

## 1607 – Topsell, History of foure-footed beastes

Edward Topsell, 1572-1625

English curate, translated part of the first 2 volumes of Gessner's *Historia Animalium* (1551 and 1554).

- 1607 The history of foure-footed beastes: describing the true and lively figure of every beast, with a discourse of their severall names, conditions, kindes, vertues (both naturall and medicinall), countries of their breed, their love and hate to mankinde, and the wonderfull worke of God in their creation, preservation and destruction. Necessary for all diuines and students, because the story of euey beast is amplified with narrations out of scriptures, fathers, phylosophers, physitians, and poets: wherein are declared diuers hyeroglyphicks, emblems, epigrams, and other good histories, collected out of all the volumes of Conradus Gesner, and all other writers to this present day. London: Printed by William Iaggard, pp. i-xli, 1-759, i-x; folio. – Text on rhinoceros pp. 594-597, figure (facing upwards) p. 595. Printed by William Jaggard, 1569-1723.
- 1658 The history of four-footed beasts and serpents: describing at large their true and lively figure, their several names, conditions, kindes, vertues (both naturall and medicinall), countries of their breed, their love and hate to mankinde, and the wonderfull worke of God in their creation, preservation and destruction. Interwoven with curious variety of historical narrations out of scriptures, fathers, philosophers, physicians, and poets. Illustrated with diuers hieroglyphicks and emblems, &c., both pleasant and profitable for students in all faculties and professions. Collected out of all the volumes of Conradus Gesner, and other authors. Whereunto is now added, The theater of insects; or lesser living creatures: as bees, flies, caterpillars, spiders, worms, &c. A most elaborate work: by T. Muffet. The whole revised, corrected, and enlarged with the additon of two useful physical tables, by J.R. [John Rowland]. London: Printed by E. Cotes, for G. Sawbridge, pp. [i-xvi], 1-1130, [i-vi]; folio – Text on the rhinoceros pp. 460-463, figure (facing upwards) p. 461.

### English text of London, 1607 and 1658

[1607: 594;1658: 460]

#### Of the Rhinoceros.

We are now to discourse of the second wonder in nature, namely of a beast every way admirable, both for the outward shape, quantity, and greatness, and also for the inward courage, disposition and mildeness. For as the Elephant was the first wonder, of whom we have already discoursed; so this beast next unto the Elephant filleth up the number, being every way as admirable as he, if he do not exceed him, except in quantity of height or stature; And being now come to the story of this beast, I am hartily sorry, that so

strange an outside, as by the figure you may perceive, yealding no doubt through the omnipotent power of the creator, an answerable inside, and infinite testimonies of worthy and memorable vertues comprized in it, should through the ignorance of men, lye unfoulded and obscured before the Readers eyes: for he that shall but see our stories of the Apes, of the Dogs, of the Mice, & of other small beasts, and consider how larg[e] a treatise we have collected together out of many writers, for the illustration of their natures and vulgar conditions, he cannot chuse but expect some rare and strange matters, as much unknowne to his minde about the storie of this Rhinoceros, as the outward shape and picture of him, appeareth rare and admirable to his eies: differing in every part from all the other beasts, from the top of his nose to the tip of his taile, the eares and eies excepted, which are like Beares. But gentle Reader as thou art a man, so thou must consider since Adam went out of Paradise, ther[e] was never any that was able perfectly to describe the universall conditions of all sorts of beasts, and it hath bin the counsell of the almighty himselfe, for the instruction of man, concerning his fall and natural weaknesse, to keep him from the knowledge of many devine things, and also humane, which is of birds and beasts, Fishes and foule, that so he might learne, the difference betwixt his generation, & his degenation, and consider how great a losse unto him was his fall in Paradise; who before that time knew both God himselfe and al creatures, but since that time neither knoweth God as he should know him, nor himselfe as he shall know it, nor the creatures as hee did know then.

[1607:594; 1658: 462]

But for my part which write the English story, I acknowledge that no man must looke for that at my hands, which I have not received from some other; for I would bee unwilling to write anything untrue, or uncertaine out of mine owne invention; and truth on every part is so deare unto mee, that i will not lie to bring any man in love and admiration with God and his works, for God needeth not the lies of men: To conclude therefore this Preface, as the beast is strange and never seen in this countrey, so my eye-sight cannot add anything to the description: therefore hearken unto that which I have observed out of other writers.

