



Neogene giant tortoise from Tha Chang sandpit, Nakhon Ratchasima Province, Thailand

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Giant tortoises have been found in the Neogene sediments of the paleo Mun River from Tha Chang sandpit, Nakhon Ratchasima Province together with a rich vertebrate fauna not older than late Miocene in age. These tortoises are described based on carapace, plastron, limb bones and isolated plates which correspond to several individuals. The estimated carapace length is about 1.5 meters. The tortoises differ from "*Megalochelys*" *sivalensis* from the Plio-Pleistocene of Siwalik Hills, India and *M. cf. sivalensis* from the Early Pleistocene Kali Glagah Formation of Bumiayu, Indonesia and from other giant tortoises from the Neogene of India by distinct shape of epiplastral projection and by the presence of a cervical. In addition, their plastral morphology is similar to the living *Manouria* suggesting that these giant tortoises were probably belonging to another lineage than "*Megalochelys*". This furthermore indicates that a giant tortoise evolved in several lineages in South-East and South Asia. This discovery also contributes to better understand geographical distribution of giant tortoises in Asia during the Neogene.

Keywords: giant tortoises, Neogene, Tha Chang sandpit, Thailand