

ARISTOTLE

Parts of animals

Translated by A.L.Peck.

663a

Most of the horned animals are cloven-hoofed, though there is said to be one that is solid-hoofed, the Indian ass, as it is called.

The great majority of horned animals have two horns ... There are, however, some animals that have one horn only, eg. the Oryx (whose hoof is cloven) and the 'Indian Ass' (whose hoof is solid). These creatures have their horn in the middle of the head: this is the nearest approximation to letting each side have its own horn, because the middle is common equally to both extremes. Now it is quite reasonable that the one horn should go with the solid hoof rather than with the cloven hoof, because hoof is identical in nature with horn, and we should expect to find divided hoofs and divided horns together in the same animal. Again, division of the hoof is really due to deficiency of material, so it is reasonable that as Nature has used more material in the hoofs of the solid-hoofed animals, she has taken something away from the upper parts and made one horn only.

Historia Animalium

II.1, 499b

Translated by Thompson, 1949

The great majority of the horned animals are cloven-footed, as the ox, the stag, the goat; and a solid-hoofed animal with a pair of horns has never been met with. But a few animals are known to be single-horned and single-hoofed, as the Indian ass; and one, to wit the oryx, is single-horned and cloven-hoofed. Of all solid-hoofed animals the Indian ass alone has an astragalus or huckle-bone.