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A new species of *Faronus* Aubé, 1844 (Coleoptera: Staphylinidae: Pselaphinae) from western Morocco

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Abstract

A new species, *Faronus agadiriensis* **sp. nov.** from the mountain range near Agadir, Morocco is described and illustrated. The species has a highly characteristic aedeagus which readily separates it from all congeners. A distributional map for all African species of the genus is also provided.

Key words: Coleoptera, Faronitae, new taxon, northern Africa

Introduction

The supertribe Faronitae Reitter, 1882 represents a basal, monophyletic lineage of Pselaphinae (Newton & Thayer 1995; Parker 2016), comprising 386 valid species placed in 33 genera worldwide. The group exhibits its greatest diversity in the Southern Hemisphere (Australia, New Zealand, and Chile), where it is represented by 22 genera and 257 species, accounting for 66.7% of the total specific and generic diversity. Contrary, Faronitae are poorly represented in the Palaearctic Region. Here, only two genera are known from western Palaearctic: *Delenda* Croissandeau, 1891, with three species (Bekchiev & Brachat 2014), and *Faronus* Aubé, 1844, with 39 species (Hlaváč pers. database). The supertribe is entirely absent from the eastern Palaearctic and Oriental regions.

The genus *Faronus* exhibits a predominantly Mediterranean distribution, ranging from Northern Africa, the Iberian Peninsula, France, and Italy, across the Balkan Peninsula to Turkey, Lebanon, and Israel. It is also present on several Mediterranean islands, including Ibiza, Majorca, Corsica, Sardinia, Sicily, Crete, Lesbos, Rhodes, and Samos. The northernmost recorded localities for the genus are in Romania and Slovenia. Six *Faronus* species are recorded from northern Africa. These include the widespread *F. aubei* Lucas, 1854, which occurs in Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and southern Italy; *Faronus simpliciceps* Reitter, 1893, and *F. hispanus* Saulcy, 1870 (the latter a senior synonym of *F. bedeli* Jeannel, 1956, established by Besuchet (1969)). Both species occur in Algeria, though *F. hispanus* is also found in Portugal and Spain. The remaining three species, *F. rifensis* Besuchet, 1963, *F. tingitanus* Besuchet, 1962, and *F. testaceus* Besuchet, 1962, are each known only from their respective type localities in Morocco.

Here, a new species that represents the westernmost record for the genus, discovered in a mountain range on the Atlantic coast near Agadir, Morocco, is described.

Material and methods

For morphological study, specimens were examined under a Leica S8APO stereoscopic microscope with diffuse lighting at magnifications of up to 128×. Aedeagi were dissected and subsequently examined with a Zeiss transmitted-light microscope at magnifications of up to 500×, before being preserved in Euparal on plastic labels pinned with

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their respective specimens. All illustrations were prepared using a drawing tube. The image of the habitus was taken using a Nikon D850 in the combination with Raynox / 10× Mitutoyo microscopic lenses. Final images were composed from partial photographs using Helicon Focus 8.0. and post-processed in Adobe Photoshop 2023.

Measurements were taken as follows: head length, from the occipital carina of the head capsule to the anterior margin of the frontal rostrum; head width, across the posterior margin including the protuberant corners; elytral length, along the suture. "Width" refers to the maximum measured width of the specified body region. Total body length represents the combined lengths of the head, pronotum, elytra, and abdomen.

The morphological terminology applied herein follows Chandler (2001), except that the terms 'mesoventral' and 'metaventral' are used in place of 'mesosternal' and 'metasternal' when discussing ventral thoracic structures. Paired structures are described in the singular. Descriptions are based on male specimens; characters exhibiting sexual dimorphism in females are treated in a separate section. All label data are cited verbatim, with individual lines of text separated by slashes (/).

Material examined for this study is deposited in the private collection of Peter Hlaváč, Prague, Czech Republic (PCPH).

Taxonomy

Faronus agadiriensis sp. nov.

