

naissance Gallery (Flint, Mich., n.d. [1964?]) and *Highlights from the Collections* (Flint, Mich., 1979), 3-7. The tapestries were formerly in the Mazarrin, Barberini, and Foulke collections before their purchase by Ruth Vanderbilt Twombly, and were displayed in the drawing room of her home Florham, in Cavent, New Jersey. They passed, in turn, through French & Company to Viola E. Bray Foulke, *Foulke Collection*, 203-13. Parke-Bernet Galleries, Inc., New York, *English and Dutch Furnishings—Tapestries and Other Appointments of Florham, Cavent, New Jersey, Estate of the Late Ruth Vanderbilt Twombly*, June 15-16, 1955, lots 493-502. French & Company stock sheet 56038-X (GRI Special Collections 840027).

91. Foulke, *Foulke Collection*, 324-33; Parke-Bernet Galleries, Inc., New York, *Celebrated Barberini-Foulke Tapestries* (May 27, 1948), lots 11-16. Like the *Story of Artemesia* tapestries, these six hangings from *The History of Constantine the Great* passed from Charles Foulke to Phoebe Apperson Hearst to John McLean.

92. Henri Marceau, the director of the Philadelphia Museum of Art in 1964, acknowledged Samuels's efforts, "It is also fitting to remember the part which Mr. Mitchell Samuels played in reassembling the tapestries from their location in widely separated collections. Without his help, the occasion we commemorate could not have come to

pass." David Dubon, *Tapestries from the Samuel H. Kress Collections at the Philadelphia Museum of Art: The History of Constantine the Great, designed by Peter Paul Rubens and Pietro da Cortona* (London, 1964), 2.

93. The Philadelphia Museum of Art, acc. nos. 59.78.1-13. The museum's Great Hall, left unfinished since 1928, had to be completed before the tapestries could be hung. This was finally achieved in 1963; *ibid.*, 1.

94. See Hunter, *Tapestries, Their Origin*, 6, and his foreword in *The Practical Book of Tapestries* (Philadelphia, 1925).

95. French & Company, *Royal Beauvais Tapestry, The Chinese Fair, One of a Series Presented by Louis XV to the Emperor Kien-Lung*, (New York, n.d.). The exact number of titles is not known, but other titles include *The Five King of Spain Don Quixote Tapestries in the Morgan Collection; The Comedies of Molière; Four Flemish Tapestries of Rustic Scenes (Late Seventeenth Century)*, *Woven by Jacques van der Borgh; The Knight's Repentance: A Late Gothic Tapestry Woven in Flanders at the Beginning of the Sixteenth Century; Ten Flemish Tapestries: A Famous Set Woven by J. François van der Borgh; Depicting Mythological Subjects Relating to the Trojan War Period; The Flight into Egypt, A Gothic Tapestry; The Three Virtues: Flemish Gothic Tapestry Wo-*

ven in Brussels about the Year 1500; The Two Marys and Barbara, A Late Gothic French Mille Fleur Tapestry; and Three Beauvais Tapestries with Subjects from Ovid's "Metamorphoses." Information through the kind courtesy of Ann Friedman, Detroit Institute of Arts.

96. Between 1916 and 1919 Samuels donated ten privately printed monographs on tapestries in stock at P. W. French & Company to the Detroit Museum of Art, acc. no. 19.1 (now preserved in the museum's library). A letter of October 4, 1916, from that institution acknowledged the receipt of some, "These excellent works, so beautifully illustrated, will be most useful text books on tapestries to our students and study clubs and we are very grateful to you." Correspondence from the archives of the Detroit Institute of Arts.

97. On October 31, 1963, Robert Samuels Jr. reminded an agent in Europe of the expectations of clients in this regard: "The second set also might have possibilities but we would have to have a photograph of at least one of the tapestries before we could do any work on it. This is the first thing any prospective client would naturally want to see." J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, California, object file 72.DA.47.

98. Standen, *European Post-Medieval and Related Hangings*, 14; Cavallo, *Medieval Tapestries*, 10.

MARNIE P. STARK

Mounted Bezoar Stones, Seychelles Nuts, and Rhinoceros Horns: Decorative Objects as Antidotes in Early Modern Europe

Exotic materials collected, mounted, and used for their perceived magico-medicinal properties date from at least the Middle Ages. As early as the thirteenth century, poison detectors or *épreuves* (proofs) of mounted griffin's claws, "serpent's tongues," roadstones, and a host of other materials¹ were part of the rituals of dining, as well as rich collections.² In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as European trade with the East and West Indies accelerated, so did the understanding and array of imported alexipharmic objects. Rhinoceros horns, Seychelles nuts (Maldive coconuts), and bezoar stones (formed in animal stomachs), are representative of such prized items, which became mainstays in European botanicals, travel journals, and princely collections.

Imbued with Asian folklore, these objects were procured by the most distinguished collectors in Europe and mounted at their request as curiosities. Four rhinoceros horns were listed among the contents inventoried in 1589-1631 of the Tribuna of Grand Duke Ferdinando I de' Medici;³ Emperor Rudolf II's *Kunstammer* of 1607-1611 displayed as many as twenty-eight rhinoceros horns, twenty-two bezoar stones, and eighteen Seychelles nuts;⁴ Duke Ferdinando Gonzaga in Mantua had a whole cabinet of bezoars in 1617,⁵ and in the late seventeenth century Cardinal Flavio I Chigi included six rhinoceros horns in his collection in Rome.⁶ Valued as exotic marvels, these objects were even more prized, arguably, for their magico-medicinal properties, particularly as antidotes to poison.

Despite the plethora of primary sources about rhinoceros horns, Seychelles nuts, and bezoar stones as magico-medicinal, the emphases in recent discussions have been primarily stylistic.⁷ Nevertheless, in the 1990s, some scholars, building on seminal earlier works, addressed the perceived intrinsic properties of select mounted magico-medicinal materials during the early modern period.⁸ A series of recent publications concerning the culture of collecting also discuss these materials.⁹ They succinctly explore the impetus behind the ruling elite's desire for wondrous objects and the complex relationship between *artificialia* and *natu-*

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ralia in burgeoning curiosity cabinets. Other scholars have placed the materials in the province of the history of science.¹⁰

Reliance on primary sources from the history of medicine within an art-historical context is largely absent, however. Yet these sources not only provide important insight into the function of such magico-medicinal materials, but also frequently hold the key to the seemingly random iconography of the mounted items. Firsthand accounts in travel journals, as well as early modern herbals, botanicals, and lapidaries, reveal contemporary conceptions and form the basis for a better understanding of the appearance of extant mounted bezoar stones, Seychelles nuts, and rhinoceros horns.

