A NEW SPECIES OF THE GENUS *STROTOCERA*
SCHENKLING (COLEOPTERA: CLERIDAE: TILLINAE)
FROM THE BALTIC AMBER

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INTRODUCTION

The genus *Strotocera* Schenkling contains seventeen extant species, of which two are found in southeast Asia and fifteen are generally distributed throughout sub-Saharan Africa (Corporaal 1950: 15–16; Pic 1953: 320; Ekis 1975: 11). *Strotocera* may be distinguished from a related complex of genera by means of the key given by Schenkling (1903: 3–4). The specific-level taxonomy of *Strotocera* is based at present on characters of coloration, and several specific synonymies undoubtedly exist in this genus. Nothing has been published on the biology of these beetles, although specimens may be found in most of the world's major museums (see **Materials** below).

I was recently given a poorly preserved specimen of a new species of *Strotocera* from the Baltic Amber which was discovered by Christopher J. Marshall (now of Cornell University) while conducting curatorial work in the fossil insect collection of the Museum of Comparative Zoology. Although this specimen has lost whatever coloration it may have possessed during the process of diagenesis, its structural morphology is sufficiently preserved to warrant description and preliminary comparison with that of extant species of *Strotocera*. Because of the extensive fracturing of the amber surrounding this fossil, it was not possible to photograph the specimen.

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MATERIALS

In addition to the one specimen preserved in Baltic Amber, I examined specimens of extant species of *Strotocera* in the collections of the following institutions: The Natural History Museum (London); Institut Royal des Sciences Naturelles de Belgique (Brussels); Museum of Comparative Zoology (Cambridge, MA); and Musée Royal de L'Afrique Centrale (Tervuren).

Strotocera marshalli NEW SPECIES

(Figure 1)

LENGTH: 9.7 mm (measured from frons to elytral apices).

INTEGUMENT: Uniformly coarsely and densely punctate; elytra striatopunctate at base, apical third impunctate.

VESTITURE: Uniformly covered with short erect setae, base of elytra with long erect setae.

HEAD: As wide as pronotum; eyes large, coarsely granulate, covered with short erect setae; interocular distance 0.5 mm; eyes surrounded by a glabrous area; mandibles recurvate, finely and densely punctate dorsally; first antennal segment conical, finely and densely punctate.

PRONOTUM: Length 2.5 mm, width 2.0 mm; subapical depression broad, recurvate medially; pronotum proper robust, with a feeble longitudinal median sulcus; pronotal collar planate, slightly constricted.

LEGS: Preserved as fragments; coarsely and densely punctate; completely covered with short erect setae; profemora larger than meso- or meta-femora.

ELYTRA: Length 6.6 mm, transhumeral width 2.5 mm; humeri angulate; basally striatopunctate, punctures not decreasing in size towards apices; apical third impunctate; apices rounded.

MATERIALS: HOLOTYPE, sex indeterminate, preserved in Baltic Amber, deposited in collection of Museum of Comparative Zoology.

ETYMOLOGY: This species is named in honor of Christopher J. Marshall, who discovered the type specimen in the amber collection of the Museum of Comparative Zoology.

DIAGNOSIS: This species is similar to many species of *Strotocera* from Africa (such as *S. convexa* Hintz) with regard to its

Figure 1. HOLOTYPE of *Strotocera marshalli* NEW SPECIES from Baltic Amber. Length of specimen 9.7 mm.

overall length, the structure of its profemora, the shape of the subapical depression of its pronotum, and the robustness of its pronotum proper. However, it shares at least three characters with the group of species typified by the Indonesian species *Strotocera grandis* Schenkling: its planate pronotal collar which is only slightly constricted basally; the glabrous area surrounding its eyes; and the arrangement of its elytral punctures.

DISCUSSION

Many clerid genera, including *Strotocera*, share a present-day discontinuous distribution which includes sub-Saharan Africa and southeast Asia (see Table 1). The most parsimonious explanation for this distribution pattern is that the ranges of these clerid genera were at one time continuous across southern Asia into Europe and Africa. The presence of tropical clerid genera such as *Strotocera* and *Orthrius* Gorham (Menier 1983: 163–165) in the Baltic Amber certainly lends weight to this hypothesis. However, the alternative hypothesis, independent evolution of generic characters in African and southeast Asian Cleridae, cannot be ruled out, particularly in the case of the poorly defined genera of the large generic complex typified by the genus *Stigmatium* Gray. Further studies of clerid inclusions in the Baltic Amber such as that of Winkler (1990: 371–381) may clarify these questions of clerid phylogeny and zoogeography.

Table 1. Clerid Genera with Discontinuous Distributions between Sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia.

Clerid Genus	African species	SE Asian species
<i>Tillodenops</i>	3	1
<i>Strotocera</i>	15	2
<i>Astigmus</i>	6	4
<i>Stigmatium</i>	22	50
<i>Phaeocyclotomus</i>	65	41
<i>Tenerus</i>	50	88
<i>Korynetes</i>	7	3

(Source: Corporaal 1950)

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SUMMARY

Strotocera marshalli NEW SPECIES (Coleoptera: Cleridae: Tiliinae) is described from a specimen preserved in Baltic Amber. A preliminary assessment of the relationships of this new species is provided. In the opinion of the author, the study of Baltic Amber fossils is essential to understanding present-day discontinuous distributions in clerid genera such as *Strotocera* Schenkling.

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