

NOTE XXI.

PITHECHIR MELANURUS S. MÜLLER

BY

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(Plates 3 and 4).

Mr. J. D. Pasteur, well-known to the readers of our »Notes" (cf. Notes from the Leyden Museum, 1890, p. 209), having removed from Padang Sidempoean (Sumatra) to Batavia (Java), wrote to me to send him over a colored drawing of *P. melanurus*, for in the possession of it he dared say that he could procure specimens, if the species truly was to be found on the Goenong Gedeh. After having received the desired drawing he had neither rest nor repose until he had kept his word. And indeed on December 3, 1891 I received a postcard d. d. November 3, with the good news, that in his possession were two living adult specimens, ♂ and ♀, the latter with a half grown young, captured on the northern slope of the Goenong Gedeh and that he intended to send them over preserved in spirits as soon as possible.

Dr. Sclater was kind enough to communicate Pasteur's discovery to the members of the Zoological Society in the meeting of January 5.

A couple of days afterward I received a letter in which Mr. Pasteur gave an account of the troubles he had to overcome before he got the said specimens, the way how they have been captured and their behavior in confinement.

I think it to be full of interest to naturalists if I hereafter give a translation of a part of the named letter,

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this at the same time will show to our zealous and disinterested correspondent how highly we esteem and appreciate his observations.

Pasteur related as follows: »Although Mount Salak, as »nearer to Batavia, offered a much better field to an entomologist, I chose the »Kampong" Toegoe (1300 meters »above the level of the sea) for my entomological excursions, solely to investigate after *Pithechir melanurus*. Toegoe is the most remote spot on the slope of the Gedeh »where I could rather easily come with a little cart. And »so I travelled every sunday or every fortnight 174 kilometers — 120 K. M. by railroad and 54 K. M. by cart »with three horses — to spend at Toegoe four or five »hours with my favorite occupation. Having your colored »drawing always with me I showed it again and again to »numerous natives, giving them rixdollars and instructions. »In short, I saw the first specimen of this interesting »species on October 31. It was half past eight in the »evening and quite dark. Dozing I sat down in my little »cart slowly pulled by the panting horses along the steep »slope of the mountain, as I heard a native crying: »toewan, saja dapet itoe tikoes"! (Sir, I have captured the »rat!) and at the same time he in triumph showed to me »in the light of the lantern one of the iron rat-traps, »which I had given him, wherein I saw the large white »bellied red rat frightened climbing round about! — My »native hunters, having a longing for the promised premium, rambling day after day along the steep uncultivated slopes of the Gedeh, believed a certain day to »remark the red rat running upon a branch of a high »rasamala ¹⁾ - tree and saw it disappear in what seemed to »be a large nest. One of them mounted on the tree, but »it was an impossibility to reach the nest: so they resolved to destroy the nest with a long stick by which the »frightened animals would be forced to drop down. And

1) *Liquidambar altingia*.

»this perfectly succeeded; for two adult specimens, ♂ and
 »♀ with a half grown young came down happily unhurt
 »and were captured. Six days afterwards I came to Toe-
 »goe and found them living and feeding with fruits of
 »the earth, especially fruits of the sole like *oebi* ¹⁾ and
 »*katèla* ²⁾. I had no opportunity to make out if they too
 »are insectivorous, and as yet believe — like my hunters
 »do — that they have a vegetable diet. The young spe-
 »cimen always uninterrupted was suckling and concealed
 »its head continually under the abdomen of the mother;
 »in the same position it did sleep and was carried along
 »by the mother. In two iron rat-traps I brought them
 »over to Batavia, where however their appetite diminish-
 »ed partly by the very high temperature (85°—90° F.),
 »partly because I could not procure the small and delicate
 »granular *oebi* from Toegoe: the coarse *katèla* from Bata-
 »via however they consumed with taste, so *kelimoen* (cu-
 »cumbers) too and fruits like *pisang* ³⁾ and *manggistan* ⁴⁾,
 »but fresh carrots they did not touch. As a rule they
 »passed the day sleeping, in the evening they grew rest-
 »less and in the morning nearly always the food had dis-
 »appeared, so that the conclusion is permitted that they
 »are nocturnal animals.

