

ZOOLOGY. — *Report on a dinosaurian reptile discovered at Poligny (Jura)*

by **Mssrs. PIDANCET and CHOPARD***

(Commissioners, Mssrs. D'Archiac, Valenciennes reporter.)

“It has been some time since Mssrs. Pidancet and Chopard, living at Poligny in the Jura, brought a very well-made drawing of the left pes of a gigantic reptile discovered in the iridescent marls or the Keuper of the Triassic formation, consequently below the Jurassic formation. They accompanied the drawing with a descriptive note of the portions of the skeleton preserved in the Poligny Museum. The drawing and note were returned to Mr. d'Archiac and myself. I will make known the result of our examination, and the zoological and geological interest attached to the discovery of these bones.

Mr. Pidancet has clearly established the position and locality of these fossil bones as inferior to the Liassic. This admitted, it is seen that it is about a very new fact concerning a reptile of the dinosaurian family, abundant and known in the formation that conceals ichthyosaurs and plesiosaurs, but which is not yet known as low as the Keuper. Perhaps it should be explained how Mr. Pidancet gave a new name to this great lizard: to express the fear that this monstrous reptile must have inspired, he imagined the made-up word DIMODOSAUR. Upon first viewing the drawing of the metatarsal bones, strengthened by unguis phalanges bearing veritable claws, I referred the reptile to the megalosaurs. But so inferior a geological position raised doubts in the spirits of your Commissioners. Then I read the description sent from Poligny again with the greatest attention, comparing it to the large femur of the megalosaur brought to Mr. Cuvier by the honorable and knowledgeable Professor Buckland. The resemblance and agreement are so complete, that it is no exaggeration to ask whether Mr. Pidancet had before his eyes the bone discovered in the Great Oolite of Stonesfield. The same proportions and dimensions are found in this bone nearly to the centimeter.

As the Academy had not received any natural piece of it, after consulting with my fellow member Mr. d'Archiac, I wrote to Mr. Pidancet to ask for at least a tooth of this

new reptile. He had the extreme kindness to make new researches while addressing them to Mr. Perdu, head of the railroad section from Nouchard to Lons-le-Saunier. Five or six teeth were found still enclosed in the Villette trench, near Arbois. According to Mr. Pidancet, the locality is the upper Keuper, immediately above the bone bed. The remainder of the slightly broken crown of these teeth is 0.02 m tall. They are compressed, very pointed, and the trenchant anterior and posterior edges and carinae are serrated.

They are undoubtedly teeth of the megalosaur. They confirmed what I supposed in first examining the drawing brought to the Academy.

The saurians of the megalosaur genus thus have a greater age on the surface of our planet, and therefore their disappearance goes back to geological cataclysms prior to those that science appears to assign them today.

However I am inclined to believe that the Poligny reptile is a different species from that of the Great Oolite of Stonesfield; the serrations on the edges of the teeth are more numerous and slightly stronger than those on the teeth of Buckland's megalosaur, which was used for Cuvier's description.

However, I would not dare to establish a species on a document still as dubious as that provided by the pieces brought recently to Paris.

Before placing the name of a new species in our scientific catalogues, it is also necessary to know the opinion of Mr. Owen on the gigantic reptile that has just been found in the lower Liassic of England, which he managed to reconstruct. What is this new dinosaurian announced in the January 1863 number, page 241, of the *Brittanic Review*?

Mr. Pidancet fears the too great fragility of the bony debris that he joined together, to send them to the Academy. However we believe that if these bones were communicated, they could be consolidated, then compared with the other saurians which the Paris collections already possess, and as a result be determined with more certainty. They are deposited in the museum of the village of Poligny. Our Commissioners do not hesitate to request the Academy, in the interest of geology and zoology, to ask for the

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communication of these bones, which will be returned exactly after the examination that will be made, and promptly replaced in the Poligny museum.

Our Commissioners, in ending the Report that you have just heard, propose to you as conclusions:

1st, to thank Mssrs. Pidancet and Chopard for their very interesting communication by the single drawing put before your eyes;

2nd, to engage the two authors of this important Note to continue their researches.”

The conclusions of this Report are adopted.