First of all, that there is such a beast in the world, both Pliny, Solinus, Diodourus, Aelianus, Lampridius, and others, do yeeld irrefragable testimony. Heliogabalus had one of them at Rome. Pompey the Great, in his publick spectacles did likewise produce a Rhinoceros (as Seneca writeth.) When Augustus rode triumphing for Cleopatra, he brought forth to the people a Sea-horse and a Rhinoceros, which was the first time that ever a Rhinocerot was seen at Rome (as Caelius writeth). Antonius Pius the Emperor, did give many gifts unto the people, amongst which were both Tygers and Rhinocerots (faith Julius Capitolinus in his life). Martial also celebrateth an excellent epigram of a Rhinocerot, which in the presence of Caesar Domitian did cast up a Bull into the air with his horn, as if he had been a Tennice ball, the Epigram is this:

O quam terribiles exarsit pronus in iras,  
Quantus erat cornu, qui pila Taurus erat!

Lastly, to put it out of all question, that there is such a beast as this Rhinocerot, the picture or figure here expressed, was taken by Gesner from the beast alive at Lysbon in Portugale,

[1607: 596; 1658: 462]

before many witnesses, both merchants and others; so that we have the testimony both of antiquity and of the present age, for the testimony of the form and fashion of this beast, and that it is not the invention of man, but a work of God in nature, first created in the beginning of the world, and ever since continued to this present day.

Concerning the name of this beast, the Grecians because of the horn in his nose, call him Rhinoceros, that is, a nose-horned beast, and the Latins also have not altered that invention, for although there be many beasts that have but one horn, yet is there none that have that one horn growing out of their nose but this one alone: All the residue have the horn growing out at their forehead. There be some that have taken this Rhinoceros for the Monoceros the Unicorn, because of this horn, but they are deceived, taking the general for the special, which is a note of ignorance in them and occasion of error unto others; yet it is better to take the Rhinoceros for the Monoceros, because there is nothing in the special which is not contained in the general, according to the maxime in logick, 'Nihil est in specie, quod non prius fuit in genere': and yet that is also ... considering that Monoceros is not only a word of generality for all one-horned beasts, but of a particularity a name for the Unicorn, whereby is meant the Indian Asse, as we shall shew in the story of the Unicorn.

This beast in the Hebrew is thought to be called Reem, or Karas, and therefore Munster so translateth it, Deut.33 'Tauri decor ejus, cornua Rhinocerotis cornua ejus, in eis ventilabit nationes ad summum usq; terrae.' His beauty is like the beauty of a bull, and his horns like the horns of a Rhinocerot, with the which he shall winnow the nations to the top of the hills.

And Tertullian writing against the Heretique Praxeas, doth so translate it. If a man compares together the Greek word Rhinoceros, and Reem, and Karas, or Rimna and Karas, he will easily think that either the Grecians have joyned together the two Hebrew words, as Rhinoceros quasi Reem Karas, or Rimna Karas; or else the Hebrews have parted asunder the Greek word, for Reem or Rimna may very well come of Rhino, and Karas of keros, yet herein I leave the readers to their own judgement. The Indians call this beast in their tongue, Scandabenamet, as Festus writeth, but I will leave the name and come to the description of it.

In quantity it is not much bigger then an Oryx: Pliny maketh it equal in length to an Elephant and some make it longer then an Elephant, but withall they say it is lower, and hath shorter legs. Strabo in his 16. book speaking of the Ethiopian Region, neer India, call these Rhinocerots, Aethiopian buls, and faith that they are bred only in that country, and by the relation of Artemidorus, who writeth thus; [Greek] That is to say, The Rhinocerotes are exceeded by the Elephants in length, but in height they almost equall them (as Artemidorus said) he saw by one that was at Alexandria, and the colour thereof was not like a box-tree, but rather like an Elephants, his quantity greater then a buls, or as the greatest bull, but his outward form and proportion like a wilde boars, especially in his mouth, except that out of his nose groweth a horn, harder than any bones, which he useth in stead of armes, even as a boar doth his teeth; he hath also two girdles upon his body

like the wings of a dragon, coming from his back down to his belly, one toward his neck or mane, and the other toward his loins and hinderparts. This far Strabo.

