

VI. *A Letter from Sir Hans Sloane Baronet, late Pr. R. S. to Martin Folkes Esquire Pr. R. S. containing Accounts of the pretended Serpent-stone called Pietra de Cobra de Cabelos, and of the Pietra de Mombazza or the Rhinoceros Bezoar, together with the Figure of a Rhinoceros with a double Horn.*

S I R,

Chelsea, April 19, 1749.

Read April 20. 1749. **I** HERE send you to be communicated

to the *Society*, if you think proper; an Account of two pretended Stones, said to be found in the Head of the most venomous Snake of the *East Indies* called *Cobra de Cabelo*, together with an Account of what I have heard, and what I believe they really are. The first I have heard and do believe to be a Stone found in the Stomach or Intestines of the Rhinoceros; not, that I know, taken notice of by any Natural Historian, excepting *Redi*. The Place where it is said to be found is on the South-East Coast of *Africa*, according to the Information *Redi* had of it, and from which Place I had the two Horns figured in these *Transactions*, N^o. 470, by Dr. *Parsons*, which were tied together across, the better I believe to preserve the short Skin that connected them on the Nose of that Animal, so that the strait and crooked Horn might appear distinct, as they do in a very intire small brass Medal of *Domitian* in my Collection.

Whether

Whether the Rhinoceros, who bore these two Horns, be a distinct Species of that Animal from that of *Asia*, future Travellers must determine

These Horns were given me by my worthy and ingenious Friend and Acquaintance *Charles Lockyer* Esq; who was (as I have been told) sent in a Ship of Strength with a Power given him by the *East-Indian* and *African* Companies, to go on their Affairs to that unfrequented Coast which common Travellers have been afraid to go to because of the Barbarity and Cruelty commonly said to belong to its Inhabitants, and with which the *Egyptians*, and from them the *Greeks* and *Romans*, had a greater Intercourse and Knowledge than with the Southern Parts of *Asia*, where that Animal is generally found with only one Horn. I am,

S I R,

Your humble Servant,

Hans Sloane.

Pietra de Serpenti di Mombazza Redi *Esperienze*,
Nat. p. 59, TAB. II. *Lapis Serpentis de Mombazza*, *Edit. Latin.* p. 82.

DR. *Waldo*, an old Acquaintance of mine, went into the *East Indies*, on purpose to search after and collect the natural Productions and Curiosities of those Parts, especially such as related to the Cure of Diseases, which he sent from time to time to his Sister he left in *London*, with Directions to shew them to the Earl of *Pembroke*, Sir *Godfrey Kneller*,
 and

and myself, to sell. The two former not caring to buy several of them, they fell into my Hands. Among the rest which I purchased were some of these Stones, which were by him call'd Rhinoceros-Bezoars, which I supposed were taken out of the Stomach or Guts of that large Animal.

These Productions or Bezoars, as they are commonly call'd, consist of several Coats made up of several Parts attracted by their Centers, such as the Stones of Fruits, and other indigestible Substances swallowed with its Food, after the manner of those found in the Stomach and Intestines of Mankind, and other Animals. The uppermost Coat or Layer of this Bezoar is made up of several brown striated small Knobs or Tubercles something like low Warts, distant from one another, and making its outermost Surface very unequal, as well appears by the Figure of it hereunto annexed, TAB. II. *Fig.* 1, and 2. different from the other Bezoars whose Surface is generally smooth. Those I have of this Bezoar are of different Sizes and Diameters, the largest about the Bigness of an Orange, heavy, and as hard as Stone, and capable of being polished.

Redi relates great Virtues belonging to them, as told by the Bringers of them from the *East Indies*; such as, being tied to the Hip or Leg of a Woman in Travail, it helps her Delivery, and without Pain, even if the Child be dead; but with this Caution, that, immediately after the Birth, it should be removed; for if it remains tied there, it brings away the Womb, &c. and the Woman dies.

This I believe to be attributed to them from their Center's being sometimes loose, and rattling within,
like

like an *Ætites* or Eagle-stone, as some of those I have do: Also that it is good for intermitting Fevers given in their Drink at the going off of the Fit; and that it is good for the Colic, and Hypochondriac Melancholy, as may be seen in that Author, who I think is the only one, that speaks of it.

It has been the most rare of any of these Snake-stones, as they are call'd in the *Indies*, and so not taken notice of.

I was inform'd there was one in *Paris* offer'd, to that great Inquirer after natural Productions the late Duke of *Bourbon*, at the Price of 100 Pistoles; to whom I signified by some of his Acquaintance, that I had more than one of them, and would make him a Present of one, which I afterward did, lest he should be impos'd upon by giving such a Price, as some curious Persons have often been in other Things of the like Nature.

