

The Fallow Deer *Dama schaeferi* Hilzheimer, 1926 (Mammalia: Cervidae), enigmatic and forgotten

by Dieter Kock

Abstract: *Dama schaeferi* Hilzheimer, 1926, a Fallow Deer of uncertain provenance but described from northern Africa, synonymous with *Dama d. dama* (Linnaeus, 1758), apparently originated from Italy (= restricted type locality).

Kurzfassung: *Dama schaeferi* Hilzheimer, 1926, ein Damhirsch unbekanntes Ursprungs, aber für das nördliche Afrika beschrieben, synonym mit *Dama d. dama* (Linnaeus, 1758), stammte offenbar aus Italien (= eingeschränkte Typuslokalität).

Key words: *Dama schaeferi*, synonymy, provenance, Northern Africa, Italy.

In 1896, a live Fallow Deer was brought to Berlin by the leader of an ethnic show troop from Nubia, Egypt. For one year this deer lived in the Berlin Zoological Garden. After its death, its skin and skull with velvet antlers, together with a pair of antlers shed the previous year, were deposited in the Zoological Museum Berlin.

This material was examined by HILZHEIMER (1926, 1927), who considered it to be similar to the Mesopotamian Fallow Deer, *Dama dama mesopotamica* (Brooke, 1875) but because of its provenance described it as a new species, *Dama schaeferi* Hilzheimer, 1926: 155. In the museum catalogue the curator P. MATSCHIE had noted that this Fallow Deer was presented to the leader of the Nubian show troop by the Khedive (Viceroy) of Egypt, and MATSCHIE suggested 'Tripolis' as its provenance. HILZHEIMER (1926) had no doubts about the deer's African origin, and considered this locality to be the Libyan Tripolis.

The type material of *D. schaeferi* was studied again by HALTENORTH (1959), but this time more thoroughly compared with both forms of Fallow Deer. He concluded that the characters of the supposedly North African deer are within the range of variation found in European *Dama d. dama* (Linnaeus, 1758), and synonymised *D. schaeferi* with the latter subspecies.

Result and discussion

The taxonomic status of *D. schaeferi* being settled, its origin nevertheless remains enigmatic. However, it seems conceivable that by 'Tripolis' MATSCHIE may have believed its prove-