Bezoar Stones

A concretion resembling an onion formed in the stomach of animals, which "Nature hath created there, for our health a remedie of our evils,"¹¹ bezoar stones were considered a potent remedy for such diverse ailments as plague, worms, melancholy, madness, malignant fevers, the pains of the womb, and, above all, poison.¹² Penetrating Europe after the twelfth century, knowledge of this supposedly medicinal stone was transferred via Arabic sources.¹³ It was through heightened trade between Europe and the East and West Indies, however, that direct knowledge and the importation of these stones proliferated in Europe. As a result, they became ubiquitous in the prescriptions of physicians and the inventories of the rich and famous in the early modern period. The stone was so popular during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that it gave its name to the pale beige color of some of Queen Elizabeth I's garments ("Ireme one rounde gowne of Beasar colour");¹⁴ so precious that it was considered a jewel (for example, when James I was asked to send jewels to Spain in 1623 he included two bezoar stones¹⁵); and so widespread that it entered English drama. For instance, in Ben Jonson's *Every Man out of His Humour* of 1599, a poisoned victim asks, "Body o' me, a shrewd mischance. Why had you no unicorn's horn nor bezoar's stone about you?"¹⁶

Bezoars reportedly originated in creatures ranging from the reddish-yellow he-goats of Persia to cows, sheep, monkeys, and apes from Malacca to the New World. These animals were capable of producing more than one stone at a time (the Spanish physician Nicolás Monardes noted the stones were "set in order after another, like unto burton holes, in a coate").¹⁷ Writing almost a hundred years later, the French merchant Jean-Baptiste Tavernier described how in Golconda, peasants "run both

hands under the belly of the goat and beat the paunch along both sides, so that all the stones fall to the middle thereof, and they then estimate exactly, by touch, how many bezoars are in it."¹⁸ Created in many shapes, sizes, and colors, with the larger and heavier stones the most valued and the color olive the most desired, bezoars taken from monkeys and the mountain goats of the East Indies were the most prized. They were most esteemed as antidotes to poison.

Since the eleventh century, Islamic physicians such as Avicenna (Ibn Sina) had promoted the bezoar stone as efficacious against poison. In 1248 the Islamic scholar Ibn al-Beithar explained, "It is an antidote against poisonous animals and plants, against bites and stitches; the powder, in a dose of twelve grains taken, retains from death and drives out the poison by sweat." It should be worn "in the form of a necklace or signet ring or chewed in the mouth."¹⁹ In the same years, the writer Otharid ibn Muhammad al-Hakeb asserted, "The bezoar stone is useful against Scorpion venom. To this purpose one closes it in a gold ring . . . [engraved with the image of a scorpion when] . . . the moon stands in the mark."²⁰ In addition, Arab tradition held that bezoar stones not only cured venomous ailments but also assuaged violent fevers and strengthened the heart when weakened by grief. They were prescribed daily as a healthy preventative.

All these medieval Arabic beliefs concerning bezoar stones permeated early modern European medical practice. For example, bezoars were continually used to quell fevers throughout the seventeenth century. The Spanish Jesuit priest José de Acosta remarked in 1604, "in Spaine and Italie we have seene admirable effects of this stone against the *labor-dete*,"²¹ a kind of fever, and Charles Jacques Poncet taught an Ethiopian emperor the effects of the bezoar stone "which I always made use of with great success in intermitting fevers, as the Emperor and two of the princes his sons experienc'd."²² A powerful purgation according to Arab scholars, bezoars supposedly lowered fevers by stimulating perspiration, a belief echoed by the English royal apothecary John Parkinson in his *Theatrum Botanicum*, a herbal of 1640: "this bezar stone is [used] . . . to provoke sweate, and thereby expel cvill vapours from the heart and vitall spirites."²³ The Jesuit missionary Jeronimo Lobo, while traveling through India in the 1620s, used the bezoar stone along with bloodletting to reduce his fever through induced perspiration.²⁴

Arabs and subsequently Europeans originally attributed the perceived magico-medicinal properties of bezoar stones to celestial influence. The Florentine Neoplatonist Marsilio Ficino was important in transmitting this notion in his *Three Books on Life* (Florence, 1489). He

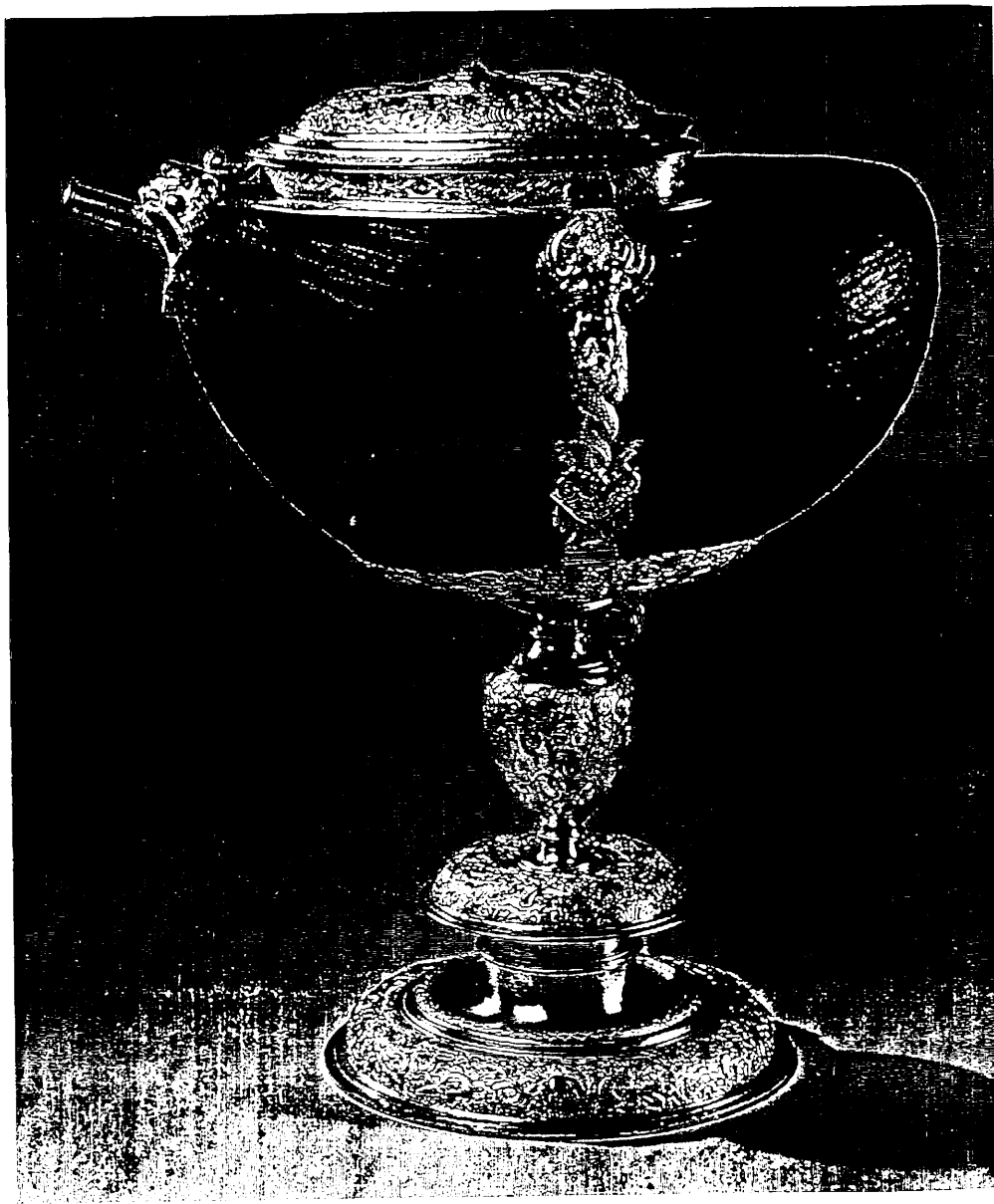


FIGURE 4
Seychelles nut mounted as spouted vessel, with embossed silver gilt, c. 1575-1600,
probably Southern Germany, Augsburg(?) Height 41, greatest width 34.3 cm.
Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