Whereunto we may add the description of other parts out of Oppianus, Pliny, and Solinus. His colour like rinde or bark of a box-tree (which doth not differ much from an elephant) and on his forehead there grow haire which seem a little red, and his back is distinguished with certain purple spots upon a yellow ground. The skin is so firme and hard, that no dart is able to pierce it

[1607: 596; 1658: 463]

and upon it appear many divisions, like the shels of a tortoise set over the skales, having no hair upon the back. In like manner, the legs are scaled down to the hooves, which are parted into four distinct clawes; upon his nose there growth a hard and sharp horn, crooking a little towards the crown of his head, but not so high, flat and not round, so sharp and strong, 'Ut quicquid impetiret,

[1607: 597; 1658: 463]

aut ventilet, aut perforet, & ferum etiam & saxa transigat', faith Oppianus and Aelianus, that is, whatsoever it is set to, either it casteth it up into the air, or else boreth it through though it be iron or stones.

Eucherius saith, that the Rhinocerot hath two horns in his nose, but that is utterly false, as you may see in the picture. Although Martial seem to expresse so much in these verses:

Namq; gravem cornu gemino sic extulit ursum,

Jactat ut impositas Taurus in astra pilas.

The Rhinocerot cast up a bear into the air, even as a bull would do a ball which were laid upon his two horns: we shall not need to apply 'gemino cornu' to the bull, as Politianus doth, but rather take it figuratively for a strong horn; and if it must needs be literal, it is apparent by the picture that there is another little horn, not upon the nose, but upon the wither of the beast, I mean the top of his shoulders next to his neck, so that the error of Eucherius lyeth not in the number, but in the place; and that it may appear that this horn is not a faigned thing, pausanias above two thousand year ago writeth thus 'Rhinoceroti in summo naso cornu singulare est, & aliud supra ipsum non magnum in capite nullum.'

I do marvel how it came to passe that men which can mock and deride others cunningly should be called proverbially Nasuti homines, except the proverb were taken from the Rhinocerot, who by reason of his crooked horn is said to have a crooked nose; for indeed a deformed nose is more subject to derision then any other part or member of the body, which caused Martial to write thus:

Majores nunquam rhonchi: juvenesq; senesq;

Et pueri nasum rhinocerotis habent.

And thereupon Horace also faith thus:

----- Naso suspendis adunco.

Oppianus faith, that there was never yet any distinction of sexes in these Rhinocerotes: for all that ever were found were males and not females, but from hence let nobody gather that there are no females, for it were impossible that the breed should continue without females, and therefore Pliny and Solinus say, that they engender or admit

copulation like elephants, camels, and lions.

When they are to fight they whet their horn upon a stone, and there is not only a discord betwixt these beasts and elephants for their food, but a naturall description and enmity, for it is confidently affirmed, that when the Rhinocerot which was at Lisborne was brought into the presence of an elephant, the elephant ran away from him. How and in what place he overcometh the elephant, we have shewed already in his story, namely how he fasteneth this horn in the soft part of the elephants belly. He is taken by the same means that the Unicorn is taken, for it is said by Albertus, Isidorus, and Alunnus, that above all other creatures they love virgins, and that unto them they will come be they never so wilde, and fall asleep before them, so being asleep, they are easily taken and carried away.

All the later Physitians do attribute the virtue of the Unicorns horn to the Rhinocerots horn, but they are deceived by imitation of Isidorus and Albertus: for there is none of the antient Grecians that have ever observed any medicines in the Rhinocerot. The Indians make bottles of their skins, wherein they put their Lycion, or succum medicatum, and therefore I will conclude this story with the riddle of Franciscus Niger, made upon the excellency of the horn that groweth upon the nose

Dio mihi quae superis sint acceptissima dona  
Whereupon the answer is made in the next verse  
Principium nasi Rhinocerotis amant.

THE  
HISTORIE  
OF  
FOVRE-FOOTED  
BEASTES.

