

LISBON'S UNUSUAL ZOO GUEST

A 3-Horn Black Rhino (*Diceros bicornis*)

by Pierre Brouard



Black rhinoceros at Lisbon Zoo, Portugal, showing an artificial third horn.

Photograph by Pierre Brouard

Among the fantastic animal houses of the Lisbon Zoo, the rhinoceros house invariably attracts visitors, because of its varied population, although this is essentially of African origin. Black rhinos breed there quite regularly.

Last December, an unusual Black rhino was on view. Its head prides itself not

only on the two horns which are distinctive to the species *Diceros bicornis*, but on three horns, this latter having no common characteristic with the third horn which possibly appears in some Asiatic species. This third horn is situated far from the two conventional ones, on the forehead, on the place where the horn of the famous and legendary Unicorn,

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appears.

It is obvious that this third horn is not natural. It has been grafted, evidently recently, onto this adult rhino. A 10 centimetre diameter hole has been bored in the thick skin of the animal and the extra horn, of a non-identifiable origin, has been driven into the head of the "patient". The diameter of the hole being a little larger than the diameter of the

horn itself, some pins have been wedged to eliminate the gap, thus ensuring that the horn grows straight up.

This is the first *live* specimen of a rhino which I have observed with a third artificial horn. Some specimens with identical grafts are to be seen in some museums. But what is the meaning of such an artifice and is it relevant to zoological research?



Black rhinoceros at Lisbon Zoo, Portugal, showing an artificial third horn.

by Pierre Brouard

Letters to the Editor

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Lisbon's Three-horned Black Rhinoceros.

Dear Sir,

I was very interested in Mr. Pierre Brouard's report on this animal, and especially so because it is *not* unique. There are, he says "some specimens with identical grafts . . . in some museums", and at least one big game hunter has encountered a three-horned Black rhino in the wild.

That big game hunter was the naturalist and author, Abel Chapman. In his *Retrospect: 1851-1928 (London, 1928)* he gives two pictures of it, one (on p.77) a drawing with a caption stating that it was shot at "Elmenteita" in British East Africa (now Kenya) on 10 February, 1906, the other a photograph of Chapman himself with the animal's severed head (p.X). Its third horn matches that shown in Mr. Brouard's photos.

There is of course no zoological interest in such an artificially produced freak. But there could be a very real anthropological interest; for "what", as Mr. Brouard asks, "is the meaning of such an artifice?" For what purpose have, not one, but, a number of these grafts been made? And where? Can there be an East African cult whose followers practise this artifice for some ritual purpose? I admit this may not seem a very likely suggestion, but neither is it very likely that unaided nature would produce in 1906 so exact a replica of the rhino which Lisbon is exhibiting today. So the question requires to be asked.

The search for an answer requires us to ask more questions, namely :-

1. In which museums did Mr. Brouard see rhino heads with grafts identical with Lisbon's living animal?
2. Where did their grafted specimens come from?
3. Where did Lisbon's specimen come from?
4. Can Chapman's specimen still be traced, and is it also a graft?

Chapman's specimen is interesting because — if it too was grafted — it proves that grafting is an old practice; also that whoever it was who grafted his rhino released it afterwards; and was this also done with Lisbon's specimen?

I suspect that Chapman tells more about his specimen in his earlier book, *On Safari*, which is not available to me, but won the highest praise from F. C. Selous in the only book review that this most experienced naturalist and big game hunter ever wrote (in the *Saturday Review* for 9 January, 1909).

Finally, how are these grafts made? One presumes that a fresh piece of genuine rhino

horn must be used, or the graft would be "rejected". It would also seem impossible to perform the operation unless the rhino was drugged; but with what? Has any reader any answer?

Yours faithfully
A Correspondent.

How to play your Client for a Sucker; or a Crook's advice to a Zoo Architect. *IZN, March, 1978.*

Dear Sir,

It was with a great sense of identification with Mephistopheles' obvious frustration that I read his satire on architectural services for zoos. I want to comment, but first I feel I must establish my platform by telling you a little about my background so you may evaluate my particular orientation to zoo development.

Firstly, I represent ZOOPLAN ASSOCIATES, INC., a consulting firm which specializes in the development and operation of zoos and aquariums. Though we do far more than plan physical facilities, one of our strengths is the concept development and planning for entire zoos/aquariums and for individual exhibits. Our staff includes a group of zoo and aquarium directors who have a combined total of more than 250 man-years of operating experience. My point is, like the author, we have observed all of the "wretchedly unfunctional, extravagance" which he identifies so poignantly and, like him, we too view with alarm.

Next, I must reveal that I am also an architect. I practised general architecture for almost twenty years before I was ever involved with the zoo field. I am intimately aware of all of the pressures, both internal and external, which go with the practice of architecture.

More than that, in 1968, the general architectural firm of which I was a senior member was considered to design a completely new zoo in our home community exactly according to the premise on which the author constructs his open letter. I remember very well how excited we were to have a chance to take on such a challenging and unique project as we assumed a zoo to be. I remember the confidence with which we prepared for our key interview with the zoological society board and how much of what Mephistopheles recommends that we say, we said along with some rather innovative fabrications of our own.

It worked, we were selected. We were ecstatic.

We went on from there to visit some zoos (some good and some bad and very difficult for a novice to separate one from the other), read the literature (skimpy, contradictory and over our heads), and otherwise, "prepared" ourselves. It was at this point we