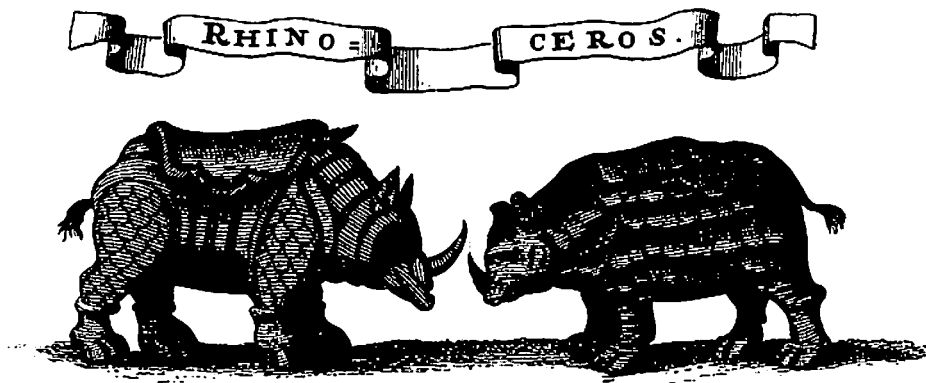


The Rhinoceros

from Dürer to Stubbs ♦ 1515-1799



T. H. Clarke

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*To my family
and friends*

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I have been fortunate to find in Peter Whitehead of the British Museum (Natural History) not only the authority on herrings and Brazil but also someone who had the determination to make me write this book despite many setbacks. The late Ulrich Middeldorf entrusted me with a lifetime of notes on the rhinoceros in the arts, an act of confidence which I have tried to justify. I was fortunate too to have the encouragement of Dr Helen Brock, late Research Fellow in the Department of the History of Science in the University of Glasgow, and of Jack Baldwin, until recently Keeper of Special Collections; both involved in the discovery of the invaluable collections of rhinocerotid drawings and prints in the Douglas and Parsons Collections. Individual mention should be made

of Hubert Emmerig's work on the travels of the 'Dutch' rhinoceros and their medallic connections.

As a specialist only in eighteenth-century porcelain, I have had to consult many authorities in dealing with other aspects of the fine and applied arts with which I am not familiar. I can only thank these sources in general, as there are too many to mention individually; some are mentioned in the notes on the plates. The same must apply to numerous libraries and museums and their unfailingly helpful replies to my endless enquiries; I am particularly indebted to the staff of the London Library. Special thanks I give with pleasure to my former colleagues at Sotheby's whom I have been pestering since I first became interested in the rhinoceros some thirty years ago. Not only have they given me much information, but some have kindly read the typescript of those chapters with which they are most connected. In this category I also thank Dr Charles Avery for reading the chapter on sculpture.

I have too to thank all those who have managed to provide photographs and transparencies not always simple to find. I am particularly indebted to the Chinese authorities, the Portuguese Government and the Hermitage Museum in Leningrad for their generous co-operation.

Finally, without the help of Sarah Bunney as editor this book would never have been fit for publication.

T. H. CLARKE
May 1986

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Introduction

*T*his book is intended as an essay on a neglected aspect of the exotic in European art. It is a study of a single animal, the Indian one-horned rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros unicornis*), as it appeared to an educated European between 1515 and 1799. During this period eight live Indian animals could be seen in Europe; some lived for only a few months, one for as long as seventeen years. Although there is much here to interest the zoologist and even the taxidermist, the emphasis is on the animal in the visual arts. Literary references have been kept to the minimum needed to throw light on the visual theme.

I hope that this book will prove of use to art historians in helping them to identify and to date any

work of the fine or applied arts in which there is a rhinocerotoc content. But the story of the eight Indian rhinoceroses to arrive alive in Europe in this limited period is so filled with odd and amusing incidents that I hope that it will also appeal to the general reader, particularly in view of the range of illustrations, many here reproduced for the first time.

The rhinoceros is known to the average student of animals in art by a mere handful of examples. Dürer's woodcut of 1515 is one of the great images of European art, known to all. Some will be familiar with the bronze relief of about 1602 on a door of Pisa Cathedral, a Dürer descendant. Others will perhaps be familiar with Burgkmair's unique surviving wood-

cut of 1515, with Oudry's finished drawing in the British Museum, or with the drawings and prints of around 1747 by the Augsburg draughtsman and engraver Ridinger. Most will be aware of Longhi's enchanting painting of the hornless creature in London's National Gallery (or the version dated 1751 in the Ca' Rezzonico, Venice) and with the imposing portrait at the Royal College of Surgeons in Lincoln's Inn Fields by Stubbs. But these examples are drawn from only three of the eight rhinoceroses that are the subject of this book.

It seemed, then, that there was room for a fresh review of the known (and unknown) facts. This in turn has led to some fresh attributions, transforming, for example, a Watteau into an Oudry and a Stubbs drawing into one by Ridinger. Investigation over the years has revealed an unexpected mass of information and many images of the rhinoceros, most of them relevant to my theme, which is the Indian rhinoceros in the European imagination over nearly three centuries.

The arrangement of the material, ferreted out of libraries, universities and institutions in nearly every European country, and gathered from museums in the United States and even from China, has presented many problems. It seemed best to treat the first part of the book as a survey in historical order of the eight Indian animals recorded as having reached Europe alive: others are known to have died on the journey.

We begin with the rhinoceros that disembarked in Lisbon on 20 May 1515. Not that this was the first one to reach Europe; the Romans knew both the African and Indian species. But the Dark and Middle Ages were both ignorant of the living animal. It was the 1515 rhinoceros that was the subject of Dürer's powerful woodcut. Iconographically, this proved to be the most important of all images, fixing in the European mind a cumbersome armour-plated beast, distinguished from all others by a gratuitous wrythen horn on its withers: an image that has lasted well into the present century.

Early attempts to replace the 'Dürer' rhinoceros were all doomed to failure. Had a great artist been available to draw, paint or model the second rhinoceros to live for some years in Europe, in Lisbon and Madrid, then there might have been a counterblast to Dürer. But few people, among them virtually no art historians, have heard of the beast that arrived

in Lisbon in 1579, was befriended by Philip II (together with an elephant) and was the subject of an engraving by Philippe Galle of Antwerp in 1586 and of a watercolour drawing from the life once owned by the Emperor Rudolf II of Prague. The print, surviving in only three known examples, showed a more naturalistic pachyderm than did Dürer's woodcut. It had a certain success in providing an alternative source for the minor arts: ceramics and *pietre dure* plaques, for example. But, by the mid-eighteenth century, this 'Madrid' rhinoceros had disappeared from view.

The third and fourth live animals – English imports of 1684 and 1739 – aroused some interest, particularly the latter, in natural history, but not in artistic circles. Both were superseded by the appearance of the fifth rhinoceros, the so-called 'Dutch' rhinoceros. Arriving in 1741 as a young animal, it toured Europe for some seventeen years, dying, it is alleged, in London in 1758. Its brilliantly publicised travels in Germany, France and Italy, organised by its Dutch owner, Capt. Douwe Mout van der Meer, who littered the towns and villages of Europe with posters, engravings and medals, did much to dampen the enthusiasm for the Dürer woodcut in the European mind. But more telling was the adoption by Buffon in his *Histoire naturelle* of an engraving after a drawing by Oudry of this 'Dutch' animal during its sojourn in Paris in the early months of 1749. Oudry's sketch, as well as the life-sized painting exhibited in the Salon of 1750, finally substituted a more life-like animal for Dürer's *Panzernashorn* of Nuremberg.

The last three of the rhinoceroses mentioned are the 'Versailles' animal of 1771, and two more English ones of 1791 and 1799. None of these did much to alter the public's idea of what a rhinoceros really looked like. The only great portrait is that by Stubbs, of about 1792; but since it was for many years not available to the public and since there was no print made of it, its influence was small. It was not until animals were kept in public zoos rather than in commercial menageries that all the world could see for itself what this unlikely beast really looked like. It was the Gardens of the Zoological Society of London that first harboured the creature, and that, in 1834, is beyond the scope of this book.

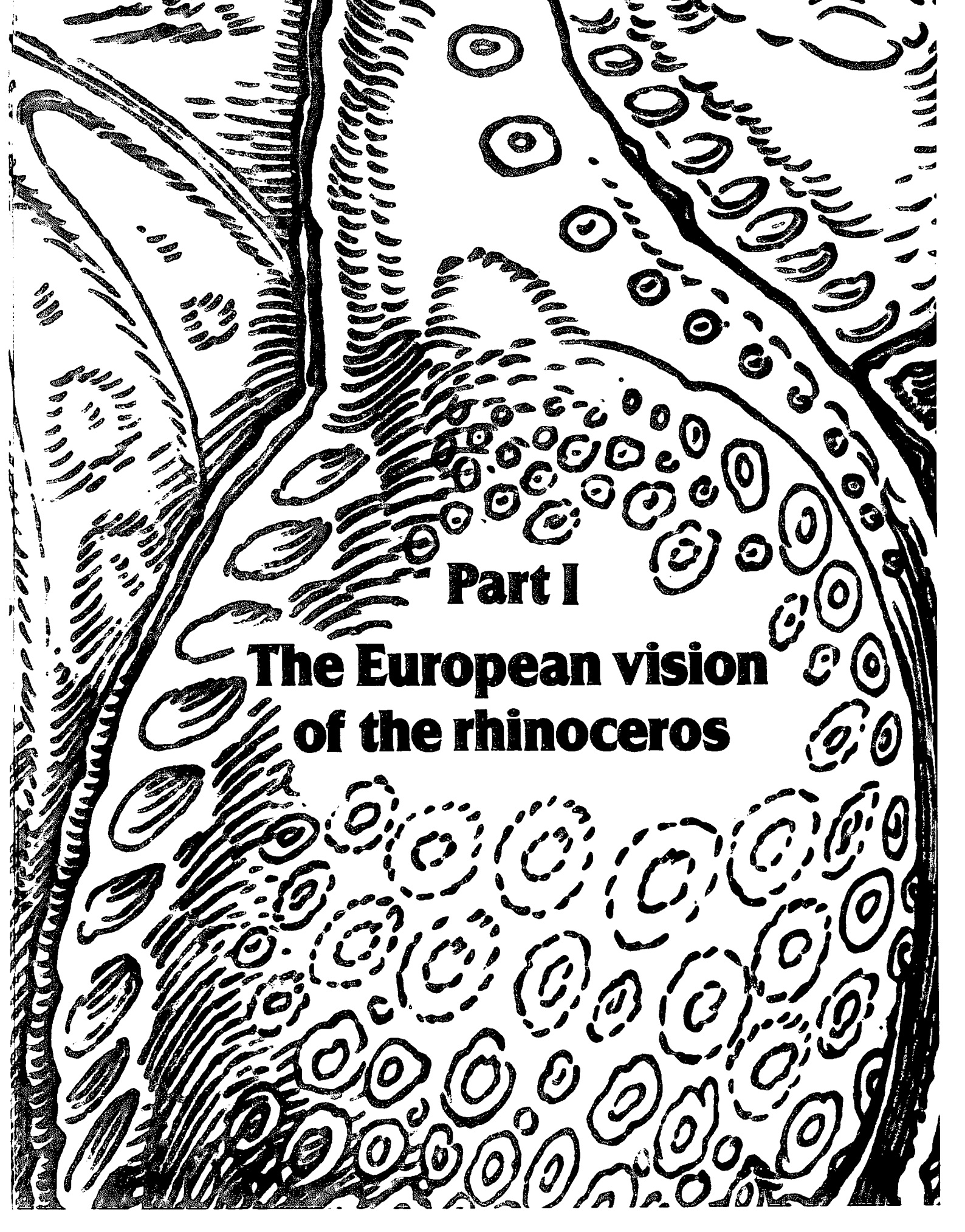
Part I, then, is devoted to a brief history of each of the eight animals that came to Europe in the years

from 1515 to 1799. A little background information is essential, but has been kept as short as possible. The curious, anxious to learn more, can follow up the references in both the notes to each chapter and the notes on the plates. Fortunately, to supplement the book there is available an excellent *Bibliography of the Rhinoceros* by L. C. Rookmaaker, published in 1983. This is prefaced by an extremely useful analysis. Each of the eight animals in the present book is accompanied in the text by its own ration of illustrations to form an iconographic sequence; here, in Part I, only the graphic arts are used – paintings, drawings and prints.

Part II deals with a whole variety of materials.

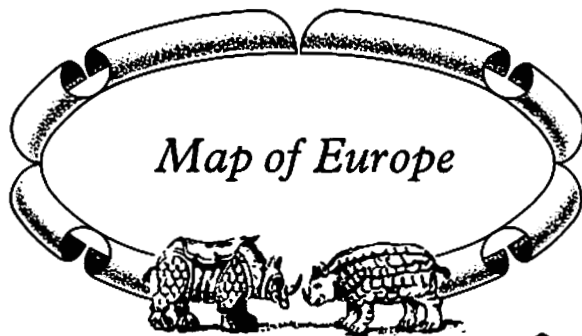
There are chapters on the rhinoceros in ceramics and glass, on tapestries and textiles, on clocks, on sculpture, furniture and weapons of war. Not only the 'Dürer' rhinoceros, but also the 'Madrid' rhinoceros and, above all, the 'Dutch' animal each play their part.

The last section, Part III, treats of special aspects of rhinocerotology under the general heading of 'Rhinocerotica'. The subjects comprise a visual record of the legendary rhinoceros/elephant animosity; the rather unexpected appearance of the rhinoceros as an allegory of most, if not all the Continents; a short chapter on pageants and fêtes; and a note on European concepts of the animal in oriental countries.



Part I

**The European vision
of the rhinoceros**



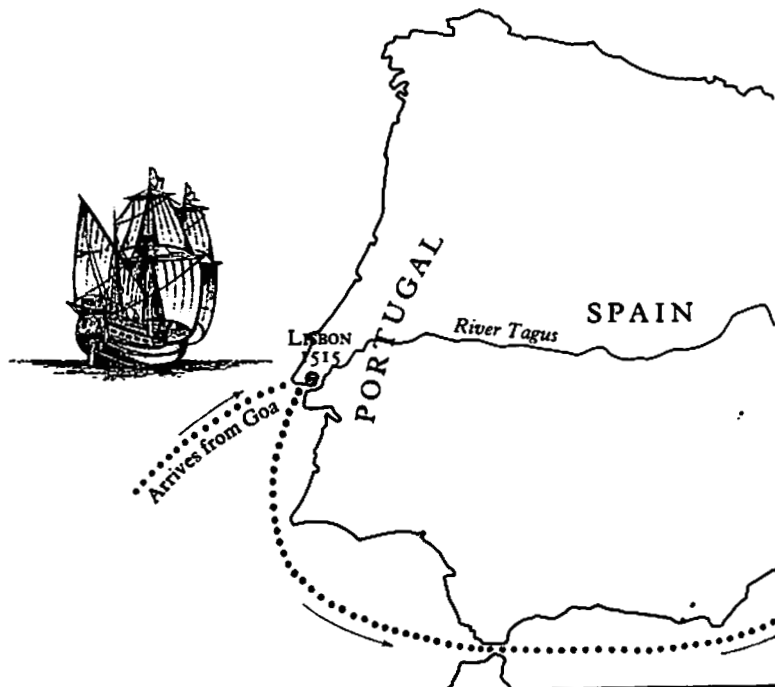
Map of Europe

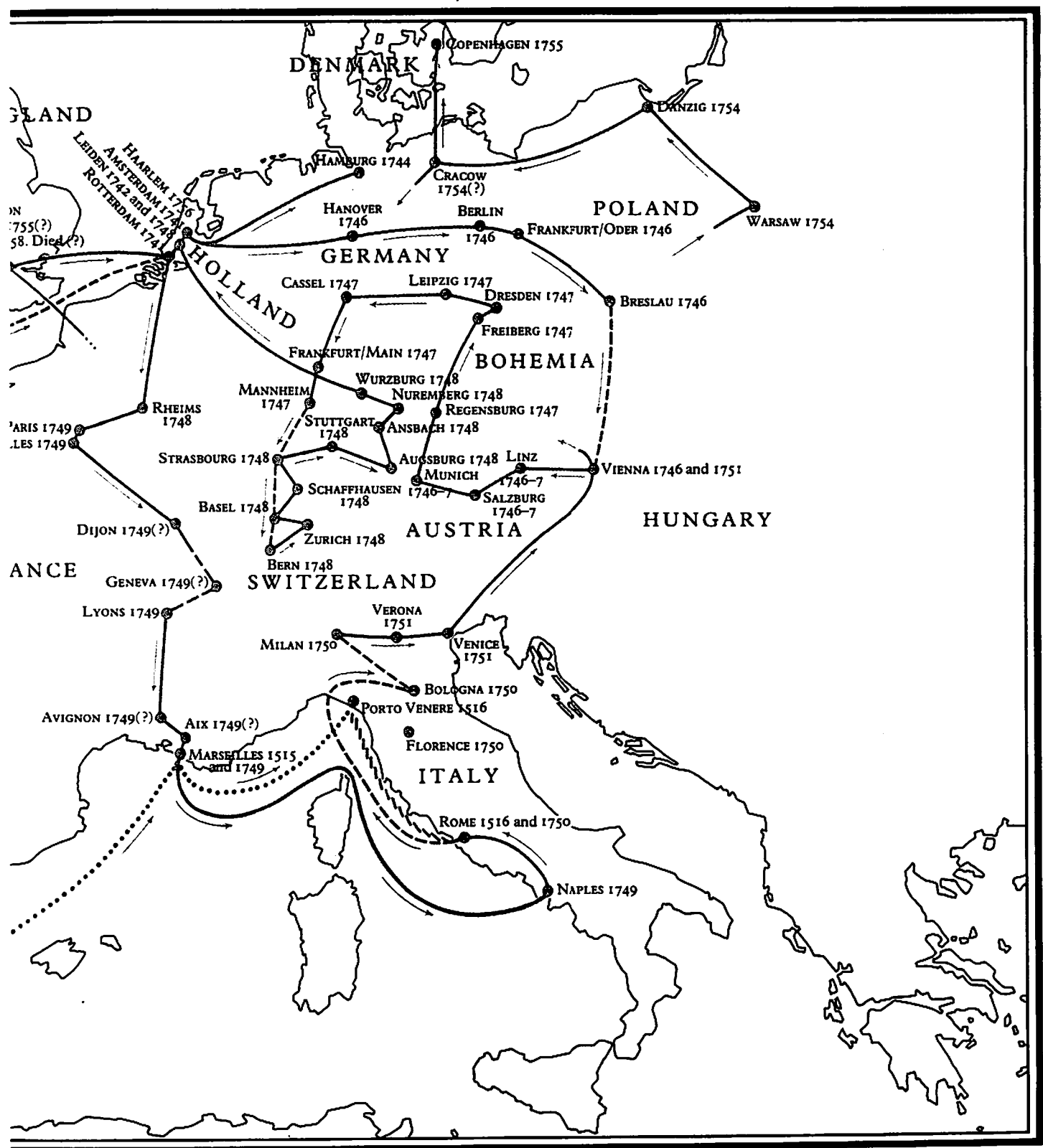


..... TRAVELS OF THE FIRST LISBON OR 'DÜRER' RHINOCEROS OF 1515-16 (see Chapter 1)



———— TRAVELS OF THE 'DUTCH' RHINOCEROS OF 1741-58 (see Chapter 4)





1

The first Lisbon or 'Dürer' rhinoceros of 1515

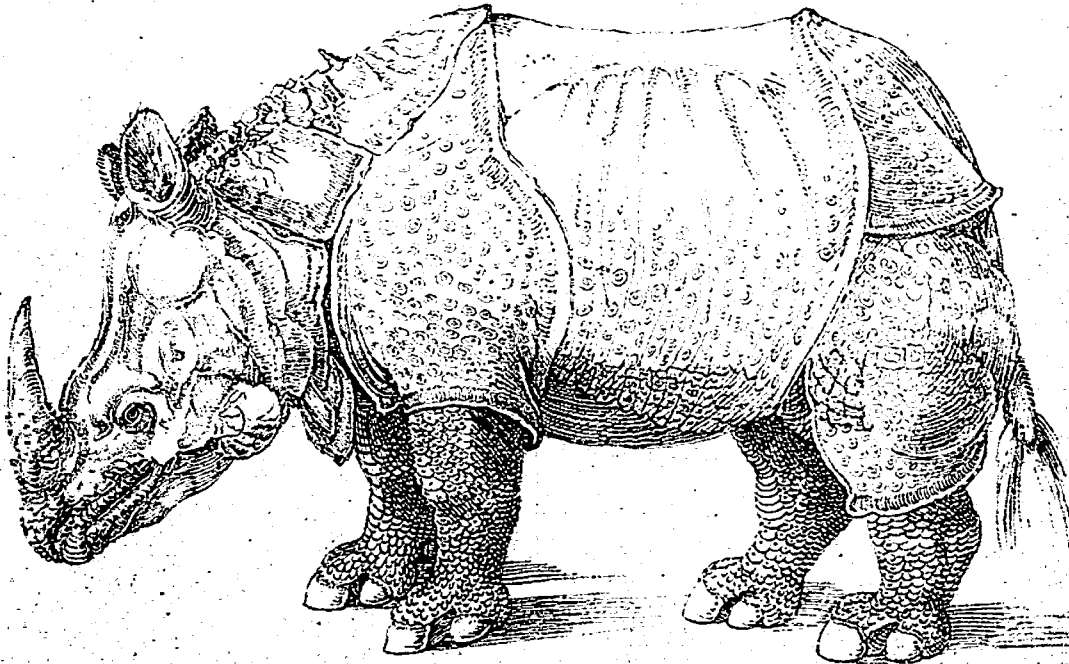
Its life, death and Dürer's woodcut

On 20 May 1515 there arrived in the Tagus estuary the Portuguese ship *Nostra Senora da Ajuda*. It had successfully completed the round journey from Lisbon to Goa and back, the *Carreira da India*, a journey of some eighteen months.¹ On board was a cargo of spices (peppers, cinnamon, myrrh, sandalwood, aloe wood, indigo, incense, rhubarb, cloves and ginger),² oriental lacquer and, surprisingly, a live rhinoceros: an animal usually referred to by the Portuguese as a *ganda*, which was its Indian (Gujarati) name. This was the first rhinoceros to reach Europe alive since the third century. Elephants had been comparatively common, from the one presented by

Harun al-Rashid to Charlemagne in 801, another given to Henry III of England in 1255 and, after a gap of nearly two centuries, small herds in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.³ But a rhinoceros would have been a novelty, except perhaps to a few learned humanists familiar with Roman coins or cameos, and to the classical scholars familiar, thanks to the invention of printing, with Pliny's pithy account. Roman mosaics in which both the African and Indian species are identifiable had not yet been uncovered.⁴ It is with the latter, the single-horned Indian animal, *Rhinoceros unicornis*, that this book is concerned.