Pietre del Serpente Cobra de Cabelo * Redi *Esperienze, Nat. p. 3. Tab. 1. Lapidis Serpentis Cobras de Cabelo dicti, Edit. Latin. Pedra de Cobra, Kempfer. Amœnitat. Exot. p. 396. Pierres de Serpent. Biron Curiosit. de la Natura, &c. p. 72.*

DR. *John Bateman*, my worthy Predecessor, formerly *President* of the *College of Physicians* of *London*, told me, with great Admiration, that he had

* Which signifies in *Portuguese*, the hooded Serpent, because it has a Membrane about its Head which it can expand like an Hood: By others it is called the Spectacle-Snake; for on the back Part of its Neck is the Representation of a Pair of Spectacles. See a Figure of one in *Kempfer's Amœnit. Exotic. p. 567.*

had seen the great Effects (upon the Bite of a Viper) of the Snake-stone or Serpent-stone, as it is call'd, before King *Charles II.* who was a great Lover of such Natural Experiments; and that he knew the Person possess'd of the very Stone he had seen tried, who he believed would part with it for Money.

Upon my Desire and Request to see him, he came to me, and brought with him the Stone, which was round and flat, as the common ones brought by Merchants and others from the *East Indies*, about the Size of a mill'd Shilling, but thicker, for which he asked five Guineas, tho' it was broken. There are several of this Sort, figur'd in TAB. II. Fig. 8. *a, b, c, d.*

Dr. *Alex. Stuart*, who had been my Acquaintance for several Years, returning from the *East Indies*, brought from thence, among many other Curiosities, some of these Snake or Serpent-stones, together with this Account of them, which he had from a Father Missionary in the *East Indies*, ' that they were ' not taken out of a Serpent's Head, but made of ' the Bones of the small Buffalo in the *Indies*' (by which their Coaches are drawn instead of Horses); the Bones being, half-calcin'd or chard by the Dung of the same Buffalo. He gave me several Pieces, with some of the Snake or Serpent-stones made out of them, and which I have in my Collection of several Shapes and Colours.

I think the first who gives any Account of them is *Francesco Redi* at *Florence*, who had them from the Duke of *Tuscany's* Collections, and who, in his *Esperienze Nat.* tells great Virtues of them, related by three *Franciscan* Friars, who came from the *East Indies* in 1662. which were, that, being applied

plied to the Bites of the Viper, Asp, or any other venomous Animals it sticks very fast till it has imbibed or attracted all the Poison (as a Loadstone does Iron), as many People in the *Indies* believe, and then it falls off of itself; and being put into new Milk, it parts with the Poison, and gives the Milk a bluish Colour; of which *Redi* tells the Success of those he figured.

Kempfer, in his *Amœnitat. Exot.* p. 396. speaking of this, says, it helps those bit by Vipers, outwardly applied; and that it is not found in the Serpent's Head, as believed, but by a secret Art made by the *Brahmens*; and that, for the right and happy Application of it, there must be two ready; that when one has fallen off fill'd with the Poison, the other may supply its Place. They are commonly, as he says, kept in a Box with Cotton, to be ready when Occasion offers.

Biron says, that if the Wound of the Serpent has not bled, it must be a little prick'd, so as the Blood comes out, and then to be applied as usual. It comes from the Kingdom of *Camboya*.

TAB. II.

Fig. 1. A *Pietra de Mombazza* $2\frac{3}{4}$ Inches in Diameter, weighing $10\frac{1}{2}$ oz. 3 dr. 13 gr. with large Prominences or Embossments on the Outside.

Fig. 2. another $2\frac{1}{4}$ in Diameter, with smaller Embossments on the Outside.

Fig. 3. the same saw'd in two, and the Section polish'd, wherein appears a common Pebble *a*, of

an Ash-colour, as the Core or Center on which this Stone was form'd.

bbbb, are several almost concentric Lines, nearly answering to the Shape of the Pebble in the Center, and resemble the different Coats of an Onion, shewing the progressive Accretion of the several *Lamine* or *Strata*, of which this Stone is composed.

'cccc, pyramidal Spaces of a darker Colour, and more compact Texture than the intermediate lighter-colour'd Spaces, whose Bases arise at the outer Circumference and form the Embossments there, and whose Points all tend towards the Center of the Stone; both the Outside and Inside of these Stones are of a light Oker-colour diluted with a little white; the Pyramids being about 2 Shades darker than the rest of the In- or Outside.

Fig. 4. another of the same sort sawn in two, in the Center of which is lodged a Fruit or large Seed, about the Size and of the Shape of an Acorn, having a thick Husk on the Outside.

Fig. 5. a Coin of *Domitian* in small Brass, having on the Foreside, the Figure of a Rhinoceros with 2 Horns growing out of his Nose, the one above the other; which in the *Numismata Pembrokiana*, Part 1. TAB. XVI. n. 68. the Engraver has made like a Tusk or *Dens exertus* of a Boar, and in Part 3. TAB. 39. he has made the 2 Horns on his Nose like 2 Tusks, and has likewise given him 2 Horns close to his Ears; so that he has made him a Creature with 4 Horns; and therefore it was thought proper to give an accurate Copy of the

the Medal, in order to clear up that famous Passage of *Martial, Lib. de Spectac. N^o. XXII.*

*Namque gravem gemino cornu sic extulit ursum,
Factat ut impositas taurus in astra pilas.*

Which has for many Ages puzzled the Critics, all thinking that the Rhinoceros was a real Unicorn or Animal, which never had any more than one Horn. See these *Transf. N^o. 470, p. 537.* and beside the double Horns, or *geminum Cornu*, in *Sir Hans Sloane's Museum*, I am told *Dr. Mead* has got another *geminum Cornu* likewise from *Africa*.

