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# EASTERN PERSIA

AN ACCOUNT OF THE

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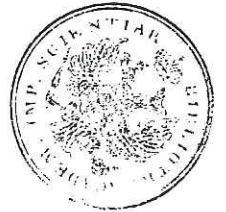
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## ZOOLOGY AND GEOLOGY

BY

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WITH NUMEROUS COLOURED ILLUSTRATIONS



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by a captive lion, trained to eat a joint of mutton off the chest of a boy, who throws himself down on his back. It is not a pleasant exhibition, the child being generally much alarmed. I once asked a Shiráz lúti which took the most thrashing to learn his part, the lion or the boy; but a grin was the only answer he vouchsafed.—O. St. J.]

19. \**Felis tigris*, L.—De F.

*Babr*, Persian<sup>1</sup>.

The tiger is only found in Persia in the Caspian provinces, Mazandarán, and Ghílán, lying to the north of the Elburz mountains, and corresponding in part to the ancient Hyrcania<sup>2</sup>. These provinces, unlike the plateau of Persia, are covered with dense forest, and in them the tiger ranges up to an elevation of at least 5000 or 6000 feet. To the westward it extends as far as the Caucasus and Mount Ararat, being found not far from Tiflis.

[Tigers are very numerous in the Caspian provinces of Persia, and in the Caucasus as far as the mouth of the Araxes. The dense vegetation, European in its forms, but tropical in luxuriance, which covers the low land near the coast, and the hills to a height of six thousand feet, affords a shelter as perfect as the jungle of the Tarai, or the swamps of the Sunderbunds. Whether the tiger extends through the hills east of the Caspian into Central Asia, where he is known to exist, is a matter of uncertainty. Ferrier in his 'Caravan journeys' speaks of tigers in the jungles of the Hari Rúd north-west of Herat, but he does not mention having seen skins.

Cubs are often captured in Mazandarán and brought to Tehrán. I have seen specimens in the Bágh-i-Wáshi quite equal in size to Bengal tigers.—O. St. J.]

20. \**Felis pardus*, L.—De F.

*Palang*, Persian.

The leopard occurs, to the best of my belief, throughout Persia and Balúchistán. In the latter country I saw its tracks on several occasions.

<sup>1</sup> S. G. Gmelin, *Reise*, iii, p. 485, gives 'Palang' as the Persian name. This really means a leopard, but may sometimes be used loosely for a tiger. In India, curiously enough, *Sher* means a tiger, and *Babr-sheer*, a lion.

<sup>2</sup> Allusions to the tigers of Hyrcania are common amongst the Roman writers, e.g. Virg. *Æn.* iv, 367, *Ecl.* v, 29; Virgil also mentions 'Caucasie tigris,' *Georg.* ii, 151.

[Leopards are found everywhere in the mountains of Persia. In the markets of Isfahán skins are always obtainable.—O. St. J.]

21. \**F. uncia*, Schreber.

I have seen ounce skins in London said to have been brought from Persia.

[An ounce's skin was brought to me at Shiráz, said to have been obtained in the neighbouring hills.—O. St. J.]

22. \**F. catus*, L.

Major St. John informs me that he has shot the common wild cat of Europe near Shiráz. Eichwald states that it occurs around the shores of the Caspian.

[I feel nearly sure that the European wild cat is found in Persia. In 1864, I shot an immense male in the pass near Kamáraj, between Shiráz and Bushire, which, from the size of the skull and shortness of the tail, as well as the markings of the skin, I supposed to be *Felis catus*. It was unfortunately lost off the mule to which I tied it, so that I did not preserve the skin. Some years afterwards the darvish, who inhabits a little imámzádeh or shrine at the Tang-i-Allah-hu-akbár at Shiráz, told me that a wild cat, which lived in the mountain above him, was in the habit of paying its addresses to the female cats kept by my religious friend. One evening I saw the amorous visitor, and he appeared to me to look like *F. catus*, though of course he may have been a domestic cat gone wild. The darvish begged me not to shoot him, lest I should bring bad luck on the imámzádeh.—O. St. J.]

23. \**F. jubata*<sup>1</sup>, Schreb.—De F.

*Gueparda guttata* (Herm.), Gray, *Cat. Carn. Mam.* p. 39.  
*Yúz-palang*, Persian.

The hunting leopard is certainly found in Persia, but I am unable to give any particulars as to its distribution. According to Eichwald it does not extend into the countries west of the Caspian, though found to the eastward. De Filippi says that it is found in Mazandarán.

[I have only seen the hunting leopard in captivity at Tehrán. It was said to have been brought from the Caspian forests. It is not used at present for sporting purposes in Persia.—O. St. J.]

<sup>1</sup> The name *Felis jubata* of Scherber was published in 1778, *Saugth.* iii, Pl. CV; *F. guttata* of Hermann in 1804, *Observ. Zool.* i, p. 38.