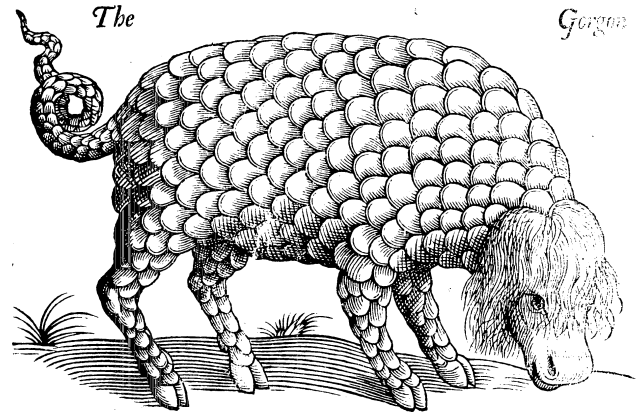
Describing the true and lively figure of euery Beast, with a discourse  
of their severall Names, Conditions, Kindes, Vertues (both naturall and  
medicinall) Countries of their breed, their loue and hate to Mankinde, and the  
wonderfull worke of God in their Creation, Preferuation,  
and Destruction.

*Necessary for all Divines and Students, because the story of euery Beast is amplified with Narrations out of Scrip-  
tures, Fathers, Philosophers, Physicians, and Poets: wherein are declared divers Hieroglyphicks, Emblems,  
Epigrams, and other good Histories, Collected out of all the Volumes of CONRADVS GESNER, and all  
other Writers to this present day.* By EDWARD TOPSELL.

U 1412 DF  
1772.6.

REPRODUCED FROM THE COPY IN THE  
HENRY E. HUNTINGTON LIBRARY

FOR REFERENCE ONLY. NOT FOR REPRODUCTION



LONDON,  
Printed by William Iaggard,  
1607.

## OF THE RHINOCEROS.



A p[re]face to  
the  
English

WE are now to discourse of the second wonder in nature, namely of a beast euery way admirable, both for the outward shape, quantity, and greatness, and also for the inward courage, disposition, and mildnes. For as the Elephant was the first wonder, of whom we haue already discoursed, so this beast next vnto the Elephant filleth vp the number, being euery way as admirable as he, if he doe not exceede him, except in quantity or height of stature; And being now come to the story of this beast, I am hardly sorry, that so strange an outside, as by the figure you may perceiue, yielding no doubt through the omnipotent power of the creator, an answerable inside, and infinite testimonies of worthy and memorable vertues comprized in it, should through the ignorance of men, lie vnfolded and obscured before the Readers eyes: for he that shall but see our stories of the Apes, of the Dogs, of the Mice, &c of other small beasts, and consider how large a treatise we haue collected together out of many writers, for the illustration of these natures and vulgar conditions, he cannot chuse but expect some rare and strange matters, as much vnknowne to his minde about the storie of this Rhinoceros, as the outward shape and picture of him, appeareth rare and admirable to his eyes: differing in euery part from all other beasts, from the top of his nose to the tip of his taile, the eares and eyes excepted, which are like Beares. But gentle Reader as thou art a man, so thou must consider since *Adam* went out of *Paradise*, there was neuer any that was able perfectly to descibe the vniuersall conditions of all sorts of beasts, and it hath bin the counsell of the almighty himselfe, for the instruction of man, concerning his fall and naturall weaknesse, to keep him from the knowledge of many deuiue things, and also humane, which is of birds and beasts, Fishes and foule, that so he might learne, the difference betwixt his generation, & his degeneration, and consider how great a losse vnto him was his fall in *Paradise*; who before that time knew both God himselfe and all creatures, but since that time neither knoweth God as he should know him, nor himselfe as he shall know it, nor the creatures as he did know then.

But for my part which write the English story, I acknowledge that no man must looke for that at my hands, which I haue not receiued from some other: for I would bee unwilling to write any thing vntrue, or vn certaine out of mine owne inuention; and truth on euery part is so deare vnto mee, that I will not lie to bring any man in loue and admiration with God and his works, for God needeth not the lies of men: To conclude therefore this P[re]face, as the beast is strange and neuer seene in our country, so my eye-sight cannot adde any thing to the description: therefore harken vnto that which I haue obserued out of other writers.