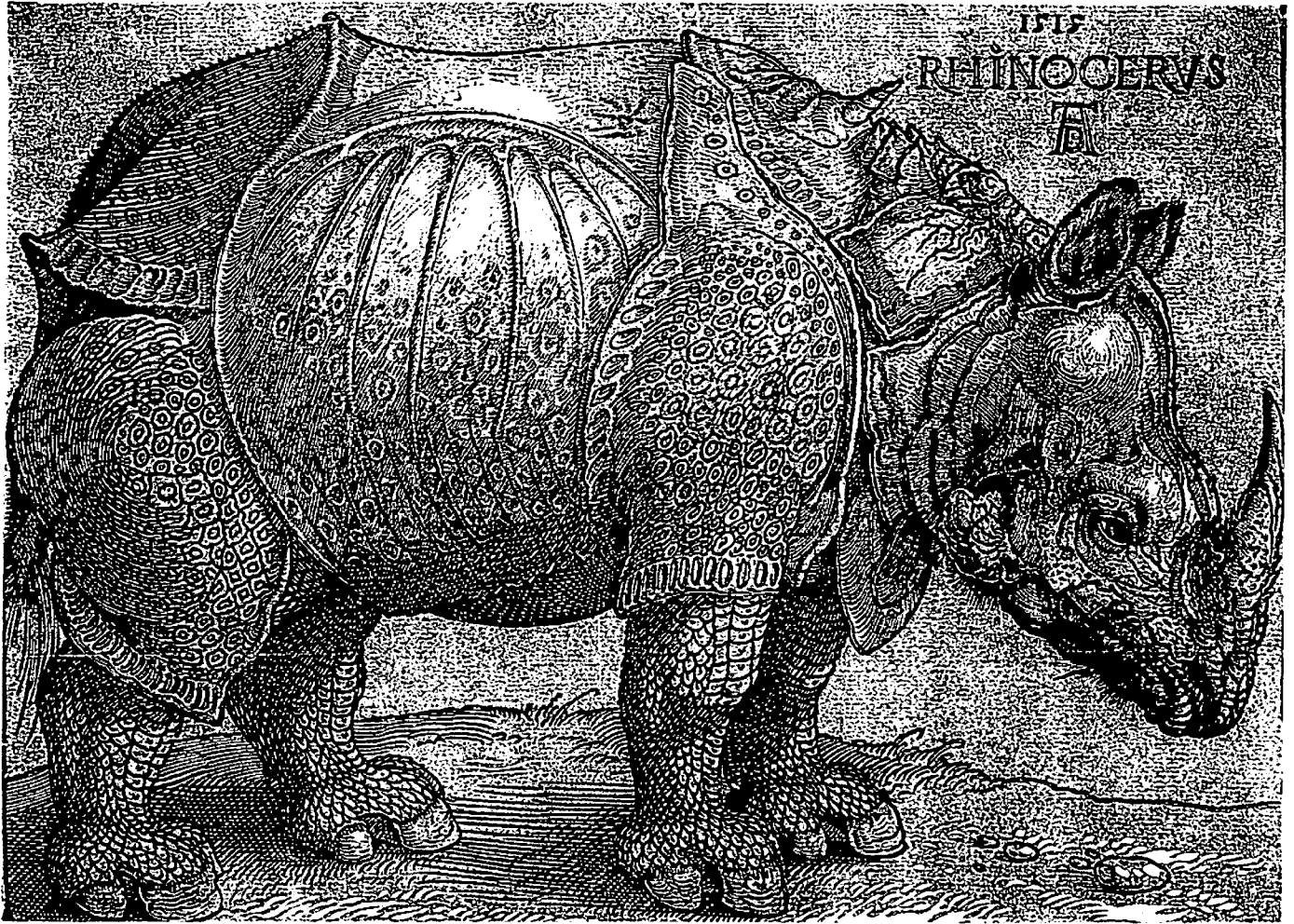
No wonder, then, that the *ganda's* fame spread rapidly throughout Europe: because of its exotic rarity, its size and shape. Lisbon supplanted Venice

RHINOCERON 1515



[Faint Latin text, likely a description or inscription related to the drawing.]

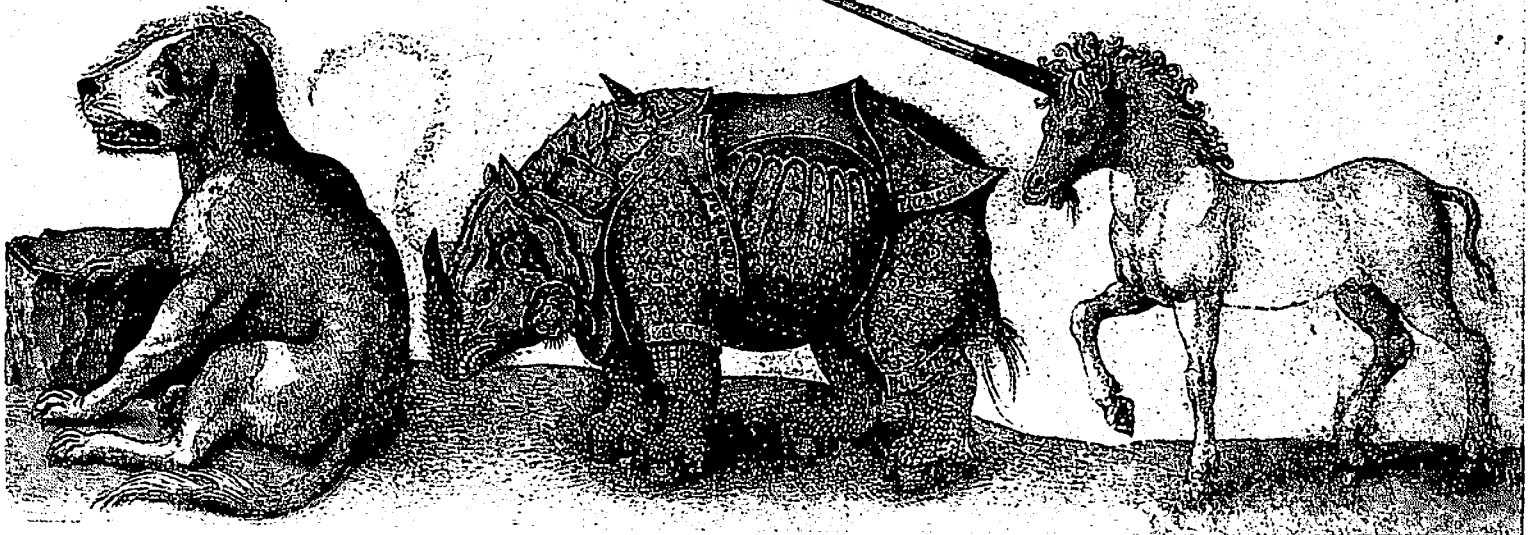
1 Albrecht Dürer, *The Rhinoceros*, drawing in pen and brown ink, 1515 (British Museum)



II Olive-green chiaroscuro woodcut of Dürer's rhinoceros by Willem Janssen, after 1620 (British Museum)

III Part of a page from Petrus Candidus, *De omnium animalium naturis atque formis*; the manuscript 1460, the illumination c. 1600 (Vatican Library)

serpentiam copia est: nullum animal ad potum
 accedere uideat: nisi unicorno precedente.



as the centre of the spice trade and as the place where new information on India and the East Indies was available. It was a hotbed of rumour and intelligence. Ever since Vasco da Gama's triumphant voyage from Lisbon to India and back in 1497–9, merchants from Italy and Germany had flocked to the Portuguese capital of Dom Manuel I, 'The Fortunate' (1495–1521). Although the loss of the spice trade by Venice (even if only temporary) was described as 'like the loss of milk to a new-born babe',⁵ the merchants, particularly the Augsburg patricians, had no qualms in deserting Venice for Lisbon. Business comes first, as always.

The rhinoceros that arrived safely in the Tagus in 1515 had been presented as a diplomatic gift to Albuquerque, governor of Portuguese India (1509–15), by Sultan Muzafar II (1511–26), ruler of the kingdom of Cambaia or Gujarat: described as a man 'given over to all manner of vice in eating and lechery', spending much of his time 'among his women, stupefied with opium'.⁶ Albuquerque wisely passed on this unwieldy pachyderm to his king, known for his exotic tastes. What is remarkable is that such an animal, a mature *ganda*⁷ with a developed nasal horn, should have survived the journey, living as it does on bulky greenstuffs. Happily it made landfall off the tower of Belem,⁸ a fortress on the Tagus water edge, on 20 May 1515. It is appropriate that the earliest sculpture of the *ganda* is to be found as a corbel below a feigned oriel on that side of the tower facing the Tagus (pl. 1). The stone head and shoulders, weatherbeaten though they are, depict the beast in a naturalistic manner, its exoticism enhanced by the Manueline detail of the twisted cord-like moulding above.

Dom Manuel, who delighted in extravagant entertainments, was determined to put to the test Pliny's account of the legendary animosity of the rhinoceros and elephant; of the latter he had a plentiful supply. A fight was arranged to take place on Trinity Sunday, 3 June 1515, in which the elephant ignominiously turned tail. But Dom Manuel also had a strong political sense. It was essential to be on good terms with Pope Leo X (1513–21), not only as a good Catholic but also for support in developing the overseas Portuguese Empire. To this end, Manuel had in March 1514 presented the Medici Leo X with an elephant, the celebrated Hanno, who was adored by the Roman



1 Stone rhinoceros, tower of Belem, near Lisbon, Portugal, c.1517

populace.⁹ Now, a year later, in 1515, he decided to part with his *ganda*, a gesture which must have cost him dear, and one which ended in disaster.

We are fully informed of the ill-fated journey by sea from Lisbon to Porto Venere by the Portuguese historian, Abel Fontoura da Costa, in his *Deambulations of the Rhinoceros* of 1937. A ship left Lisbon in December 1515, laden with gifts of silver tankards, jars and washing vessels, as well as six goblets of gold. 'Unhappy *ganda*', as da Costa calls him, was, of course, the rarest of the gifts. He (or was it a female?) was dressed like a bride or groom, with a gilt-iron chain and a green velvet collar gilt with roses and carnations. 'How dandy poor *ganda* must appear in such harness', comments our author. After a stop near an island off Marseilles,¹⁰ where the French King, Francis I (ruled 1515–47), together with his Queen, paid a state visit amid a mock battle with oranges substituted for cannonballs, the Portuguese vessel continued its voyage towards Rome. But, caught in a

severe storm off Porto Venere late in January 1516, the ship sank and the rhinoceros was drowned. The chronicler and Bishop of Nocera, Paolo Giovio (1483–1552), tells us in an English translation of 1585, *The Worthy Tract*,¹¹ that ‘it was not possible that such a beast could save itself being chayned . . . yet notwithstanding there was brought to Rome his true portraiture, and greatnes in February [1516] with information of his nature’. Another chronicler, Damião de Gois, writes that the rhinoceros was stuffed on the beach and arrived in Rome dead instead of alive. It has not been possible to verify either of these statements. King Manuel’s gift proved good intentions rather than a zoological triumph; ‘and so, in this sad manner, ended the deambulations of the *ganda* of Muzaffar, King of Cambaia’, concludes da Costa.¹²

In the physical sense this is correct; but in the European imagination the *ganda* of Cambaia is still deambulating, thanks to the brilliant and celebrated woodcut by Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528) of 1515 (pl. 2). A German authority¹³ on Dürer noted as recently as 1938 that school books had only just given up the use of the Dürer woodcut as a valid image of the beast; and another, later writer¹⁴ has gone so far as to state that ‘probably no other animal picture has exerted such a profound influence on the arts’. Despite contemporary portraits of the first Lisbon rhinoceros by other hands and despite later and more naturalistic portraits of the rhinoceroses of 1579, 1684 and 1739, the Dürer image prevailed; and it was not until the deambulations of the ‘Dutch’ animal of the mid-eighteenth century that finally it was realised by both zoologists and artists that perhaps Dürer had exaggerated certain features. Nonetheless, there were many who preferred to believe in the Dürer version for decades after it had been proved to be a work of imagination rather than of observation.

Although scholars have argued over the details of the genesis of Dürer’s woodcut, all have agreed that he never saw a living specimen, and that his drawing (happily preserved amongst the Sloane treasures in the British Museum) and woodcut were based on a sketch from Lisbon that accompanied a newsletter; probably sent by the Moravian printer, Valentim Fernandes, who had long worked in Lisbon.¹⁵ Since the Dürer drawing in brown ink (col. pl. 1, p. 17) is of rhinocerological as well as of artistic importance,

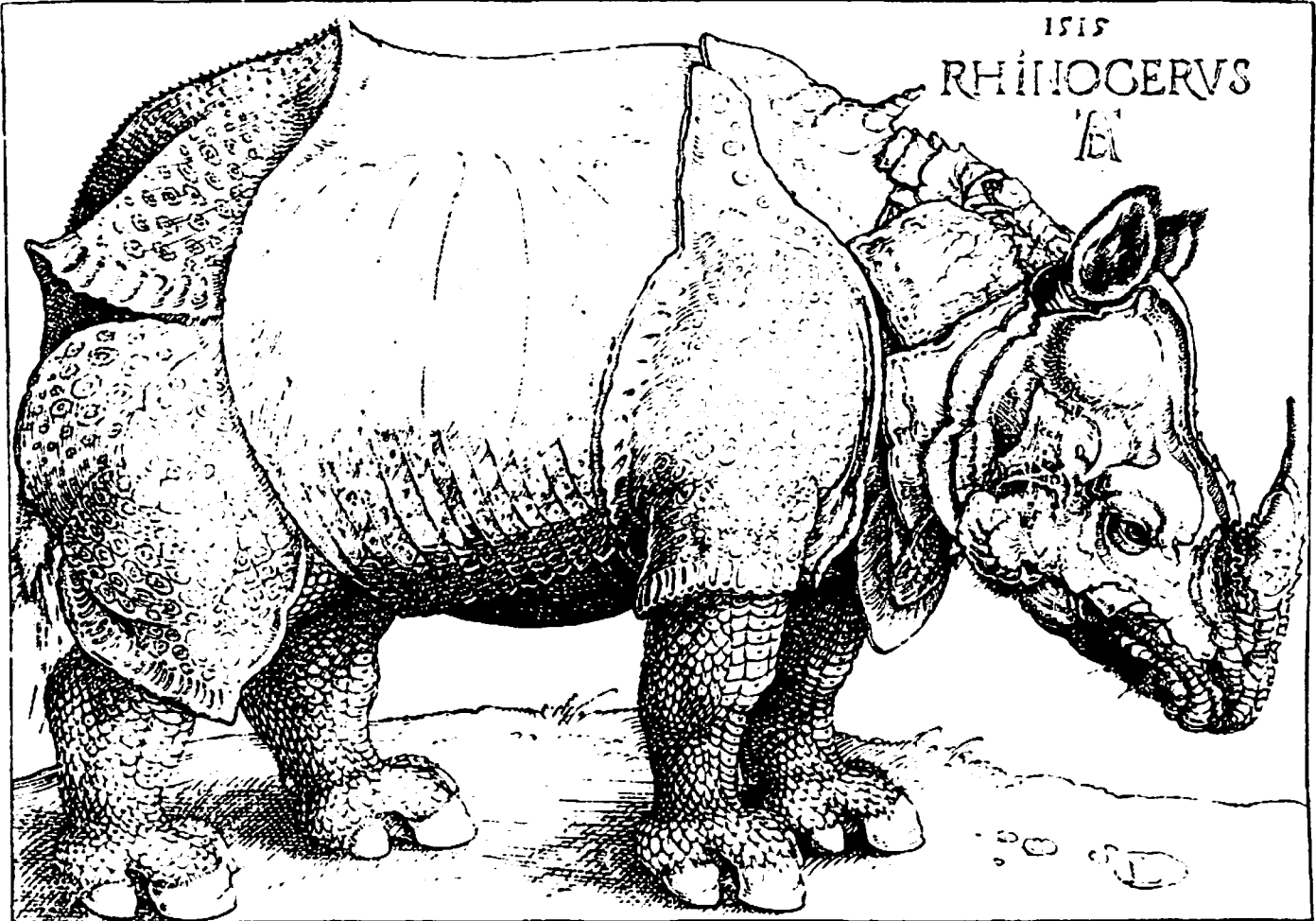
it seems appropriate to give here a translation of the German inscription. It is the work of Dr James Parsons (1705–70) published in the *Philosophical Transactions* of 1743:¹⁶

In the Year 1513¹⁷ upon the 1. Day of May, there was brought to our King at *Lisbon* such a living Beast from the *East-Indies* that is called *Rhinocerate*: Therefore on account of its Wonderfulness I thought myself obliged to send you the Representation of it. It hath the Colour of a Toad and is close covered with thick Scales in Size like an *Elephant*, but lower, and is the *Elephant*’s deadly Enemy; it hath on the fore part of its Nose a strong sharp *Horn*; and, when this Beast comes near the *Elephant* to fight with him, he always first whets his Horn upon the Stones; and runs at the *Elephant* with his *Head* between his fore Legs; then rips up the *Elephant* where he hath the thinnest Skin, and so gores him: The *Elephant* is terribly afraid of the *Rhinocerate*; for he gores him always, where-ever he meets an *Elephant*; for he is well armed, and is very alert and nimble. This Beast is called *Rhinocero*, in *Greek* and *Latin*; but, in *Indian*, *Gomda*.

Here we have the usual classical misconceptions and legends that were to be repeated *ad nauseam*. They recur in the inscription above the woodcut with slight variations.

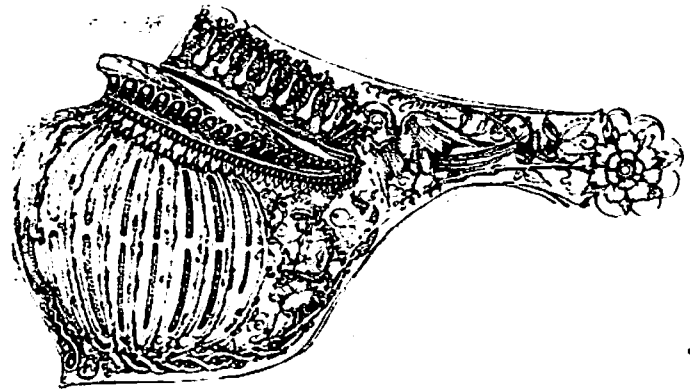
Clearly a newsletter and sketch came into the hands of Dürer in Nuremberg; similar letters and sketches were also in circulation elsewhere, as we shall see later. But no one else portrayed the rhinoceros in such an idiosyncratic manner. We know that Dürer shared with many of his age in the fascination of the exotic; and we know of his close relationship with the armourers of Nuremberg. These two facts are answer enough as to why he made the woodcut. As for the exotic, Dürer wrote in his notebook after his journey to the Netherlands in 1520–1, where he saw for himself a group of Mexican works of art, that ‘they were all much fairer to behold than any marvel’.¹⁸ But the connection with armour is what gives the woodcut its outstanding feature. Dürer lived in the street next to the armourers’ quarter (the *Schmiedegasse*), and he was actively engaged in designing armour. There is a drawing of a visor in the Albertina, Vienna (pl. 3), dated in a later hand 1517, that bears a remarkable similarity to elements of the rhinoceros’s ribcage with

17. Ich Chrijstus geurt 1511. Jar. Ab. 1. May. Hat man in dem großmichtigen König von Portugal Ein unall gar Lisboa nach auß India ein sollich lebendig Thier. Das nennen sie Rhinoceros. Das ist hie mit aller feiner gefaltt beschriben. Es hat ein feid reit ein gepackte Schildtrier. Und ist es dicken Schalen überlegt fast stift. Und ist in der groß als der Schilde. Ist in der macht gar starker und fast verhältig. Es hat ein schwarzes Horn vom auff der nase. Das begynde es allweg zu wechsen was es herflamen ist. Das dinstig Thier ist des Schilffahrt fähig. Der Schilffahrt sucht es fast recht. Dann es es zu ankumet so laufft In das Thier mit dem Kopff zwischen dre foidern parr und reißt den Schilffahrt vnder am pauch auff zu erweigt In des mag es sich mit erweim. Dann das Thier ist also gewapent das In der Schilffahrt nicht kan thun. Sie sagen auch das der Rhinoceros Schmelt, starck und listig sey.



2 Albrecht Dürer, *The Rhinoceros*, woodcut, first edition, 1515 (British Museum)

3 Albrecht Dürer, *Visor for a Jousting Helm*, drawing in pen and brown ink, c. 1515 (Albertina, Vienna)





4 Engraving from Albrecht Herport, *Neue Ost-Indianische Reisebeschreibung*, Bern 1669 (British Library)

its elongated ovals; and details such as the band of ovolos as an ornamental decoration to the edges of the animal's folds above the legs and on the rump are echoed in the band of the ovals on the upper part of the visor.¹⁹ No wonder that the colloquial name for the Indian rhinoceros in German is *Panzernashorn*. One can almost hear the creaking of the iron plates as they slowly grind against each other.

It must be admitted that there have been critics of Dürer's vision, but these have come from natural and

not art historians. Of the first it is worth quoting again Dr Parsons, writing in 1743. He complains of Dürer's imitators who 'have exceeded him in adorning their Figures with Scales, Scallops and other fictitious Forms'. But a modern zoological historian of note maintains that the woodcut 'envisages the distinctive congruity of the animal better than later ones executed from life'.²⁰ James Byam Shaw says much the same: 'considering that he had never seen it, it seems to me that Dürer has caught the character of

the animal remarkably well, even if he has misinterpreted some of the anatomical detail'.²¹

The unqualified success of the Dürer woodcut may have been due as much to chance as to genius. For only one, the first, edition appeared during the lifetime of the artist, who died in 1528. This 1515 issue was succeeded by two others published in the decade from 1540 to 1550; it was these which seem to have had a particularly penetrating effect. Two further issues have been traced to the late sixteenth century. There follow two more editions printed in Holland, still from the original block, which gradually developed a crack in the hind legs and damage to the line border. Finally, there appears the chiaroscuro edition of W. Janssen, printed in Amsterdam after 1620 with a variety of ground colours.²² Of the two in the British Museum, we illustrate here (col. pl. II, p. 18) the one with an olive-green ground.²³

The persistence of the Dürer image in sculpture, tapestries, ceramics and other applied arts is stressed in Part II of this book; here, a few more purely graphic examples should be noted. Perhaps the most colourful of all depictions is contained in a manuscript of the mid-fifteenth century, a treatise on natural history by Petrus Candidus, *De omnium animalium naturis atque formis*. This was illuminated towards the end of the sixteenth century. Colour plate III (p. 18) shows the illumination at the bottom of a page: to the left a puppy, to the right a unicorn,²⁴ and in the centre a remarkably accurate *ganda* after the Dürer woodcut. But it is the colouring that is so remarkable, showing a fantasy of invention that is a delight to the eye.²⁵

As for the endlessly repetitive and pirated illustrations of the rhinoceros in the classical compendiums of natural history so popular in the sixteenth century – Sebastian Münster's *Cosmographiae* (1544), Conrad Gesner's earlier *Historiae animalium* (1551), André Thevet's *La Cosmographie universelle* (1575) and others of the same type – the interested reader is referred to F. J. Cole's article on 'The history of Albrecht Dürer's rhinoceros in zoological literature' of 1953.²⁶ Here it is worth quoting from the Rev. Edward Topsell's *The Historie of Foure-footed Beastes* of 1607 for an extract of his description of the rhinoceros as 'a beast in every way admirable; both for the outward shape, quantity, and greatnesse, and also for inward courage, disposition, and mild-

ness . . . above all other creatures they love Virgins'.

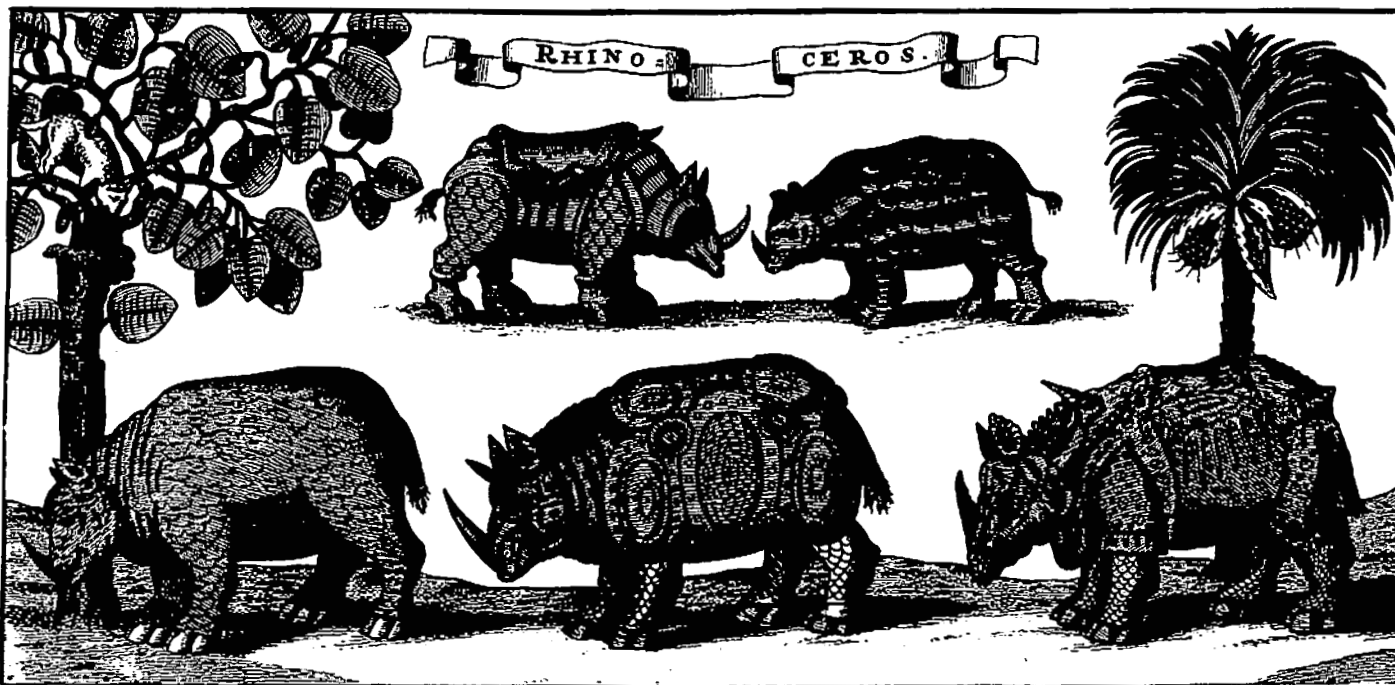
The countless travel books must be ignored (for lack of space), with the exception of two untypical examples. The first (pl. 4) is a plate from Albrecht Herport's *Neue Ost-Indianische Reisebeschreibung*, published in 1669. The author had the temerity to pose Dürer's pachyderm together with an ostrich and various allegorical figures on a kind of floating island off the Cape of Good Hope: a one-horned nose in the country of the double horn! The second illustration (pl. 5) comes from a slightly later work, François Leguat's *Voyage et aventures* of 1708. His party arrived at the Cape in 1698, where he was unfortunate not to see a live rhinoceros, although he writes that 'my Friends that had seen of them, laugh'd at all the Figures the Painters gave of them, and which are here subjoin'd for Curiosities sake. Certainly nothing can be more Comical, than so many pretended Embossings; all which however is fabulous'.

