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Scolopendromorph centipedes (Chilopoda: Scolopendromorpha) in the Natural History Museum (London): A review of the hitherto unidentified species collected in Africa, with remarks on taxonomy and distribution, and a new species of *Otostigmus* (*Parotostigmus*)

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Abstract

The collection of centipedes in the Natural History Museum (NHM) in London is one of the most taxonomically and geographically complete in the world. Type material includes many species described by William Leach, George Newport, and especially Reginald I. Pocock. The present paper provides a survey of previously unidentified centipedes in the collections in the NHM, and is focused on scolopendromorph specimens collected during expeditions to Africa between 1892 and 1967. It deals with material gathered in numerous regions, provinces and islands across the African continent, mainly by British naturalists. Species of the genera *Alipes* Imhoff, 1854, *Asanada* Meinert, 1886, *Cormocephalus* Newport, 1844, *Cryptops* Leach, 1815, *Ethmostigmus* Pocock, 1898, *Otostigmus* Porat, 1876, *Rhysida* Wood, 1862, *Scolopendra* Linnaeus, 1758 and *Scolopocryptops* Newport, 1844, were examined. A total of 32 species and subspecies are identified, one of which, is described as new: *Otostigmus* (*Parotostigmus*) *coltellus* n. sp., from São Tome, while many of them are new to the fauna of certain African regions/countries. The syntypes of *Otostigmus* (*Parotostigmus*) *productus* Karsch, 1888, include two species, one of which is *O. (P.) coltellus*; a lectotype is selected to stabilize the name. *Cormocephalus westwoodi anceps* and *Rhysida lithobioides paucidens* have been returned to specific rank.

Key words: *Alipes*, *Asanada*, *Cormocephalus*, *Cryptops*, *Ethmostigmus*, *Otostigmus*, *Rhysida*, *Scolopendra*, *Scolopocryptops*

Introduction

The Scolopendromorpha is one of the five orders in the class Chilopoda, composed of ca 700 nominal species classified in five families (Edgecombe and Bonato 2011). The order has a worldwide distribution but is most diverse in the tropics, where species of Scolopendridae reach their largest body sizes. This study addresses the taxonomic and faunistic status of scolopendromorph centipedes in the collections of the Natural History Museum in London (NHM). Important holdings in the NHM centipede collection include many primary types of species described by William Leach, Thomas Say, and George Newport in the 19th century. The largest suite of types resulted from the prolific publications of Reginald Innes Pocock, who worked at the Museum from 1885 until 1904, during most of which he was Curator of Arachnida and Myriapoda (Beccaloni 2012). Type material of many scolopendromorphs in the NHM collection, including Pocock types, has been revised by J. G. E. Lewis (e.g., Lewis 1996, 1999, 2003, 2011).

The focus of the present study is previously undetermined material from Africa, plus the Sokotra archipelago, most of which was acquired during British surveys over the period 1892–1967 (Fig. 1).

General distribution. West-Central Tropical Africa: Cameroon (CM), Gabon (GA), Guinea (GN) (Chagas-Júnior 2008).

Remarks. *Scolopocryptops ferrugineus* has been assigned many records in the Neotropics (Pocock 1905; Attems 1930; Kraus 1957; Chagas-Juniór 2003, among others), but these represent a diagnosibly distinct species from the West African types (Chagas-Júnior 2008). *Scolopocryptops mexicanus* Humbert and Saussure, 1869, is the oldest available name for Neotropical “*ferrugineus*” (Chagas-Júnior 2008).

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