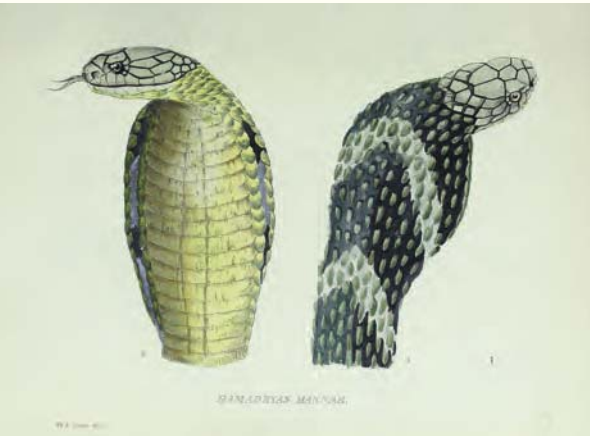


Theodore Edward Cantor (1809–1860) is a Danish doctor who serves in the East India Company. An interest in natural history and tropical Asia is inspired by his uncle, Nathaniel Wallich 🌿1829. Cantor is best known for describing the King Cobra (*Ophiophagus hannah*) in 1836. Cantor transfers to the Straits Settlements 🌿1826 between 1842 and 1845 and collects in Singapore. These collections are the basis for many papers on natural history written by Cantor. The description of the eye of the Binturong is from his paper on the mammals of the Malay Peninsula and Singapore that is published in 1846.

1846.3



1846.3

This illustration accompanies the first description of the King Cobra by Cantor, who gives it the name *Hamadryas hannah*. Today this species is known as *Ophiophagus hannah* (Cantor, 1836). The King Cobra is also called the Hamadryas or Hamadryad 🌿1950

1846.4

Charles Frédéric Girard (1822–1895), names a genus of snakes *Cantoria* after Cantor in 1858. This plate accompanies Girard's description of the genus. It is the snake that is depicted at the centre of the plate. The specimen is collected from Singapore during the United States Exploring Expedition 🌿1842

1846.4



1820

🌿 1846

1860

1880

1900

1920

1940

1960

1980

2000

Cyanide dissolved in alcohol

The Island Golf Club King Cobra

“The Island Club Hamadryad brought to the museum alive on Monday 10 July having been caught by three greensmen one of whom commenced by seizing it by the tail. We kept it in the box in which we received it, allowing it to drink, until Wed. morning, when it was killed with chloroform followed by injection into the oesophagus of potassium cyanide dissolved in alcohol. It measured 15 feet 7 inches (tail 36 inches) & weighed 26½ lbs. ... The spring balance was used and afterwards corrected against a certified scale in the Singapore Cold Storage Co).” — **Anonymous**

1950.1



1950.1

'King Cobra meets a swift death'. This article is published in the 'Straits Times' on 13 July 1950. The man holding the head of the King Cobra at the right of the upper photograph and in the left of the lower photograph is Shariff bin Hashim, the Museum's taxidermist. The girl in the lower photograph is Josephine Tweedie, the daughter of Michael W. F. Tweedie. 🌿 1946

1950.2

'The Island Club Hamadryad'. This unpublished note, possibly written in the days after the King Cobra is brought to the Museum, provides further information on the capture of the Hamadryad and its fate. The author of the note is not known with certainty but the handwriting is similar to that in a letter that is written by Michael W. F. Tweedie that is reproduced elsewhere in this book 🍀1953

In Greek mythology, a hamadryad is a type of tree-dwelling forest nymph whose fate is intertwined with its home—it dies when the tree is cut down. Mortals who harm these trees risk the wrath of the gods and other spirits. It is thus both ironic and apt that the Hamadryad (or Hamadryas) is another common name for the King Cobra. Theodore E. Cantor ♣1946 gives the scientific name *Hamadryas* (now *Ophiophagus*) *hannah* to this snake in 1836. After it is killed, the Island Club Hamadryad is used to make a papier mâché cast. Such casts are especially suitable for animals with a “watery nature” such as fish ♣1914, 1932. The ‘Straits Times’ reports that by 1947, the Museum has plaster casts of “a complete set of Malaysian snakes, comprising about 128 varieties”. To this will be added the papier mâché cast of the Island Club King Cobra that arrives in a box on 10 July 1950.

1820

1840

1860

1880

1900

1920

1940

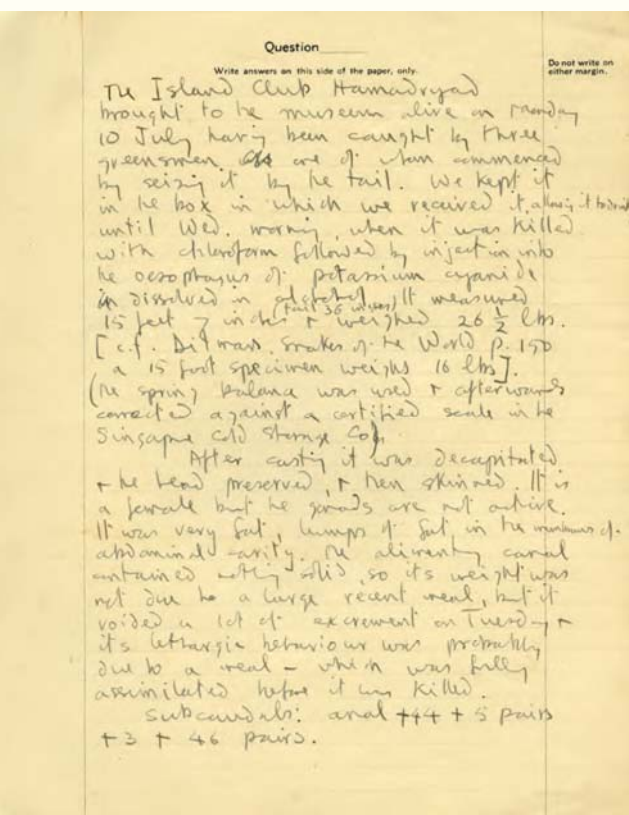
♣ 1950

1960

1980

2000

1950.2



1950.3



1950.3

The Hamadryad that is caught on 10 July 1950 and brought to the Raffles Museum. The anonymous note states that “[a]fter casting it was decapitated & the head preserved ...”. The whereabouts of the head are not known