Other images of the first Lisbon rhinoceros

From the title of the first part of this chapter it might justifiably be thought that Dürer alone produced a likeness of the Indian rhinoceros that sailed up the Tagus in May 1515. But this was not the case, for there were other artists and illustrators attracted by this exotic theme.

First in the field was Giovanni Giacomo Penni, a Florentine doctor.²⁷ On 13 July 1515 he published in Rome an account of the rhinoceros in twenty-one verses of *ottava rima*, with a woodcut of a rhinoceros on the cover below the title, *Forma e natura e costumi de lo Rinocerothe* (pl. 6). Dr Penni was remarkably well informed, his source probably coming from a member of one of the numerous Florentine merchants familiar with the Lisbon scene. The woodcut shows a sympathetic, naive creature, with beady eyes, its fore-legs hobbled and chained, its folds of skin clothing it like a surcoat, the ribs, which in Dürer's woodcut have been likened to the spokes of an umbrella, are here more like an uncomfortable saddle. The source of the design may well have been a drawing from Lisbon, one not so far removed from the one used by Dürer.

What is noteworthy is the speed with which Dr Penni got into print; a tribute to the intense interest



5 François Leguat, *Voyage et aventures . . . en deux isles desertes des Indes orientales*, London 1708 (British Library)

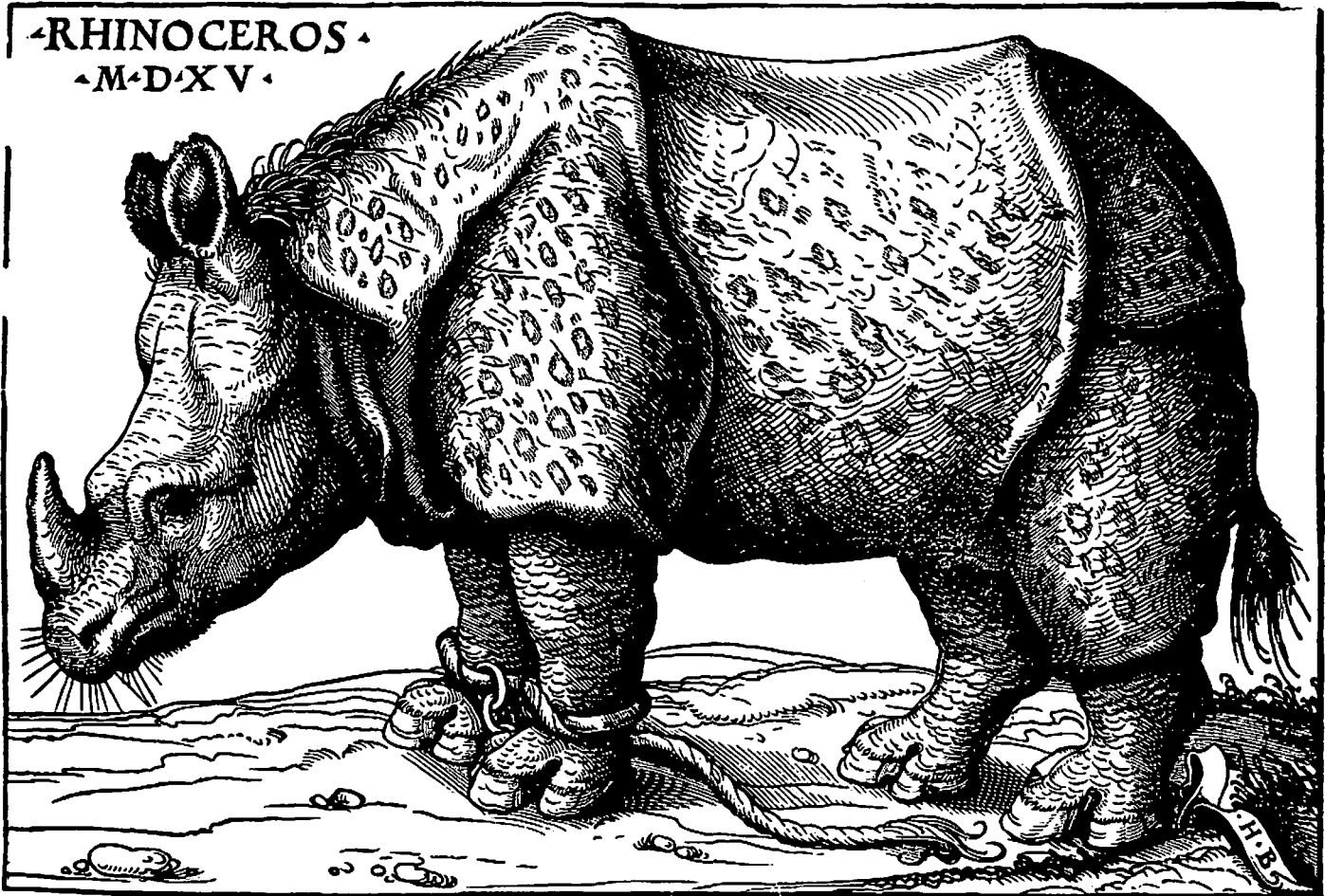
6 Giovanni Giacomina Penni, title-page, Rome, 13 July 1515 (Bibliotheca Colombina, Seville)

**Forma ⁊ natura ⁊ costumi de lo Rinocero,
che stato condotto importogallo dal Capita-
nio de larmata del Re ⁊ altre belle cose con-
dutte dalle insule nouamente trouate.**



in the exotic and indeed to the curiosity of the humanists for knowledge of the newly discovered East. The rhinoceros arrived in Lisbon on 20 May, and the contrived fight with the elephant only took place on 3 June, an event not mentioned by the Florentine doctor: not surprising, since the poem was published on 13 July.

Also in 1515, in the imperial free city of Augsburg, was produced the second great German woodcut of the Lisbon *ganda*. It was the work of Hans Burgkmair (1473–1531), friend of Dürer (pl. 7). It has survived in a single copy in the Albertina.²⁸ Slightly larger than Dürer's, Burgkmair's animal is less fanciful, more down-to-earth. Scholars have long argued over the relationship between the two. Were they both derived from the same or at any rate similar drawing sent from Lisbon? And whose work was first published? Commercial relations between Augsburg and Lisbon were very close. Copper from the Fugger mines was exchanged in Lisbon for silk, carpets, spices and precious stones; from which one might argue that Augsburg had priority in receiving news of the Lisbon animal, and possibly too of receiving a drawing. But this is mere speculation.



7 Hans Burgkmair, *Rhinoceros*, woodcut, 1515 (Albertina, Vienna)

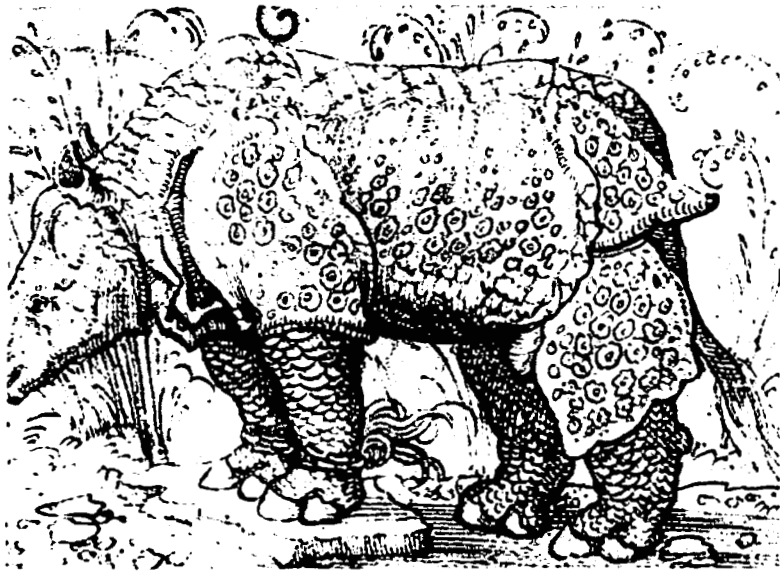
What is undeniable are the many similarities between the Dürer drawing and the Burgkmair woodcut. Stance, tail, proportions, bulk, spread-out toes are common features. What is noticeable is the absence of the 'Dürer hornlet' on the withers and the presence of rope and chain, which bind the forelegs. Further, the horn is shorter, the facial expression gentler, the markings both of body and legs less stylised than in Dürer's drawing. Why Burgkmair's likeness seems, from the evidence of only a single survival, to have been a comparative failure is something of a mystery. Apart from a single woodcarving in a church at Minden in North Germany,²⁹ it had apparently little iconographic effect.

Another early likeness of a rhinoceros is drawn in red ink in the lower margin of the Emperor Max-

imilian's prayerbook of about 1520 (pl. 8). This particular drawing has been attributed to Albrecht Altdorfer (c.1480–1538), but is more likely to be by another artist of this school.³⁰ The creature seems to combine elements of both the Burgkmair and Dürer woodcuts. Fettered as in the former, but with the Dürer hornlet, it has a band of lozenge-shaped markings along the spinal ridge that is a novel addition.

One of the most intriguing of the early non-Dürer rhinoceros images was painted about 1517 by Francesco Granacci (1477–1543), a Florentine artist.³¹ Slightly enlarged in pl. 9, it walks slowly in the background of 'Joseph and his Brethren in Egypt', with the city of Cairo depicted as a Tuscan renaissance town. With its lowered head, as though sweeping up the parched Cairene earth like a vacuum cleaner, it

THE EUROPEAN VISION OF THE RHINOCEROS



8 Detail from the Emperor Maximilian's prayerbook, drawing in red ink, c.1520 (Bibliothèque Municipale, Besançon)

9 Francesco Granacci, detail from *Joseph and His Brethren in Egypt*, oil on wood, c.1517 (Uffizi, Florence)



could have been derived from a live animal; because exotic animals for the Sultan's menagerie in Constantinople were shipped from the East via Egypt, and thence onwards by land or sea. It would not be surprising to find the single-horned Indian rhinoceros in the land of the double-horned African beast. We know that some years later an Indian rhinoceros was observed in Aleppo in North Syria on its way to the animal market in Constantinople; this was in April 1575.³² It had walked either all the way from India or perhaps only from Egypt, having made the first part of the journey by ship. But all this is mere fancy, since there is no evidence that Granacci was ever in Egypt. His model, it would seem, was very close to that used by the Florentine Dr Penni: indeed, it might have been derived from the same drawing sent from Lisbon. Points of similarity are the arched back (so different from the Dürer and Burgkmair woodcuts), the form of the folds of skin (in particular the irregular dark markings), the chained forelegs, the wide spacing of the hind legs. But one depiction of

it was by a hack draughtsman (admittedly not without a certain charm), the other by a professional painter.

A final rhinocerotoc image concludes the early portrayals. This forms part of a group of mainly exotic animals designed by Raphael, and painted probably by a pupil, Giovanni da Udine (1487-1564), in the background of a fresco in the Vatican Loggia (pl. 10). The subject is the Creation of the Animals on the fifth day. Only the head, part of the neck and the forelegs are visible, in profile to the right of a palm tree, which is flanked by a camel and elephant, perhaps Hanno. The source may well be close to those used by Penni and Granacci, since the head has similar markings and is not dissimilar in general shape. This profile head, painted about 1519, set a fashion that was followed by many painters of the next century and a half; but in these later paintings the head invariably is set on the extreme left of the picture.

The ignorance which still exists as to the sources of these early rhinoceros portraits may one day be clarified by the discovery of a drawing originating in Portugal, a drawing such as is mentioned in the Dürer inscription. Meanwhile, we can only hazard guesses. What is certain is that, apart from the Dürer woodcut, none of the other images discussed here had more than passing influence on the European idea of the rhinoceros. It is always the woodcut of 1515 that overwhelms its rivals.



10 *The Creation of the Animals*, detail from Raphael's Loggia in the Vatican, c.1519

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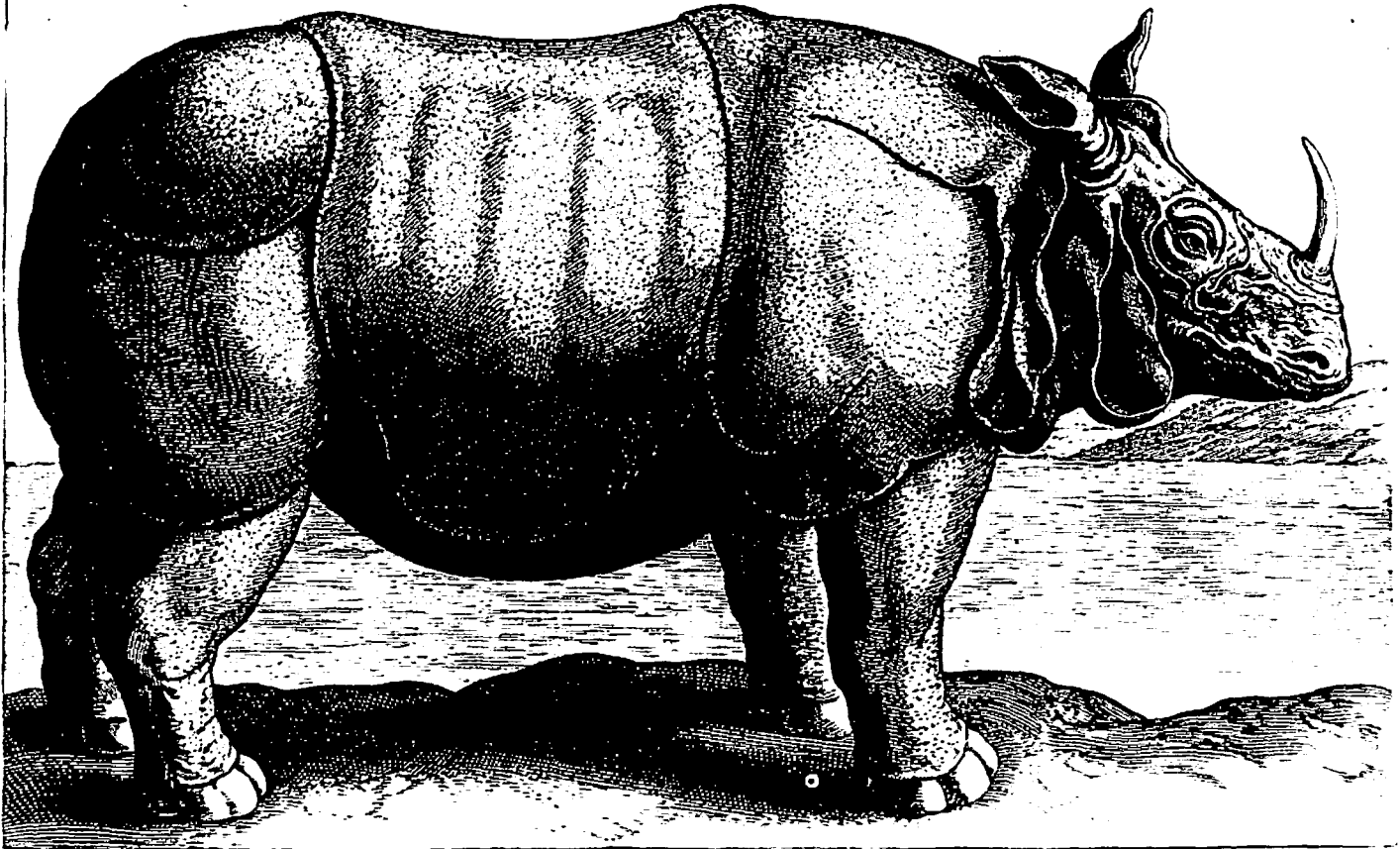
The 'Madrid' rhinoceros of c. 1579-87

After the astonishing success of Albrecht Dürer's woodcut of the rhinoceros or *ganda* of 1515, it is almost presumptuous to present a challenger, however lightweight. But there was such a challenger some sixty-five years later, one that has largely been ignored by rhinocerotologists and that is almost unknown to the art historian.¹ The reason for this neglect lies not so much in the paucity of graphic material as in the fact that this material has remained unrecognised. This deficiency has been recently rectified, first by the publication in 1974² of an engraving by Philippe Galle (1537-1612), dated 1586 (pl. 11); and by the publication here (col. pl. iv, p. 35) of a watercolour miniature in a volume of drawings said

to have been prepared for the Emperor Rudolf II of Prague (ruled 1576-1612) at about the same date.

Of this second rhinoceros to arrive alive in Europe, referred to in most contemporary chronicles as an *abada* or *bada*, there exist many entertaining accounts.³ It has been called the 'Madrid' rhinoceros, the more easily to distinguish it from its predecessor of 1515: both in fact were imported by the Portuguese from India to Lisbon in the first instance. The Madrid connection is seen in the succinct account by the observant and unusually accurate Dutch traveller, Jan Huyghen van Linschoten (1563-1611), who relates how 'in the year 1581, as King Phillip was at Lisbon, there was a Rhinoceros and an Elephant

RHINOCEROS.



PHILIPPVS GALLAEVS SPECTATOR (B.S.)

Cum Ioannes Hofmannus Philippus II. Hispaniarum rex Sardiniam, ut uti omnino generis elegantiarum, ita et rerum naturalium summus admirator, rhinoceros hanc imaginem ad vitam animae suae huiusmodi descriptionem curasset, cum in Belgium venire, necnon liberatior commutaretur, agnosceret, ut eandem mea manu in se incidere et meo stylo pingere faceret. Haud enim nostro orbi rarissime visa et iniquam faciem quod frum, et aliis, pulchra, aut typo vere delineata. Ex India hoc animalis descriptionem accepimus, unde Madragum in silum ablatum, status annu agens deo sum certum. Corpus totius animalis a rostro ad caudam extrema longitudine absteron pedum continet. Hispani nomine abada appellant. Quibus abas, quoniam abas dicitur, quod in omnia huiusmodi animalia, ut in Sardiniam Pinium, Atacam, Oppidum, aut si munit unum Garamum dicitur, in hac Quadrupediata natura. Hoc animal h. v. Garam ab Haro, magis recentiorum rerum, Indiarum scriptores. Inscriptio CTS 15 LXXXV.

11 Philippe Galle, *Rhinoceros*, engraving, Antwerp 1586 (Private collection)

brought him out of India for a present, and he caused them both to be led with him unto Madrid, where the Spanish Court is holden'.⁴ Filippo Sassetti (1540-88), Iberian agent for the Florentine Capponi family from 1578 to 1581, mentions the *bada* in a letter dated 15 February 1579 and informs his employers of 'the marvel that is the Rinoceronte ... beyond the imagination of anyone who has not seen it', comparing it in its uniqueness even to Petrarch's Laura.⁵ Yet another chronicler refers to the *abada* in Lisbon as a creature 'as admirable among the works of nature

... as in the Tower of Belem [our pl. 1] amongst the works of artifice'.⁶

What, one may ask, was 'King Phillip' doing in 'Lisbone' rather than in Madrid? The answer is political. The Portuguese King Sebastian and the flower of the Portuguese aristocracy had been slain or captured in the battle of Alcázarquivir, which ended in 1578 the disastrous crusade against the Moors. In Portugal there was left a power vacuum; which Philip II of Spain was able to fill by the use of diplomatic skill and with the minimum of blood-

shed. From 1580 until 1640 the two colonial empires of Spain and Portugal were united under the Spanish king; not so the administration. Philip had the intelligence to move his court from Madrid to Lisbon for three years, so soothing the pride of his new subjects. The gift of the two pachyderms, it appears, was some little consolation for his absence from home. At least the union with Portugal broke the monopoly in the supply of the Indian elephant and rhinoceros, which had been used by Portugal as diplomatic gifts; much in the manner in which Louis xv distributed large services of Sèvres porcelain from the 1750s to friendly rulers.

When Philip II returned to Madrid in 1583, the two large beasts, of which we are told he had become fond, left Lisbon for the Spanish capital at about the same time. There was no sign of animosity between the two beasts. Our witness, Fray Juan de San Geronimo,⁷ records their arrival in Madrid, where the rhinoceros was housed in a street still called *la calle Abada*. Since Philip II spent much time in the Escorial (completed in 1584), the two animals would be invited there for the entertainment of the Court. Thus, on 9 October 1583 the elephant was summoned by royal command, so that the priests too might have the opportunity of seeing it in a quiet garden. A week later, on 16 October 1583, it was the turn of the *abada*. The weather was hot so that after a copious drink it lay down and played. It is an animal 'curious, melancholy and sad', comments the friar, adding that it can also be dangerous. In fact, it seems to have shared many of the characteristics of its master, Philip II.

In April 1584 the *abada* was seen by the first Japanese embassy of four noble youths, on their way to visit the Pope: a propaganda triumph for the Portuguese Jesuits.⁸ Another visit to the Escorial was related by Vincent le Blanc,⁹ unfortunately undated, but with a ring of truth.

At the *Escorial* in *Spain* I saw [a Rhinocerot] that was brought from the Indies; but because he had overturned a Chariot full of Nobility, though fortunately no harm was done, the King commanded his eyes should be put out, and his horn cut off. . . . The Duke of *Medina* advised the King to kill him with a musket, because he had maimed a Gentleman of his . . . his eyes were put out and his horn cut off.

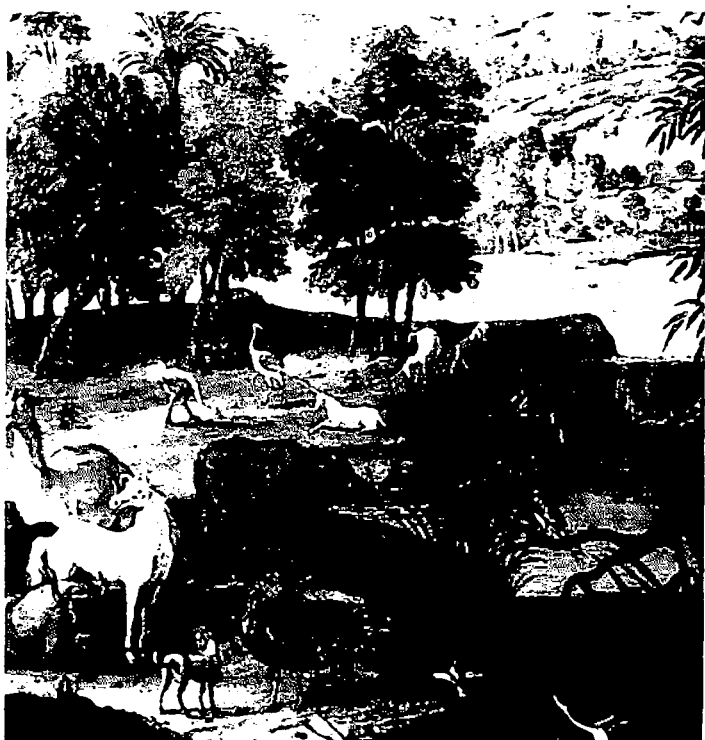
If the above account is true, then this accident must have taken place after the publication in Antwerp in 1586 of the engraving by Philippe Galle, for there is no sign in the print (pl. 11) of the indignities to which the *abada* had been subjected. Despite the Spanish persecutions in Antwerp, at least the industry of printmaking continued to flourish, in particular under the aegis of Galle and his family, working from their headquarters 'in the White Lily' ('In de Witte Lelie'). This very rare print is of the highest importance in tracing the iconography of the rhinoceros in Europe, for it represents the first serious rival to the Dürer monopoly.¹⁰

The long Latin legend to the print relates how a drawing (or painting) from the life was brought to Flanders by King Philip's chaplain, Joannes Moflinius, and shown to Galle who considered it worthy of engraving on copper and having it then published by his firm. One point of interest in Galle's description of the *abada* is its age – thirteen. This would account for the length of the horn, but not for its exaggerated thinness. As for Galle's engraving, one must remember that, like Dürer's woodcut, it was prepared not from the life but at secondhand. Nonetheless, the result is considerably more naturalistic than Dürer's woodcut, even if aesthetically it is of quite a different order. The Galle animal has nothing of Dürer in it. We are presented with a lumpish, porcine creature with deep folds of fleshy skin hanging, like empty pouches, from below its ear. The features which distinguish it from any other rhinocerot image are the expression of its head and, above all, the peculiar shape of the overlapping folds of skin surrounding its ribcage, like a lobed lappet. The columnar legs are another distinct feature. It is not an attractive animal.