»The iris is as black as jet; the feet and fingers, as
 »far as they are thinly haired or not haired at all, are
 »of a flesh-color like indeed in the existing colored draw-
 »ing; the callosities on the soles of the feet are white
 »as chalk, the soles however have a somewhat reddish
 »flesh-color tinge.”

So far the interesting notices made by Mr. Pasteur, by
 which we now may state that we know more about the
 biology of this very rare red rat than we ever heard about
 hundreds other mammals since long represented in every

1) Genus *Dioscorea*.

2) *Batatas edulis*.

3) *Musa*-species.

4) *Garcinia mangostana*.

Museum, so that we congratulate Mr. Pasteur with the splendid work he has done.

The color of the fur a. s. o. I described in »Notes from the Leyden Museum, 1890, p. 227"; I only have to add that the red color has not the yellow tinge like in Cuvier's figure, but is of a beautiful chestnut tinged red; the hairs of the belly are pure white in the young specimen (slightly tinged with reddish in the adult individuals) like in the old Java-specimen in our Museum; the tail is very hairy towards its root for about 25 Millimeters: for the rest it *looks* smooth like a snake's skin: the scales (8 to 10 pro Centimeter) are very dark brown colored, so that the specific title *melanurus* has »raison d'être" and my hypothesis (l. c. p. 227) that in our old dried Museum-specimens the tail had been decolored, was quite right; there are very short dark colored hairs — very difficultly conspicuous without the aid of a lens — regularly spread between these scales (plate 3, fig. 8): the midmost is slightly longer than the two others, the latter reaching about halfway the height of a scale; towards its tip the tail is about without hairs, the scales of that part are very small and few in number and bear a much lighter brownish white color; the extreme point of the tail is destitute of hairs, very smooth and purslain white.

Whiskers black throughout, much longer than the head, very numerous; the longest measure about 63 Millimeters.

The strongly rounded oval ears are sparingly clothed with short hairs; upper margin fringed with rather long hairs.

Size and shape of hands and feet will be clear from the drawings (plate 3, fig. 5 and plate 4, fig. 6), the nails are short, well arched and very acutely pointed, brownish white; the nail of the rudimentary thumb of the hand is very small and obtuse like that of the thumb of the hind foot, which nail is however stronger.

The female has four strongly (their young was suckling) developed inguinal nipples. The clitoris is extraordinarily

large: in the adult female it measures 11,5 Millimeters (exactly the size and shape of the penis of the adult male) so that I at first mistook the young individual for a male, as this suckling young has a clitoris measuring 6 Millimeters: the four small nipples are clearly visible.

