

THE
GEOLOGICAL MAGAZINE.

NEW SERIES. DECADE V. VOL. V.

No. III.—MARCH, 1908.

ORIGINAL ARTICLES.

I.—A GIANT SUB-FOSSIL RAT FROM MADAGASCAR, *MYORYCTES RAPETO*,¹
gen. et sp. nov.

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AMONGST the vertebrate remains which I found in the marshes of Sirabé (Central Madagascar), a large Rodent is represented by two right ossa innominata, one of which (B.M. M 7085) is fairly complete, only the free portion of the pars dorsalis of the ischium being broken off.

The very elongate, comparatively narrow ilium, divided pretty equally by the crista lateralis into a dorsal and a ventral portion, shows that we have to deal with a muriform member of the Rodentia; it comes very near in its general form to the same bone of the Malagasy genera of rats *Nesomys*, *Gymnuromys*, *Eliurus*, and *Hypogeomys*; in *Brachyuromys* the long axis of the ilium is more straightened. The single tuberculum iliopectineum (iliopubicum) for the insertion of the psoas minor is enormous, and the spina ventralis posterior (anterior inferior of man) is likewise very strong.

The conformation of the os pubis, however, is markedly different from that of the genera above-mentioned; its pars anterior is very long and directed more decidedly backwards, and the symphysis is quite minute. This is the shape of a vole's pubis, and in a general way of all fossorial Muridæ and Rodents generally,² so that I do not hesitate in assigning the fossil to a highly fossorial Rodent.

The length of the fossil innominatum is 134·5 mm.; that of the bone in a *Nesomys rufus* = 41 mm.; the skull of the latter has a basal length of 39·5 mm., the absolute maximum length—front of nasals to occiput—being 49 mm. The approximate corresponding measurements of the cranium of the new genus may therefore be

¹ *rapeto* is the Malagasy word for 'giant, uncanny.'

² Cf. in Tullberg, "Über das System der Nagethiere" (1899), the figure of the innominatum of *Nesomys* (pl. 32, figs. 11, 12), and those of the genera of fossorial Rodents, viz., *Spalax* (figs. 13, 14), *Ellobius* (figs. 15, 16), *Arvicola amphibius* (figs. 17, 18), *Hesperomys* (figs. 19, 20), *Geomys* (figs. 27, 28), *Georychus* (pl. 31, figs. 1, 2), *Ctenomys* (figs. 19, 20), *Haplodon* (pl. 33, fig. 8), *Perodipus* (figs. 23, 24).

calculated at 129·5 and 160·7 mm. respectively. In the largest known recent Rat, the *Phloeomys* of the Philippines (B.M. No. 97.3.1.17), the skull has a basal length of 80 and maximum length of 90 mm.

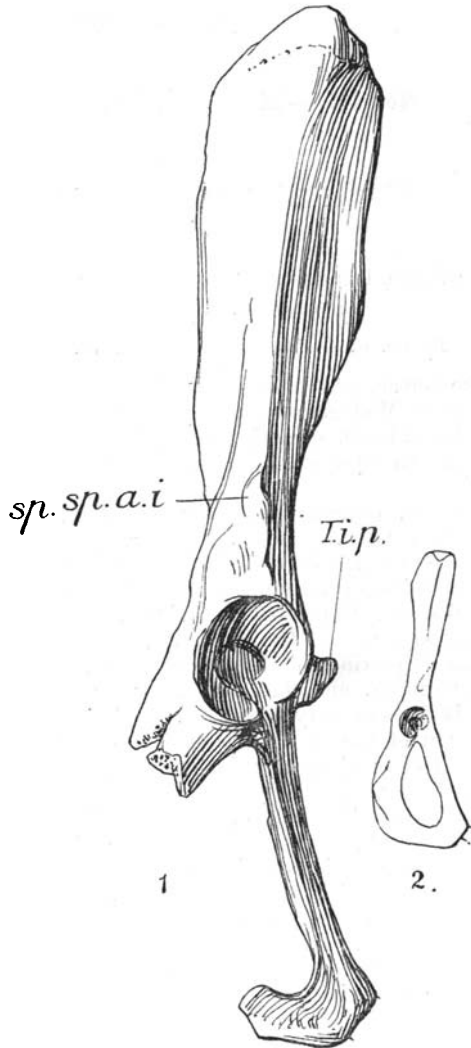


FIG. 1.—Right innominate bone of a giant sub-fossil Rat, from Sirabé, Central Madagascar, *Myoryctes rapeto*, gen. et sp. nov. *sp.a.i.* spina anterior inferior ilei; *T.i.p.* tuberculum iliopectineum.

FIG. 2.—The same bone of *Arricola amphibiu*.

Both figures are natural size.