

IMITATION RHINO HORNS

By

ERIC R. ALFRED

Raffles Museum, Singapore

The existence of faked rhinoceros horns which have been confused as genuine ones, has been pointed out by Hooijer (1959) who described a specimen from Djakarta that was made from the horn of an ordinary Water Buffalo, *Bubalus bubalis* (Linn.). In 1927, Neuville described in detail two such specimens which he claimed to be horns of the Javan, or One-horned Rhinoceros, *Rhinoceros sondaicus* Desmar. A figure of one of these was given by Bourdelle (1955), who also accepted it as a rhinoceros horn.

In January 1959, I received from Singapore a similar example which I immediately identified as a product of Water Buffalo horn. It was almost identical with a specimen that had been previously publicised in a local newspaper (Straits Times, 13th. January, 1958). As a result of further publicity in the local press (Sunday Times, 10th. July, 1960), two further specimens were forthcoming.

The first of these (Pl. XVIII, figs. 1 & 2), was one of two that were purchased for about \$300/- (Malayan) from Saigon in October 1957. It was made from the entire horn of a young Gaur, *Bibos gaurus* Smith. The specimen was well polished and the base was carved with rows of knobs, the latter probably imitating the rough skin of rhinoceros. There were four smooth prominences carved symmetrically on the polished part, two on the convex side and one on either side of these two. The specimen was immediately recognised as a fake since, unlike rhinoceros horn, it was hollow (Pl. XVIII, fig. 2) and the horny substance was laid down in concentric layers.

The second specimen (Pl. XIX, figs. 1 & 2), was a much better imitation and was similar to Hooijer's example and my earlier specimen from Singapore. It originated locally from Taiping and has been in the possession of its present owner for the last 40 years. It was made from Water Buffalo horn and was constructed of two parts, the hollow base, into which the solid tip of the buffalo horn had been inserted and held fast with glue. The protruding tip was mostly polished and the base was again carved to look like rhinoceros skin. There were also eight smooth prominences arranged symmetrically on the base. An interesting feature was the disruptively gouged undersurface of the base (Pl. XIX, fig. 2), an attempt apparently at diverting attention from the otherwise conspicuous circular outline of the joint.

The use of rhinoceros horn as an aphrodisiac in Chinese medicine is well known. Faced now with the near extinction of the Malaysian species of rhinoceros which are at the same time well protected by game laws, it is not surprising if substitute horns are being produced. Hooijer (1959) points out that imitation horns may be seen displayed prominently in Chinese medicine shops in Djakarta as, what he claims to be, advertisements for the genuine horn. I have, however, failed to see any being put to such use in Malaya. It furthermore seems to me highly unlikely that these imitations would have been prepared so painstakingly merely for this purpose. For the present, I am accepting them merely as fakes which have been manufactured solely for disposal as genuine items.

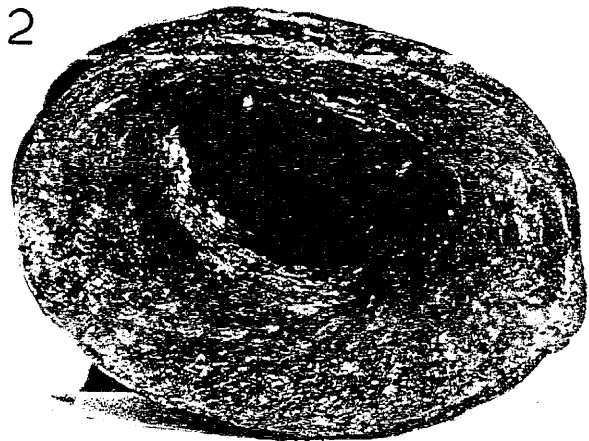
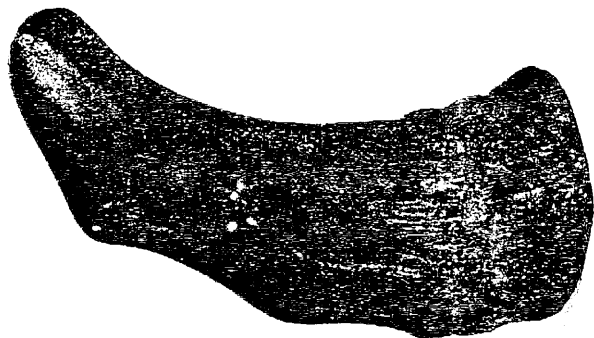
References

- BOURDELLE, E., 1955. Ordre des Perissodactyles, in P.P. Grasse, *Traité de Zoologie*, Vol. 17, fasc. 1, pp. 1002-1126, figs. 961-1064. Paris.
- HOOIJER, D. A., 1959. Cornes de rhinoceros truqués, *Mammalia*, Vol. 23, No. 3, pp. 316-317, pl. XI.
- , 1959. Faked rhinoceros horns, *Bijdr. Taal-Land-en Volkenkunde*, Vol. 115, pp. 56-57, pls. I & II.
- NEUVILLE, H., 1937. Remarques et comparaisons relatives aux Planches des Rhinoceros, *Arch. Hist. Nat. Paris*, ser. 6, Vol. 2, pp. 179-208, pls. 1-III, figs. 1-11.
- Straits Times, 19th. June, 1957. Singapore.
- , 14th. January, 1958. Singapore.
- Sunday Times, 10th. July, 1960. Singapore.

