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BOOK REVIEWS

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**S. L. Wood, *Bark and Ambrosia Beetles of South America*  
(*Coleoptera: Scolytidae*) (Monte L. Bean Life Science Museum,  
Brigham Young University, Provo, 2007), 900 p.**

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In 2007, a monograph of Professor Emeritus Stephen Lane Wood appeared. It is devoted to the bark beetles of South America, the region having the richest fauna of these beetles. This titanic work contains descriptions of 1339 South American species and original identification keys. Two genera: *Corthyloxyphus* Wood, 2007 (Corthylini) and *Cortisinus* Wood, 2007 (Phloesinini) and 305 species are described as new to science. The generic name *Corthycyclon* Schedl, 1951 is synonymized with *Corthulus* Erichson, 1836. In addition, synonymy for 140 species names has been established, a considerable number of new combinations have been suggested, and some species names have been de-synonymized. This work has become a natural continuation of the author's monograph on the bark and ambrosia beetles of North and Central America (Wood, 1982) and his catalogue of the bark beetles of the world fauna (Wood and Bright, 1992). Most part of the new monograph was written after S.L. Wood's retirement, and the author's energy and his desire to complete his vast task should be given their due.

The main question which naturally arises after attentive reading of the monograph is how fully it embraces the fauna of South America. In the introductory section, S.L. Wood writes that during his work at the monograph he was brought a box that contained about 50 specimens of 50 species of the Neotropical genus *Camptocerus* Latreille, 1829. Most of these species were not mentioned among the 20 *Camptocerus* species covered by the monograph, and were not later included in it. S.L. Wood restricted himself to the description of the serial material and individual specimens of the most peculiar species, considering that since in most modern collections species are represented by one or a few specimens, captured in light traps rather than collected from their trophic substrate, adequate assessment of many "new" species might be

difficult or impossible. For description of new species it is desirable to have series from the same food plant and from the same galleries, including both males and females, rather than individuals of only one sex. Hardly had one year passed since publication of S.L. Wood's monograph when the new genus *Akrobothrus* Dole et Cognato, 2007 and a number of new species notable for their large size were described from South and Central America (Kirkendall, 2006; Petrov and Mandelshtam, 2007). The important point is that the species described belonged not to the small and obscure Cryphalini or the highly diverse South American Pityophthorina and Corthylina, but to the relatively well studied genera *Xyleborus*, *Camptocerus*, and *Scolytodes*. These facts suggest that the monograph includes not more than half the number of South American bark beetle species, and maybe even less. According to O.L. Kryzhanovski (2000), bark beetles are most diverse in South America.

The book under review contains 230 plates of black and white photographs, each devoted to 1–3 species of South American bark beetles. These tables make species identification much easier in spite of very low quality of some photographs. Unfortunately, the photographs cannot replace good outline drawings of structural details (for example, antennae or upper margin of elytron), which are traditionally scarce in S.L. Wood's books. With a considerable number of new species described not only from South but also from Central America, the new book has become an important supplement to the author's monograph of 1982 on the bark beetles of South and Central America. Therefore, both monographs should be used when dealing with species from South and Central America. Both books are still available from different sellers announced in the Internet.

Some small remarks on the book may be appropriate. In some cases when the type material and original

descriptions proved to be inaccessible, S.L. Wood ignored such “good” species as, for instance, 3 species of the genus *Sampsonius* Eggers, 1935 (Schönherr, 1994), synonymized them, or re-described them claiming his authorship.

S.L. Wood is “the last of the Mohicans” who regards bark beetles as a separate family and not a group of weevils. This view, backed in his monograph of 1986, is now supported neither by the cladists nor by Russian paleontologists (Zherikhin and Gratshev, 1995). At the same time, findings of fossil bark beetles predating all the known weevils (Kirejtshuk et al., in press) may in the long run force the cladists to reconsider the problem and support a separate position of the family, biologically and morphologically independent from the weevils.

In the introduction to his book, S.L. Wood notices that many tropic bark beetle species are considered to be of very small economic significance or even regarded as beneficial forms, accelerating the initial stages of wood decomposition. In his opinion, this is not supported by facts, since production of many economically important cultures, for example coffee beans, may be drastically reduced by the fruit parasite *Hypothenemus hampei* (Ferrari, 1867). Losses of timber caused by bark beetles and fungi carried by them have not been estimated at all. Many South American species of bark beetles have successfully colonized other tropical regions of the world, especially in Africa. Therefore, the appearance of a monograph with reliable keys to species is the first step to studying the biology of bark beetles and reassessment of their economic significance in the Neotropical region.

In spite of the drawbacks present in many species-level keys, the monograph of S.L. Wood has become a long expected present for taxonomists. It will find an important place on the bookshelf of bark beetle experts. It is very important that now this book has appeared in the library of the Zoological Institute, RAS. This will make it possible for Russian taxonomists and amateurs interested in bark beetles to work with the South American fauna of this group.

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