Oddly, the Galle image did not succeed in penetrating zoological literature of a serious kind, but it did have a following, not only in the graphic arts, but also in sculpture and the applied arts, as we shall see in later chapters. Where a knowledge of the Antwerp print of 1586 can be of real importance to the art historian is in helping to date a large group of mostly Netherlandish paintings with subjects derived from mythology or, even more frequently, from the Old Testament. The story of Orpheus and the animals is an example of the first group; of the second there are many more subjects in which a rhinoceros is likely

drawing by Albert Flamen (1620-c.1693) in the Royal Library in Brussels (pl. 14). Here the *abada*, seen from the rear starboard quarter instead of broadside, breaks into a trot, cumbersome as ever. Flamen would have done better to stick to his birds and fishes, at which he was more adept.¹³

Compared to this trivial drawing, the watercolour of the Indian rhinoceros on col. pl. iv and its companion elephant of pl. 15 are historically, iconographically and aesthetically of the highest importance.¹⁴ They comprise the first two pages of a collection of German and Flemish drawings, mostly of natural history, mounted on some 170 pages of paper in a large album bound in green-stained vellum. Such bindings are reputed to have been made for the Emperor Rudolf of Prague (acceded 1578, moved his court to Prague in 1583, died in 1612), and to have been kept in his Treasury (*Schatzkammer*) rather than in his library. This spectacular volume of draw-



12 Jacob Bouittats, detail from *Paradise*, oil on panel, signed and dated 1700 (Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Munich)

13 Anonymous, detail from *The Creation*, Flemish School, c.1580 (Musée des Beaux Arts, Château des Rohans, Strasbourg)

to appear, ranging from the Creation to Adam and Eve in Paradise and to the succeeding episodes of the story of Noah and the Ark. The presence of the Galle rhinoceros in such a painting ensures that it cannot date from before 1586. The reverse, of course, does not hold true: that the presence of the Dürer *ganda* entails a date before 1586. The two interpretations continue in amicable rivalry until well into the eighteenth century. Here we have only room to include one specimen of each type. First, a detail from Jacob Bouittats's *Paradise* of 1700,¹¹ an obvious derivation from the Galle engraving, although the nasal horn is, quite rightly, very much thicker (pl. 12). Second, an anonymous painting of *The Creation* of c. 1575 with a pair of Dürer animals in the centre background,¹² sadly unable to prevent Adam and Eve from eating the fatal apple (pl. 13).

That Galle's rhinoceros later developed poses other than a merely static one is shown by the amusing





14 Albert Flamen, a group of exotic, European and mythological animals, watercolour, c. 1660 (Bibliothèque Royale Albert I^{er}, Brussels)

15 Miniature of an Indian elephant, watercolour on vellum, ?Flemish, c. 1585-95; pair to col. pl. IV (Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna)

ings has only recently begun to be the subject of serious study; five of the drawings were exhibited in the Albertina in the summer of 1985. That so many have remained unpublished would have pleased Rudolf, who was usually unwilling to display his treasures. His was a secret character; almost secret this and other volumes from his library have remained, even since their transference to the Imperial Library in Vienna in 1783.

Present opinion is that this volume of natural history drawings was put together in Prague. Many

Flemish artists are represented, some, like the painter of the two watercolours here mentioned, remaining for the time being anonymous. The rhinoceros and elephant can have been painted only in Lisbon or Madrid: they do not have the feeling that they are copied from drawings. To me there is little doubt that these are portraits from the life of the 'Madrid' rhinoceros, drawn either in Lisbon between 1579 and 1583, or in Madrid later, probably by a Flemish artist. That they have the place of honour in the album might be because they were a gift from Philip II to



Rudolf II, each a Habsburg. Philip is sure to have known of Rudolf's liking, almost passion for the rhinoceros, of which he owned countless horns, both plain and carved. For example, the inventory of Rudolf's *Kunsthammer* of 1607-11 begins with three pages of descriptions of such objects.

The most remarkable feature of the watercolour of the rhinoceros is its likeness to nature. The animal may well have been sketched in Madrid in its stall in *la calle Abada*, as was the elephant which had separate quarters. Only one feature is unusual: the absence of the horizontal fold of skin that divides its rear section into two parts. Possibly the stubby nasal horn gives a clue to the date of the portrait. The Galle engraving has a long thin horn, and the inscription, as already noted, gives its age as thirteen. Such a short horn belies the stated age. Can it be, perhaps, that the story of its horn being amputated was true, and that this stubby horn was the beginning of a new growth? For the rhinoceros often rubs off its horn in captivity, and a new one grows in its place, as was the case with the 'Dutch' animal painted by Longhi in 1751 to be mentioned later. If this was the case, then the date of the portrait may well be later than supposed, possibly in the late 1580s, by which time the horn cut off earlier had time to grow again. Had the Emperor Rudolf not had such a strong objection to showing his collections, a facet of his secretive nature, this anonymous portrait might well have been engraved; in which hypothetical case, with such imperial backing from Prague, the Dürer image might

have been challenged a century and a half earlier.

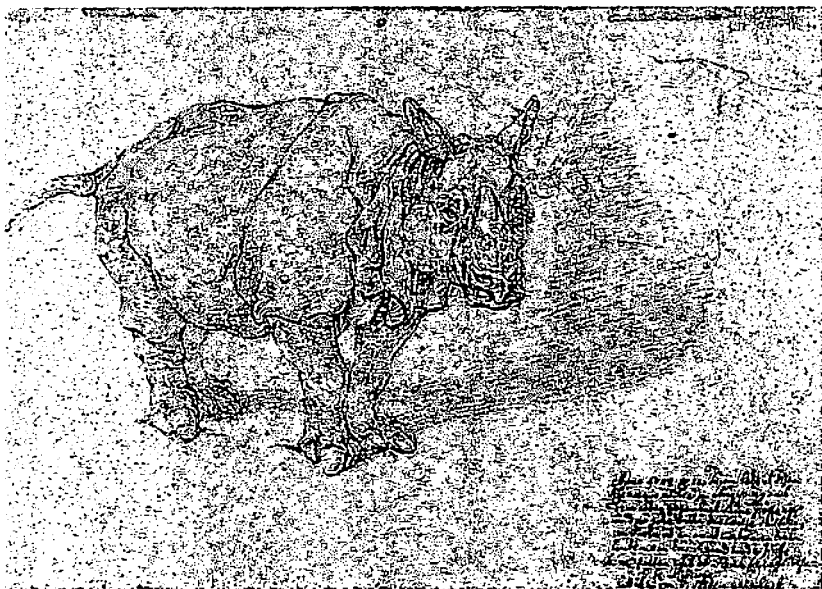
Even closer to nature than the Rudolfiner watercolour is the image of a non-graphic rhinoceros to be found on a silver-gilt ewer in the Metropolitan Museum, a gift of Pierpont Morgan.¹⁵ It forms part of a frieze around the widest part of the body; a frieze representing a Roman triumph cast and chased in high relief with soldiers and supposedly African animals. Called Italo-Spanish of late sixteenth-century date, it may well commemorate the return of Philip II from his three-year residence in Lisbon to his capital, Madrid. Both elephant and rhinoceros, which we know Philip II to have befriended in Lisbon, walk side-by-side in perfect amity.

The rhinoceros is an Indian one, and so natural that one is left astonished and wondering how a silversmith could so lightly discard the Dürer tradition and anticipate by more than a century and a half the portrait of 1750 by Oudry. It has been suggested that the model was a contemporary Spanish version of the Dürer animal, an engraving in the silversmith Juan d'Arfe's *Varia Commensuracion* of 1585-7; but when ewer and d'Arfe's print are compared, there is clearly no resemblance. Or the anonymous silversmith could have worked from an undiscovered drawing of the animal made in Lisbon between 1579 and 1583 or in Madrid between 1583 and its death some years later. But this silver-gilt *abada* remains iconographically an unsolved problem. Certainly it had no influence on the European concept of the animal.

iv The 'Madrid' rhinoceros, watercolour on vellum, from an album of drawings prepared for the Emperor Rudolf II of Prague; ?Flemish, c. 1585-90 (Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna)

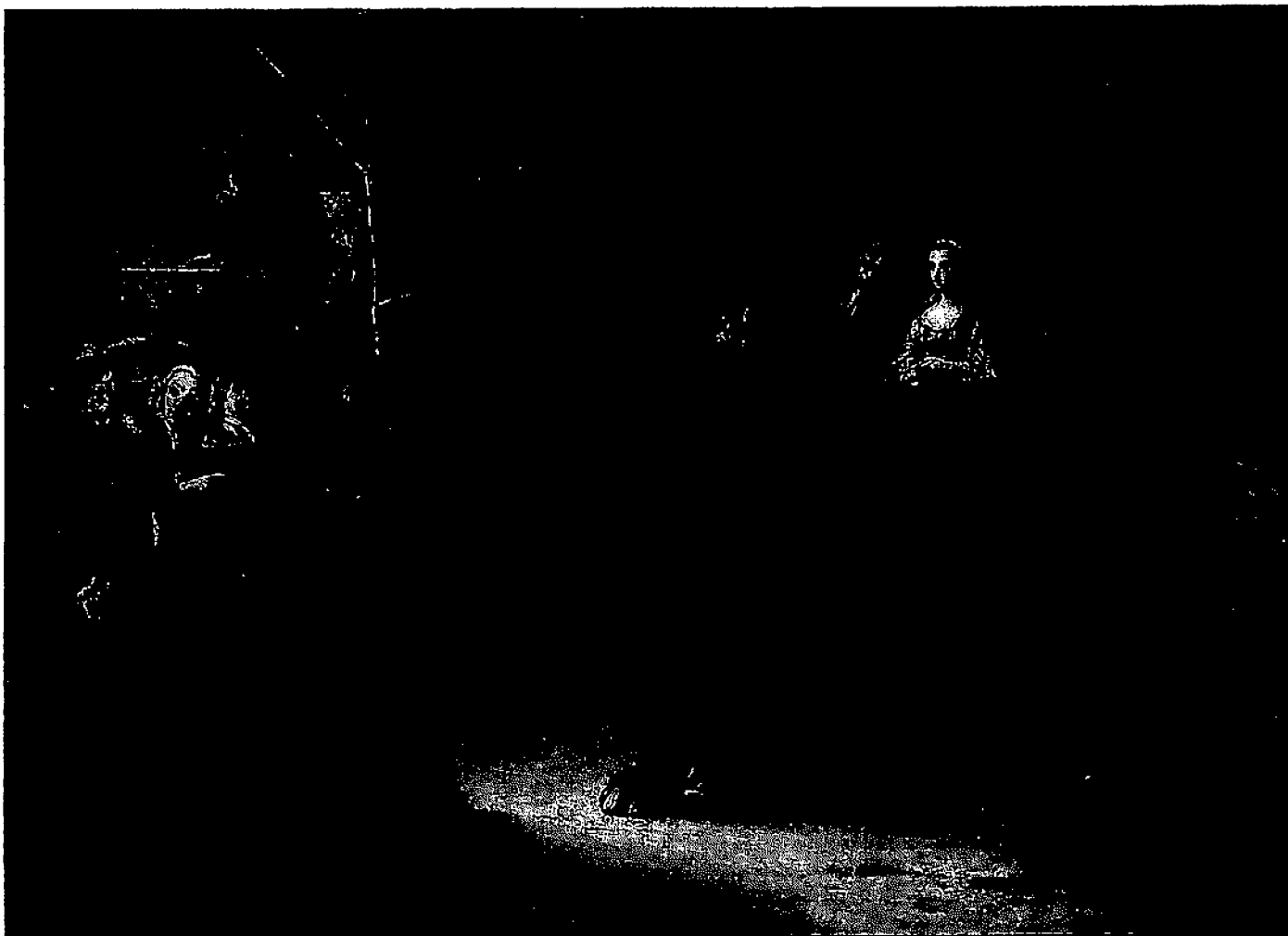


v Miniature of Archduke Karl Joseph, son of Maria Theresa, Liotard School, c.1747 (Private collection)



vi Johann Elias Ridinger, *The 'Dutch' Rhinoceros Standing*, drawing on blue paper in lead pencil heightened with white, 12 June 1748 (Private collection, London)

vii Neapolitan School, *The Rhinoceros in its Booth near the Castelnuovo, Naples*, oil on canvas, c.1749–50 (Collection of the Duke of Wellington)



3

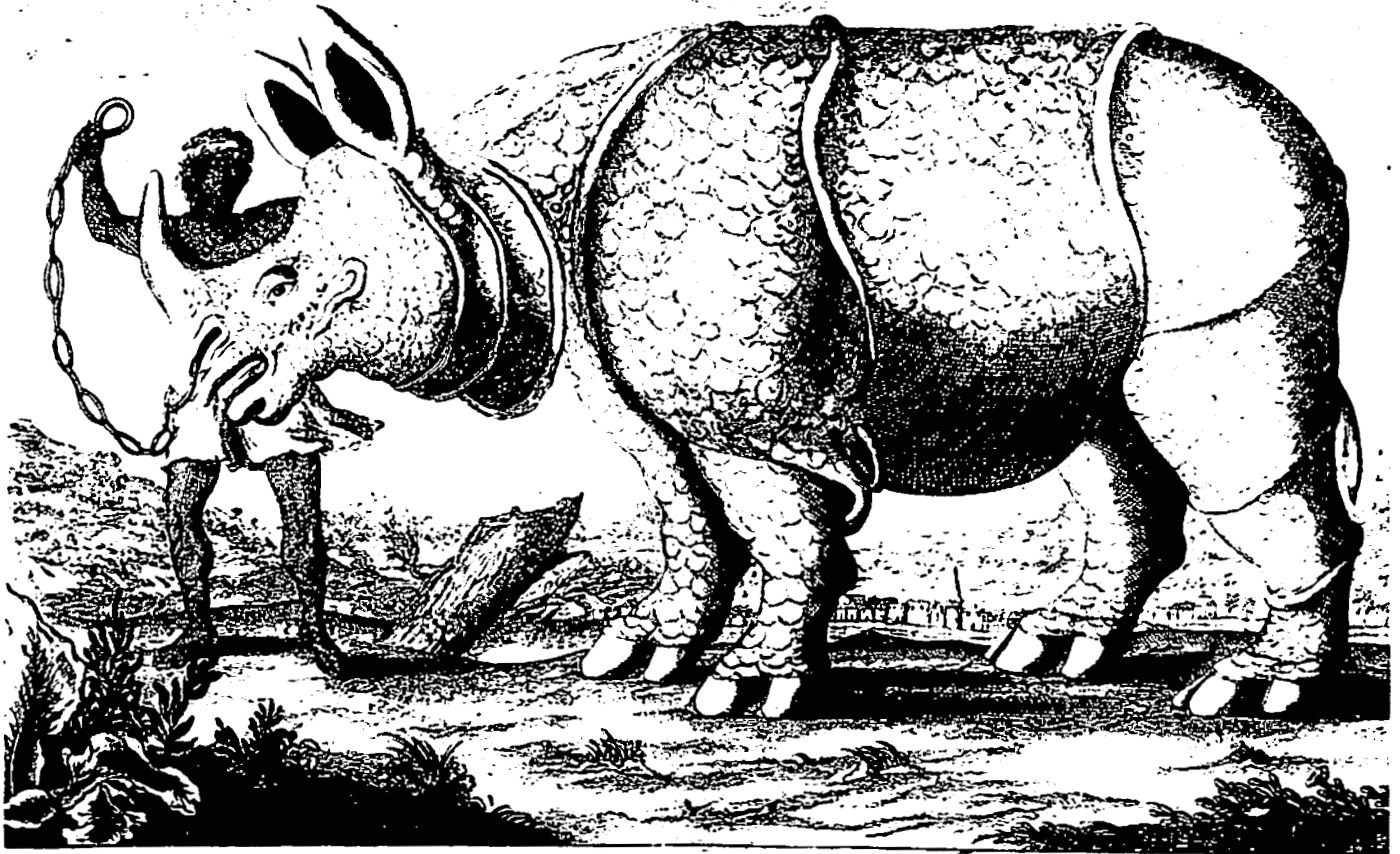
The first two London rhinoceroses of 1684 and 1739

The first London rhinoceros, 1684–6

‘A Very strange Beast called a Rhynoceros, lately brought from the East-Indies, being the first that ever was in England, is daily to be seen at the Bell Savage Inn on Ludgate-Hill, from Nine a Clock in the Morning till Eight at Night’, reads an advertisement in *The London Gazette* of 16 October 1684: an advertisement repeated in subsequent issues. It is significant of the change in the international political scene that the third rhinoceros to arrive captive in Europe should land at the port of London rather than in Lisbon, like its predecessors. For despite Portugal’s eventual

independence from Spain by 1640, it had been losing much of its overseas trade and possessions to the northern powers – Holland, France and England. So it was hardly surprising that it was to one of these other nations, to the English, that Capt. Henry Udall brought in his ship, the *Herbert*,¹ a live rhinoceros in the summer of 1684 from ‘the Court of the King of Gulkindall’.

We are better informed from literary than from graphic sources about the third successful import: but it must be at once admitted that virtually nothing of iconographic or artistic merit emerged from the short life, 1684 to 1686, of the first London rhi-



Exact Draught of that famous Beast the RHINOCERUS that Sadley came

16 The first London rhinoceros, anonymous engraving, c.1684
(Glasgow University Library)

noceros. The wealth of detailed information from two main sources, newsletters and the diary of John Evelyn, makes it a story worth telling. It should be emphasised that this was a commercial venture, that the status of Kings and Popes was not involved. The commercial aspect is evident from the earliest newsletter² dated 23 August 1684: 'on Board one of the E. India ships is come a rhinoceros valued at £2,000 at the Customes house, will be sold next weeke by Inch of Candle'.³ Two days later 'the Rhinoceros' (variations in spelling abound⁴) was 'put to sale by Inch of Candle & bought for £2320 by Mr Langley

one of those that bought Mr Sadler's well at Islington & in a day or so will be seen in Bartholomew faire'.⁵

But Mr Langley had overreached himself: mineral waters and a large pachyderm proved that overdiversification does not always pay. 'Mr. Langley who bought the rhinoceros not being able to raise the money forfeited the £500 he paid in hand & this evening the owner . . . put up the beast to sale again by Inch of Candle for £2000 but noe person bid a farthing so lyes upon their hands.' This newsletter is dated 30 August. The disappointed East India merchants were left with the animal (so expensive to feed)

in their hands, and so had to make their own arrangements for its display, if they were not to lose money on this rhinocerototic speculation. Hence the exhibition at the Bell Savage Inn, where it was 'much visited at twelve pence apiece, and two shillings those that ride him. They get fifteen pound a day'. It is a moot point whether anyone succeeded in riding the beast. A story went the rounds that no less a personage than Lord Keeper North had done just this. Roger North in his *Lives of the Norths*⁶ describes how Sir Dudley North took his brother, the Lord Keeper, to see the animal before it had been sold, that is, in the last week of August 1684.

'A merchant had brought over an enormous rhinoceros to be sold to show-men for a profit. It is a noble beast . . .', writes Roger North. The two brothers went on a specially arranged visit, the Lord Keeper expressing himself 'exceedingly satisfied with the curiosity he had seen'. But the scandalmongers had got wind of the secret visit, so that 'the very next morning, a bruit went from thence all over the town . . . in a very short time, viz. that his lordship rode upon a rhinoceros, than which a more infantile exploit could not have been fastened upon him'. Maybe in fact his Lordship took the two-shilling ticket; we shall never know.

A less noble but more observant visitor, John Evelyn, wrote in his diary⁷ later in the year (22 October 1684) a brilliant but long description, of which the following are extracts:

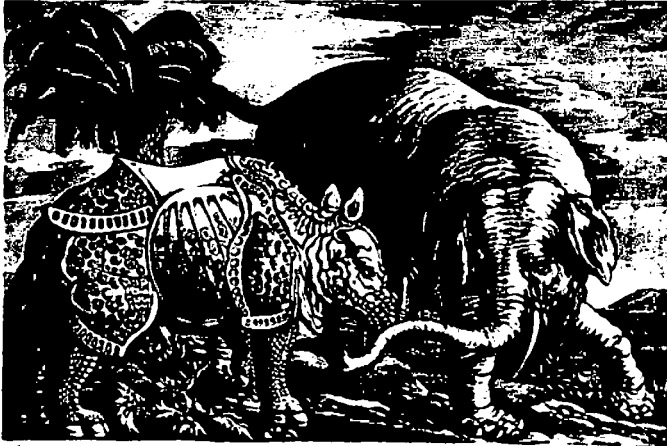
The Rhinoceros (or Unicorne) . . . resembled a huge enormous swine . . . but what was the most wonderfull, was the extraordinary bulke and Circumference of her body, which . . . could not be lesse than 20 foote in compasse: she had a set of most dreadful teeth, which were extraordinarily broad, & deepe in her Throate, she was led by a ring in her nose . . . in my opinion nothing was so extravagant as the Skin of the beast, which hung downe on her hanches, both behind and before her knees, loose like so much Coach leather . . . these lappets of stiff skin, began to be studded with impenetrable Scales, like a Target of coate of mail, loricated like Armor. [When she lay down] she appeared like a greate Coach overthrowne, for she was much of that bulk, yet would rise as nimbly as ever I saw an horse . . . to what stature she may

arrive if she live long, I cannot tell, but if she grow proportionable to her present age, she will be a Mountaine.

It is probable that the animal went on tour during the summer months. But she was not to live long. First *The London Gazette* of 22 March 1685 (OS) warns potential clients 'that the strange Beast called the Rhynoceros, will be sent beyond the Sea, and therefore will not be seen in this City after the 14th April next'. But, sadly, a newsletter of 28 September 1686 informs us that 'last weeke died that wonderfull creature the Rhynocerus'. However, the owners were sensible businessmen, for the entry goes on to say that 'the several proprietors having Ensured £1200 on her life the Ensurers are caught for much money'.

The only published image of this London animal to break away from earlier ones is an engraving of which there are examples in two great collections of rhinocerototic graphic material made by Drs James Douglas and James Parsons, now in the Hunterian Collection⁸ of Glasgow University Library, brought to light some ten years ago. This anonymous print (pl. 16), cut down on the right side, is inscribed as an 'Exact Draught of that famous Beast the RHINOSERUS that lately came [to England?]'. A blackamoor holds the end of a chain which is affixed to the animal's nostrils by a ring. Although both ears and nasal horn are on the large side, the artist has really tried to use his eyes rather than rely on the Dürer version used by his contemporaries. The folds of the skin are as accurate as have yet been portrayed, and the markings of the skin excrescences are at far remove from earlier images. But despite this new approach, it had no followers, and the Dürer image held fast.