Type material. HOLOTYPE: MOROCCO: ♂, one label "MOROCCO, Agadir env. / mountains above Imouzzer / sifting in forest, 1280 m / 30.662076N, -9.486151W / 7.IV.2019 M. Kocian lgt." [white, printed] (PCPH). **PARATYPES: MOROCCO:** (11 ♂♂, 23 ♀♀): 3 ♂♂, 12 ♀♀: same data as for holotype; 1 ♂, 3 ♀♀: "MOROCCO, Agadir env. / mountains above Tamzargot / sifting in valley, 700 m / 30.528973N, -9.550122W / 6.IV.2019 M. Kocian lgt." [white, printed]; 3 ♂♂, 3 ♀♀: one label "MOROCCO, Agadir env. / mountains above Imouzzer / sifting in forest, 1240 m / 30.663317N, -9.485303W / 9.IV.2019 M. Kocian lgt." [white, printed]; ♂♂, 5 ♀♀: one label "MOROCCO, Agadir env. / mountains above Imouzzer / sifting in forest, 1260 m / 30.662636N, -9.485537W / 11.IV.2019 M. Kocian lgt." [white, printed] (all paratypes deposited in PCPH).

Diagnosis. Head capsule with rostrum having deep longitudinal sulcus reaching frontal fovea and bifurcates towards base of occipital region; temples with pointed, protuberant posterior corners; antennae with cylindrical scape and globular pedicel, antennomere 3 small, twice smaller than pedicel; antennal club trimerous, weakly delimited; elytra clearly shorter than head capsule and pronotum together; abdomen posteriorly pointed, distinctly longer than pronotum and elytra together; all visible sternites simple, lacking any kind of modification; aedeagus with distal part wide, subrectangular, asymmetric parameres lacking setae.

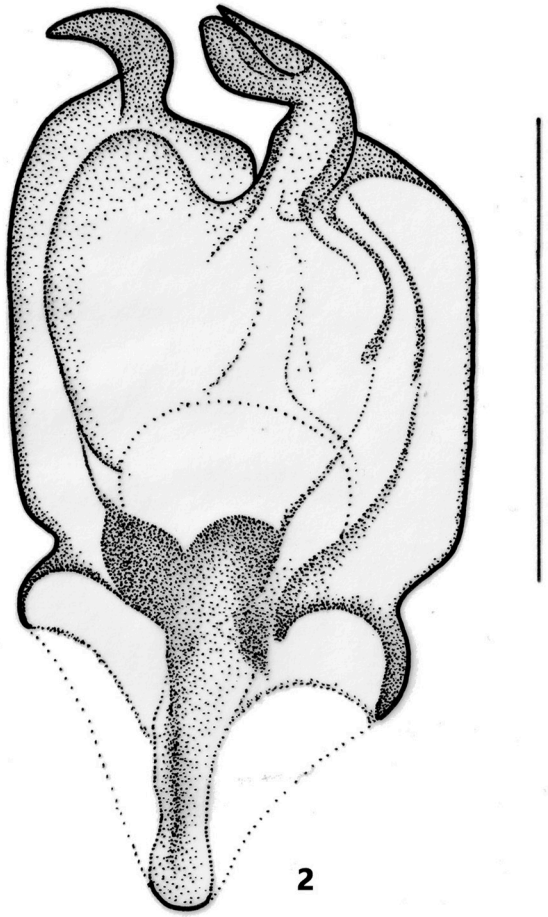
Description. Body (Fig. 1) smooth and shiny, entirely reddish brown with yellowish palpi and legs, with dense pubescence of golden setae. Length 1.65–1.75 mm, maximum width 0.55–0.56 mm in posterior half of abdomen.