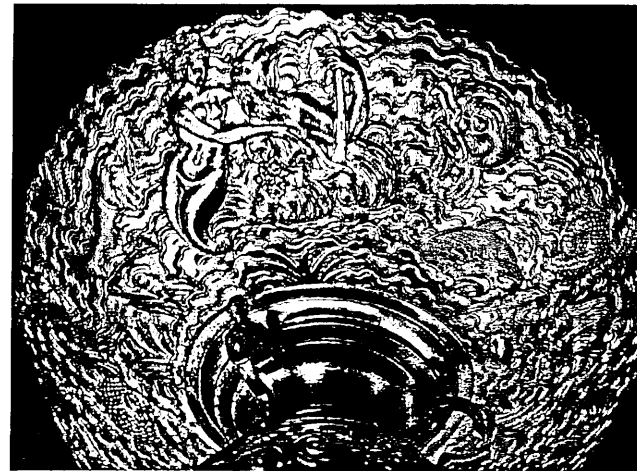


FIGURE 5
Detail of mount on the underside of Fig. 4

were included in the witches' "charm of powerful trouble" in *Macbeth*. Coupled with the birthing serpents, which in Cesare Ripa's *Iconologia* represent "conscience, which gnaws at the soul that has sinned," the term, grimacing like an apotropaic gargoyle flanked by ominous symbols, possibly warded against the fatal mischief of others.

Rare and therefore a luxury afforded only by the richest, all six extant Seychelles nuts are formed as a spouted vessel or container for liquid and mounted with decoration alluding to that magico-medical function.⁸² For it was known that in the East Indies "drinking out of the Cup made of the Shell . . . [is] look[ed] upon as a Preservative against all Diseases, and a Means to keep themselves in a sound and healthful state."⁸³ It seems evident that these objects were not purely decorative.

Rhinoceros Horns

In a manner similar to Seychelles nuts, rhinoceros horns were also commonly fashioned into magico-medical containers for liquid. As late as 1773 the Swedish traveler Carl Peter Thunberg remarked during his voyage through the Cape of Good Hope:

The horns of the rhinoceros were kept by some people not only as amulets, but also as useful in diseases and for the purpose of detecting poison. As to the former of these intentions, the fine shavings of the horn, taken internally, were supposed to cure convulsions and



FIGURE 6
Detail of strap mounts in Figure 4

spasms in children. With regard to the latter it was generally believed that goblets made of these horns, in a turner's lathe, would discover a poisonous draught that was put into them, by making the liquor ferment till it ran quite out of the goblet. Such horns as were taken from a young rhinoceros calf were said to be the best and the most to be depended on. Of these, goblets are made which are set in gold and silver and made presents to Kings, people of distinction, and particular friends, or else sold at a high price, sometimes at the rate of fifty rix[six]-dollars a goblet.⁸⁴

Although written in the eighteenth century, this description of rhinoceros horns as collectible rarities capable in the form of goblets of protecting against or detecting poison, frequently mounted in precious metals, and given as gifts among the elite, generally characterizes their form and function in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europe. As the horn was commonly adorned with motifs relating to the lore of the rhinoceros, it is worth examining contemporary knowledge of the beast before moving on to its horn.

Known since antiquity through the games of Pompey the Great and other ancient spectacles, the rhinoceros throughout the early modern period was famous through such classical sources as Pliny and the first-century poet Martial.⁸⁵ Thanks to these classical authors, the rhino developed a reputation as an intrepid beast able to overthrow the most ferocious adversaries, particularly the bear and elephant. Pliny reports that before a rhinoceros fought an elephant at the games of Pompey, it "gets ready for battle by filing its horns on rocks, and in the encounter goes specially for the belly, which it knows to be softer."⁸⁶

When the rhinoceros made its first appearance in Europe since antiquity, in 1515, as a gift for King Manuel of Lisbon, the monarch planned a battle between the rhino and an elephant, undoubtedly inspired by Pliny's account. A Portuguese artist sketched the animal then and sent this to Albrecht Dürer in Nuremberg "for wonder's sake." The woodcut Dürer subsequently executed (Fig. 7) includes a translation of the Portuguese letter he received concerning the spectacle. It reads:

It was in the year 15(1)5, on May 1st, they brought our King of Portugal at Lisbon such a beast alive from India, which they call a Rhinoceros . . . It has in front on its nose a strong sharp horn, and when the beast comes at the elephant to fight him, it has always first whetted its horn sharp against the stones and runs at the elephant with its head between his forelegs, and rips him up where his skin is thinnest, and so kills him.⁸⁷

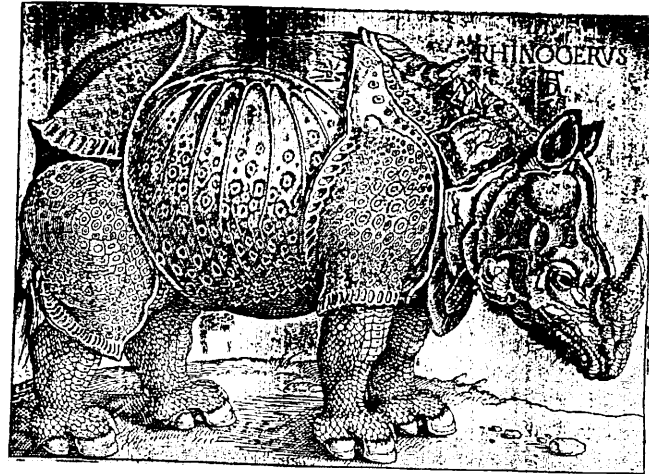


FIGURE 7
Albrecht Dürer, *Rhinoceros*, 1515, woodcut,
24.8 × 31.7 cm. British Museum, London.

Consisting of an armorlike body, scaly legs and feet, and a fictitious spiral dorsal horn, Dürer's anatomically incorrect rhinoceros and its accompanying text of 1515 set the standard for contemporary representations and notions of this creature for the next two hundred years.

