Prof. Mik's genus Paracrocera (Cyrtidae), with a Postscript about the genus Alloeoneurus Mik (Dolichop.)

by

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Dr. Griffini, in his paper: „Di alcune Acroceridi italiani" (Boll. dei Musei di Z. ed A. C. etc. di Torino, 28 May 1896) expressed the opinion that the genus *Paracrocera* Mik (Wien. Ent. Z. 1886, p. 276) is an unnecessary genus, and gave a reason for it. Prof. Mik replied (W. E. Z. 1897, p. 44): „The genus which I have separated from *Acrocera* has not been approved by the author; whether he is right" (?) the interrogation is Mik's, „will ich dahin gestellt sein lassen," which means „I will leave undecided".

As I, some time ago, formed the same opinion about *Paracrocera* as Dr. Griffini, and have worked up the question in detail, I shall take advantage of this opportunity for making my results public.[1])

A strange peculiarity of the genus *Acrocera*, and a peculiarity that requires a further investigation, consists in the instability of its venation, as the second longitudinal vein is, in many cases, entirely absent; but in some other cases it is only stunted, either at its distal, or at its proximal end. Thus, there are sometimes two, in other cases only one submarginal cell; in the latter case it is the second cell (formed by the fork of the third vein) which is present; the first submarginal cell is, in such a case, coalescent with

[1]) After issuing my successive papers, historical and critical, on Blepharoceridae, I had prepared a rough draft of a similar work on Cyrtidae, but upon hearing that Mr. Wandolleck in Berlin was gathering materials for a complete monograph of that family, I handed to him in October 1895 my manuscript for use, or eventual incorporation in his work. What I publish now is based upon the facts contained in a paragraph on *Acrocera* in that manuscript, only more developed for the purpose of publication.

the marginal, and that either completely coalescent when the second vein is entirely suppressed, or incompletely, when it is only stunted. Erichson has already noticed this peculiarity when, in his characterzation of *Acrocera*, he said: 'Die Flügel haben meist zwei Unterrandzellen'. On p. 167, he says about *A. sanguinea* Meig., 'dass dem vorderen Ast der Gabelader ein paralleler Ast vorhergeht, wodurch drei Unterrandzellen gebildet werden.' In our terminology this means the presence of a distinct second vein, and of two submarginal cells. As Erichson did not possess specimens of *sanguinea* at that time, it is evident that he derived his information from Meigen's figures (the excellent one in Classific. Tab. 8. f. 25—26, and the same, on a smaller scale, in the Syst. Beschr. III, Tab. 24, f. 1).[1]) Meigen in his letterpress (Syst. Beschr. III, p. 95), describes another species, *A. nigrofemorata*, and says that 'the venation is somewhat different from that of *sanguinea*,' and refers to fig. 10. The difference, as the figure shows, consists in the stunting of the second vein, which is interrupted half-way before reaching the margin. Erichson (p. 167) describes this same character, when he says about *nigrofemorata*: 'die Flügel haben wieder die einfache Gabel'. Erichson and Gerstaecker judged of the species merely from Meigen's data, and I am not aware whether any specimens of *nigrofemorata* have been discovered since Meigen's time. In fact, Schiner (Fauna I, p. 73 and in the Syst. Catal.) takes *nigrofemorata* for a synonym of *sanguinea*. For this reason, we cannot be sure whether the stunting of the second vein in *nigrofemorata* is a permanent character, or a mere casual or individual aberration.[2])

We have another instance still of the instability of the structure of the second vein in the genus *Acrocera*. About *A. bimaculata* from Washington, D. C., Loew (Cent. VI, 33) says: 'vena longitudinalis secunda praeter apicis rudimentum omnino deest; vena longitudinalis tertia furcata et transversae ambae perfectae, ut in speciebus plerisque'. Thus we have in *sanguinea* a complete second vein;[3]) in *nigrofemorata* an incomplete one at one end; in *bimaculata* an incomplete one at the other end; and in other species

[1]) Meigen, in his Vol. III, p. 94, at bottom, by a slip of the pen has fig. 10, instead of fig. 9 in the diagnosis of *sanguinea*.

[2]) Schiner (Fauna I, p. 72) likewise describes the venation of the genus *Acrocera* as 'very variable and irregular; the third vein has generally a distinct fork, and there are two, often incomplete, submarginal cells'.

[3]) Also in *trigramma* Loew, *Stelviana* Pok., *trigrammoides* Pok.

(*globulus* Panz., *obsoleta* v. d. W., from Wisconsin etc.), no second vein at all.[1])

The result of my research thus far shows that the majority of Acrocerae have the second vein complete, and that, in a minority of cases, it is entirely wanting; but some rare cases occupy an intermediate position, when the second vein is represented by a stump, either at the distal or at the proximal end. Whether such stumps belong to the specific characters, or are merely casual aberrations in single specimens, is still a question. The number of recorded cases is, as far as I know, only three: Meigen's specimen of *nigrofemorata*, and Loew's male and female specimens of *bimaculata* (it is not stated, at any rate, that Loew had any more than these). And three is too small a number for justifying a final conclusion. But even this small number is sufficient to prove that the total disappearance of the second vein is not a consequence of its coalescence with the first, but of its obliteration. We can reach the same result without being led to it by the lesson of the stumps. By comparing a specimen of *globulus* with another of *trigramma*, which I have before me, I can easily perceive that the coalescence of the first vein with the costa takes place exactly in the same way in both species, although in *globulus* the second vein is obliterated, while it is present in *trigramma*. If its disappearance in *globulus* had been caused by its coalescence with the first vein, the chitinous structure of this coalescence along the costa would have shown some difference between both species; but that is not the case. The legitimate inference from this observation is, that the obliteration of the second vein, in *Acrocera*, is not a deep-seated character at all, and is not an index of a corresponding change in the rest of the organisation. And this is what Dr. Griffini tersely and happily expressed in a single sentence: 'non corrispondendo all' unico carattere sudetto' (that is, the character adduced by Mik, the