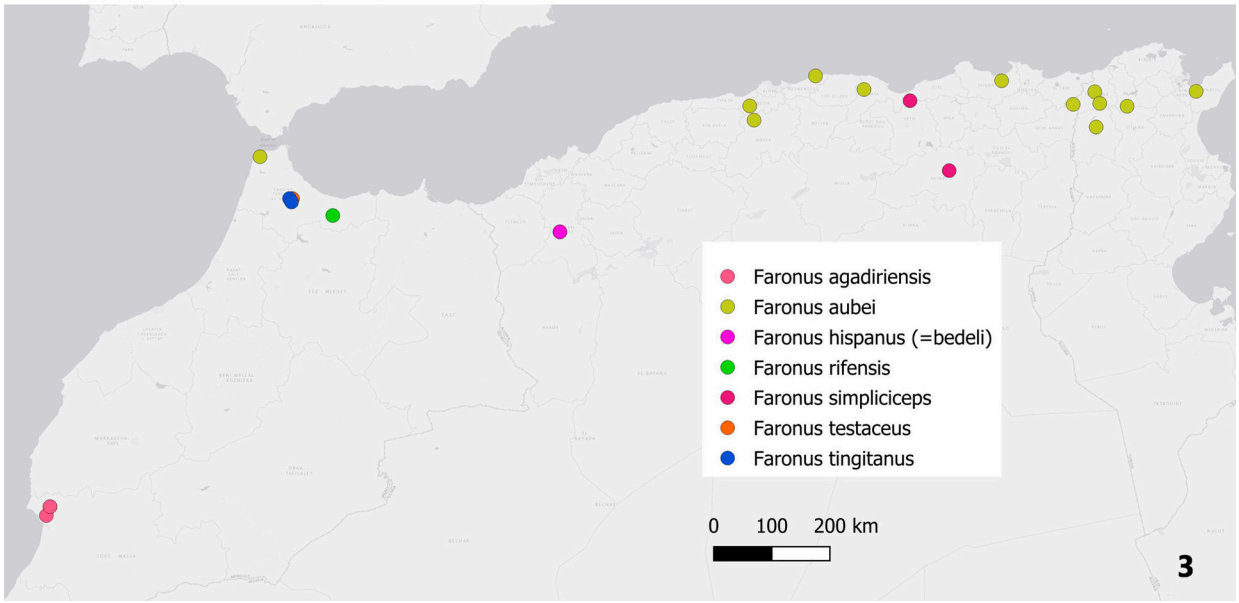
Head capsule triangular, 1.2–1.3 times as wide as long; rostrum convergent, its lateral margin as long as well-developed, slightly protuberant eyes, anterior margin convex, rostrum with deep longitudinal sulcus reaching frontal fovea and bifurcates towards the base of the occipital region; temples shorter than eyes, convergent posteriorly, with sharp, protuberant posterior corners; posterior margin of head capsule slightly convex; neck region almost completely inserted into pronotum.

Antennae with cylindrical scape about 1.4 times as long as wide and about 1.6 times as long as pedicel; pedicel globular, larger and longer than antennomeres 3–10; antennomere 3 smallest, about half of length of pedicel; 4–10 subequal in size, twice as long as 3; antennal club decently defined, trimerous, antennomeres 9 and 10 wider than 8; terminal antennomere 1.75 times longer than 10.

Pronotum 1.15–1.25 times as wide as long, 1.10–1.20 times as long as head capsule, disc flat, widest in middle, convergent posteriorly; with three discal foveae, with median antebasal fovea located in deep median impression and with lateral antebasal foveae.

Elytra short, about 1.5 times as wide as long, clearly shorter than head capsule and pronotum together, about as long as pronotum, evenly expanding posteriad; each elytron with two antebasal and two discal foveae; sutural stria born in inner discal fovea, almost reaching posterior margin of elytron; discal stria very short; humeri not protruding; hind wings absent.





FIGURES 1–3. *Faronus agadiriensis* **sp. nov. 1.** Male habitus **2.** Aedeagus, in dorsal view. **3.** Distribution of *Faronus* in Africa. Scale: 0.2 mm.

Abdomen posteriorly triangular, pointed, distinctly longer than pronotum and elytra together, first, second and third (IV–VI) visible tergites equal in length, visible tergite 4 (VII) about 1.2 times as long as 3 (VI). All visible sternites simple, lacking any kind of modification.

Legs with protibia evenly expanded, widest at apex; metatibia with distal third curved.

Aedeagus (Fig. 2) 0.39 mm long, about 1.95 as long as wide, its distal part subrectangular, with well-developed large and differently modified parameres, left paramere with left oriented hook, right paramere shorter, both lacking setae.

Sexual dimorphism. Females similar to males, differences not apparent except the posterior part of abdomen which is not pointed in females, but weakly rounded.

Distribution. Morocco (Souss-Massa Region) (Fig. 3).

Etymology. Locotypic, named after Agadir, the capital of Souss-Massa Region.

Remarks. *Faronus agadiriensis* **sp. nov.** belongs to a group of species with simple, unmodified sternites. It can be readily distinguished from all species of this group by the shape of the aedeagus which has its distal part wide, subrectangular with strongly asymmetric parameres that lack apical setae.

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