The notions concerning the perceived antidotal power of the rhinoceros horn, however, were borrowed from the legends of another horned beast: the mythical unicorn. Since at least the fourteenth century the so-called unicorn horn (actually the tusk of a narwhal and sometimes a walrus) was believed to be a sovereign remedy for poison as well as contagious ailments such as the plague; and when Europeans began encountering the rhinoceros and its horn at home and abroad, many mistakenly took the beast's horn for that of the unicorn. This confusion was compounded by European contact with natives in the East Indies and China, who for centuries ascribed magico-medicinal powers to the rhino horn. For example, when the English merchant Sir James Lancaster traveled to the East Indies in October 1592, he recorded:

Now we sent commodities [gilt armor, halberds, and "shirtes of maile"] to their king [of the island of Junkseylon—today Phuket, Thailand, also formerly Salang, off the west coast of the Malay Peninsula] to barter for ambergriese and for the hornes of abath [rhinoceros], whereof the beast which hath one horne onely in her forehead, and is thought to be the female unicorn, and is highly

esteemed of all the Moores in those parts as a most soveraigne remedie against poysoun.⁸⁸

Even when recognized as distinct from one another, the rhinoceros horn and the unicorn horn were considered by many as medicinally interchangeable. Grand Duke Ferdinando I de' Medici, in a letter dated June 15, 1591, requested two ampules of anti-poison and anti-worm oil as well as some rhinoceros horn since he did not have any unicorn horn.⁸⁹ In 1611, when Eleanora de' Medici suffered from hemorrhaging in an apoplectic fit, she imbibed what was purportedly the powdered horn of a unicorn and a rhinoceros.⁹⁰

Like the bezoar stone, rhinoceros horn was supposedly efficacious against poison thanks to the special herbs in its composition. This belief possibly stems from China: since the fourth century, as the Chinese writer Ho Kung averred, the horns were antidotal because the rhino ate poisonous plants and trees,⁹¹ which enabled it to break the power of poison through its venomous sympathy. This explanation was still given credence in the East and subsequently in the West in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and may underlie remarks made by Linschoten in 1598:

It is to be understood, that all Rhinocerotes are not a like good, for there are some whose hornes are sold for one, two, or three hundred Pardawes the peece, and there are others of the same colour and greatness that are sold but for three or foure Pardawes, which the Indians know and can discern. The cause is that some Rhinocerotes, which are found in certaine places in the countrie of Bengala have this vertue, by reason of the hearbes which that place only yeeldeth and bringeth forth, which in other places is not so, and this estimation is not onely held of the horne, but of all other things in his whole body.⁹²

As a result of Eastern belief in its antidotal qualities, horns were fashioned into drinking vessels in China, as Carletti noted in 1599:

[Natives] carry many nose-horns of the rhinoceros, an animal of which their region is full. And they believe that if they make a vase from these horns and then drink from it, it has the virtue of purifying—or, to say it better—of overcoming the force of the poison that may be in—the drink, so that the poison loses its power.⁹³

It is in this form, as a protective goblet, that many rhinoceros horns entered elite European collections.

The Iconography of Rhinoceros Horn Mounts

Attributed to Nikolaus Pfaff, Rudolf II's cup and cover of 1611 in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna is a spectacular example of such a goblet (Fig. 8). Crowned with the silver-gilt head of a monstrous creature, which contains a fossilized shark's tooth, or so-called "serpent's tongue," and boasts the tusks of an African warthog, this cup is carved of horn with simulated coral branches and insects and faces emerging from them. The mounts at the base of the cover and cup include *style rustique* snakes, lizards, spiders, crayfish, and beetles cast from specimens in the manner of the great Nuremberg Mannerist goldsmith Wenzel Jamnitzer.⁹⁴

As Elisabeth Scheicher succinctly argues, the decoration of this object may embody notions of India, the exotic source of the horn.⁹⁵ For example, Pliny considered coral the jewel of the Indians, and the doglike faces emerging from the stem possibly relate to dogheaded people, which according to such classical authors as Megasthenes, Pliny, and Strabo were also one of the wonders of India. Perhaps celebrating this country's rich and bizarre splendors, the motifs may also symbolize the elemental, malevolent forces used to ward off similar energies. From the "serpent's tongue," which, according to Rudolf's physician Boethius de Boodt, "many people make much of for its supposed power against poisons and for keeping off the Evil Eye,"⁹⁶ to the carved "coral" branches, a material also renowned as a protective charm against the evil eye, to the menacing face crowning the goblet, this cup is alive with apotropaic imagery.

Decoration alluding to the foreign origin of these horns and their alleged alexipharmic virtues is also evident in a south German carved cup and cover from the mid-seventeenth century in Figure 9. Featuring a female figure as a finial, the cup proper is carved with a variety of animals; the stem consists of a scantily clad Venus and Adonis, and it terminates with a base of carved sea creatures including a dolphin and a walrus. In *Kuriositäten Antiquitäten* (1966), Eugen von Philippovich characterizes the decoration on the cup as a random mixture of motifs, and he contends there is no connection between the land animals, sea creatures, and the romantic couple. Thus, he concludes these pieces may have originated separately in a workshop and have been arbitrarily put together.⁹⁷



FIGURE 8
Attrib. to Nikolaus Pfaff, Rhinoceros horn
goblet, with African warthog tusks and silver
gilt, before 1612, Prague. Height 49.7 cm.
Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.

If a tightly coherent iconographic program is lacking, however, one thing is certain: the majority of the motifs seem to relate to the theme of the rhinoceros. For example, there is an obvious connection between the rhino and the animals featured on the cup proper, which are appropriately exotic beasts. The creature on the right is presumably an elephant, the rhino's notorious foe. Moreover, Adonis wears an outfit of feathers, a costume frequently used to represent the New World or exotic lands and thus an allusion to the rhino's distant origin. Additionally, the combination of land animals on the cup proper and sea creatures on the base may reflect the affiliation of the rhino's Indian origin with the fecundity of the country and the element water.⁹⁸

Furthermore, Adonis and Venus are particularly appropriate decoration. In Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, when Cupid's arrow causes the goddess to fall in love with Adonis, she becomes "more like Diana than like Venus, Bare-kneed and robes tucked up. She cheers the hounds [and] hunts animals."⁹⁹ She warns Adonis to hunt only the more timid creatures and stay away from the "force of lightning [which] is in the wild boar's tusks." Scorning her caveat, however, Adonis soon goes after a passing wild boar. As a result, the beast "came charging at the hunter, who feared, and ran, and fell, and the tusk entered deep in the groin,"¹⁰⁰ thus ending his life. An association between the wild boar and the rhino may be implied in this mount. The ubiquitous belief in the rhino as a fierce predator ready to kill with his horn is paralleled in this ancient poem.¹⁰¹

More pointedly, the base of Rudolf II's cup includes a walrus, positioned with its tusks at the middlemost point of the composition, directly centered below the figures of Venus and Adonis. Probably based on Dürer's 1521 pen and ink drawing of a walrus now in the British Museum, this image reflects the association of the two creatures as exotic curiosities. (Dürer probably sketched his walrus from a stuffed head in a chamber of wonders during his visit to the Netherlands.) In fact, a pickled walrus head and a stuffed rhino could both be seen in Leo X's papal collection.¹⁰²

The prominent motif of the walrus may also allude to the purportedly antidotal material of the cup. Walrus tusks were often straightened out and spuriously sold as the magical unicorn's horn.¹⁰³ For example, in 1598 the doctor Giles Flercher acknowledged that "some use the powder of it [the walrus] against poison, as the Unicomes horn. The fish that weareth it is called a morse, and is caught about Pechora."¹⁰⁴ André Thevet, historian and cosmographer to François I, reportedly witnessed