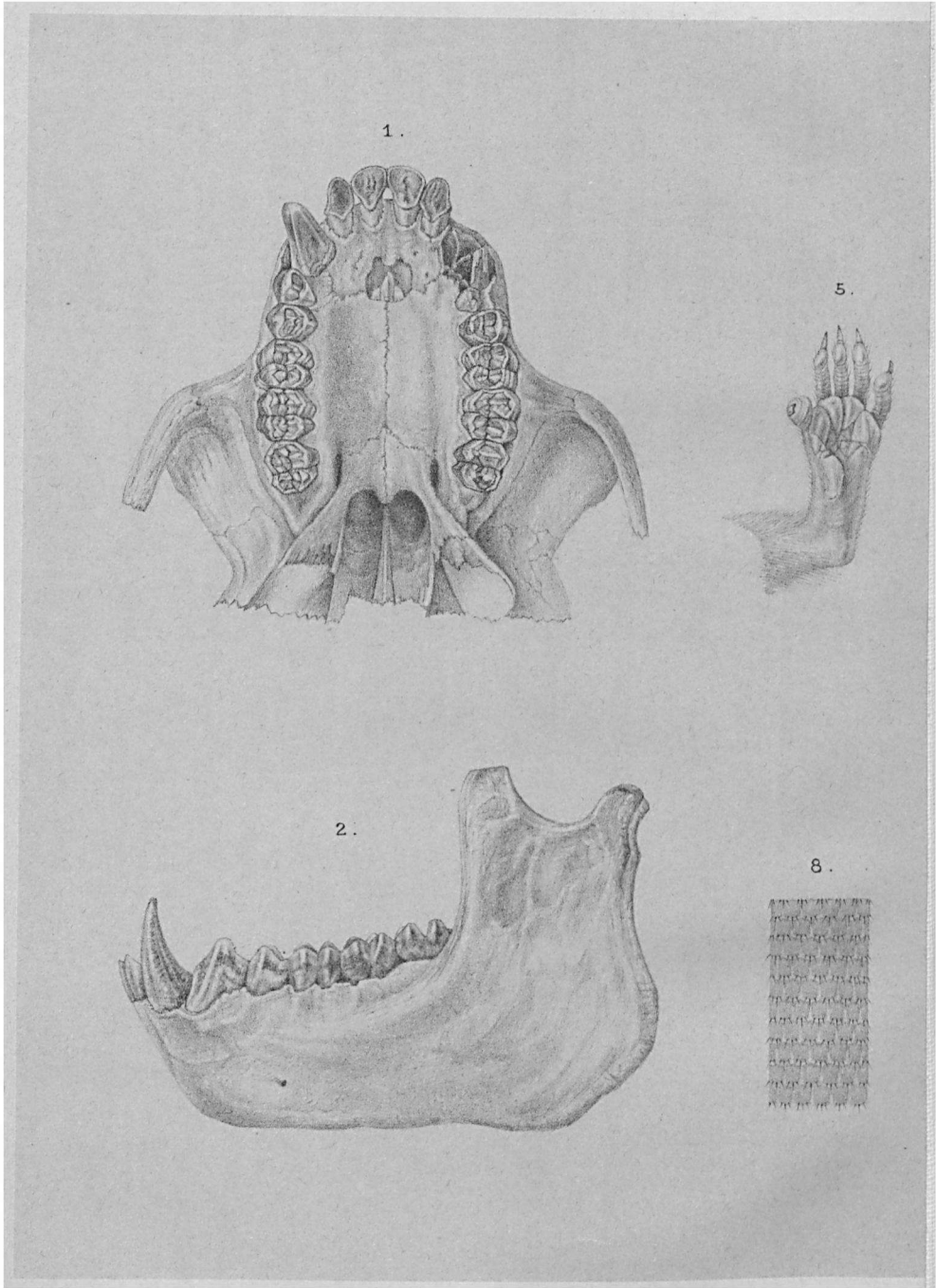
Some measurements (in Millimeters) of the ♂, ♀ and young ♀ preserved in spirits:

	♂	♀	young ♀
Length of head and body	180	200	130
Nose to eye	21	22	16
Eye to ear	14	16	10
Ear	15,5 × 14,5	17 × 15	14 × 14
Length of tail	193	210	128
» » fore foot with claw.	16	17	15
» » hind foot	31	32	26

The skull and teeth agree with the figures published in N. L. M. 1890, plate 9, figs. 1—4, so that it appears that I was correct when I referred these skulls to our old stuffed specimens of *Pithechir melanurus* (l. c. p. 226).