Fig. 6. is the reverse of the same Medal, with this Inscription *IMP DOMIT AVG GERM* and in the middle *sc*

Fig. 7. is the Figure of the Rhinoceros magnified, that the Position of the 2 Horns might appear distinct and plain.

Fig. 8. a, b, c, d, represent the *Pietre de Serpente Cobra de Cabelo*, of an Ash-colour and black. In that mark'd *b*, the dark Shade in the middle shews an Hollow, which was Part of the Cavity of the Inside of the Bone. *e* and *f* are rough Pieces of Bones, half-calcin'd, porous, and not polish'd. The Figure and Description of the Buffalo, whose Bones they use for this Purpose, are given in *Mr. Edwards's History of Birds*, to which he has subjoined the Figures and Descriptions of some few rare Quadrupeds. *Plate 100.*

Fig. 8. p. 122.

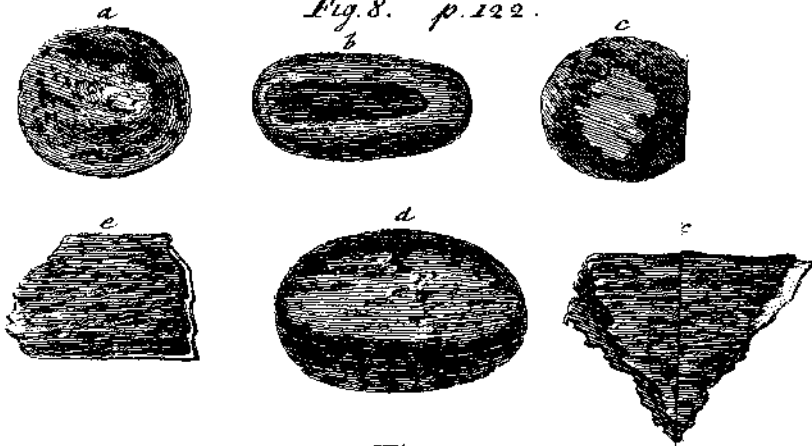


Fig. 4. p. 124.

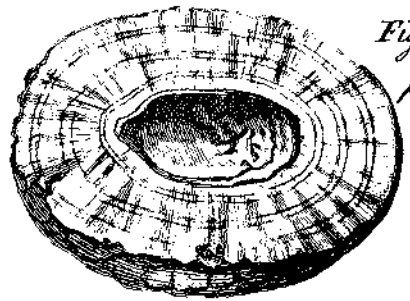


Fig. 7. p. 125.

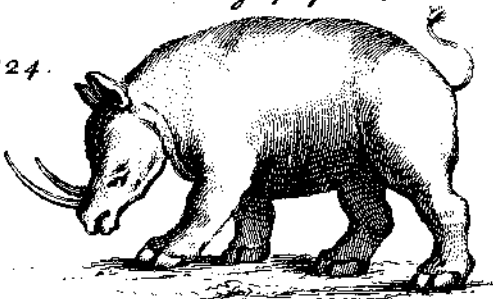


Fig. 5. p. 124.



Fig. 6. p. 125.



Fig. 2. p. 123.

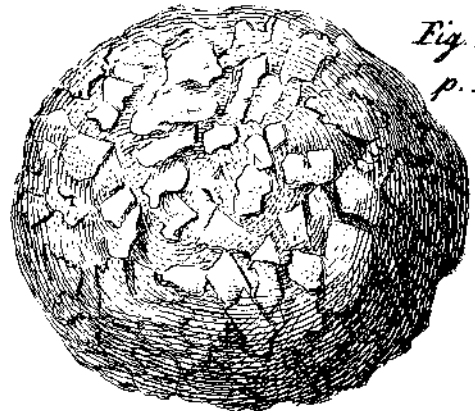


Fig. 1.

p. 123.

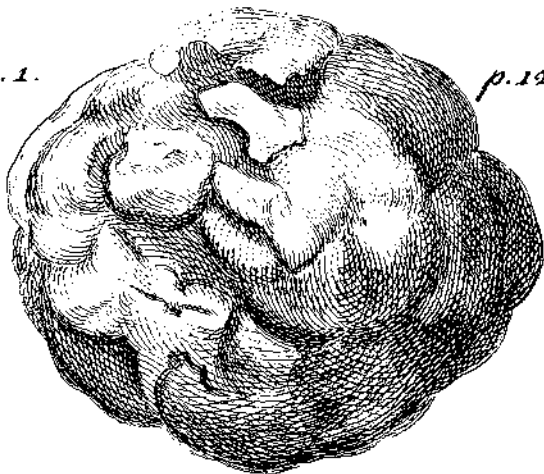


Fig. 3. p. 123.