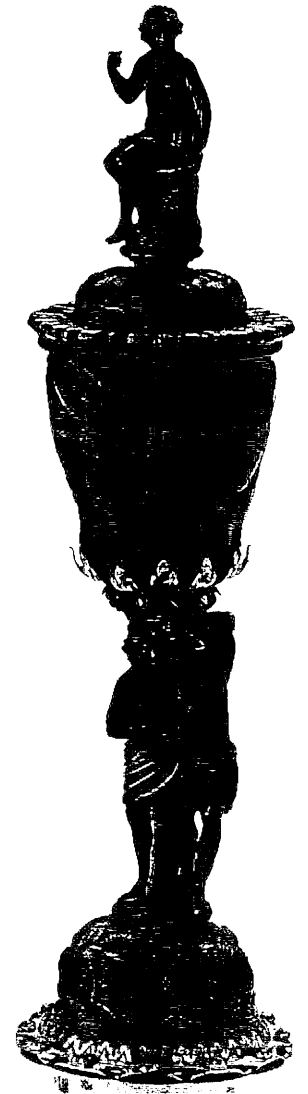


FIGURE 9
Rhinoceros horn cup and cover, with
silver, seventeenth-century, Württemberg,
Germany. Height 48.8 cm. Württembergisches
Landesmuseum Stuttgart.

the transformation of walrus tusks into unicorn's horn on an island in the Red Sea.¹⁰⁵

As the lore of this material attests, the horn, stones, and nuts discussed here were not simply wondrous exotica, objects fashioned into art, but richly adorned safeguards against poison. A rhino horn goblet turned on a lathe for the Emperor Rudolf II in Prague even included the inscription "The cup of the sublime Rudolph II, which protects against poison."¹⁰⁶ As magico-medicinal objects, rhinoceros horns may have been ceremoniously used in Europe, as they were in China. For according to an Italian Jesuit missionary in Tongking (today's Tonkin, the greater part of north Vietnam), whence the Chinese frequently imported rhinoceros horns:

The gravest mandarins of China, for greater splendour and pomp on the tables they set before their guests at the banquets do not give bowls of glass to drink from, but only cups, worked with graceful carvings, of the hard horn of this animal [the rhinoceros] esteeming that wine drunk in these will make men drink more freely and with the more enjoyment that he who drinks therefrom is free from all suspicion of poison.¹⁰⁷

Moreover, in 1697 the Italian writer Lorenzo Magalotti also recorded that the Chinese elite drank from "rhinoceros horn, either smooth or worked with carving, with gold mounts enriched with jewels."¹⁰⁸

Conclusion

Travelers' tales of the use and efficacy of rhino horn, Seychelles nuts, and bezoar stones lend credence to the thesis of their primarily alexipharmic virtues, which undoubtedly stimulated collectors' interest in procuring, mounting, and using these objects for their own prestige and protection against malevolent forces in turbulent times. For example, in 1689 the English traveler John Ovington wrote:

Upon the coast of Africa, in the time of the Sale of [an English merchant's] cargo there, the King's son of the Place was poisoned to that degree, that his Skin was bloated and swollen upon him like a Bladder: He presently betakes himself for a Remedy to the Maldive Coco-nut, several of which are found there. This he rubbed upon a hollow stone, containing five or six spoonfuls of Water, till the Water was well tinctur'd by it; and in the same manner rubb'd a piece of Rhinoceros Horn, and then drank the water off. And repeating this Medicine for three or four Days, the Humours sensi-

bly asswaged, and in that time were all drawn off by so powerful a Purgation, that though it had rack'd and examin'd every part of his body, he recover'd in that short space of time . . . I brought one of these Coco-nuts with me from Suratt, which was graciously accepted of by the late Queen [Mary II], of Glorious and Immortal Memory.¹⁰⁹

Francesco Carletti noted the magico-medicinal properties and preparation of bezoar stones abroad, and once home in Florence in 1607 he instructed Grand Duke Ferdinando de' Medici's physicians "by order of Your Highness." Carletti undoubtedly informed Ferdinando I of Asian beliefs in the potency of rhino horns, and he may have given the Grand Duke one of the four rhinoceros horn objects surviving in Ferdinando's collection.¹¹⁰ The merchant John Lancaster received (undoubtedly along with a litany of its virtues) two bezoar stones "very faire" as a diplomatic gift from a Sumatran king to Queen Elizabeth I;¹¹¹ and John Ovington observed during his stay in India that the belief in rhino horns, as the "Antidote against all poysounous draughts," was so strong with the English, that "a former President of ours at Suratt . . . exchange'd for a cup made of this Horn a large capacious Silver Bowl of the same bigness."¹¹²

Cities closely involved in overseas trade must have been full of these stories, which certainly aided traders in selling their wares¹¹³ and undoubtedly influenced the fashioning of these items. At the confluence of contemporary firsthand accounts, classical sources, and Eastern and Western magico-medicinal beliefs, the adornment of these materials frequently reflects the perceived intrinsic nature of these exotic "magical" objects and may even have enhanced their supposed powers at the time. Connecting the elite with distant lands, these items also underscored the collectors' own status, wealth, and erudition. For although by the end of the early modern period these materials waned in importance medicinally, they continued to endure as mounted marvels, exotic specimens, and trophies of ambitious merchants and affluent collectors.