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[1]) *A. borealis* Zett. and *laeta* Gerst. probably belong here, but the statements are not quite distinct. Gerstaecker says about *laeta* (p. 352): „Venation like that of *orbiculus*." This must be a lapsus calami for *globulus*, because Gerstaecker considers *orbiculus* F. (♀) as a synonym of *globulus* Panz. ♂. Schiner (Fn. I. p. 73, foot-note) says: „The older name is properly *orbiculus* Fab. Ent. Syst. 1794. But as both monographers, Erichson and Gerstaecker, have retained Panzer's name, I prefer to follow them." This is not quite correct, because Erichson considered *orbiculus* F. (♀) as a separate species, and it was Gerstaecker who united them under the younger name *globulus* Panzer ♂ (1803). Why he did so, is not quite clear, and Griffini may be right after all in preferring *orbiculus*.

obliteration of the second vein) 'un facies complessivo dell' insetto che lo distingua dalle altre *Acrocere*'.

All that Mik says about *Paracrocera* is this: „The genus *Acrocera* contains species in which the second longitudinal vein is fully developed (frei entwickelt) and the third is forked, and also such, in which the second vein is wanting (or coalescent with the first along its entire length) and the third is likewise forked. The importance of this difference in its relation to the general structure (in genereller Beziehung) decides me to unite the species of the second group, that is those, where the second vein is wanting, in a separate generic type, which I call *Paracrocera*." Evidently Mik, in attempting to write on this subject, was utterly unprepared for it. He had no idea of the existence of a stunted state of the second vein, and for this reason gave a superficial, and curiously erroneous interpretation of its total disappearance. As I have shown, there is no coalescence with the first vein, and these is no difference of local structure pointing to a difference in the general structure, and therefore no occasion for a new genus. Now, that Mik's attention has been directed towards the species with the stunted veins, in which of his two genera would he place them? Or would he establish new genera for each of them, just as he made so many genera of *Clinocera*, that are superfluous even as subgenera?

A last observation, to cap the climax. Meigen introduced the genus *Acrocera* in „Illiger's Magazin" 1803, and quoted *Syrphus globulus* Panzer, as type, or example. According to the rule of priority, the original generic name should be retained by this species, which belongs to the group with the obliterated second vein, while Mik calls *Acrocera* just the other group. And thus nothing is left in defence of the rights of *Paracrocera!*

My friend, Professor Mik, with his numerous „Referata" and „Miscellen" has organised a system of regular canalization, by means of which, once a month, he irrigates the fields of Dipterology. Unfortunately, his good will notwithstanding, this irrigation carries many noxious microbes with it, which it will cost us years of work and trouble to get rid of!

Heidelberg, January 29, 1897.

Postscript. It often happens that a monographer points out natural subdivisions in a genus, and defines them, without finding it necessary to introduce new genera, or even subgeneric names for them. Other entomologists have sometimes interfered in such cases,

by proposing new names for such subdivisions, of course with their mihi appended, but without adding anything in the way of new characters, which would justify such an interference. This is an impropriety which borders on piracy. The great weakness of Mik for appending his name to new genera has, more than once, induced him to commit such indiscretions.

In the Neue Beitr. VIII, p. 70 (1861) Loew said: „Our two European species of *Liancalus* show several important differences. *Liancalus lacustris* Scop. has four bristles on the scutellum and the appendages of the hypopygium are short, hairy lamels, while *Liancalus virens* Scop. has six bristles on the scutellum and the external hairy hypopygial appendages are filiform. If there was a large number of species of them, difficult to recognise, the above-indicated characters would have been sufficient for the erection of two separate genera; but as only a small number of *Liancalus* are known, such a subdivision is at present absolutely unnecessary (vollständig überflüssig)." —

In 1878 only three European and two N.-American species were known. Now in that year Mik, in spite of Loew's warning, and without giving him any credit for his diagnosis, copied it, and established the new genus *Alloeoneurus* for *L. lacustris* Scop. (Mik, Dipterol. Untersuchungen, Wien 1878, p. 8). He was not aware that, the year before, I had described a Californian *Liancalus*, which, with regard to the characters borrowed from the scutellum and the hypopygium, holds the middle between the two subdivisions indicated by Loew. *L. querulus* O. S., Western Dipt. p. 318 (1877), has „lamelliform" appendages of the hypopygium and six bristles on the scutellum. According to Mik it would require again a new genus and so on!

Mik followed the same method in establishing the genus *Symplectomorpha* (Wien. Ent. Z. 1886, p. 318). In my Monograph of the *Tipulidae brevipalpi* (1869, p. 171) I had shown that among the four known species of *Symplecta*, the typical species, *S. punctipennis* alone has the anterior branch of the fourth vein forked. This offered Mik an occasion to publish the above named new genus upon the most futile characters, promising more developments about a new *Symplecta grata* Lw., developments which never came! (Comp. my Studies on Tipulidae II, p. 197, in the Berl. E. Z. 1887, where I pointed out the uselessness of this new genus.)