Even such a talented animal artist as Francis Barlow (1626–1704) failed to rise to the occasion. He, or his agent, had the impertinence to advertise in *The London Gazette* of 26 January 1684 (NS 1685) 'a True Representation of the Rhinoceros and Elephant lately brought from the East-Indies to London, drawn after the Life, and curiously Engraven in Mezzo Tinto Printed upon a large Sheet of Paper' (see pl. 17). In fact, the whole composition is derivative, stemming from the late sixteenth century; as is what appears to be a preparatory drawing for the mezzotint (pl. 18) in the Courtauld Institute Galleries in London. Note

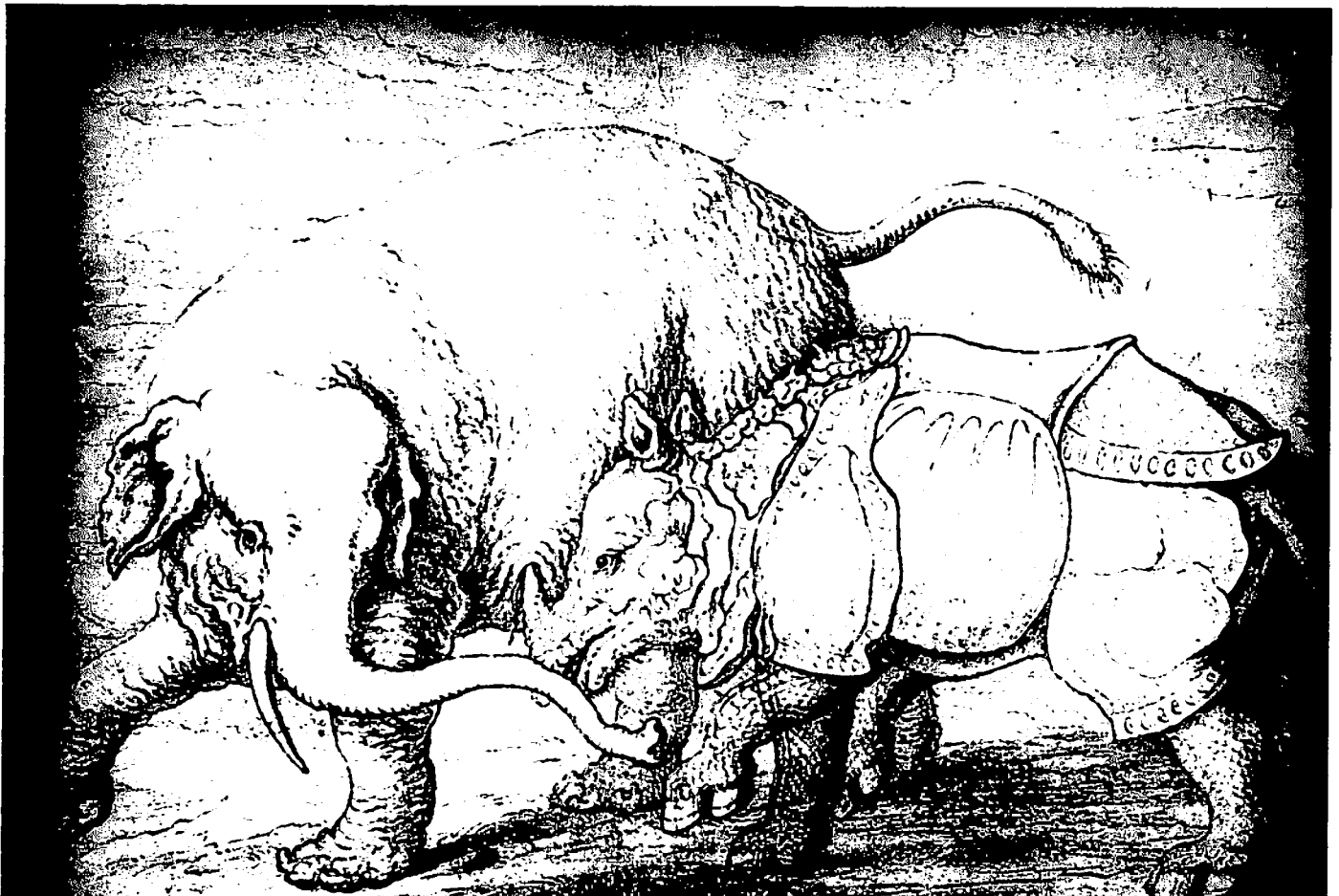


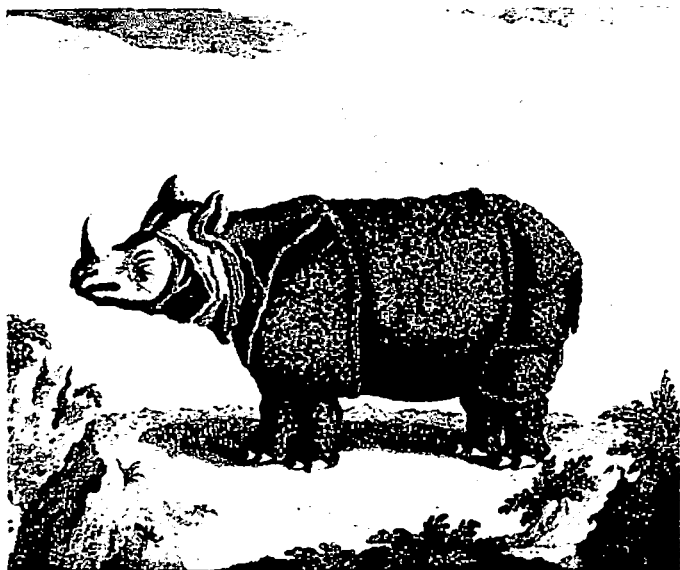
17 Francis Barlow, 'A true representation of . . . the Elephant, and the Rhinoceros', mezzotint, c.1684-5 (Glasgow University Library)

here the curious drawing of the fore left leg, presented simultaneously in two positions.⁹

There were other prints on sale, all purporting to be taken from the life, but in fact Dürer derivatives. One of the closest to the original woodcut has a very short horn and omits the dorsal hornlet; a short chain and ring in the nostrils make a feeble attempt to bring the creature up to date. The superscription has a certain wayward charm: the body is described as 'Musquett proof', and 'his colour is like the Barke of a Box tree; Above all creatures they love virgins, and to them they come and sleep by them by which means they are taken'.¹⁰ This latter is, of course, a reference to the unicorn legend.

18 Francis Barlow, *Rhinoceros/Elephant Fight*, drawing in bistre, pen and india ink wash, signed and dated 1684 (Courtauld Institute Galleries, London)





The true and Exact Portraiture of the Rhinoceros, which was brought over into England in the Year 1685, and after some stay in London was carried to the University of Oxford, where by the over Curiousness of some Gentlemen in trying the utmost strength of that Creature loaded it with so many Sacks of Corn till it sunk under the Burthen and broke its Back — copied from a Drawing taken from the life. & Published according to an Act of Parliament 1685. 1739

19 'The true and Exact Portraiture of the Rhinoceros', anonymous etching, dated 1739 (Glasgow University Library)

Not only was the Indian rhinoceros of 1684 presented to the Londoner in the guise of 1515, but posthumously, as late as 1739, it appeared in a totally different context that has been categorised as 'an indifferent and lifeless caricature' and, more recently, as an 'outrageous fake'.¹¹ The Huguenot Sir John Chardin (1643–1713), or Le Chevalier Chardin as he called himself, travelled much in Persia, selling jewels to the Shah and his court. He was in Isfahan in the mid-1670s, and while there saw a rhinoceros in the royal stables housed next to the elephants. This captive animal was given an illustration in *Voyages en Perse* of 1711.¹² In 1739 this Chardin animal, happily unlike any other recorded, was pirated and referred to in the inscription (pl. 19) as a portrait of the English rhinoceros of 1685. To add insult to injury, the author of the inscription has the gall to state that the beast was 'carried to the University of Oxford; where by the over Curiousness of some Gentlemen in trying the utmost strength of that Creature loaded it with so many Sacks of Corn till it sunk under the Burthen and broke its Back'. Close scrutiny of Oxford archives has failed to provide any corroboration of this fic-

tional undergraduate activity. Indeed, no proof has been found that the 'creature' ever visited Oxford.

Chardin's rhinoceros of 1711 was only a little less curious than one of 1658, which is here mentioned out of chronological sequence (pl. 20). Described by Cole as 'one of the first attempts to draw an animal from life',¹³ this woodcut was provided by the publisher for the posthumous edition of Jacobus Bontius (1598–1631) from descriptions of the live animal which he had often encountered during his travels in the East. Dürer is renounced: no 'hornlet', no invincible armour, a jigsaw of skin markings and a prehensile upper lip. But, of course, it had no influence on the Dürer image, particularly because it was not published as a separate print, but in a book of natural history. And furthermore, it has little right to appear here, since it is perhaps the earliest portrait of a Javan rhinoceros and not of the Indian animal.

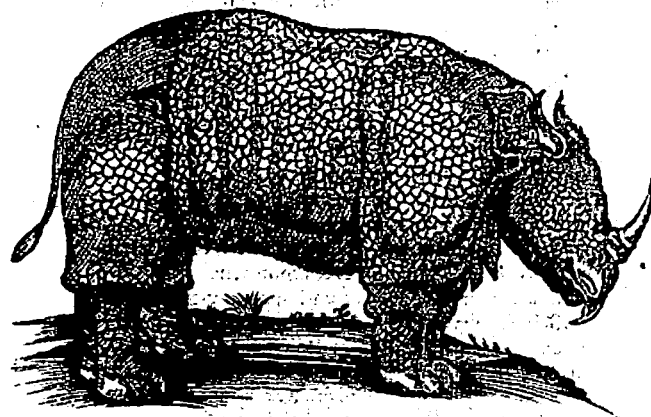
The second London rhinoceros, 1739

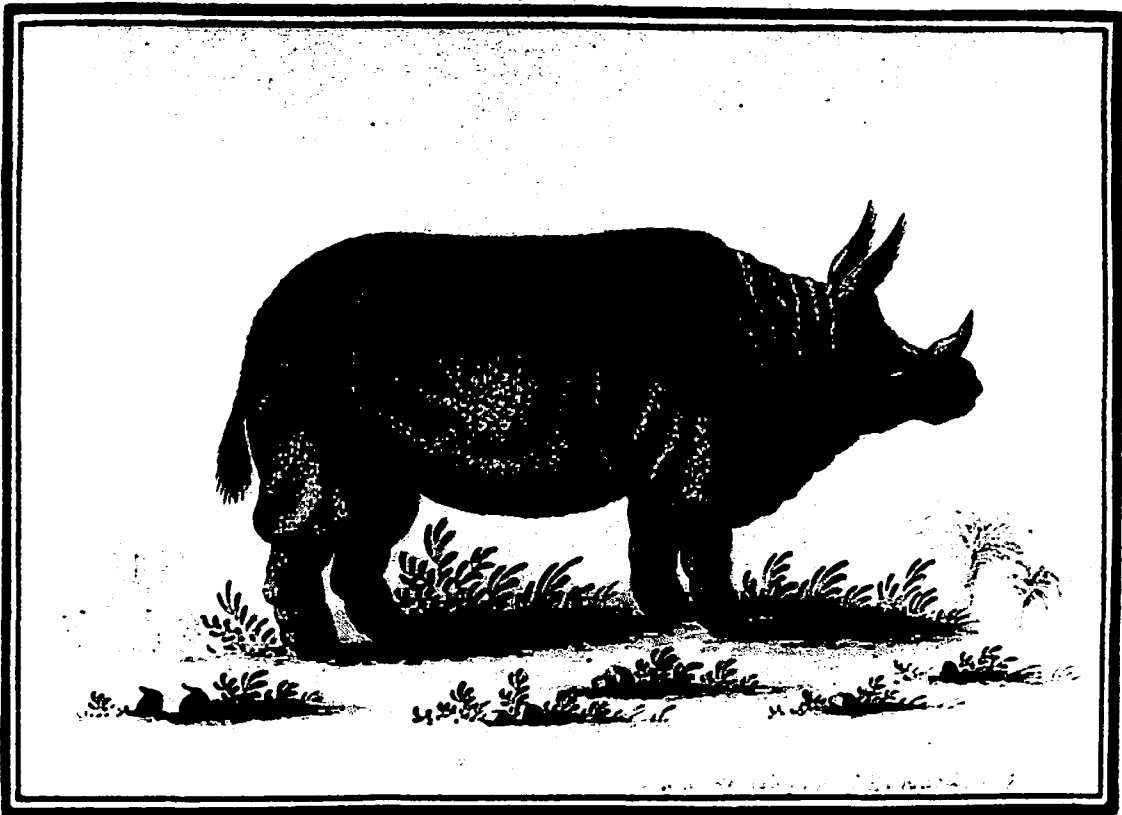
Before discussing the importance of the second London animal a brief mention of two casualties is worth while, if only to draw attention to one of the early rhinocerotologists, Dr James Douglas (1675–1742),¹⁴ mentioned earlier. The doctor evidently

20 Jacobus Bontius, *Rhinoceros*, anonymous woodcut from *Historiae naturalis*, 1658

HIST. NATURAL & MEDIC. LIB. V.

RHINOCEROS.





This Rhinoceros died in the Passage from East India to England on board the unfortunate Captain Matthew Bookey's ship the *Shaftesbury* in 1737, and was drawn after Death by a Gentleman on board, whose name I did not find in the Record to the Society of Antiquaries. The Parts of the Skin are whit & covered under which it has some white podes, & some small black & blue spots. The Rhinoceros is taken from the original & painted by the same Artist in 1737.

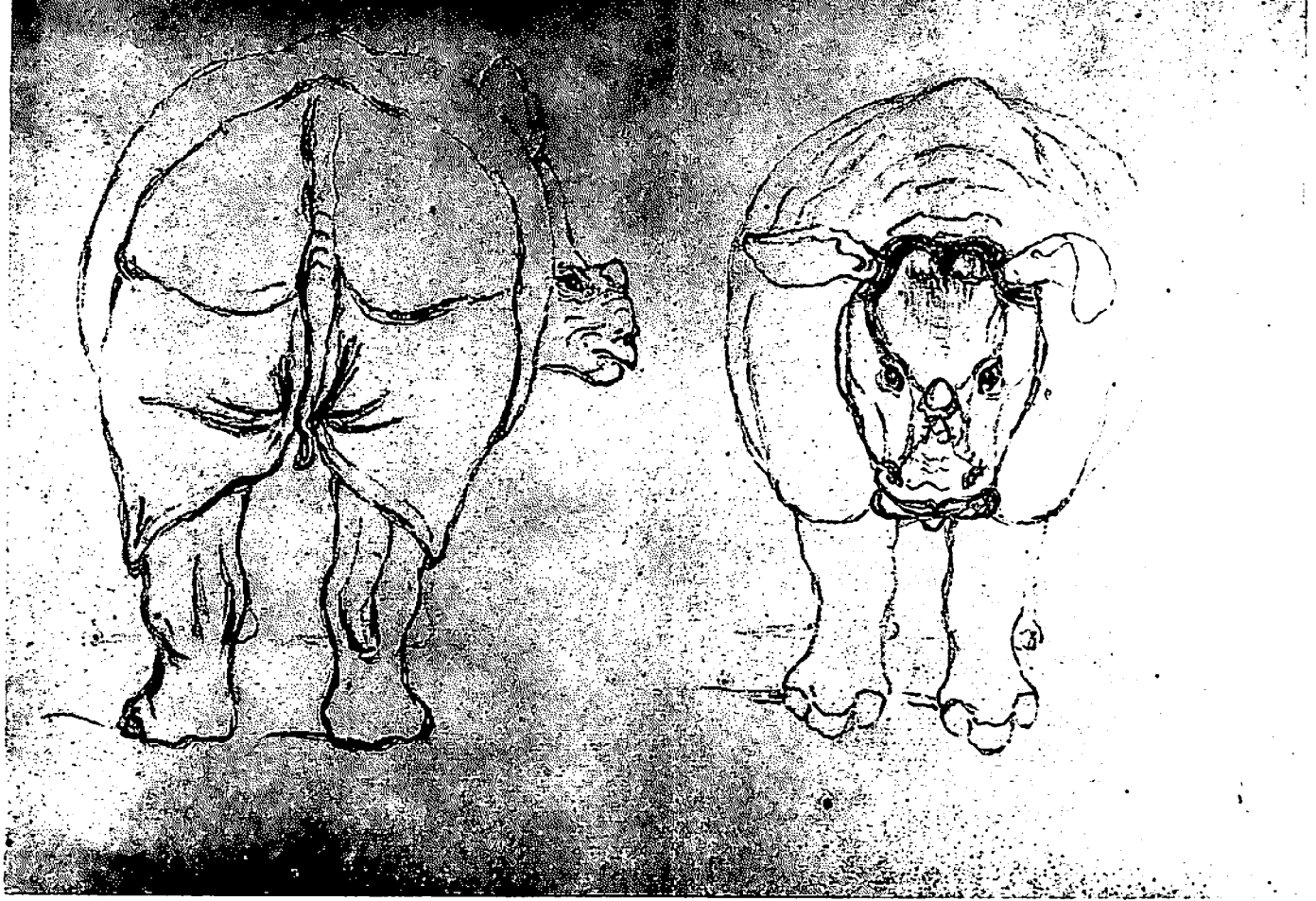
- 21 Rhinoceros that died on board the ship *Shaftesbury*, en route to London in 1737, a copy by George Edwards of a lost watercolour (British Museum)

became interested when he was sent to Holland in 1734 by George II to assist at the confinement (which proved unfounded) of the Princess of Orange. He was in Holland again in 1739 and 1740. Visiting Leiden, he saw the stuffed body of a rhinoceros that had died aboard a Dutch East Indiaman in 1677. While in Leiden he met the painter and engraver Jan Wandelaar (1690–1759),¹⁵ who made for him drawings of the 'stuffed animal that was very whole'. But Dr Douglas appears not to have been aware of the animal that expired aboard the *Shaftesbury*, an East Indiaman commanded by Capt. Matthew Bookey. This was in 1737. As the illustration shows (pl. 21), a copy by George Edwards (1694–1773) of the original 'drawn after Death by a Gentleman on board', we have come a long way from Dürer, but still not much closer to reality. The furry ears, the velvety skin and the delicacy of forelegs and smallness of the feet suggest a mincing ballet-dancer. Perhaps this incipient dancing movement is caused by 'Centi-

pedes, Scorpions, small Snakes & other Animals' that inhabit the 'Plaits of the Skin'.

But Dr Douglas was very much concerned in the arrival in London on 1 June 1739 of a young male rhinoceros aboard the ship, *Lyell*, commanded by Capt. Acton. It came at a moment when the natural sciences were increasingly the subject of serious study, particularly in Holland and England. Not that the intention of the shippers, again probably a consortium of East India merchants acting on their private initiative, was to help unravel zoological problems so much as to make money by showing the animal in London and elsewhere.

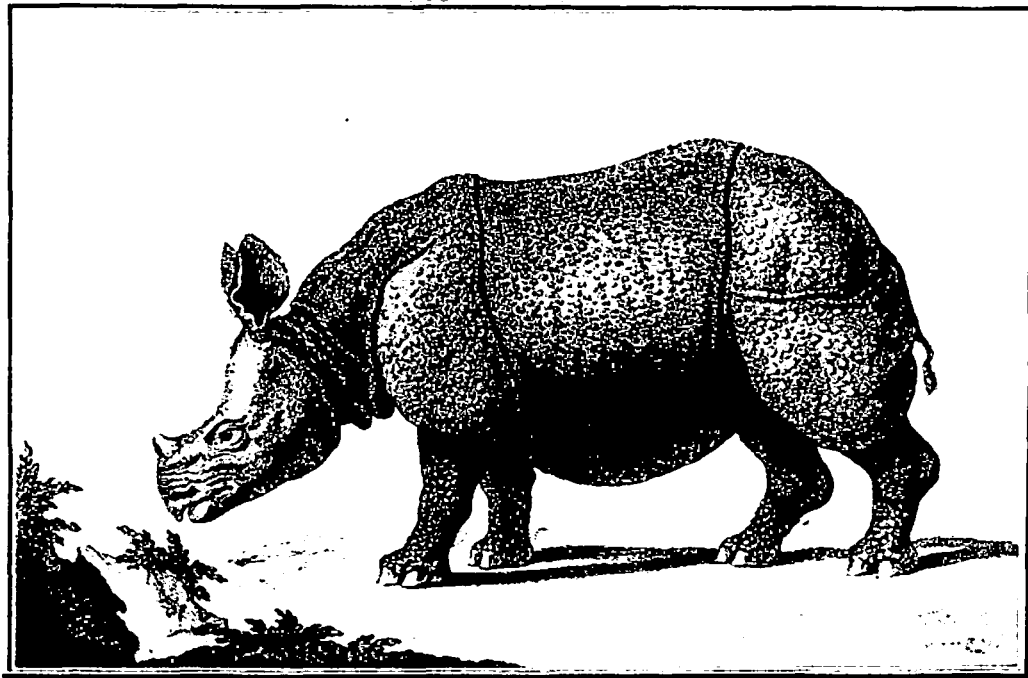
While on show in London, in Red Lion Square, Dr Douglas was able to make a detailed description of the animal's physical features on which he reported to the Royal Society on 21 June 1739.¹⁶ He 'exhibited before the ROYAL SOCIETY a Drawing of the same *Rhinoceros*, with a collection of Figures of that Creature'.¹⁷ Dr Douglas's energetic assistant, James



22 James Parsons, two views of the London rhinoceros, pencil drawing, London 1739 (Glasgow University Library)

23 James Parsons, *Recumbent Rhinoceros*, drawing in red chalk, London 1739 (Glasgow University Library)





*An Exact Figure of the
RHINOCEROS
That is now to be Seen in
LONDON.*

*Inscribed to His Highness COLLEGEY
Chief of The Hon^{ble} East India Com-
pany's Factory at PATNA in the
Empire of The Great MOGUL for
the Favour he has done the Curious
in lending it over to view.*

Published October 10 1739

24 Poster of the second London rhinoceros, engraved after a drawing by James Parsons, London 1739 (Glasgow University Library)

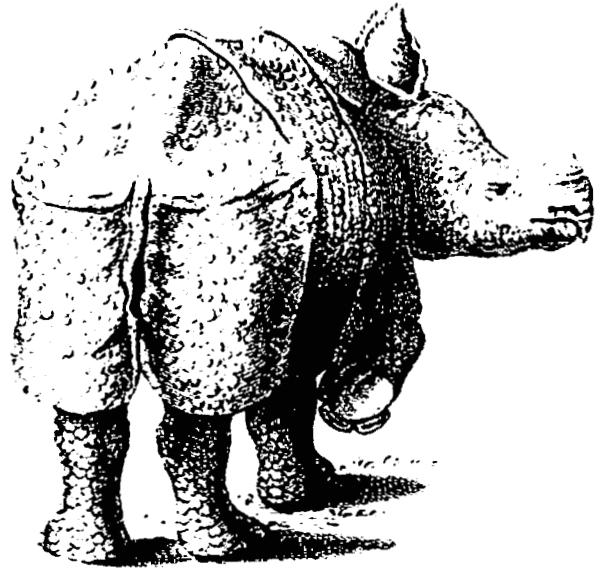
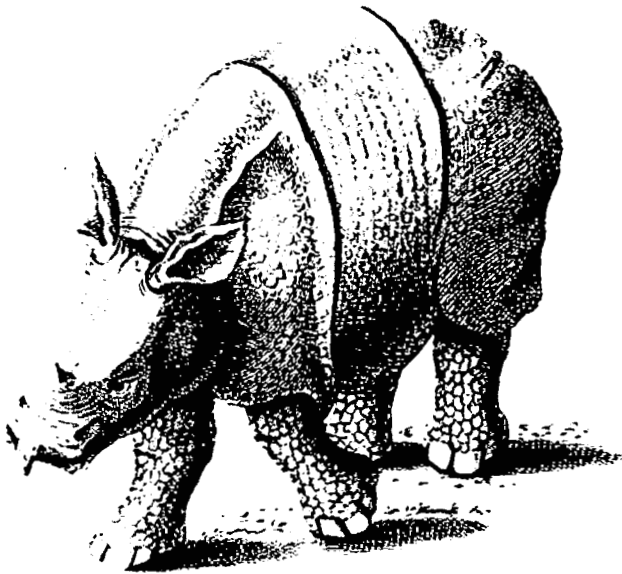
Parsons (1705–70), was employed to make the drawings and paintings, for which he had a certain talent, as pls 22 and 23 show. The recumbent animal is in a novel pose, and should be compared with that made some eight years later by the Augsburg artist, Johann Elias Ridinger (1698–1767) (see pl. 32).

Several drawings preserved in the Douglas Collection in Glasgow University Library show the usual side view, the animal facing to the left. One of these was ‘engraved by Mr VanderGucht from a drawing which I [Parsons] made at the request of Dr Douglas. It has been subject to some alterations by the Doctors command, which makes it differ from my drawing, and the painting I made also afterwards from the animal’.¹⁸ The engraving was in fact the poster (pl. 24) published on 10 October 1739. It is likely that this was Dr Douglas’s thanks to the owners for permission for his frequent visits. This is the first pos-

ter of a rhinoceros known in England, though posters of elephants occur in the seventeenth century. It would have been displayed in the booth or inn where the animal was on display; in this instance the animal was ‘exposed to public view in Eagle Street . . . at 2^s 6^d each person’.¹⁹ The price of viewing this rare pachyderm had, then, more than doubled since 1684.

But more permanent than ephemeral posters, drawings and paintings was the publication by Dr Parsons of a long ‘letter’ in the *Philosophical Transactions*,²⁰ organ of the Royal Society. Dr Douglas having died in 1742, Parsons took on himself the task of elaborating on Douglas’s oral report to the Royal Society on 21 June 1739. This so-called ‘letter’ of 9 June 1743 contains ‘the Natural History of the Rhinoceros’. It comments at length on Dürer’s woodcut and on later images, has a detailed account of the animal’s appearance, touches on classical ‘medals’ (in

Philos. Trans. 1743, Vol. 1



25 James Parsons, engraving from the *Philosophical Transactions*, London 1743

fact, coins), and, above all, is illustrated by three engravings by Parsons, of which the first two show the side, back and frontal views. Here illustrated (pl. 25) is the plate with back and front views; the frontal view showing unusually accurately the animal's strange gait, the left foreleg curiously bent. The side view is virtually indistinguishable from the poster of pl. 24.