NOTES

- For an introduction to a plethora of "antidotal" materials used in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, see Odell Shepard, *The Lore of the Unicorn* (London, 1930), 127–54.
- E.g., as recorded in the thirteenth-century Brevarium attributed to the Spanish physician, astrologer, and alchemist Arnal or Arnau de Villanova (c. 1235–1312): "Certain nobles and barons, when they eat, keep on the table the horn or else the tongue vessel of a serpent in a vessel on a piece of bread, and it is said that if any poison is set before it on the table, it at once begins to sweat"; quoted in Ronald W. Lightbown, *Secular Goldsmiths' Work in Medieval France* (London, 1978), 29–30.
- Giovanna Goeta Bertella, ed., *La Tribuna di Ferdinando I de' Medici: Inventari 1589–1631* (Modena, 1997), nos. 308, 695, 787, 943.
- Rotraud Bauer and Herbert Haupt, "Das Kunstkammerinventar Kaiser Rudolfs II, 1607–1611," *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen in Wien* 72 (1976).
- Letter from August 25, 1617, from Ferdinando Gonzaga to Caterina de' Medici. *Faccia che il [Giulio or Lorenzo] Campagna mi mandi una pietra bezare orientale di quelle legate in oro che sono nel scrittorio de bezari che ne tengo di bisogno non per me ma per amici*. Archivio di Stato di Firenze, Archivio Mediceo del Principato, vol. 6109, n.p. (entry 7046 in the Medici Archive Project's "Documentary Sources" data base) (hereafter AsFi, MdP 6109 [MAP Doc Sources 7046]).
- Giovanni Inesio della Rocchetta, "Il Museo di curiosità del Cardinal Flavio I Chigi," *Archivio della Società Romana di storia patria* 20 (1967): nos. 220, 479, 486, 589, 598, 752.
- See Wilfried Seipel, ed., *Exotica: Portugals Entdeckungen im Spiegel fürstlicher Kunst- und Wunderkammern der Renaissance*, exh. cat. (Vienna: Kunsthistorisches Museum, 2000); Prag im 1600: *Kunst und Kultur am Hofe Kaiser Rudolfs II*, exh. cat., 2 vols. (Vienna: Kunsthistorisches Museum, 1988); Eliska Fucikova, ed., *Rudolf II and Prague: The Court and the City*, exh. cat. (Prague: Prague Castle, 1997); and Hugh Tait, *Catalogue of the Waddesdon Bequest in the British Museum*, vol. 3, *The Curiosities* (London, 1991).
- John Evans, *Magical Jewels of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (Oxford, 1922); Shepard, *The Lore of the Unicorn*; Thomas Raff, *Die Sprache der Materialien: Anleitung zu einer Ikonologie der Werkstoffe* (Munich, 1994); Eva Maria Hoyer, ed., *Sächsischer*
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- Oliver Impey and Arthur MacGregor, eds., *The Origins of Museums: The Cabinet of Curiosities in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Europe* (Oxford and New York, 1985); Joy Kenseth, ed., *The Age of the Marvelous*, exh. cat. (Hanover, N.H.: Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, 1991); Elisabeth Scheicher, "Zur Ikonologie von Naturalien im Zusammenhang der enzyklopädischen Kunstkammer," *Anzeiger des Germanischen Nationalmuseums und Berichte aus dem Forschungsinstitut für Realienkunde* (1995): 115–25; and Lorraine Daston and Katharine Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature, 1150–1750* (New York, 1997).
- E.g., Hermann Führer, "Bezarsteine," *Janus* 6 (1901): 317–21, 351–56, provides a chronological sequence of citations from medieval Arabic sources regarding the medicinal use of bezoar stones, and includes an excellent bibliography of European primary sources concerning the bezoar stone. R. van Tassel, "Bezoars," *Janus* 60 (1973): 241–56, provides a chemical analysis of bezoar stones as well as brief historical data. Martha Baldwin, "Teads and Plague: Amulet Therapy in Seventeenth-Century Medicine," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 67, no. 2 (1993): 227–47, details the medicinal use of similar materials against the plague.
- Nicolás Monardes, *Joyfull Newses of the New-found World: Where in are declared the rare and singular vertues of diuers and sundrie herbs, trees, oyles, plants, & stones with their applications, as well to the use of Physicke, as Chirurgery: which being well applied, bring such present remedy for all diseases, as may seeme altogether incredible: notwithstanding by practice found out, to be true. Also the portraiture of the sayde herbes, very aptly described: Englished by John Frampton . . .* (London, 1580), fol. 99.
- According to the research of Andrew A. Benson at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography in San Diego, Calif., bezoar stones may in fact remove both the toxic forms of arsenic arsenate, and arsenite from solutions in which they were immersed. Arsenite binds to sulfur in the protein of partially digested hair in the stones. In effect, the animal hair can act as a chemical sponge for arsenite. See Thomas H. Maugh II, "Speaking of Science: It isn't Easy Being King," *Science*, n.s., 203, no. 4381 (February 16, 1979): 637.
- Van Tassel, "Bezoars," 123. For early Arabic sources concerning the bezoar stone, see also Führer, "Bezoarsteine," 351–56.
- Stowe Inventory, 1600, item 26:29, in Janet Arnold, *Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe Unlock'd* (Leeds, 1988), 273. This inventory also includes "one petycoate of bezoar colour," as item 63:108, p. 304.
- "One great Bezar stone, sett in gold, which was Queene Elizabeth's, with some unicorn's Horne, in a paper; and one other large Bezar stone, broken in pieces." Robert Lemon, "Warrant of Indemnity and Discharge to Lionel Earl of Middlesex, Lord High Treasurer, and to the Other Commissioners of the Jewels, for having delivered certain Jewels to King James the First, which were sent by his Majesty into Spain, to the Prince of Wales and Duke Buckingham, dated July 7, 1623," *Archaeologia* 21 (1827): 153.
- Quoted in Henry Yule and Arthur Coke Burnell, *Hobson-Jobson: A Glossary of Colloquial Anglo-Indian Words and Phrases, and of Kindred Terms, Etymological, Historical, Geographical and Discursive* (1886; London, 1903), 91.
- Monardes, *Joyfull Newses*, fol. 99.
- Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, *Travels in India*, trans. Valentine Ball (Paris, 1676; New York, 1889), 147.
- Ibn al-Beithar, quoted in Hermann Führer, "Bezoarsteine," *Janus* 6 (1901): 353.
- Orhidat ibn Muhammad al-Hakeb, quoted in Führer, "Bezoarsteine," 353.
- José de Acosta, *The Natural and Moral History of the Indies*, trans. Edward Grimston (1604; New York, 1932), 294.
- Charles Jacques Poncet, *The Red Sea and Adjacent Countries at the Close of the Seventeenth Century as Described by Joseph Pitts, William Daniel, and Charles Jacques Poncet*, ed. Sir William Foster (London, 1949), 131.
- John Parkinson, *Theatrum Botanicum: The Theater of Plants or an Universall and Complete Herbal . . .* (London, 1640), 1590. Parkinson served as an apothecary and herbalist to James I and Charles I. The *Theatrum* was the most comprehensive botanical encyclopedia of its time.
- Jerónimo Laba, *The Itinerary of Jerónimo Laba*, trans. Donald M. Lockhart (London, 1984), 4.
- Marsilio Ficino, *Three Books on Life*, trans. Carol V. Kaske and John R. Clark (Binghamton, N.Y., 1989), 301.
- Ibid.*, 327.
- Ibid.*
- Acosta, *The Natural and Moral History*, 293.
- Monardes, *Joyfull Newses*, 99.
- John Fryer, *A New Account of East India and Persia in Eight Letters, Being Nine Years Travels begun 1672 and Finished 1681* (London, 1698), 212.
- Thomas Nicols, *A Lapidary or History of Precious Stones: With Cautions for the Undeceiving of All Those That Deal with Precious Stones* (Cambridge, 1652), 181.
- Winfried Schleichner, "Jacques and the Melancholy Stag," *English Language Notes* 17, no. 3 (March 1980): 175.
- H. C. Erik Midelfort, *Mad Princes of Renaissance Germany* (London, 1994), 88.
- Ibid.*, 118.
- Marie-Christiane Maselis, Arnout Balis, and Roger H. Marijnissen, *The Albums of Anselmus de Boodt (1550–1632): Natural History Painting at the Court of Rudolph II in Prague*, trans. Alistair Weir (Ramsen, Switz., and Tiel, Belgium, 1999), 18.
- Giambattista della Porta, *Natural Magick* (London, 1658), 545. There are extant amulets of bezoar stones illustrated in Liselotte Hansmann and Lenz Kriss-Rettenbeck, *Amulets und Talisman: Erscheinungsform und Geschichte* (Munich, 1966), figs. 273, 275–78.
- Parkinson, *Theatrum Botanicum*, 1590.
- Francesco Carletti, *My Voyage around the World*, trans. Herbert Weinstock (1594; New York, 1964), 196.
- Don Enrique de Villena, quoted in Ronald W. Lightbown, *Medieval Jewellery* (London, 1992), 96.
- Maria Luisa of Orleans had two bezoar stones encased in gold filigree and Kunruffia Anna of Saxony had a bezoar in a "little gold wire basket of fine work." Atoms, *Princely Magnificence: Court Jewels of the Renaissance, 1500–1630*, exh. cat. (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1980), 54. Many different kinds of bezoar pendants are illustrated in Hansmann and Kriss-Rettenbeck, *Amulets und Talisman*; see figs. 273, 275–78.
- Examples of such extant bezoar stones mounted in filigree are illustrated in Rotraud Bauer, ed., *Die Portugiesen in Indien: Die Eroberungen Dom João de Castros auf Tapissieren, 1538–1548*, exh. cat. (Vienna: Kunsthistorisches Museum, 1992), and Seipel, *Exotica*. See also the large bezoar pendant (16.2 cm) enclosed in filigree with four black champlevé enamel plaques with the coats-of-arms of the duke of Alva, one of Emperor Charles V's generals, illustrated in *Princely Magnificence*, fig. 21.
- The inventory is reprinted and translated in Anna Maria Massinelli, *Treasures of the Medici* (New York, 1992), 232.
- Bells had been incorporated into amulets since antiquity; note, e.g., the many phallic amulets with bells from the first century A.D. discovered in Pompeii and Herculaneum. In the early modern period, bells were used as protective amulets in portraits of children. See, e.g., the portrait by Hans Mielich (1515–1573) illustrated in Hansmann and Kriss-Rettenbeck, *Amulets und Talisman*, fig. 738. Southern Italians still sell bells and horseshoes adorned with bells to avert the evil eye.
- Letter from August 25, 1617, from Ferdinando Gonzaga to Caterina de' Medici. *Faccia che il [Giulio or Lorenzo] Campagna mi mandi una pietra bezare orientale di quelle legate in oro che sono nel scrittorio de bezari che ne tengo di bisogno non per me ma per amici*. AsFi, MdP 6109 (MAP Doc Sources 7046).
- Nicols, *A Lapidary*, 182.
- Della Porta, *Natural Magick*, 545.
- James Petiver, "An Account of Some Indian Plants, etc., with Their Names, Descriptions and Vertues; Communicated in a Letter from Mr. James Petiver, Apothecary and Fellow of the Royal Society; to Samuel Brown, Surgeon at Fort St. George," *Philosophical Transactions* (1683–1775) of *The Royal Society* 20 (1698): 330.
- García da Orta, *Colloquies on the Simplex and Drugs of India*, trans. Sir Clements Markham (1563; London, 1913), 365.
- John Huyghen van Linschoten, *The Voyage of John Huyghen Van Linschoten to the East Indies*, ed. Arthur Coke Burnell, 2 vols. (1598; London, 1935), 1: 75.
- Ibid.*, 144.
- Today, the Seychelles nut is considered the heaviest seed in the world.
- Cocoanuts came from the East Indies and, after the discovery of the Americas, from the New World as well. In early inventories they are referred to as "India nuts." From the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century, cocoanuts were already being mounted in Europe. For discussion of these mounted medieval objects, see Lightbown, *Secular Goldsmiths' Work*, 58–59. Cocoanuts were not quite as rare as other exotic materials and declined in value in the sixteenth century. See Philippa Glanville, *Silver in Tudor and Early Stuart England* (London, 1999), 325. For a general discussion of cocoanuts, see also Rolf Fritz, *Die Gruppe von Kokosnus in Mitteleuropa, 1250–1800* (Mainz, 1983).
- Da Orta, *Colloquies*, 145.
- Bauer and Haupt, "Das Kunstkammerinventar," nos. 283–92.
- For a color illustration of this cabinet, see Monica Ricciardi-Cubitt, *Art of the Cabinet* (London, 1992), pl. 19. For further information, see Hans-Olof Bostrom, "Philipp Hainhofer and Gustavus Adolphus's Kunstschatk in Uppsala," in *The Origins of Museums*, ed. Impey and MacGregor, 90–91.
- Yule and Burnell, *Hobson-Jobson*, 230.
- Carletti, *My Voyage*, 275.
- Parkinson, *Theatrum Botanicum*, 1599–1600.
- Ibid.*
- Ibid.* Parkinson nonetheless offered the caveat that Carolus Clusius and others were not completely convinced.
- Ibid.*
- Ibid.*
- John Peachie, *Some Observations Made upon the Maldiva Nut: Shewing Its Admirable Virtue in Giving an Easie, Safe, and Speedy Delivery to Women in Child-bed Written by the Physician in the Countrey to Dr. Hinton at London, 1663* (London, 1694), 3.
- Ibid.*, 6–7.
- João de Barros, quoted in Yule and Burnell, *Hobson-Jobson*, 230–31.
- Da Orta, *Colloquies*, 145.
- John Ovington, *A Voyage to Surat in the Year 1689* (1696; London, 1929), 137–58.
- Rudolf Dostelberger, "Die Kunstkammerstücke," in *Pragum 1600: Kunst und Kultur am Hofe Kaiser Rudolfs II*, exh. cat., 2 vols. (Vienna:

