

1616 – Coryate, Travailler

Thomas Coryat, c. 1577-1617

Coryat describes his visit to Ajmer in India, the court of the great Mogul, Jahangir, from July 1615 to September 1616. The original letter, written in 1615, was given to Purchas by Sir Thomas Roe.

- 1616 *Travailler for the English Wits, and the good of his Kingdom: To all his inferiour countrey men, Greetings: Especially to the sirenicall gentlemen, that meets the first Friday of everie moneth at the Mermaids in Broadstreet. From the Court of the Great Mogul, resident at the town of Asmere, in the Easterne India. (Pamphlet in British Library, London)*
- 1616 *Traveller for the English Wits Greeting. From the Court of the Great Mogul, resident at the towne of Asmere, in the Easterne India. London: Printed by W.Iaggard and Henry Fetherston, pp. 1-56; 4to.*
- 1625 *A letter of Mr. Thomas Coryat, which travailed by Land from Jerusalem to the Court of the Great Mogol, written to Mr. L. Whitaker. In Purchas, Samuel, *His Pilgrimes*, part 1, book 4, chapter 17, pp. 592-602.*

Translations

- 1707 *Tweede reys van kapiteyn Walter Peyton, na Oost-Indien, met het schip de Expeditie, uytgerust van de Engelse Oost-Indise Maatschappy, neffens de Draak, de Leeuw en de Peper-com, in het jaar 1615. Als mede de reys van Thomas Coryat, na Asmere, zijnde de hof-stad van den Grooten Mogol, van Jerusalem, na derwaards door hem met een caravaan ondernoomen, in het jaar 1615. Briefs-wijse opgesteld, en aan sijnen vriend Mr. L. Whitaker gesonden. Beneffens nog eenige bysonderheeden, vervat in 3 brieven, door hem aan verscheyde persoonen geschreeven. Nu alder-eerst uyt het Engels vertaald, met een volkoomen register verrijkt. In: Naaukeurige versameling der gedenk-waardigste reysen na Oost en West Indien, mitsgaders andere gewesten gedaan; zedert het jaar 1611 tot 1618, vol. 103. Leyden: Pieter van der Aa, pp. i-ii, 1-54; 8vo.*

Illustration:

London 1616: 24 has an illustration of a Unicorn, which is traditional as a horse with a single horn on the forehead.

English text pamphlet of London, 1616

[1616: 246] [At the court in Ashmer]

Hee keepeth abundance of wilde beasts, and that of divers sorts, as lyons, elephants, leopards, beares, antlops, unicornes; whereof two I have seene at his court, the strangest beasts of the world. They were brought hither out of the countrie of Bengala, which is a kingdom of most singular fertilitie within the compasse of his dominion.

English text of London (Iaggard and Fetherston), 1616

[1616:24]

Hee keepeth abundance of wilde beasts, & that of divers sorts, as lyons, elephants, leopards, beares, antlops, unicornes; whereof two I have seene

[25]

at his court, the strangest beasts of the world. They were brought hither out of the countrie of Bengala, which is a kingdome of most singular fertilitie within the compasse of his dominion, about foure moneths iourney from this, the midland parts thereof being watered by divers channels of the famous Ganges, which I have not as yet seene, but (God willing) I meane to visite it before my departure out of this countrie, the neerest part of it beeing not above twelve daies iouny from this court.

Dutch translation of Amsterdam, 1704

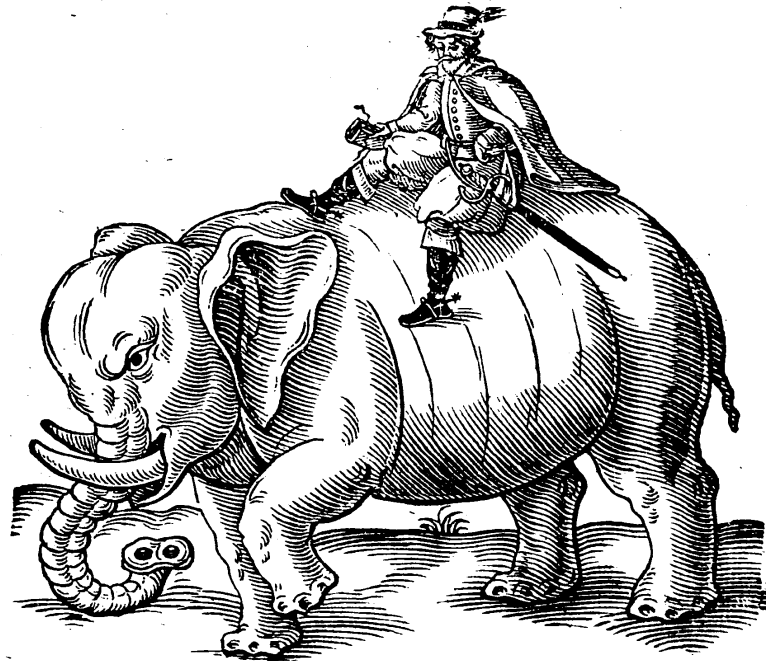
[1704:30] [Asmere]

