

HYRACHYUS: TAPIROID OR RHINOCEROTOID?

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Received December 8, 1982

Radinsky (1966, J. Mammal. 47:631-639) transferred Hyrachyus from the Rhinocerotoidae to the Tapiroidea on the basis of admittedly primitive character-states shared between Hyrachyus and primitive ceratomorphs classified as tapiroids. The following derived character-states are shared by rhinocerotoids and Hyrachyus (cf. Savage, Russell and Louis, 1966, Univ. Calif. Publ. Geol. Sci. 66:1-38): development of relatively crest-like molar metacones, especially posteriorly, with loss of the cingula labial of the metacones; M³ metacone lingually depressed and M³ relatively triangular (seen especially in Hyrachyus modestus; amynodontid rhinocerotoids are derived in bearing labially deflected M³ metastyles: Wall, 1982, J. Paleo. 56: 434-443); parastyles slightly reduced (Hyrachyus modestus) and M₃ hypoconulid lost. Hyrachyus should thus be removed from the Tapiroidea and returned to the Rhinocerotoidae. Within the Rhinocerotoidae, Hyrachyus may represent the plesiomorphous sister-group of the Hyracodontidae, to which it may have given rise (Radinsky, 1967, Amer. Mus. Nov. 2313:1-23; note especially the triangular M³ seen in both these groups, but not in amynodontids).

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Evolutionary Theory 6: 166 (December, 1982)

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