Kunsthistorisches Museum, 1988), I: 440. See also Tait, *Catalogue of the Waddesdon Bequest*, 56.

69. Parkinson, *Theatrum Botanicum*, 1599-1600.

70. *Ibid.*

71. Tait, *Catalogue of the Waddesdon Bequest*, 38.

72. Antonio Pagaterra, quoted in Yule and Burnell, *Hobson-Jobson*, 230.

73. Scharzkammer of the Deutsches Ritter Ordens, Vienna; Gränes Gewölbe, Dresden; two in the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna; Chancellor's Room of the University of Uppsala, Sweden; and the British Museum, London. See Tait, *Catalogue of the Waddesdon Bequest*, 38.

74. The spotted vessel was described in an 1821 inventory with a decapitated swan finial, and by 1885 the swan was officially recorded as lost. Tait, *Catalogue of the Waddesdon Bequest*, 53.

75. This supposed marine origin also led to the acquisition of these nuts as representative of the element water in cosmographically organized collections. For a discussion of the origin of this system of collecting and Sycyelles nuts within it, see Elizabeth Scheicher, "Zur Ikonologie von Naturalien im Zusammenhang der enzyklopädischen Kammern," *Anzeiger des Germanischen Nationalmuseums* (1995): 115-25.

76. Yule and Burnell, *Hobson-Jobson*, 230.

77. See the engraving of terms now in The Metropolitan Museum of Art illustrated in Janet S. Byrne, *Renaissance Ornament: Prints and Drawings* (New York, 1981), 70.