The *Philosophical Transactions* had a wide if not numerically large circulation. It was read by the learned all over Europe, and we know too that copies reached India (see p. 166). Further, Parsons' letter was translated into both French and German,²¹ and the engravings were, as usual, extensively pirated.²² At long last, the Dürer monopoly was being slowly eroded.

Parsons's account is still worth reading. 'The *Rhinoceros* was brought to Eagle-street, Red-Lion-Square, on the 15th of [June]: it was said by those who took care of him, that from his being first taken, to the time of his landing in *England*, his Expences

amounted to One Thousand Pounds Sterling'. Parsons added that the animal preferred greens to his 'dry Victuals' of rice, sugar and hay.

He appeared very peaceable in his Temper; for he bore to be handled in any Part of his Body; but is outrageous when struck or hungry, and is pacified in either Case only by giving him Victuals. In his Outrage he jumps about, and springs to an incredible height, driving his Head against the Walls of the Place with great Fury and Quickness, notwithstanding his lumpish Aspect.

There follow detailed descriptions of his shape and of the texture of his skin, zoological reporting rare at this time. After commenting on the hairlessness of the animal, Parsons refers to his sensitiveness to noise:

I have observed a very particular Quality . . . of listening to any Noise or Rumour in the Street; for though he were eating, sleeping or under the greatest Engagements Nature imposes on him, he

Rhinoceros.



Drawn and wrote by

William Twiddy who never had the use of Hands or Feet. June 1744

26 William Twiddy, *Rhinoceros*, watercolour, 1744 (Castle Museum, Norwich)

stops everything suddenly, and lifts up his Head, with great Attention, till the Noise is over'.²³

How long this animal lived is unknown. Arriving in 1739, it was later to be seen 'at a Booth near the London-Spaw'.²⁴ There are two advertisements in the *Daily Advertiser* for 5 and 24 December 1741, apparently referring to different creatures. The first must refer to a stuffed animal, for it mentions the *Shaftesbury*, aboard which, as we have seen, a rhinoceros died; and the ambiguous wording ('the only complete Animal of that Kind') can refer as much to a stuffed as to a live animal. The second advertisement

is more accurate: 'the Great MALE RHINOCEROS' is at least correct as to sex while mention of the ship *Lyell* is also correct. Whether this second London rhinoceros then went on a provincial tour is less certain, but quite likely. It is possible that it was actually in Norwich on 1 June 1744, where it was drawn by William Twiddy, 'who never had the use of Hands or Feet' (pl. 26).

But by 1746 the real challenger to the two and a half centuries of Dürer hegemony had already made the first of its European journeys that took it all over Germany, and to France, Italy, Poland and England, among other countries.

4

The 'Dutch' rhinoceros of 1741-58

Holland and the Holy Roman Empire

Historically it would have been more appropriate for a rhinoceros to have arrived in Holland's 'Golden Century', the seventeenth, rather than to have to wait until 1741 when Dutch power and influence were on the decline. This trifling miscalculation, however, was more than compensated for by the greater significance, iconographically, commercially and artistically, of the fifth such animal to arrive in Europe in excellent shape. On view to the public in its home base in Holland from the time of its arrival, but also constantly travelling around Europe for some sixteen years (omitting only the Iberian peninsula, the

Balkans and Russia), it – or rather she, for it was a female of the Indian species – radically altered the European's image of such a curious, rare and renowned animal, bringing the exotic into close contact with thousands of paying onlookers of all classes.¹

The animal whose features were eventually to supersede those of Dürer's woodcut of 1515 in the European imagination had been captured with snares in 1738 or 1739 in the Kingdom of Assam, whose ruler presented it to the director of the Dutch East India Company in Bengal.² 'This animal is tame as a lambe', relates an English poster of the 1750s, 'because it was caught very young, and for two years successively has run round the tables of Gentlemen

THE EUROPEAN VISION OF THE RHINOCEROS



Systematische und accurate Beschreibung

Des bey den 30. October. Anno 1746. in der Stadt. Rendsburg. ...

Das Rhinoceros. Dieses Thier, ist ein sehr großes ...

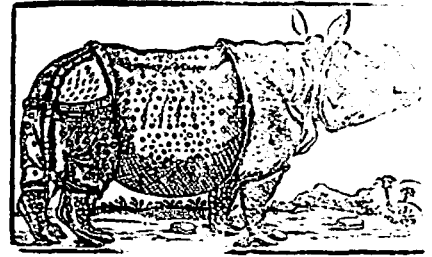
(a)

So wird allen respectiv die Babbern kund gethan



Die Rhinocerosen sind eine Art von Thieren ...

(b)



TO BE SEEN

At the House of the ...

RHINOCEROS ALIVE

BEING, in a great measure ...

(c)

27 Posters of the 'Dutch' rhinoceros in (a) Vienna, October 1746; (b) Zurich, March 1748; and (c) London, probably 1752 (Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg (a); Zentralbibliothek, Zurich (b); and Glasgow University Library (c))

and Ladies like a lap-dog.' It was then acquired by a Dutch sea captain, a certain Douwe Mout van der Meer, the self-effacing hero of this chapter, just as the young rhinoceros was the heavyweight winner. Captain and charge arrived in Holland on 22 July 1741.

It was Gustave Loisel in 1912 who first drew attention to the deambulations of the so-called 'Dutch' rhinoceros: thus named because of its Dutch owner and Dutch base. But it is only in the past fifteen years that the details of its amazing journeys through Europe have been painstakingly pieced together from a variety of sources. Of these, the most rewarding we owe to Douwe Mout's flare for public relations and to his skill as the leading international showman of his generation. A close study of the text of the posters, of which over a score have survived in German, French, English and Dutch, and of the wording on the prints (in three varieties) which the astute owner offered for sale, yields much information

on the route that was followed (pls. 27 and 28). Then there were medals in silver, copper and even baser metals, again with inscriptions in different languages on the reverse, all of which help us to trace the peregrinations of this popular animal all over Europe. To these sources must be added the newspaper advertisements and puffs, the brief references in letters and printed memoirs and the official records of many of the towns that were visited. And finally, the surest guarantee of immortality, the drawings, paintings and prints by such diverse artists as Johann Elias Ridinger of Augsburg, Jean-Baptiste Oudry and Pietro Longhi, all add to our knowledge of an animal that in one German town, Würzburg, was so endeared to the population that it earned the soubriquet of 'Clara'.

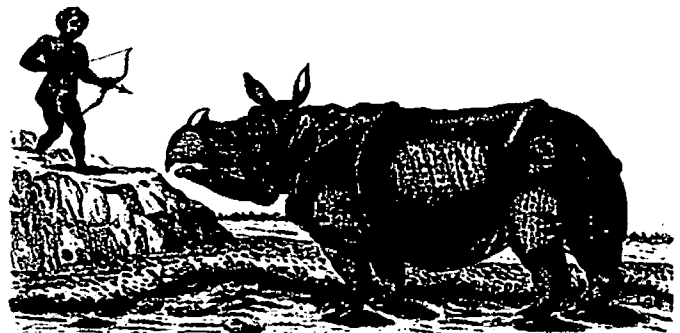
As far as iconography is concerned, the posters and individual prints were of major importance, for they display with professional skill a stereotyped version of the animal that had not been seen earlier. It is a

remarkably able likeness that occurs and re-occurs over some fifteen years. The animal is viewed in profile, its head slightly raised and its mouth partly open, its large ears pricked, with tuberous markings on the hide, ponderous and short-legged, a palm-tree or two, perhaps a piccaninny in the background to remind us of the rhinoceros's exotic origin.

As for Douwe Mout, he remains a shadowy personality. Born in 1705, he was working for the VOC (the Dutch initials for their East India Company) until 1741. We know that he was married to one Elisabeth Snel and that their daughter was christened in Leiden in 1751.⁵ We know, too, a little of his appearance, both from his half-length portrait in a print of 1747, and from his inclusion in two Italian paintings, one by an unidentified Neapolitan artist in 1749 (see col. pl. VII, p. 36) and the other, the celebrated Longhi of 1751 (see col. pl. VIII, p. 53). We know even less of his small staff. This must have included the driver of the heavily built special waggon in which the animal seems always to have travelled, rather than on foot; a keeper, probably the youth to be seen in the two Italian paintings; a clerk to arrange the bookings ahead with local permission and to ensure that the posters were suitably displayed; and, finally, a man to take the entrance money. What place Douwe Mout's wife played, if any, is unknown. Some of these characters will be noted again later in this chapter.

The route of Douwe Mout, rhinoceros and staff is here reported in an abbreviated or diary form, except in those few cases (Vienna and Augsburg, for instance) where there is unusual documentation or graphic material of particular merit. It must be emphasised that there are many gaps remaining to be filled in, and that some of the dates here suggested may prove to be wrong.

- 1741 22 July. Arrival in ROTTERDAM.
- August. On view at NIEUWENDAM, near Amsterdam.
- September. Seen in AMSTERDAM.
- 1742 LEIDEN. Drawn by Jan Wandelaar (1690-1759) in two positions (see pl. 29) for Bernard Siegfried Albinus's anatomical work, *Tabulae sceleti et musculorum corporis humani* (Leiden, 1747). An English edition published in 1749. Loose plates available 1742.⁶



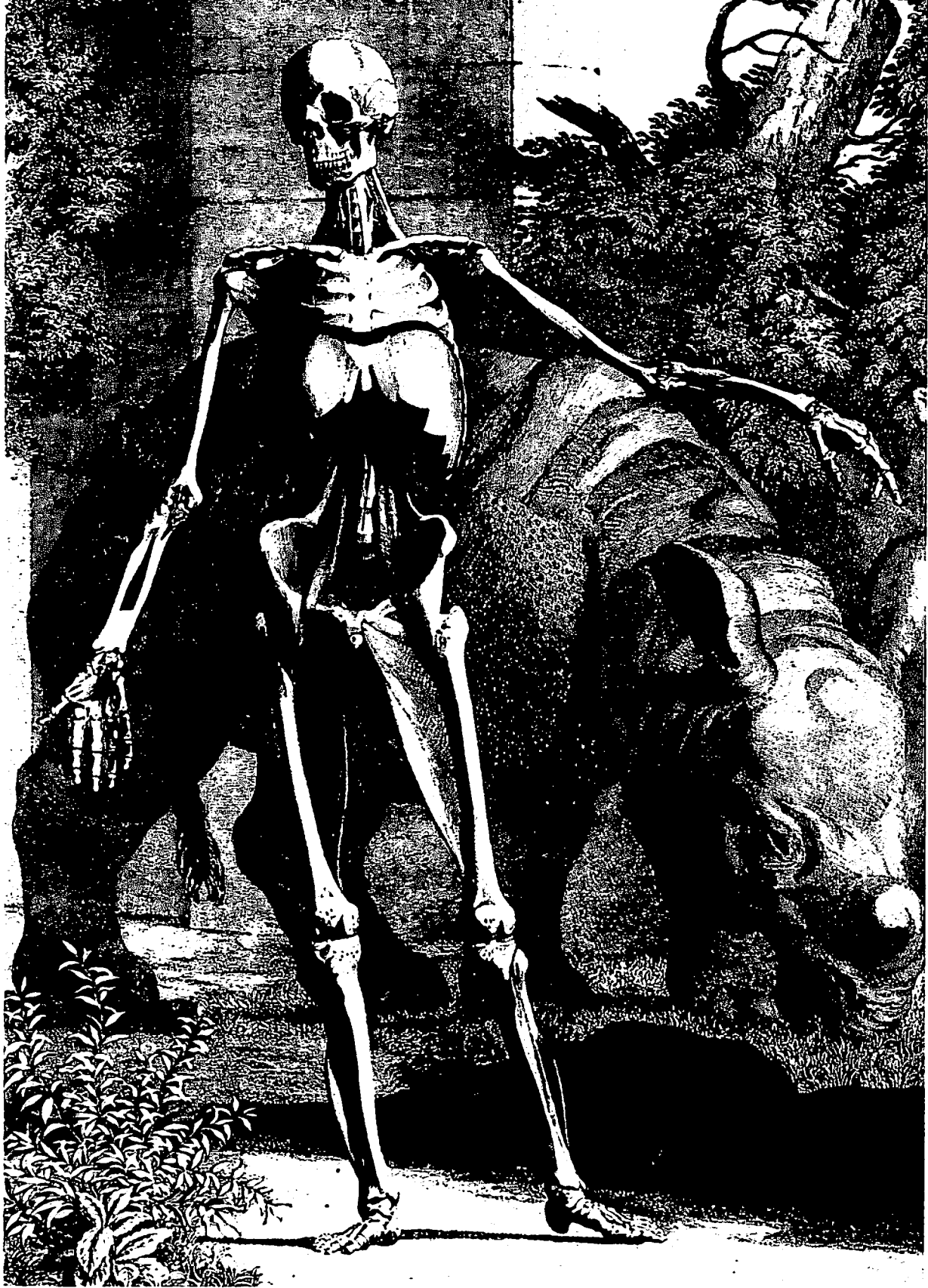
(a) Douwe Mout's print of the rhinoceros from 1746 to 1748 (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam); (c) Swiss woodcut (Zentralbibliothek, Zurich)



(b) Douwe Mout's print of the rhinoceros from 1746 to 1748 (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam); (c) Swiss woodcut (Zentralbibliothek, Zurich)



28 (a-b) Douwe Mout's prints of the rhinoceros from 1746 to 1748 (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam); (c) Swiss woodcut (Zentralbibliothek, Zurich)



29 Jan Wandelaar, *Human Skeleton and Young Rhinoceros*, engraving from Albinus's *Tables of the Skeleton and Muscles of the Human Body*, London 1749

1744 HAMBURG. A poster and an engraving establish without doubt a visit, probably in the summer. Both show the Dürer image, but without the dorsal twisted hornlet, and both with tip of the nose broken off.⁷

1745-6 Probably back in Holland.

1746 HANOVER. Probably early spring. Reported by a local chronicler as a 'hideous animal of female gender'. Watercolour drawing by G. L. Scheitz (see pl. 30) 'from the life'.⁸

BERLIN. Visited by Frederick the Great (1740-86) and his court on 26 April at a fishstall in the Spittelmarkt. Tip of 12 ducats, followed by another 6 ducats on the next day.⁹

FRANKFURT/ODER. Probably August.¹⁰

BRESLAU. 3 September to 2 October, long stay, due to bad weather.¹¹

VIENNA. 30 October to about 26 November.

The route followed from Breslau to Vienna has not yet been traced; the road that passed through Prague was apparently not used, for there is no record of a Prague visit. No matter whence the party arrived in the capital of the Holy Roman Empire, it was received there in style: in a style surely organised by the astute Douwe Mout. A poster (see pl. 27a) of exceptional type, engraved by the Augsburg artist, Elias Baeck (1679-1747), notable for his chinoiserie prints, and for his dwarfs, commemorates this event. The animal is of hybrid type, with a Dürer body but a modern head as seen on the other posters used in most of the towns visited. But there is too the figure of a hussar standing with a long staff, possibly Douwe Mout in person, as one of the eight cuirassiers who escorted the 'Rhinoceros oder Nasen-Horn' into town riding in a wagon drawn by eight horses.¹²

We are kept well informed of the Vienna stay by frequent references in the *Wienerisches Diarium*, the leading local paper.¹³ On Saturday 5 November the Empress Maria Theresa (1717-80), accompanied by her husband Francis I of Lorraine (ruled 1745-65) and by the latter's mother, drove in to Vienna for the day from their country Schloss Schönbrunn especially to see the rhinoceros at its stall in the Freyung - a large open space in the centre of the city, flanked by the baroque town houses of the Austrian nobility.



30 G. L. Scheitz, *The 'Dutch' Rhinoceros in Hanover*, watercolour 1746 (Stadtarchiv, Hanover)

Having paid their visit to 'the African wonder animal', as the reporter mistakenly writes, the imperial party proceeded to the Hofburg to pay their respects to the Empress Elisabeth (relict of the Emperor Charles VI, d. 1740) and to inspect the bevy of Serene Highnesses, most of them the offspring of Maria Theresa (who bore sixteen children). Amongst these young princes was the two-year-old Archduke Karl Joseph (b. 31 January 1745, d. 18 January 1761), of whom there has by good fortune been preserved an oval miniature close to Jean-Etienne Liotard (col. pl. v, p. 36). He holds in his hands a book open at a page with the drawing of a rhinoceros. One can only conjecture that his mother, Maria Theresa, must have told him about this wonderful animal which she had that day, 5 November, just seen, and that the little boy was entranced by her account. It would seem probable that Karl Joseph was himself taken for a private visit on one of the ensuing days.

1746-7 From Vienna possibly via Linz and Salzburg to MUNICH, which is mentioned on one of the posters; but no confirmation has been found yet.

1747 REGENSBURG. 4-16 March.¹⁴

FREIBERG (FREYBERG).¹⁵ Early April. On view in the Wiesemann Inn of the Golden Star, where it was 'shown to many people'. 25 miles from Dresden and a mining centre.

DRESDEN.¹⁶ 5 to 19 April. Stayed at the Red Stag, near the Pirna Gate. Dresden had strong rhinocerotid connections under Augustus the Strong of Saxony (d. 1733), both in court festivities and at the Meissen porcelain factory nearby. Paraded before its ruler Augustus III (King of Poland and Elector of Saxony), the court and the heir, the sickly Electoral Prince, on its last day, 19 April, on its way out of town to:

LEIPZIG. About 23 April until early May. This was timed to coincide with the Easter Fair. Seen probably by the popular poet Christian Fürchtegott Gellert (1715–69), who wrote a poem on the rhinoceros, and by Friedrich Gotthilf Freytag, who wrote a learned pamphlet in Latin with Greek quotations. Stayed near the Petersthor. Was weighed and measured.¹⁷

CASSEL. 25 June to about 18 July, a long stay. Housed in the Orangery.¹⁸

FRANKFURT AM MAIN.¹⁹ 7 to 30 September, staying at the Peacock Inn for the Autumn Fair. This inn, like so many of the party's lodgings, was just outside the town walls, presumably for safety and sanitary reasons.

MANNHEIM.²⁰ November. (October visits not yet identified.) Seat of the Elector Palatine, Carl Theodor, who on 20 November visited the animal at its lodgings, yet another Peacock Inn. With him were his heir presumptive, Duke Christian IV of Zweibrücken (1722–75) and the latter's brother, Prince Frederick Michael (1724–67), together with their wives. (See poster (pl. 28b) with doggerel verse superimposed.)

1748 BERN.²¹ 27 January. Price of admission to be fixed by two junior councillors, a nice example of Swiss efficiency.

ZÜRICH.²² March, to be seen in the Münsterhof according to an inscribed poster (see pl. 27a). Two woodcuts by a local artist, David Redinger, were issued. One is of particular interest in showing the animal lying down in its pen, with its waggon to the left (pl. 28c).

BASEL. March.

SCHAFFHAUSEN. After 18 March. Official permission with price control mentions both Basel and Zurich as having the same controls.

STRASBOURG. Probably in April, although possibly in December 1747. In favour of 1748 is a medal struck in Strasbourg by Johann Daniel Kamm (c. 1722–95), in three slightly differing versions, one of them in French; all dated 1748. The inscription says that the animal was weighed in 1747.²³

STUTTGART. Early May, according to the French inscription on a medal struck in Nuremberg by Peter Paul Werner (1689–1771). It was weighed on 6 May, tipping the scales at 5,000 pounds.²⁴

AUGSBURG. 18 May to 16 June.

Augsburg in the mid-eighteenth century was the foremost German centre of the applied arts. Here flourished a large community of artisans – goldsmiths, ivory carvers, scientific instrument, watch- and clockmakers, furniture and coloured silk manufacturers, 'outside-decorators' of Meissen porcelain, toymakers, publishers and, above all, engravers and other printmakers. Amongst the engravers with the largest international following was Johann Elias Ridinger (1698–1767), who from the early 1720s drew and engraved a large number of hunting and other animal prints, both domestic and exotic, usually sold in bound sets; such bound sets are still to be found in the libraries of the landed aristocracy and gentry not only in Germany but also in England and France.

Fortunately for posterity Ridinger set to work only a few days before the animal's departure on 16 June to make a series of six drawings. His biographer, G. A. W. Thienemann (1856), noted these drawings as being 'mostly in chalk heightened with white'. All six date from the same day, 12 June 1748; of these six, three were in London a few years ago, but one has since migrated to the United States. The remaining three have yet to be discovered; although their probable form can be guessed at from two of Ridinger's prints evidently based on these missing drawings.

VIII Pietro Longhi, *The Rhinoceros in Venice*, oil on canvas, 1751 (Ca' Rezzonico, Venice)

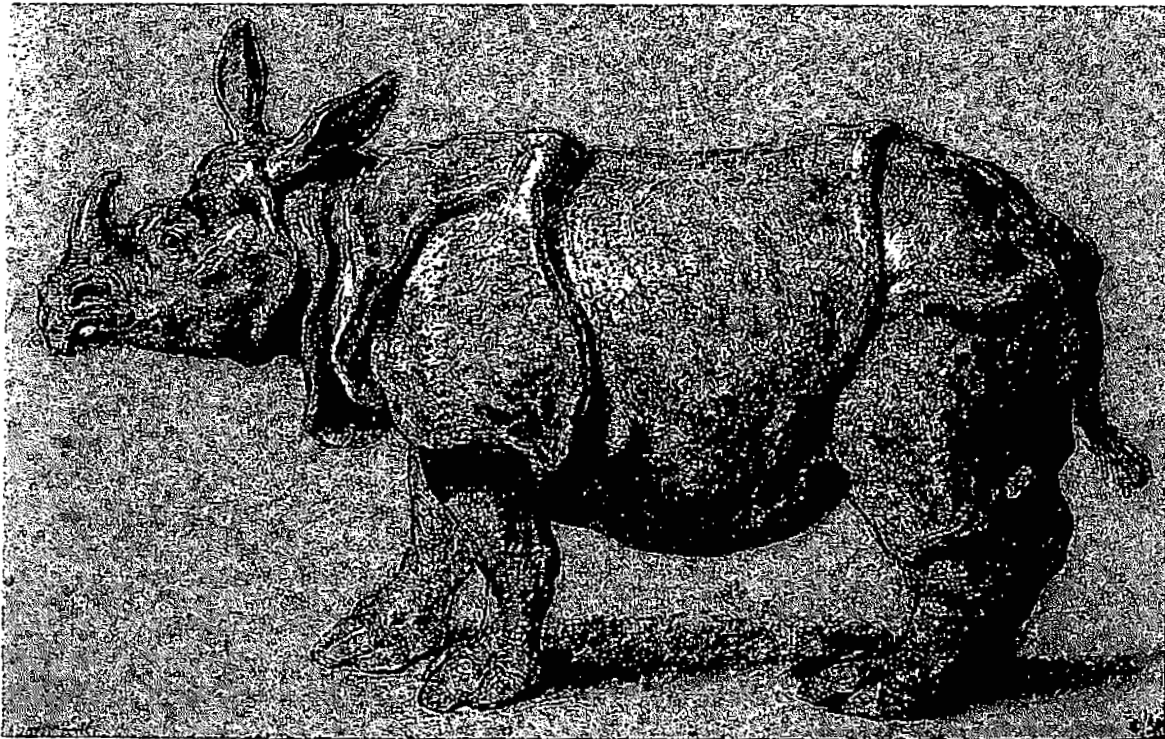


Vera Religione
In Luce Reclamata
Condono in Venezia
L'anno 1751
Dalla Compagnia di
S. Antonio Gio: Battista
Ducani da Vicenza
Della Compagnia di
S. Antonio Gio: Battista
Della Compagnia di
S. Antonio Gio: Battista



ix Venetian School, *The Rhinoceros in its Booth*, oil on canvas, c. 1750–1 (Banca Cattolica del Veneto, Vicenza)

x Jean-Baptiste Oudry, *Study of the 'Dutch' Rhinoceros*, drawing in black chalk heightened with white on blue paper, 1749–50 (British Museum)





31 Johann Elias Ridinger, *The 'Dutch' Rhinoceros Lying on its Left Side*, drawing, lead pencil on blue paper, 1748
(Courtauld Institute Galleries, London)

The most important as a document is the first of the series, showing the rhinoceros standing (col. pl. VI, p. 36), a pathetic, knock-kneed drooling figure, with tail held horizontally. On blue paper, it is inscribed (in translation) thus: 'On 12 June 1748 I drew this rhinoceros here in Augsburg after the life. Its height was 6 feet, its length 12 feet, in colour it is mostly chestnut brown; the lower part of its belly and in the depth of its folds it is body or flesh coloured. J. Elias Ridinger drew it from 6 sides.' This particular drawing was engraved by Ridinger probably in the same year, 1748, and had a wide circulation. Note that to the right of the drawing is a faint outline sketch of the rhinoceros from the other side, its head lifted.

