

# POSTILLA

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**Yale** PEABODY MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

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## YALE PEABODY MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

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### A NEW GENUS OF THRUSH FROM EASTERN AFRICA

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In connection with a revision of the thrushes, I have examined specimens of *Turdinus stictigula* Reichenow through the courtesy of the authorities of the American Museum of Natural History. This rare and seldom observed species found only in the hills in parts of Tanganyika was described as a babbler and placed in *Illadopsis* by W. L. Sclater (*Systema Avium Æthiopicarum*, 1932:363). In his revision of the babblers (*L'Oiseau*, 1946, 16:13) Delacour has pointed out that the Spot-throat is certainly a thrush and not a babbler in the lengthening of its narrow bill, and its long and slender tarsus and toes. M. Delacour placed the species provisionally in *Cossypha*, noting that it bore a slight resemblance to *anomala* and *archeri*.

Virtually nothing was known of the habits of the Spot-throat until Moreau published his observations (*Ibis*, 1932: 672 and 1938:302). He noted particularly its thrush-like habits and beautiful voice. He further described the nest, eggs, and nestlings, all reasonably thrush-like, but unfortunately the nestlings were destroyed before he could observe the juvenal plumage.

In its uniform coloration, spotted throat, and wing and tail formation, *stictigula* differs notably from the members of the genus *Cossypha*, and I therefore propose the erection of a new genus.

*Modulatrix*, n. gen.

Type.—*Turdinus stictigula* Reichenow 1906.

This genus is similar to *Cossypha* Vigors 1825 in its narrow bill and its long tarsi and toes; but the wing, which is rounded, has the sixth primary longest rather than the fifth and the first primary is less than two-thirds the length of the second (shorter than in species of *Cossypha*). The tail, which is shorter than the wing and of 12 feathers, is slightly rounded rather than squared, the individual rectrices being somewhat pointed. The color pattern of *Modulatrix* is distinctive uniform deep olive brown on the crown and back, with a faint tendency to terminal barring on the feathers of the center of the back. The tail is rich rufescent. Below, the throat is buffy-gray with terminal black spots; the abdomen is rufous. The flanks are dark brown. There is no tendency to a white eyebrow, crown or presuperciliary spot or stripe, so uniform a feature of *Cossypha*.

Measurements of three males are: wing, 79-81; tail, 71-72; culmen, 16; and tarsus, 29-30 mm.

Two forms of this genus have been described:

1. *Modulatrix stictigula stictigula* (Reichenow)

2. *Modulatrix stictigula pressa* (Bangs and Loveridge)

"*Modulatrix*," a singer *Tertull*.