Hij houd overvloed van wilde beesten, en van verscheyden soort, als Leeuwen, Olyfanten, Luypaarden, Beeren, Antelopes, en Een-hoornen, van welke laatste ik aan het Hof 2 gesien heb, zijnde de aller-vreemdste beesten van de geheele wereld, die derwaards gebragt waren, uyt het Land van Bengale, een koningrijk dat 4 maanden reysens hier van daan is.

THOMAS CORIATE

Traeller for the English
VVits : Greeting.

From the Court of the Great M O G V L, Resi-
dent at the Towne of A S M E R E, in
Easterne I N D I A.



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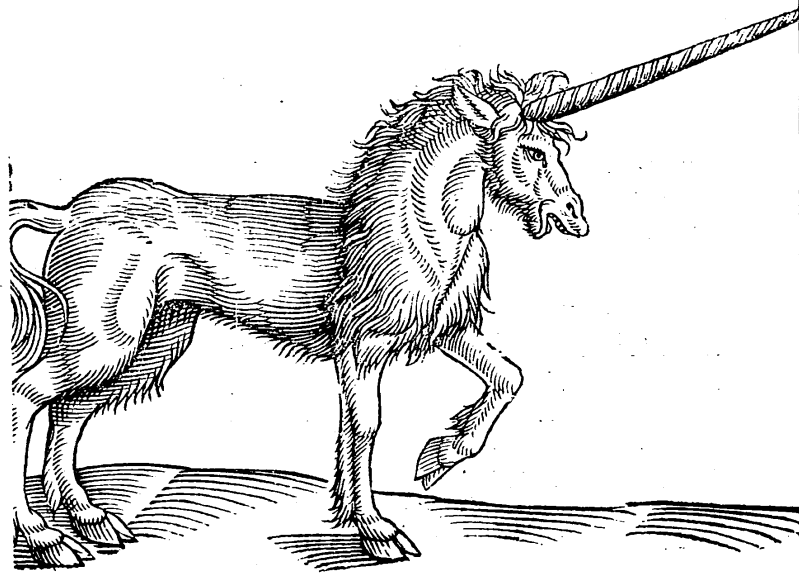
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Printed by W. Jaggard, and Henry Fetherston.
1616.

ble shew of that kinde, that euer my eyes suruaied. Likewise wheras there is a Mountaine some ten daies iourney betwixt *Labore* and *Agra*, but verie neere ten miles out of the way on the left hand: the people that inhabite that Mountaine, obserue a custome very strange, that all the brothers of any familie, haue but one and the selfe-same wife; so that one woman sometimes doth serue 6 or 7 men: the like whereof I remember I haue read in *Strabo*, concerning the Arabians that inhabited *Arabia felix*. *Agra* is a verie great Citie, and the place where the *Mogul* did alwaies (sauiug within these two yeares) keepe his Court; but in euerie respect much inferior to *Labore*. From thence to the *Moguls* Court I had ten daies iourney, at a Towne called *Asmere*, where I found a Cape Merchant of our English men, with nine more of my COUNTRYMEN, residents

dent there vpon termes of Negotiations, for the right worshipfull Company of Merchants in Londó that trade for East India. I spent in my iourney betwixt *Ierusalem* & this *Moguls* Court, 10. moneths and odde daies: all which way I trauerfed a-foot, but with diuers paire of shooes, hauing beene such a Propateticke, (I will not cal my selfe Peripateticke, because you know it signifieth one that maketh a perambulation about a place, περιπατητιν, signifying to walk about) that is, a walker forward on foote, as I doubt whether you euer heard of the like in your life: for the totall way betwixt *Ierusalem* and the *Moguls* court, containeth two thousand and seauen hundred English miles. My whole perambulation of this Asia the greater, is like to bee a passage of almost sixe thousande miles, by that time that in my returne backe thorough Persia,

the great Prophet, Iesus: and all Christians, especiallie vs English, he vseth so beneuolently, as no Mahometan Prince the like Hee keepeth abundance of wilde Beasts, & that of diuers sorts, as Lyons, Elephants Leopards, Beares, Antlops, Vnicornes; whereof two I haue seene