First of all that there is such a beast in the world, both *Pliny*, *Solinus*, *Diodorus*, *Aelianus*, *Lampridius*, and others, doe yeald crefigible testimony. *Helioabalus* had one of them at Rome. *Pompey* the great, in his publike spectacles did likewise produce a Rhinocerot (as *Seneca* writeth) When *Augustus* rode triumphing for *Cleopatra*, he brought forth to the people a sea-horse and a Rhinocerot which was the first time that euer a Rhinocerot was seene at Rome (as *Celsus* writeth.) *Antoninus Pius* the Emperour, did giue many gifts vnto the people, amongst which were both Tigers and Rhinoceros, (saith *Iulius Capitolinus* in his life.) *Martiall* also celebrateth an excellent epigram of a Rhinocerot, which in the presence of *Cesar Domitian* did cast vp a Bull into the aire vwith his horne, as if he had bin a tenyce ball, the epigram is this:

*O quam terribili exarsit pronus in iram,  
Quantus erat cornu, cui pila Taurus erat.*

Lastly to put it out of all question that there is such a beast as this Rhinocerot, the picture & figure here expressed, was taken by *Gesner* from the beast alive at *Lysbon* in *Portugale*, before



before many witnesses, both Marchants and others; so that we haue the Testimony both of antiquity and of the present age, for the Testimony of the forme and fashion of this Beasts; and that it is not the invention of man, but a worke of God in nature, first created in the beginning of the World, and euer since continued to this present day.

Concerning the name of this beast, the Græcians because of the horne in his Nose call him *Rhinoceros*, that is a Nose-horned-beast, and the Latins also haue not altered this invention, for although there be many beasts that haue but one horne, yet is there none that haue that one horne growing out at their Nose but this alone: All these fide haue the horne growing out at their foreheades. There be some that haue taken this *Rhinoceros*, for the *Monoceros* or *Vnicorne*, because of this one horne, but they are deceiued, calling the generall for the speciall which is a note of ignorance in them, and occasion of error vnto others; yet it is better to take the *Rhinoceros* for the *Monoceros*, because there is nothing in the speciall which is not contained in the generall, according to the maxime of Logicke: *Nil est qui specie, quod non prius fuit in genere*: And yet that is also absurd, considering that *Monoceros* is not only a word of generality for all one-horned-beastes, but of particularity a name for the *Vnicorne*, whereby is ment the *Indian Asse*, as we shall shew in the story of the *Vnicorne*.

This beast in the Hebrew is thought to be called *Reem*, or *Karas*, and therefore *Munster* to translate it. *Deutro. 33. Tauri decor eius, cornua Rhinocerotis, cornua eius in eis ventillabit nationes ad summum vsq; terre.* His beauty is like the beauty of a Bull, and his hornes like the hornes of a *Rhinocerot*, with the which he shall winnow the nations to the tops of the hills.

And *Tertullian* writing against the heretique *Praxeas*, doth so translate it. *Ita enim comparet together the Greeke word Rhinoceros and Reem, and Karas, or Rimma and Karas,* he will easily thinke that either the Græcians haue ioyned together the two Hebrew wordes, as *Rhinoceros quasi Reem Karas*, or *Rimma Karas*, or else the Hebrews haue interpreted afunder the Greeke word, for *Reem* and *Rimma* may very well come of *Rhino*, and *Karas* of *Keres*, yet here in I leaue the Readers to their owne iudgment. The *Indians* call this beast in their tongue, *Scaandabeneram*, as *Vesputius* writeth, but we will leaue the name and come to the description of it.

In quantity it is not much bigger then an *Orix*: *Pliny* maketh it equall in length to an Elephant, and some make it longer then an Elephant, but withall they say it is lower, and hath shorter Legges. *Strabo* in his 16. booke speaking of the *Ethiopian* Region, neare India, calleth these *Rhinoceroses Aethiopian* Bulls, and saith that they are bred onely in that Country, and by the relation of *Artemidorus* he writeth thus: *Outoi de microm apolepocoi ton elephantoon a rhinocerotis, olper Artemidoros phesi, epi seiran, to mekei, kai per eorhakai phesin in Alexandria, alla schedon ti Olson to vplei apogetou aph emoon oruthentos. &c.* This is to say, The *Rhinoceroses* are exceeded by the *Elephant* in length, but in height they almost equall them, (as *Artemidorus* said) he saw by one that was at *Alexandria*, and the colour thereof was not like a Box-tree, but rather like an *Elephant*, his quantity greater then a Bull, or as the greatest Bull, but his outward forme and proportion like a wilde Boare, especiallye in his mouth, except that out of his Nose groweth a horne, harder then any bones, which he vseth in stead of armes, euen as a Boare doth his teeth; he hath also two girdles vpon his body like the wings of a Dragon, coming from his backe downe to his belly, one toward his necke or mane, and the other toward his loines and hinder parts. Thus saith *Strabo*.