78. Sarah Carr-Gomm, *Dictionary of Symbols in Western Art* (New York, 1995), 45.

79. Pliny the Elder, *Historia Naturalis*, trans. Harris Rackham, 10 vols. (London, 1940), 10: 72.

80. Chaucer, quoted in Timothy B. Schroeder, *Art of the European Goldsmith* (New York, 1983), 57.

81. Shakespeare, quoted in Faith Mellon, *Centuries of Oaks in Art and the Written Word* (Norwalk, Conn., 1967), 37.

82. Even the nut crowning the Uppsala cabinet of about 1625-1641 was detachable and according to the merchant Phillip Hamhofer held a quart of wine, Hans-Clot Bostrom, "Phillip Hamhofer and Gustavus Adolphus's *Kunstschränk* in Uppsala," in

The Origins of Museums, ed. Impey and MacGregor, 96.

83. Peache, *Some Observations*, 1663, 6. Peache is quoting John Parkinson in a pamphlet to another physician.

84. Carl Peter Thunberg, quoted in Lady Margaret Evans, "Carved Cups of Rhinoceros Horn," *Connoisseur* 87, no. 357 (May 1931): 297.

85. See Marcus Valerius Martialis, *The Epigrams of Martial: On the Spectacles*, trans. Walter K. C. Ker (London, 1919), 17.

86. Pliny, *Historia Naturalis*, 8: 53.

87. Written on Dürer's drawing translated in Campbell Dodgson, "The Story of Dürer's Ganda," in *The Romance of Fine Prints*, ed. Alfred Fowler (Kansas City, 1938), 46.

88. Sir James Lancaster, *The Voyages of Sir James Lancaster to Brazil and the East Indies (1591-1603)* (London, 1940), 14.

89. Letter June 15, 1591, from Ferdinando I de' Medici to unspecified recipient. *Sabito ricevuto la lettera di V.S. Ill. ma ho comandato che siano mandate a Roma in mano del Sr. Card. Le dal Monte [Francesco Maria del Monte] due buone ampolle d'olio contra veleno et contra vermi, et del corno di buda, che dell'unicorno non n'ha.* ASFi, MdP 280, fol. 58 (MAP Doc Sources 7323).

90. Report of c. February 1611. ASFi, MdP 2951, n.p. (MAP Doc Sources 5425).

91. Richard Ettinghausen, *The Unicorn* (Washington, D.C., 1950), 112.

92. Linschoten, *The Voyage*, I: 10.

93. Carletti, *My Voyage*, 181.

94. The comparison is also made by Archduke Götz von Habsburg in *idem, Princely Treasures* (New York, 1997), 125.

95. Scheicher, "Zur Ikonologie," 121-23.

96. Boethius, quoted in Shepard, *The Lore*, 129.

97. Eugen von Philippovich, *Kuriositäten Antiquitäten: Ein Handbuch für Sammler und Liebhaber* (Braunschweig, Germany, 1966), 460-62.

98. Scheicher, "Zur Ikonologie," 121-23.

99. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. Rolfe Humphries (Bloomington, Ind., 1955), 251.

100. *Ibid.*, 257.

101. The unknown designers of this cup used Ovid's poem as a source because it was familiar to erudite collectors. Also, there is evidence that in the early seventeenth century people saw a parallel between the ferocity of the boar with his tusks and the rhino with its horn. E.g., in another early seventeenth-century carved rhinoceros horn cup, now at the British Museum (illus. in Tait, *Catalogue of the Waddesdon Bequest*, 3), boar imagery is prominent: the cup depicts Meleager in high relief presenting the head of the Calydonian boar to Atalanta (again, the story comes from Ovid and parallels contemporary notions of the rhinoceros).

102. Colin Eisler, *Dürer's Animals* (London, 1991), 275. In fact, the stuffed rhinoceros in Leo X's collection was the same rhino originally at the court of King Manuel of Lisbon, which inspired Dürer's popular woodcut. When the Portuguese ruler sent the live creature to the Pope (undoubtedly to reenact another classical battle, this time with the Pope's elephant), it drowned off the Italian coast and was subsequently stuffed.

103. Shepard, *The Lore*, 132-33. In fact, Richard Ettinghausen argues that it is actually the tusks of the walrus and/or narwhal that catalyzed the belief in the magical powers of horns in Muslim countries. Ettinghausen, *The Unicorn*, 122.

104. Giles Fletcher (1598), quoted in Shepard, *The Lore*, 133.

105. Shepard, *The Lore*, 133.

106. Fucikova, *Rudolf II*, 495.

107. P. Giovanni Filippo de' Mattini (1665), quoted in Ronald Lightbown, "Oriental Art in Italy," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 32 (1969): 261.

108. Quoted in Alvar González-Palacios, *Objects for a Wunderkammer*, exh. cat. (London: Colnaghi Gallery, 1981), 130.

109. Ovington, *A Voyage to Surat*, 158-59.

110. Bertola, *La Tribuna*, items 308, 695, 696, 943.

111. Lancaster, *The Voyages*, 115-16.

112. Ovington, *A Voyage*, 159.

113. E.g., while in Madrid, Rudolf II's agent tried convincing the emperor to purchase such materials by stressing their potential to protect against poisons. Fucikova, *Rudolf II*, 474.

The Cabinetmaker Pietro Porciani at the Palazzo Chigi, Rome, 1762

Newly discovered documents reveal with certainty important information about a piece of furniture, today in a private collection, of excellent design and execution. These significant new facts include the object's daring, its original destination, its patron, and the name of the artist responsible, Pietro Porciani, whose other work remains unknown. This case study has implications for studies of the history of eighteenth-century furniture in Rome.

In recent years the history of settecento Roman furniture has been enriched by a series of valuable contributions. The study by Goffredo Lizzani, *Il mobile romano*, published in Milan in 1970, still represents the only attempt at a general synthesis, if not systematic methodology, for the topic. Nonetheless, this work, which retains its validity as a repertoire of images combined with useful indications of provenance, is now out of date concerning the attribution and dating of individual pieces, which Lizzani based more on the connoisseur's eye than on documentary sources.

In the years since Lizzani's publication numerous scholars have attempted to fill some of its holes. The doyen of this effort has been Alvar González-Palacios. This scholar, whose overview formed the introduction to Lizzani's volume, subsequently compiled a series of catalogue entries and monographic essays into two volumes, *Il tempio del gusto* (1984) and *Il gusto dei principi* (1993). Still further information appears in three exhibition catalogues: his *Fasto Romano* (1991), Maria Grazia Bernardini and Maurizio Fagiolo dell'Arco's *Gian Lorenzo Bernini: Regista del barocco* (1999), and Edgar Peters Bowron and Joseph J. Rishel's *Art in Rome in the Eighteenth Century* (2000).¹ *Fasto Romano* contains no overall introduction to the individual entries, although this could have offered a useful and up-to-date synthesis of the topic, while *Gian Lorenzo Bernini: Regista del barocco* examines Roman production influenced by Bernini or directly under his control. The latter theme was investigated in Stefanie Walker and Frederick Hammond's exhibition catalogue of 1999, *Life and the Arts in the Baroque Palaces of Rome: Ambiente Barocco*, in a more

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