

WISSENSCHAFTLICHE KURZMITTEILUNG

The type locality of the Javan rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros sondaicus*
Desmarest, 1822)

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There has always been uncertainty about the type locality of *Rhinoceros sondaicus*. In 1821, a hide and skeleton of a young adult single-horned rhinoceros was received in Paris. DESMAREST (1822: 399–400) described it as “*Rhinoceros sondaicus* . . . Espèce nouvelle, découverte par MM. DIARD et DUVAUCEL, envoyée au Muséum d’Histoire Naturelle en 1821”. He first stated that the animal was found in “Sumatra” (p. 400), but corrected this in the supplement to his book, published simultaneously, into “trouvé à Java, et non à Sumatra, comme nous l’avons indiqué par erreur” (p. 547).

SODY (1941: 61; 1946, 1959: 133, 157) doubted the accuracy of this emendation primarily because DIARD and DUVAUCEL never collected together in Java, and he considered Sumatra as the correct type locality of *R. sondaicus*. Although SODY’s historical arguments have not received any comment, most recent authors give the type locality as “probably Java” (e.g. HOOIJER 1946: 6; GROVES 1967: 233; HONACKI et al. 1982: 311; ROOKMAAKER in press). It is possible to settle this problem more definitively.

STRESEMANN (1951: 146) summarized the more important biographical details of ALFRED DUVAUCEL (1793–1824) and PIERRE-MÉDARD DIARD (1794–1863). DUVAUCEL, the stepson of GEORGES CUVIER, had been sent to India as “naturaliste du Roi” in 1817. DIARD went to India on his own accord to collect plants and animals. They met near Calcutta in May 1818. Shortly after, they were engaged by STAMFORD RAFFLES (1781–1826) and travelled with him from India to Sumatra arriving in 1819. On the way, they collected a large number of animals, some of which they sent to Paris. Because this was a breach of their contract, RAFFLES was very annoyed when he learned about it and he sent both Frenchmen away. DUVAUCEL returned to India and probably never visited Java. DIARD was imprisoned and taken to Batavia (Jakarta) where he was released. While it is unknown if he travelled outside the city, he was able to make a large collection of Javan animals. DIARD left Java in 1821 never to return.

DESMAREST (1822) was not the only one to describe the rhinoceros received in Paris in 1821. CUVIER (1822), too, discussed its osteological characteristics. First, he listed a “squelette d’un rhinocéros unicolore de cette espèce, de Java, adulte, que M. DIARD vient de nous envoyer de cette île” accompanied by a “Mémoire manuscrit de MM. DIARD et DUVAUCEL, sur ce rhinocéros [the species described by BELL in 1793] et sur celui de Java” (CUVIER 1822: 4). After comparing the skeleton with specimens from Africa and India and with the description of the Sumatran rhinoceros by BELL (1793), CUVIER (1822: 20–42) accepted its specific distinction without providing a binomial name. This conclusion was considerably confirmed by “les observations de deux de mes élèves, MM. DIARD et DUVAUCEL, consignées dans un mémoire qu’ils ont présenté à la Société des Sciences de Batavia, et par l’envoi qu’ils nous ont fait d’un squelette adulte, et d’une peau de cette espèce” (CUVIER 1822: 26). On the next page, CUVIER (1822: 27) again said that “les mêmes jeunes naturalistes se sont assurés que ce rhinoceros particulier jusqu’à présent à l’île de Java, n’est point une simple variété du bicolore du Sumatra.”

The "Mémoire sur le rhinocéros" mentioned above is still in the central library of the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle of Paris (MNHN, MS. 625 no. 13). There are one rough and one fair copy, both 18 pages long, unsigned and undated. DIARD mentioned its despatch in a letter to CUVIER dated "Batavia 9 avril 1821" (MNHN, MS. 625 no. 11). The Mémoire essentially contains a description of the external morphology, anatomy, osteology and dentition of the rhinoceros which "paraît être particulier à l'île de Java". It is stated that a copy was sent to the "société des recherches asiatiques" (CUVIER, above, mentioned the Société des Sciences de Batavia), but it was never published.

It appears clear that the type specimen of *R. sondaicus* Desmarest, 1822 was collected in Java by DIARD alone. The exact locality is undeterminable because DIARD's travels or transactions in Java are unknown. The note on this species and the Sumatran rhinoceros probably was written by DIARD although it may have included observations by DUVAUCÉL. The type locality of the Javan rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros sondaicus* Desmarest, 1822) is Java.

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