A second drawing in the Courtauld Institute Galleries in London (pl. 31) is of the animal lying down

in a most relaxed manner. On the left is the study of a foot, and on the right its head with wide-open jaws. The third drawing, once attributed to Stubbs, seems to show the animal asleep, its legs tucked up under its body, eyes closed, the ears nearly but not quite drooping. This too is on blue paper, and approximately the same dimensions as the former two mentioned (pl. 32). As for the remaining three, they can be deduced from two prints. One (pl. 33), from the *Paradise* series, believed to have been completed by about 1749, gives us two views of the missing drawings, the one in the background with head raised and jaws open was possibly used by Parisian clockmakers as a model (see pl. 101). The sixth drawing by Ridinger may well be that used in a later series of prints (pl. 34). Here the beast is leaping forwards, an alarming movement that has also been captured in a



32 Johann Elias Ridinger, *A Sleeping Rhinoceros*, drawing in black chalk with white on blue paper, 1748 (Collection of Mr and Mrs Paul Mellon, Upperville, Virginia)

33 Johann Elias Ridinger, *Eve gives Adam the Forbidden Fruit*, no. 8 of a set of twelve engravings of the *Paradise* series, c.1748-50





34 Johann Elias Ridinger, *A Rhinoceros Leaping*, coloured etching with engraving, Augsburg, c.1750-5 (Private collection, Madrid)



35 Anonymous, *The Rhinoceros*, oil on canvas, German, c.1745-55 (Private collection, Germany)

Longhi School painting. The fact that this print has the legend 'Joh. El. Ridinger ad vivum del.fec. et exc.' lends support to the suggestion that one of the missing drawings was the basis for this print; for Ridinger really did draw from life, unlike some of the other artists we have considered, such, for example, as Francis Barlow.

There is no doubt that Ridinger's prints of the rhinoceros that he saw in Augsburg on 12 June 1748 did much to scotch the Dürer tradition. These prints, together with Douwe Mout's repetitive posters, certainly influenced the applied arts, as we shall see in later chapters. Until the publication of vol. XI of Buffon's *Histoire naturelle* in 1764 with its portrayal of Oudry's vision of our pachyderm, the Ridinger influence was at its height, vying with the posters, prints and medals of that eminent Dutch showman, Douwe Mout van der Meer. What is odd is how few paintings by lesser artists have survived. One such is here illustrated (pl. 35): an anonymous picture deriving from one of Douwe Mout's prints, but with an

idiosyncratic deviation from the normal in the folds of skin, here looking like thick cording.

1748 ANSBACH. A short stop here is indicated by a unique medal by Johann Samuel Gözinger (1734-91), in silver.

NUREMBERG. 22 July to 20 August. Here an order for medals to be sold at the rhinoceros's booth as it travelled was placed with the medallist, Peter Paul Werner, one of the leaders of his craft. Five differing models are known, with inscriptions in Italian and French as well as in German. It is as though the Dutch Captain had already planned ahead for journeys in France and Italy.²⁵

WÜRZBURG. 3 October drawn by the court painter Anton Clemens Lünenschloss (1678-1763) (pl. 36). A touching tribute to the animal's local popularity can be felt in the last words of the inscription: 'is called Miss Clara'. Or, in German: 'wird genannt die Jungfer Clara'.²⁶

LEIDEN. November–December. Appears to have returned to Leiden, possibly by Rhine boat. While in Leiden, modelled in clay and drawn by the anatomist Petrus Camper (1722–89).²⁷

It will have been noted that there are many gaps in the above itinerary. There is little doubt that Douwe Mout and party must have made many one-day visits to small towns and longer visits to larger towns. These will in time doubtless be brought to light, as well as a quantity of unrecorded portraits of 'Jungfer Clara'.

France, Italy and Northern Europe, 1749–58

The second stage of 'Jungfer Clara's' European peregrinations²⁸ will be treated as in the first part of this chapter: in diary form for the minor visits and in narrative form for those of more consequence. Since the first major stopping point was Paris, still the intellectual and artistic centre of the civilised world, a narrative section is here inevitable.

Douwe Mout is reported to have reached Rheims, presumably travelling from his base in Holland, at the end of December 1748. On 30 December the party left Rheims for Versailles,²⁹ where Douwe Mout had the audacity to ask Louis XV the very stiff price of 100,000 écus for his rare beast which he hoped would add lustre to the royal menagerie. But Louis XV refused the offer, and the animal remained on view in Versailles for most of January 1749. It was to be seen at the Cheval Rouge in the rue de l'Orangerie, with the usual range of prices according to how close the visitor was allowed to approach. By 3 February it had moved to Paris, 'au bas de la rue de Tournon, Cul-de-Sac de l'Opéra Comique, rue des Quatre-Vents'. Later it moved to a booth at the annual Fair of St Germain. It remained there until late in April.³⁰

If we are to believe contemporary writers, both serious and frivolous, Paris in the first months of 1749 suffered from a severe attack of rhinomania: a harmless disease which also affected clockmakers, faience painters and that great animal painter, Jean-Baptiste Oudry. First on the scene was the Abbé Ladvozat with his ponderous *Lettre sur le Rhinocéros*.³¹ Submitted for approval on 13 February, and published soon

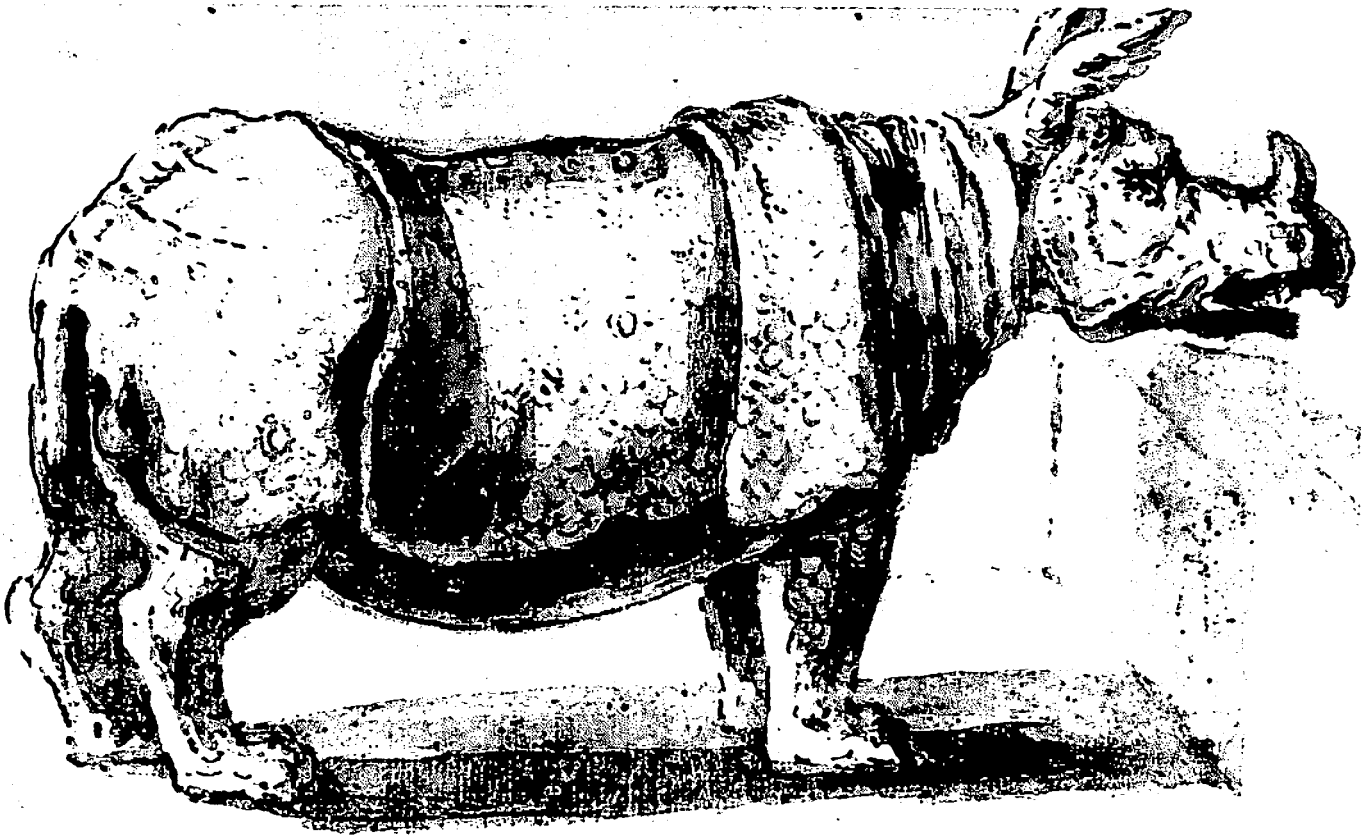
afterwards without waiting for an engraving to be inserted, he noted that the animal had a tongue 'slender like that of a dog and as soft as velvet', while of its eating habits he notes that it 'likes beer and wine, and the smoke of tobacco'. Another commentator, Barbier, mentions its predilection for orange peel.

It was only natural that fashion was affected, for both sexes. That prolific authoress, who wrote under the name of the Countess Dash,³² remarks that 'in 1750 we wore fashions and outfits with the strangest names. There were muffs à la maréchale, fur caps à la parmesane . . . ribbons à la rhinoceros'. Even stranger fashions are mentioned or perhaps invented in a satirical poem, *Le Rhinocéros*, also published in 1750.³³ For example, the *Coëfure à la Rhinocéros* was composed of a horn and a tail, 'ouvrage sublime'; the horn was imitated by a multicoloured feather and the wagging tail by a ribbon. Even more striking was the equipage of a dandy whose pair of horses were so attired that they resembled rhinoceroses: 'a bouquet of feathers placed on the animal's head looked like the animal's horn, and strands of silk . . . imitated its tail'. Finally, the author describes how a wife introduced her lover into the home hidden inside a cardboard rhinoceros (like an up-to-date Trojan horse).

The German critic, Friedrich Melchior von Grimm (1723–1807), writing to Diderot, comments that 'all Paris, so easily inebriated by small objects, is now busy with a kind of animal called rhinoceros'.³⁴ Even Casanova, in one of his funnier experiences, becomes involved with this brutish animal, when his current mistress, a marquise, of course, seeing the huge, dark-skinned attendant 'of human shape and very masculine', squatting outside the wooden booth to take the entrance money, mistakes him for the rhinoceros itself.³⁵ The Encyclopaedists and natural historians, however, took the occasion more seriously; and none more than the great Buffon, who made use of a portrait by Jean-Baptiste Oudry, so taking one more step in the partial destruction of the Dürer image: partial, for that image has not yet been totally eradicated from the European subconscious.

The next stages of the animal's progress are again reduced to diary form.

1749 LYONS. 30 May. Reported by Marquis d'Argenson that the rhinoceros had killed five



Rhinoceros in Wiedlung gemessen 25. Aug 1748
 g. Kopf 22 1/2, 5 Füsse 4, 3 Zoll lang - 12 Zoll lang
 Rückgrat 11 1/2 Füsse, 1 1/2 Zoll, 1 1/2 Zoll, 1 1/2 Zoll, 1 1/2 Zoll, 1 1/2 Zoll, 1 1/2 Zoll, 1 1/2 Zoll, 1 1/2 Zoll
 Die oben sind die wichtigsten Maße, die man bei der Beschreibung eines Rhinoceroses anführen muß.
 am 20. H. 1748, Frankfurt, 14. Erwähnung gemacht. 10. F. 1748, Frankfurt, 14. Erwähnung gemacht.
 ist der größte Maßstab, 1 1/2 Zoll, 1 1/2 Zoll, 1 1/2 Zoll, 1 1/2 Zoll, 1 1/2 Zoll, 1 1/2 Zoll, 1 1/2 Zoll, 1 1/2 Zoll
 die Jungfer Clara.

36 Anton Clemens Lünenschloss, 'Jungfer Clara', watercolour, Würzburg, 3 August 1748 (Martin von Wagner Museum, University of Würzburg)

or six people in Lyons and had itself died from a 'chaleur d'amour'.³⁶ A false rumour.

DIJON, GENEVA, AVIGNON, AIX. Unconfirmed visits, from a Dutch report in the *Gazette d'Amsterdam*.

MARSEILLES. November. An unfortunate incident reported in a German paper, *Auszug der neuesten Weltgeschichte*,³⁷ that while embarking at Marseilles en route for Italy the animal upset the barge in which it was being transferred to a larger vessel.

OFF THE COAST OF ITALY. November. Once again the Marquis d'Argenson falsely reports the loss of the animal and its owner with all his takings, perishing at sea between Rome and Naples.³⁸

NAPLES. November. Painted in its stall by an unidentified artist of the Neapolitan School (see col. pl. VII, p. 36). Through the booth's half-door can be seen a tower and battlements of the Castelnuovo. The man on the left is believed to be the Marchese Tanucci (1698-

1783), an influential figure and later first minister to Carlo di Borbone, King of the Two Sicilies. On the far right, perhaps Douwe Mout. See note to col. pl. VII.

1750 ROME. March. Reported in the *Diario ordinario* under the date 14 March as having arrived the previous Saturday from Naples.³⁹ 1750 was Holy Year and Rome therefore filled with devout tourists. A Dutch poster, undated, announced that the animal lost its horn in June, by rubbing it off against its cage.⁴⁰

FLORENCE. This appears to have been a fiasco. On 13 March Sir Horace Mann (1701–86), British Minister in Florence, wrote to his intimate friend, Horace Walpole, about ‘the rhinoceros, which we expect from Rome, where it is gone to the Jubilee. This animal is to be recommended to me with its master, Vander Meer, whom the Emperor has made a Baron for the merit of the beast. You must not be surprised that a Baron de l’Empire should follow this trade, when we are told that Augustus himself did not disdain to be *rhinocerontajo* by showing one publicly to the Romans.’⁴¹ Sir Horace then tells Walpole that he has been sent a medal of the animal from Rome.⁴² On 8 May he reports on the fashion of dressing hair ‘*a la rhinocéros*, which all our ladies here follow, so that the preceding *mode a la comète* is only for . . . antiquated beauties’. Evidently Paris fashions spread rapidly.⁴³

But despite these precise reports, it seems that the animal never visited Florence,⁴⁴ but must have gone by sea from Rome to N. Italy.

BOLOGNA. 24 August to 7 September. As usual stayed at an inn, the former ‘*osteria del la rosa vicino a San Petronio*’. It arrived in a ‘*gran cassone*’ drawn by six pairs of oxen. On sale was a medal of tin with a French inscription; presumably the Italian medals had been sold out. The party departed ‘*verso la Lombardia*’, which suggests Milan.⁴⁵

MILAN. Noted on a poster.

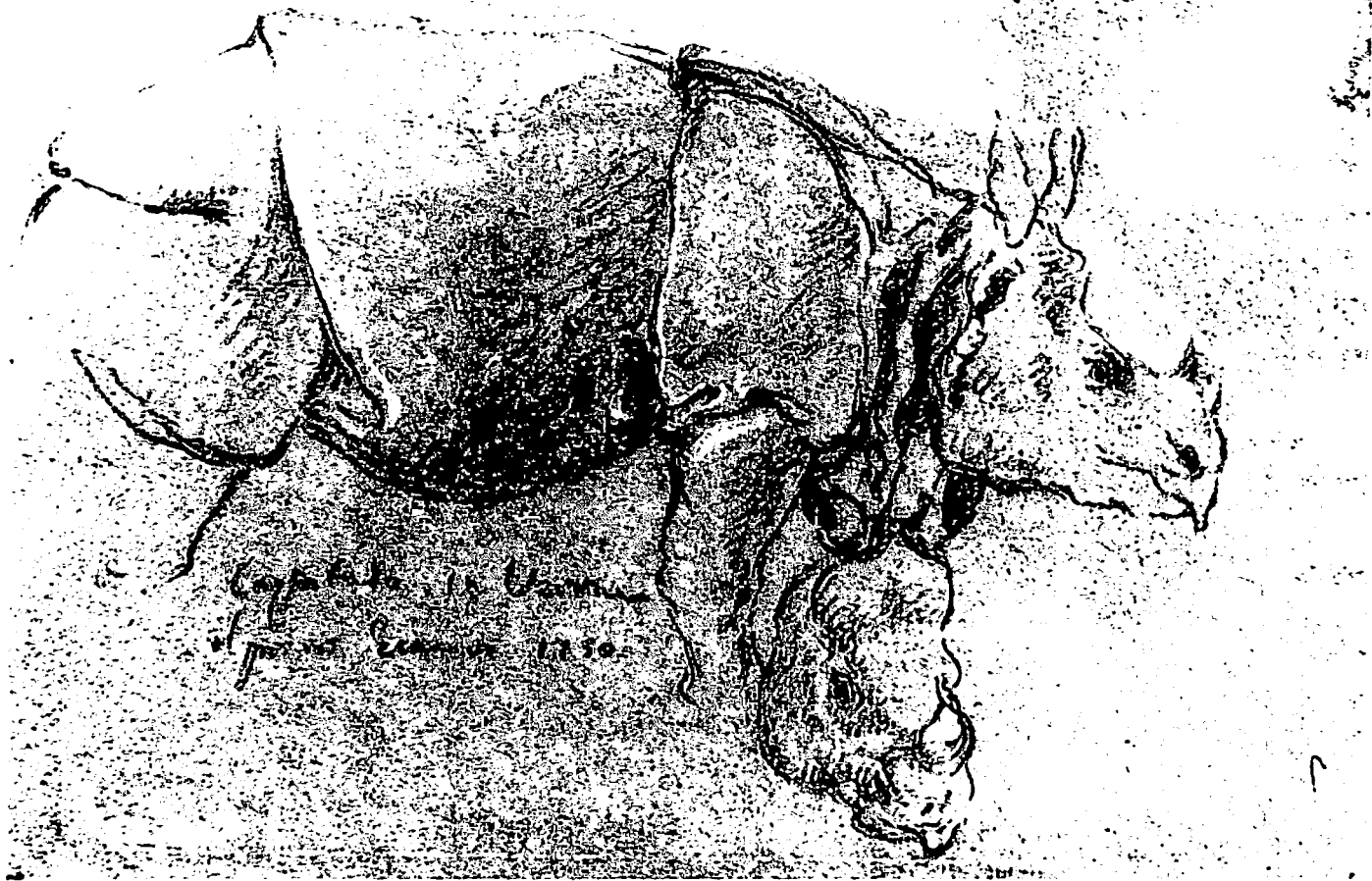
1751 VERONA. 1 January 1751. As noted, but using the Old Style calendar, on a drawing attributed to Francesco Lorenzi (1723–87).⁴⁶ This

drawing (pl. 37), belonging to the late Ulrich Middeldorf, is in black-and-white chalk on olive paper; it is more naturalistic than the Longhi painting mentioned below. The inscription reads: ‘arrived in Verona 1 January 1750’. Verona was one of the few places still to use the Old Calendar. A red and white chalk drawing certainly attributed to Lorenzi was made for a Francesco Segui, member of the Académie royale des Sciences, but this has been lost.

VENICE. January to February.

Capt. Douwe Mout seems to have been rather late for the Venetian carnival, which began on 26 December and continued for about two months, until Shrove Tuesday. Freaks, charlatans, exotic beasts as well as the antics of the *commedia dell’arte* were the staple diet of the carnival, which drew crowds of foreigners as well as the local inhabitants. Among the latter was the Veronese savant, Marchese Scipione Maffei, who noted that he saw ‘in the hands of its master the horn [of the rhinoceros] which fell off last year’; a confirmation of the Dutch report already mentioned.⁴⁷

One reason why the Indian rhinoceros is regarded sympathetically in the West is because of the two versions of the painting by Pietro Longhi (?1702–85): one in the Ca’ Rezzonico, Venice (col. pl. VIII, p. 53) and the other in London’s National Gallery. These two rightly popular paintings of the rhinoceros on view at its stall in Venice have acted as an antidote to the Germanic image of the 1515 woodcut. The animal here portrayed is a gentle creature, smaller than one would have thought, its head more like a large pug than a ferocious wild beast. It is the absence of a pronounced horn, the stub of new growth, that distinguishes it from previous portraits. It stands in a small arena, nonchalantly chewing straw. Behind it are two rows of benches (doubtless graded as to entrance fee), with figures standing in two groups. Behind are two women and a child, one woman wearing and the other carrying a small oval black mask forming part of the domino, called a *moreta*. In the front row (it is the Ca’ Rezzonico version here described) is the young keeper holding a whip and the horn that was rubbed off in Rome. Next to him three paying visitors, two unmasked, one woman wearing the *bauta* – a white mask worn by both sexes during



37 Francesco Lorenzi (attributed to), *The Rhinoceros in Verona*, drawing in black and white chalk on blue paper, dated 1 January 1750 (NS 1751) (Collection of the late Ulrich Middeldorf)

carnival. On the extreme right a pensive pipe-smoking man wearing a tricorne, perhaps the owner, Douwe Mout.

The Longhi painting in Venice is generally agreed to be the earlier version. It alone has pinned to the rough boards on the right the following inscription on a piece of paper tacked to the wall in *trompe-l'oeil* fashion: 'true portrait of a Rhinoceros brought to Venice in the year 1751, made by the hand of Pietro Longhi as a commission from the Nobleman Giovanni Grimani dei Servi: Venetian Patrician'. The National Gallery example made for another Venetian nobleman, Girolamo Mocenigo, differs in that there is no inscription and because the two male figures leaning on the wooden rail are now masked with the *bauta*.⁴⁸

Close to these two pictures, but no slavish copy, is an etching by Alessandro Longhi (1733–1813), where the 'gran Rinoceronte' (pl. 38) is mistakenly described as 'Dall' Africa'. It is in reverse to his

father's paintings, including some of the same figures but adding on the right a group of Italian comedians venturing into the arena, ignorant of the beast's occasional fits of temper.⁴⁹

There are other Longhi and Longhi School portraits of the same animal at the 1751 carnival. One strange commission for a member of the Grimani family shows the Irish giant, Magrath, who was in Venice in 1757, standing beside the rhinoceros of 1751.⁵⁰ Another painting, not yet positively attributed, shows the rhinoceros as an altogether livelier animal (col. pl. ix, p. 54). Here, of especial interest, is the large-wheeled carriage in the left background.⁵¹ Another picture is of the animal in a rage, leaping in the air and scaring the onlookers.

Despite their toy-like charm, the Venetian scenes had little impact on rhinocerontine iconography. In the minds of a few Englishmen on the Grand Tour some impression of a gentler creature than they had been brought up to believe in may have had an effect.



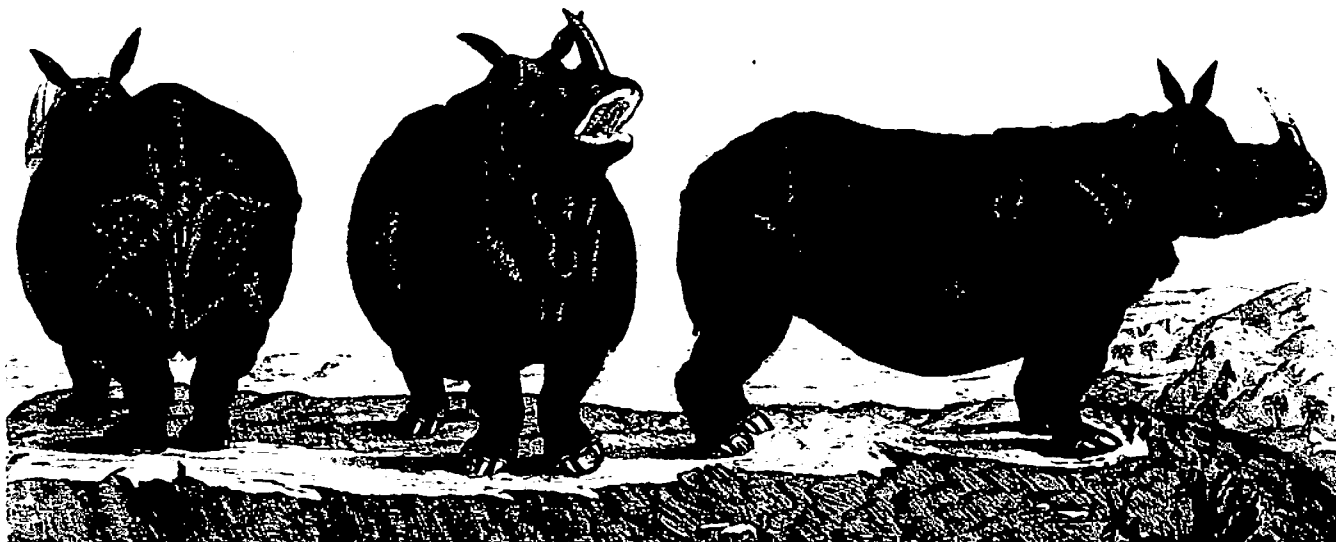
*Il gran Rinoceronte qui si vede,
Dall' Africa condotto in suo contorno.*

*Costella Bebra smisurata in fede,
Del suo naso cornuto eccovi il corno*

38 Alessandro Longhi, 'Il gran Rinoceronte', etching, from a set of six, c. 1751 (Museo Correr, Venice)

The real impact, then, of the Longhi portrayal was not on his contemporaries so much as on the thousands of visitors to the National Gallery since the picture was acquired in 1881. This too has helped to create in the European imagination an image of this exotic beast.