Whereunto we may adde the description of other parts out of *Oppianus*, *Pliny* and *Solinus*. His colour like rinde or barke of a boxe-tree, (which doth not differ much from an Elephant) and on his forehead there grow haire which seeme a litle red, and his back is distinguished with certaine purple spots vpon a yellow ground. The skinn is so firme and hard, that no Dart is able to pierce it, and vpon it appeare many deuifions, like the shelles of a *Tortoise* set ouer with scales, hauing no haire vpon the backe. In like manner, the Legs are scaled downe to the hooues which are parted into foure distinct claws, vpon his nose they groweth a hard and sharp horne, crooking a litle towards the crowne of his head, but not so high: flat and not round, so sharp and strong, *vt quicquid inspetierit,*

*ret, aut veniet, aut perforet. & ferrum etiam & saxa transgat*: saith *Oppianus* & *Aelianus* that is, whatsoeuer it is set to, either it casteth it vp into the aire, or else boreth it through though it be Iron or stones.

*Eucherius* saith that the *Rhinoceros* hath two hornes in his nose, but that is vtterly false, as you may see by the picture: Although *Martiall* seeme to expresse so much in these verses

*Namq; grauem cornu gemino sic extulit vsus  
Iactat vs impositas Taurus in aspra pilas.*

The *Rhinocerot* cast vp a Beare into the aire, euen as a Bull would do a ball which were layd vpon his two hornes: we shall not neede to apply *Gemino cornu* to the Bull, as *Politianus* doth, but rather take it figuratiuely for a strong horne, and if it must needs be literal, it is apparent by the picture that there is another litle horne, not vpon the nose, but vpon the wither of the beast, I meane the top of his shoulder next to his necke, so that the error of *Eucherius* lyeth not in the number, but in the place, and that it may appeare that this horne is not a fained thing, *Pausanias* aboute two thousand yeare ago writeth thus; *Rhinocerotis in summo naso cornu singulare est, & aliud supra ipsum non magnum in capite nullum.*

I do maruaile how it came to passe that men which can mocke and deride others cunningly should be called prouebially *Nisuti homines*, except the prouerbe were taken from the *Rhinoceros*, who by reason of his crooked heine is said to haue a crooked nose; for in deede a deformed nose is more subiect to derision then any other part or member of the body, which caused *Martiall* to write thus:

*Maiores nunquam rhonchi inueniensq; senesq;  
Et pueri nasum Rhinocerotis habent.*

And the cupon *Horace* also saith thus:

*Nisi suspensio aduoco.*

*Oppianus* saith; hat there was neuer yet any distinction of sexes in these *Rhinoceroses*: for all that euer were found were males and not females, but from hence let no body gather that there are no females, for it were impossible that the breede should continue without females, and therefore *Plinius* and *Solinus* say, that they engender or admit copulation like Elephants, Camels, and Lyons.

When they are to fight they whet their horne vpon a stone, and there is not only a discord betwixt these beasts and Elephants for their food, but a naturall description and enmity: for it is confidently affirmed, that when the *Rhinoceros* which was at *Liborne*, was brought into the presence of an Elephant, the Elephant ran away from him. How and in what place he ouercometh the Elephant we haue shewed already in his story, namely, how he fasteth his horne in the soft part of the Elephants belly. Hee is taken by the same means that the *Vnicorne* is taken, for it is said by *Albertus*, *Isidorus*, and *Aluinnus*, that aboute all other creatures they loue Virgins, and that vnto them they will come be they neuer so wilde, and fall a sleepe before them, so being all cepe they are easily taken and carried away.

All the later Physitians do attribute the vertue of the *Vnicorns* horne to the *Rhinoceros* horne, but they are deceiued by imitation of *Isidorus* and *Albertus*: for there is none of the ancient Græcians that haue euer obserued any medicines in the *Rhinocerot*. The *Indians* make botels of their skins, wherein they put their *Lycion* or *succum medicatum*, and therefore I will conclude this story, with the riddle of *Franciscus niger* made vpon the excellency of the horne that groweth vpon the nose.

*Dic mihi que superis sim acceptissima dona,*

Whereunto the answer is made in the next verse:

*Principium nasi Rhinocerotis amant.*