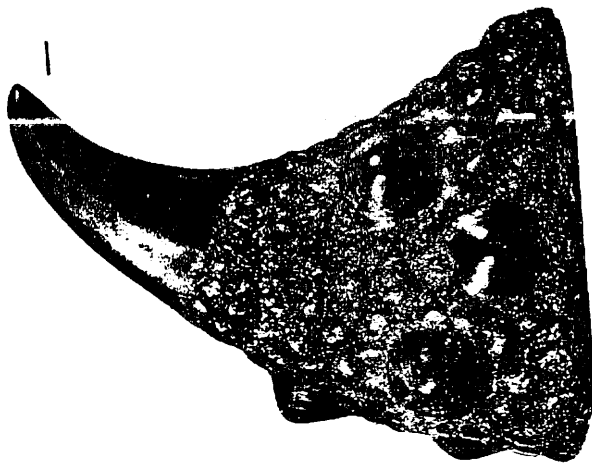
Footnote:

While this paper was in the press, the writer received yet another imitation made from Water Buffalo horn which was somewhat similar in appearance to the last one described above (see Singapore Free Press, 8th. November, 1960). It was however in one piece with a hollow base. Of particular interest was the fact that powdered scrapings from this specimen had been used for medicinal purposes on a number of occasions.

E. A.



Imitation rhinoceros horn. 1 & 2, lateral and basal views.
Scale = 1 inch.



2

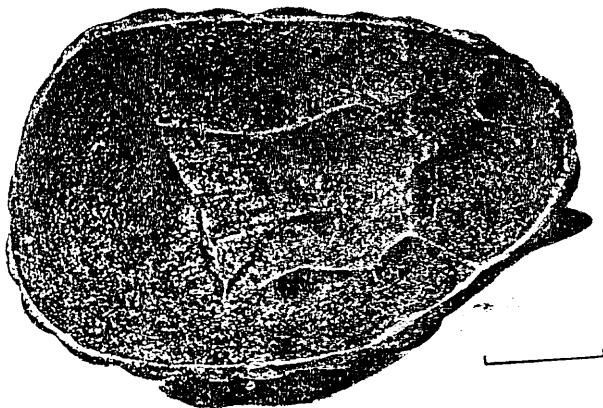


FIGURE 1. Horn of *Acrida* sp. (1 cm).
FIGURE 2. Ovipositor of *Acrida* sp. (1 cm).

COLLECTING MALAYAN ACRIDOIDEA

By

V. M. DIRSH

Anti-Locust Research Centre, London

The *Acridoidea* are commonly known as grasshoppers. Sometimes they are called short-horned grasshoppers (*Tettigomoidea*) or long-horned grasshoppers which consist of other sub-orders of *Orthoptera*. *Acridoidea* possess usually shorter than the body and a short ovipositor (three-segmented). *Tettigomoidea* have long antennae or much longer than the body, and an ovipositor which is ensiform; the tarsi are four-segmented.

The recently separated sub-order *Tetragoidea* is separated from *Acridoidea* by the elongate pronotum, usually extending to the end of the body, by the absence of an aronium between the two-segmented tarsi of the fore and middle legs.

There are many other important characters for different suborders, but those mentioned above are sufficient for the purposes of collectors. I do not mention the other suborders since they are easily recognizable at sight and are not encountered.

Up to the end of 1958, between 1,500 and 1,600 approximately 10,000 species of *Acridoidea* were known from the world. These numbers increase every year and will probably continue for a long time, since the rate of increase is still rising.

The *Acridoidea* are distributed throughout the world, but the numbers of genera and species are highest near the equator. They flourish most in subtropical and tropical regions. The best studied *Acridoidea* faunas are the fauna of the Americas and the fauna of Africa. The fauna of the African continent. Up to the end of 1958, 1,000 species were known from Africa and since then the numbers have steadily increased.

In the Indo-Malayan region, however, there are less than 200 genera of *Acridoidea* known. The fauna of the country has been explored only in a few places.

The exploration of the Malayan fauna of *Acridoidea* began very early, but sporadically. The first collector was a surgeon in the army of the Dutch East