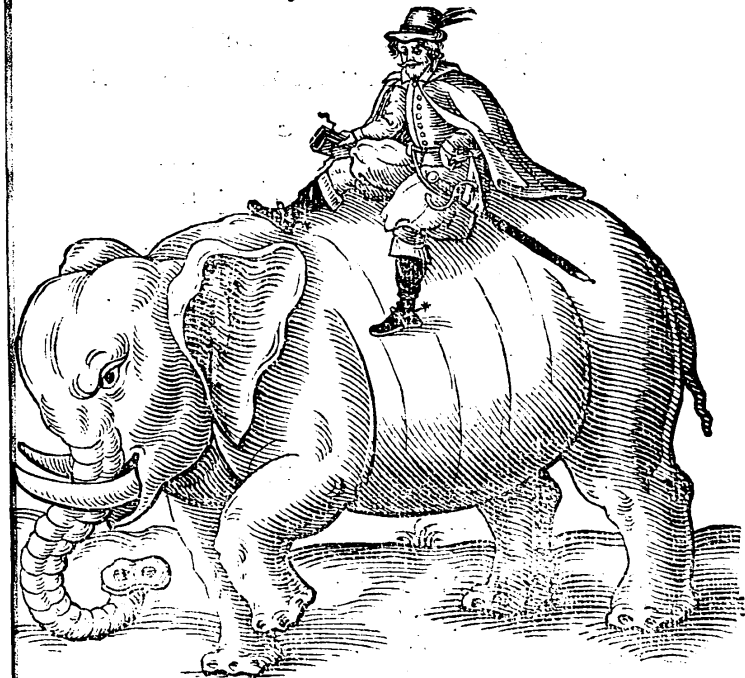
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at his Court, the strangest beasts of the world: they were brought hither out of the Countrie of *Bengala*, which is a kingdome of most singular fertilitie within the compasse of his Dominion, about foure moneths iourney from this, the midland parts therof being watered by diuers channels of the famous *Ganges*, which I haue not as yet seene, but (God willing) I meane to visite it before my departure out of this Countrie, the nearest part of it beeing not about twelue daies iourney from this Court. The King presenteth himselfe thrice euery daie without faile to his Nobles, at the rising of the Sunne, which he adoreth by the eleuation of his hands, at noone, and at fise of the clocke in the euening; but he standeth in a roome aloft, alone by himselfe, and looketh vpon them from a window that hath an embroidered sumptuous couerture, supported with two siluer pillasters to yeeld shaddowe vnto him. Twice euery week, Elephants fight before him, the brauest spectacle in the worlde: many of them are thir-

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teene foot and a halfe high ; and they seeme to iustle together like two little Mountaines, and were they not parted in the midst of their fighting by certaine fire-workes, they would exceedingly gore and cruentate one another by their murdering teeth. Of Elephants the King keepeth 30000. in his whole Kingdome at an vnmeasurable charge; in feeding of whom, and his Lyons, and other Beasts, he spendeth an incredible masse of money, at the least ten thousand pounds sterling a day. I haue rid vpon an elephant since I came to this Court, determining one day (by Gods leaue) to haue my picture expressed in my next Booke, sitting vpon an Elephant. The King keepeth a thousand women for his own body, whereof the chiefeft (which is his Queene) is called *Normal*. I thinke I shall here after this, send another Letter vnto you, before my departure out of this Countrey, by a worthy man, which is the Minister & Preacher of our Nation in this place, one M. *Peter Rogers*, a man to whom I
am



am exceedingly obliged for his singular offices of humanity exhibited vnto me. Pray vse him kindly for my sake; hee vnderstanding, that there is a certaine yong Gentleman, called Maister *Charles Lancaster*, that serueth the M. of the Rolles, intreated me to desire you to recomment him very kindly vnto him.