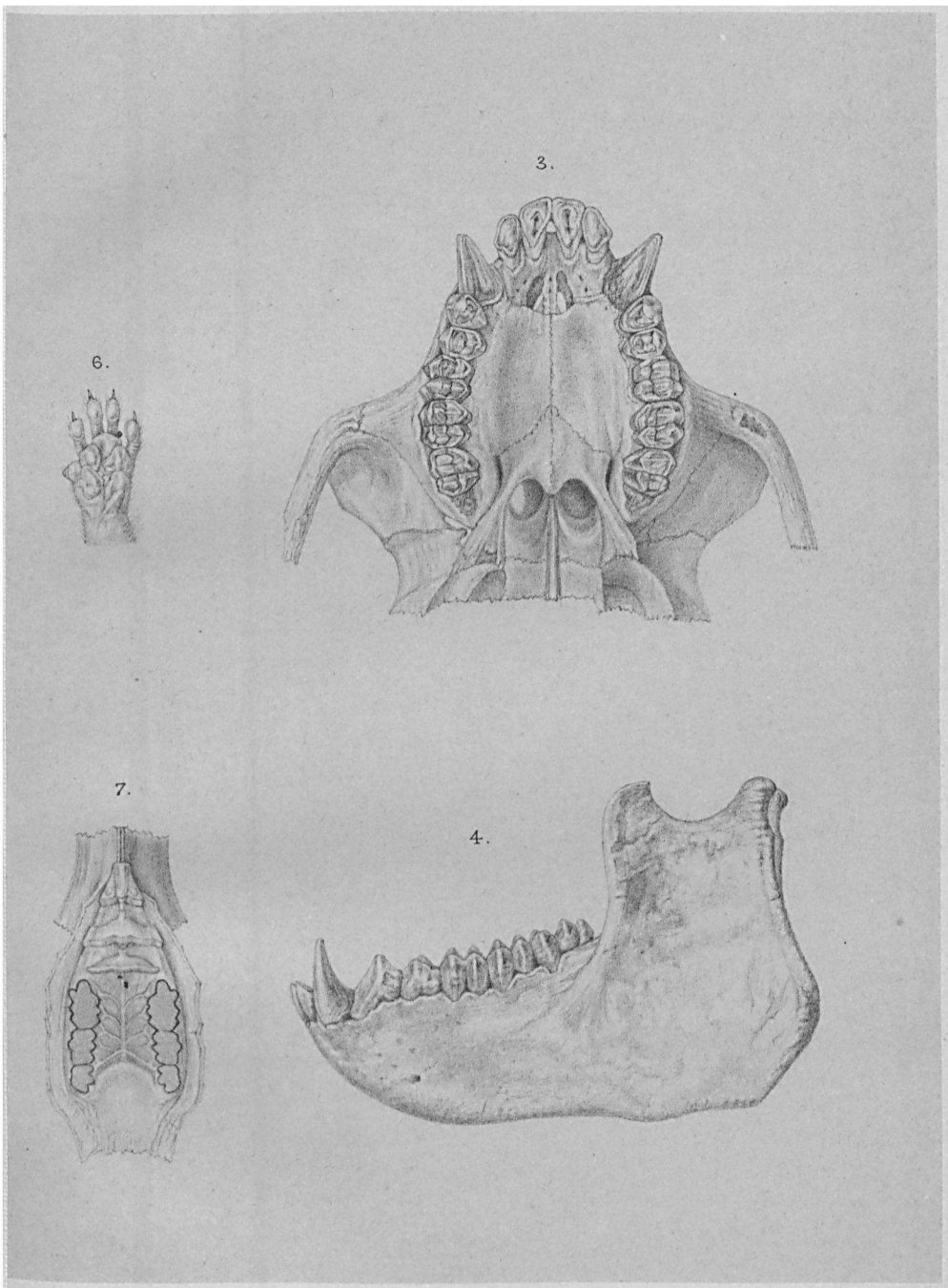
The palate-ridges (plate 4, fig. 7) bear some interest as they widely differ from those on the palate of the greatest part of the other *Muridae* known to me.

The skeleton presents 13 costales, 6 lumbarcs, 4 sacrales and 37 caudales.



Dr. H. W. de Graaf ad nat. del. et lith.

1, 2. *Semnopithecus pyrrhus* *Horsfield*.
5, 8. *Pithechir melanurus* *S. Müller*.



P. W. M. Trap, impr.

3, 4. *Semnopithecus maurus* Schreber.
6, 7. *Pithechir melanurus* S. Muller.