

Morphology and relationships of the enigmatic stenotheccoid pan-brachiopod *Stenothecoides*—new data from the middle Cambrian Burgess Shale Formation

Paul A. Johnston and Michael Streng

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Bulk sampling of middle Cambrian carbonate units in the lower Burgess Shale Formation (Wuliuan) and the upper Wheeler Formation (Drumian) in Utah have yielded abundant silicified stenotheccoids. Previously unreported from the Burgess Shale, stenotheccoids discovered include at least two species: *Stenothecoides* cf. *elongata* and *Stenothecoides rasettii* sp. nov. The Utah material is assigned to *Stenothecoides elongata*. The new stenotheccoid material confirms some earlier observations including a set of interior grooves and ridges forming nested chevrons across the midline and a finer set disposed around the interior shell margin. The chevroned grooves are interpreted here as mantle canals and the peripheral furrows as setal grooves. A prominent boss occurs at the valve apex in both valves. An apparent socket receiving the boss in the opposite valve described in earlier studies we show to be an artefact of preservation. Consequently, the bosses were juxtaposed when the valves were conjoined and so must have had some function other than valve articulation. Most extraordinary in *Stenothecoides* is an embayment at the shell apex, which likely represents a rudimentary pedicle foramen. This and other features including apparent articulate brachiopod-like calcitic fibrous shell microstructure replicated in silica, indicate phylogenetic propinquity of the Stenotheccoida is with the Brachiopoda, not the Mollusca. However, phylogenetic proximity of the Stenotheccoida relative to any of the brachiopod crown groups is unclear. Stenotheccoids may represent a pan-brachiopod stem group derived from organocalcitic, multisclerite, eccentrotheccimorph tommotiids via sclerite reduction to two opposing mitral sclerites. Discovery of stenotheccoids in carbonate debris aprons in the Burgess Shale suggests transport of shelly biota downslope from the adjacent platform. However, their absence in siliciclastic units of the Burgess Shale preserving both shelly and soft-bodied biota indicates these units lack significant input of transported elements from the adjacent platform

Key words: Stenotheccoida, Brachiopoda, Mollusca, Cambrian, Burgess Shale Formation.

Paul A. Johnston [pajohnston@mtroyal.ca], Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences, Mount Royal University, Calgary, Canada. Michael

Streng [michael.streng@geo.uu.se], Department of Earth Sciences, Palaeobiology, Uppsala University, Villavägen 16, SE-75236, Uppsala, Sweden.

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