The remaining seven or so years of the animal's life, mostly spent in North Europe, have not yet been at all fully documented; in any case, as far as we know, there were no portraits of any significance. A brief account in diary form should suffice.



Accurate Abbildung eines Asiatischen Rhinoceros weiblichen Geschlechts von dreierlei Posturen, nemlich von vornen, von hinten, und von der Seiten. Welcher 1754 in Sölon und Trautenlebendy gesehen worden, seine Länge und dicke ist 22 Schuh die Höhe 7 Schuh 7 Zoll, seines Alters 16 Jar

Prawdziwe wyobrazenie jednego Azyackiego zwierzcia, Rhinoceros nazwany, który zwierz jest samica, brodawicy postaci, mianowicie z przodku z tyłu, y z boku. Który zwierz roku Pańskiego 1754go w Poloczce y w Stawskiej ziemi żywym był widziiany. Długość y grubość tego zwierzcia jest sześć Łokci, wyższego jest półtrzecia Łokci y średm. całego (albo szerz wielkości ciała) jest stury czemasto at
Matth Deisch sculpsit, 1754

39 Matthäus Deisch, *The 'Dutch' Rhinoceros in Danzig*, etching on copper, 1754–5 (Martin Sperlich Collection, Berlin-Wannsee)

1751 VIENNA. 29 May. Second visit for a week only. *Wienerisches Diarium* reports on future plans to visit Prague, Frankfurt and then London. First two stops not confirmed.

LONDON. December. Reported in *The Gentleman's Magazine* (vol. XXI for December 1751) that amongst other 'Uncommon Natural Curiosities' (two dwarfs, a negro contortionist and a crocodile) was shown 'a female rhinoceros, or true unicorn'. Engraved by George Edwards in *Gleanings of Natural History* (1758). Poster in English (pl. 27c) probably refers to this visit.

1752–October 1754. No information. Probably in Holland.

1754 WARSAW. 6 November. At the Royal Palace, where it was seen by Augustus III's sons and by the Court; this presentation was followed

by the performance of a comedy (perhaps Italian).⁵²

DANZIG. Engraved by Matthäus Deisch (1718–c.1789) in three positions (pl. 39).⁵³

CRACOW? A possibility, for there are two bronze plaques on a house of roughly this period.

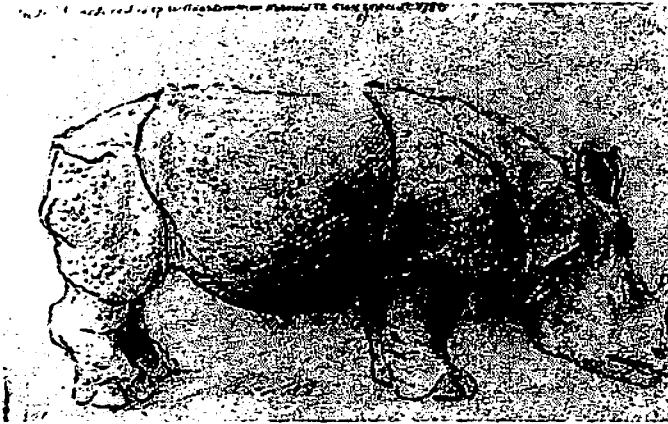
PRUSSIA. Referred to in legend of Deisch's engraving above.

1755 COPENHAGEN. A visit in mid-June; drawn by Johanna Fosie.⁵⁴

LONDON. Possibly a second visit; based on a poster in Glasgow.

1756 HAARLEM. Drawing by Cornelis van Noorde (1731–95), inscribed 'this rhinoceros was seen at the fair in Haarlem, 1756' (pl. 40).

1758 HOLLAND. A drawing in the possession of J. le F. van Berkhey (1729–1812) mentioned.⁵⁵



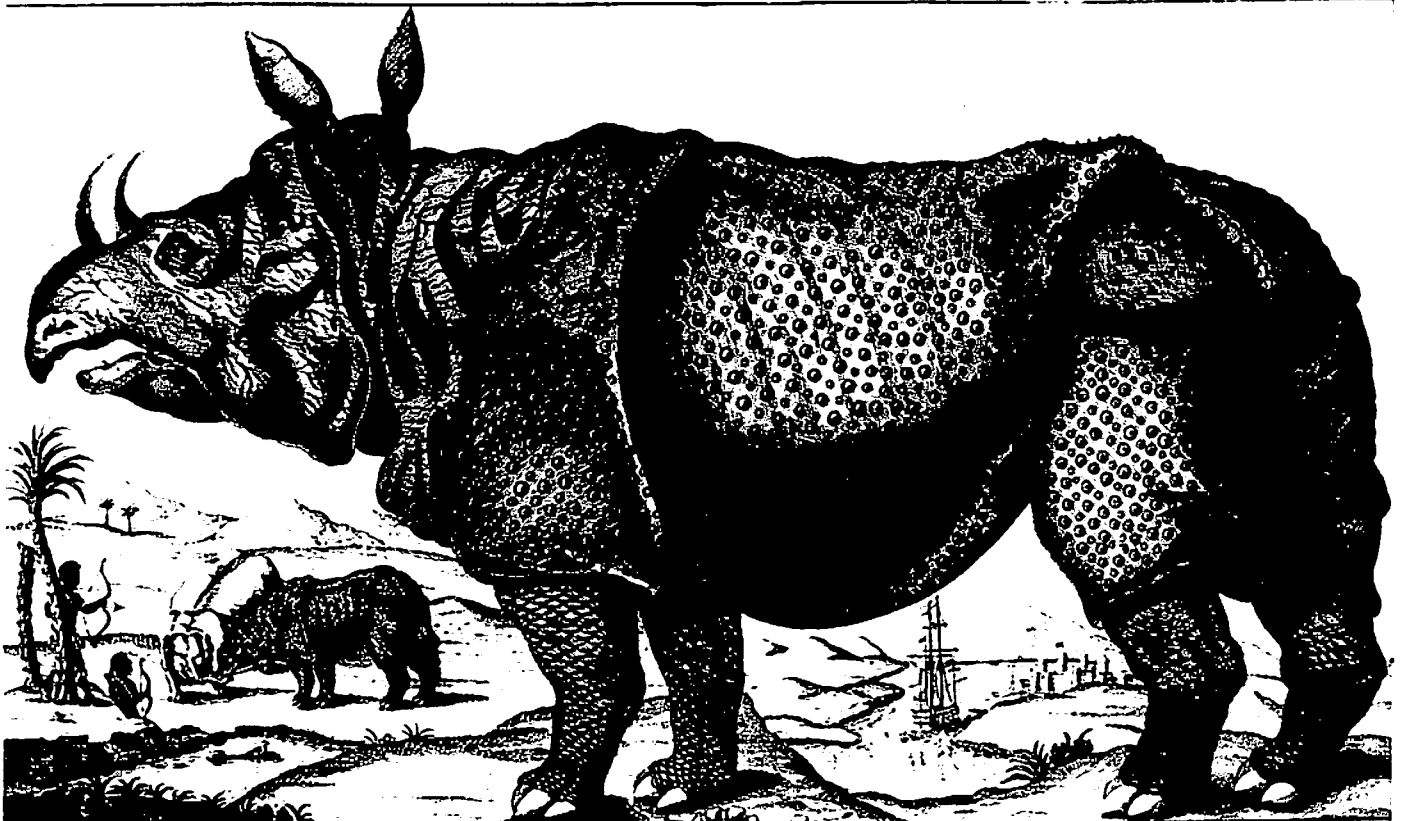
40 Cornelis van Noorde, *The Rhinoceros in Haarlem*, drawing in black chalk heightened in white, 1756 (Gemeentearchief, Haarlem)

41 *The Death of 'Jungfer Clara' in London*, engraving 1758 (Staats- und Stadtbibliothek, Augsburg)

LONDON. 14 April. In two German prints of the usual type sold by Douwe Mout (pl. 41) it is recorded (in translation) that 'at the age of 21 it died in London on 14 April'.⁵⁶ No obituary notice has been found in London newspapers.

Oudry, Buffon and the Histoire naturelle

By themselves the numerous booklets, pamphlets, posters, prints, medals, drawings and paintings, many of them shown on the previous pages, would not have had sufficient authority for the 'Dutch' rhinoceros to destroy the visual hegemony enjoyed by Dürer's woodcut of 1515. They had certainly upset Dürer's monopoly, but had not as yet taken the lead. It needed the combination of an artist and of a natural



Dieser Rhinoceros der Nasenhorn ist im Königreich Assam im Jahr 1751 gefangen worden, der König machte ein Project an den damaligen Holländischen Director in Bengalen Herrn Nieuhofmann alle die er zu Lehr zu ihm bringen, wegen vorerwähnten geringen Schaden, vorzuziehen, als er ihn an den Ostindischen Schiff-Capitain H. David Plant van der Meer, der ihn 1751 in Holland brachte, zum Täglichen Unterhalt bekam, er ist Heutzeit 21 und so Einer 1751 der Dagegen die Behauptung, was Hildt in die 1751 Erstmal worden zu Lehr in London Caput 1758 den 14 April.

Dieser ist der wahre Origin al von dem Welt best an dem Rhinoceros oder Nasenhorn.

Le premier Rhinoceros qui fut amené de l'Inde dans le Royaume de France, fut celui qui fut amené par le Capitain David Plant van der Meer, qui arriva à Paris le 14 Avril 1751. Ce Rhinoceros est mort le 14 Avril 1758, à l'âge de 21 ans. Il a vécu 21 ans, et mourut à Londres le 14 Avril 1758.

historian, each of international reputation, to accomplish this difficult feat. Such a partnership finally developed in Paris in 1749, by chance rather than by intent.

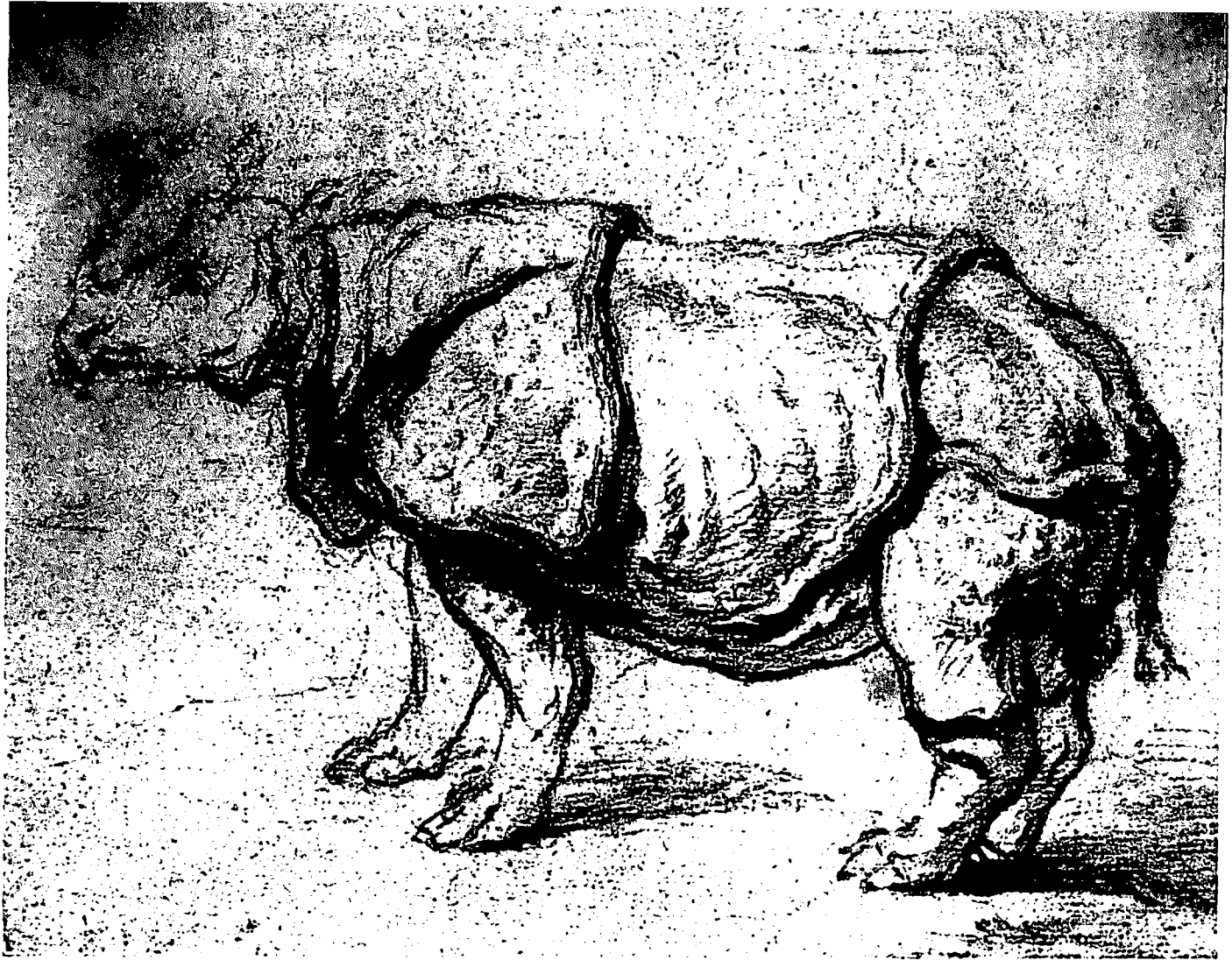
The painter was Jean-Baptiste Oudry (1686-1755) and the naturalist Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon (1707-88). Oudry was a prolific and successful painter of still-lives, of portraits, of domestic and exotic animals, of Louis xv's dogs and the King's official painter of hunting subjects and provider of decorative canvases for specific interiors. He was also a rich man, who had revitalised the Beauvais tapestry manufacture since his appointment as director in 1734. Buffon was a brilliant naturalist in the broadest sense, director of the Jardin du Roi (now Jardin des Plantes) since 1739, a man of considerable ambition and influence, who for long had nursed the idea of a comprehensive illustrated work on natural history. It was in 1749, the year of the 'Dutch' rhinoceros's profitable stay in Paris (profitable for its owner), that Buffon succeeded in persuading the *Imprimerie Royale* to begin printing the first volumes of his *Histoire naturelle*. In all, the work comprised forty-four quarto volumes, with over two thousand plates and maps. The first three volumes were issued in 1749, the last in 1804, posthumously. It was one of the greatest feats of publishing in the eighteenth century, rivalled only, but not exceeded by Diderot and d'Alembert's *Encyclopédie* of seventeen volumes (Paris 1751-65). Indeed, it was this rivalry between free enterprise and the State that finally persuaded the Royal Press to undertake Buffon's *Histoire*.

Buffon, with his *Histoire naturelle* about to start publication, must have been enthralled to learn of the arrival in Paris in February 1749 of a live rhinoceros, an animal never seen there before. Whether Oudry was commissioned by Buffon, according to Loisel (1912), or by Louis xv as Buffon asserts, is a matter of conjecture; very likely it was commissioned by neither, but drawn and painted for Oudry's own pleasure. That this may have been the case is likely, because the finished oil painting, life size, was not sold at the time but remained in his possession, as the entry in the catalogue of the Salon of 1750 clearly shows: 'No. 38. The Rhinoceros, life size, on a canvas 15 feet long and 10 feet high. This animal was painted in its pen at the Fair of St Germain: it belongs to the Artist.' It was only later in 1750 that it was acquired,

together with a number of other paintings, by the Duke of Mecklenburg-Schwerin; and in Schwerin this huge canvas remains, alas (!), in a poor state.⁵⁷

The word 'painted' must be understood as a little artistic licence, for it would hardly have been practicable to move into a squalid wooden booth a canvas fifteen feet long; nor was it usual to expect an animal to stand still for the artist. There is no doubt that a series of sketches must have been the first stage. One such preliminary sketch in a private collection, wrongly attributed to Watteau, has fortunately come to light. In red chalk, the body is more finished and assured than the head (pl. 42). There may have been many such studies before Oudry completed what would seem to be the finished drawing for the oil painting (col. pl. x, p. 54). There are many points of difference between the drawings apart from the greater detail. Both head and ears of the finished drawing are larger in proportion than in the sketch of pl. 42. The horn is both thicker, longer and more bent. The legs are a trifle squatter and the feet with the three pointed toes decidedly bigger. This splendid drawing, acquired by the British Museum in 1918, is in black-and-white chalk on blue paper.

Since the live rhinoceros was in Paris only from early February until late April 1749, Oudry must have been working in the later part of the year and in the early months of 1750 in preparing the finished, lifesize oil for display in the Salon du Louvre of 1750 (25 August-8 October). In all, he sent in eighteen pictures. As already mentioned, the vast portrait of the rhinoceros was sold in the same year, 1750, to one of his oldest and most faithful foreign patrons, Christian II Ludwig, Duke of Mecklenburg-Schwerin (reigned 1728-56). The Duke had first ordered four pictures from Oudry in 1732. In 1739 Oudry painted in Paris a portrait of his son, Friedrich. In 1750, besides his purchase of the rhinoceros, the Duke bought a series of pictures from the estate of M. de la Peyronie, and on Oudry's death in 1756, only a few months before his own death, he acquired eighteen paintings as well as numerous drawings from the studio sale. Most of these, including the huge rhinoceros, are still to be seen in the Staatliches Museum in Schwerin; an unrivalled collection better known to the world since the 1982 exhibition of Oudry's works at the Grand Palais in Paris, where, incidentally, the rhinoceros was omitted.



42 Jean-Baptiste Oudry, *The 'Dutch' Rhinoceros in Paris*, drawing in red chalk, 1749 (Private collection, Paris)

The condition of the lifesize rhinoceros has been briefly mentioned. Without stretcher, it is in poor but not impossible condition. Happily there seems to be little damage to the head. However, rather than depend on a poor photograph of the original, col. pl. XI (p. 71) shows a contemporary reduction by a local artist, Dietrich Findorff (1722–72). Many of his copies of the ducal collection were made on a scale of one to three, as in the present instance. The close dependence on the British Museum drawing is obvious; the only noticeable change is in the nasal horn, which is not only larger but also ends in a sharp point. There is here no dependence whatever on the Dürer woodcut. It is based on close personal study of a live animal.

Oudry's part in the creation of a new image of the rhinoceros was now taken over by Buffon, who had

already published the first three volumes of his *Histoire naturelle*. In order that the numerous illustrations should have a certain uniformity of style, Buffon employed Jacques de Sève (d.1795). In all de Sève produced some fifteen hundred drawings in thirty years.⁵⁸ Some of these were drawn from living birds and animals in the royal menagerie at Versailles, others from stuffed creatures, in particular birds, while in some instances, as in the case of Oudry's rhinoceros, de Sève would redraw the work of other artists. There is a volume in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris with de Sève's drawings mounted next to the finished print(s). Plates 43 and 44 show the drawing by de Sève and the print etched by Jean-Charles Baquoy (1721–77). The drawing is dated 1750 and signed 'De Sève'. Since the volume of the *Histoire* containing the description of the rhinoceros



43 Jacques de Sève, *The Rhinoceros after Oudry*, drawing in grey watercolour, signed and dated 1750 (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris)



44 Jean-Charles Baquoy, *The Rhinoceros after Oudry*, engraving after de Sève's drawing in pl. 43 (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris)

was not published until 1764, this print must have been held in reserve. It is, however, likely that independent single prints were in circulation earlier.

It will be easily noted that the horn, both of de Sève's drawing and of Baquoy's print, is smaller, sharper and thinner than on any of the works by Oudry himself (col. pl. x, and pl. 42). De Sève's model quite likely came from an intermediate drawing by Oudry, now lost. There were critics of the horn, generously included by Buffon in volume XI of the *Histoire*, where the animal is described. 'M. Oudry', writes M. de Mours, 'has given the rhinoceros a defensive weapon longer than that of the rhinoceros at the Fair.' But the damage was done, and the thin horn persisted for a while. Perhaps this criticism explains why in the vignette in vol. XI the rhinoceros is given a thicker horn (see p. 65). The thin horn again is 'borrowed' for the *Encyclopédie* in the *Recueil de Planches* of 1768; but Thomas Bewick in his woodcut for *A General History of Quadrupeds* of 1790 has thickened Oudry's horn to a normal size. How exactly the thin horn disappeared is a matter of conjecture. It is not seen much in the half century when the Oudry/de Sève/Buffon pachyderm prevailed over earlier interpretations. In zoological books this new and more realistic approach to the animal was widely pirated in the countless editions of the *Histoire naturelle* in most European languages, but it had rather less effect than one might imagine on the applied arts. It could be that the Indian rhinoceros was losing its impact as an exotic novelty.

5

Stubbs and the late eighteenth century

The Versailles rhinoceros, 1770–93

It was noted in the previous chapter that the Dutch sea captain Douwe Mout offered his rhinoceros to Louis xv in January 1749 for the exorbitant sum of 100,000 écus. Patience made it possible for the king to acquire his personal pachyderm at a saving of some 98,000 écus by waiting twenty years.¹ That France should have been the last of the European countries with overseas possessions – after Portugal, England and Holland – to obtain a foothold in India (in 1693, at Pondicherry)² is part of the reason why it was so late in acquiring such a status symbol; wars, financial insolvency and a certain backwardness in interest in

the natural sciences were additional hindrances to any large-scale import of exotic beasts and birds.

Eventually, an unusually able governor of the French factory at Chadernagor, Chevalier, procured a young rhinoceros for Louis xv. Happily, the log of the ship which returned to Lorient with its capture is still preserved; and further details from the archives of the Compagnie des Indes at Lorient give us the most detailed picture of the arrangements for the well-being and travel arrangements of a rhinoceros that we have.

The French East Indiaman, the *Duc de Praslin*, left India on 22 December 1769, revictualled with twenty tortoises amongst other provisions at the isle of

Ascension, and docked on 11 June 1770. A special cage was constructed to lift the rhinoceros safely to land, as it was beginning to be 'fort et méchant'. Then it was lodged in the Company's stables, securely chained.³ Two butchers, Jean Goulet and Benoist Baudet, used to handling the food requirements of carnivores, were appointed to look after the beast; but, since the rhinoceros is a herbivore, surely grocers would have been more appropriate. However, the animal thrived. In a stoutly built waggon the rhinoceros and its party left Lorient on 24 August 1770, taking with them six jars of fish oil with which to keep the animal's skin moist. Versailles was reached on the 11 September; there a special enclosure had been prepared, with a shelter and a pool of water.⁴ For the first time the rhinoceros in Europe had a permanent home in agreeable surroundings. Here it remained in idle captivity until its death in July or September 1793,⁵ having survived the worst excesses of the revolutionary Terror.

It is strange that with the rhinomania of 1749 expressed in ormolu clocks, epic poems as well as in human and equine fashion, 'le rhinocéros de Versailles' attracted such little attention from painters and sculptors. It was indeed visited both by naturalists and distinguished members of the public, such as the Austrian Emperor Joseph II in 1777,⁶ the Dutch anatomist Petrus Camper (who made a sketch in ink on 28 July 1777)⁷ and by Buffon on several occasions. But there was no Oudry, no Ridinger, certainly no Stubbs to record for posterity a contemporary personal vision of the sixth Indian rhinoceros to live in exile in Europe. What we do have are a few posthumous engravings and, of anatomical interest, a series of thirty-eight folio *velins*, the majority by the flower painter, Pierre-Joseph Redouté (1759–1840).⁸ But these rather macabre records do not justify their inclusion here as of any serious iconographic significance.

The third London or Stubbs rhinoceros, 1790–3

There is a twenty-year gap between the arrival in Europe of the 'Versailles' rhinoceros and the exhibition in London of its third Indian rhinoceros.⁹ Unfortunately, zoological as well as art historians have been misled by a printer's error in Loisel's pioneer work

on menageries, already often quoted. He wrote in 1912 that 'at the end of the eighteenth century a dealer in wild animals, Pidcock [sic], formed an emporium of rare beasts at Exeter Change in the Strand; it was there that the London public had the opportunity of seeing two Indian rhinoceroses, one that was exhibited in 1770 and the other in 1799'. An accurate report except that the date 1770 should read 1790; and, further, 1770 cannot be called 'the end of the century'.¹⁰ But until recently no one has bothered to check the information, which, as we shall see, has considerable interest in dating the portrait of Stubbs.

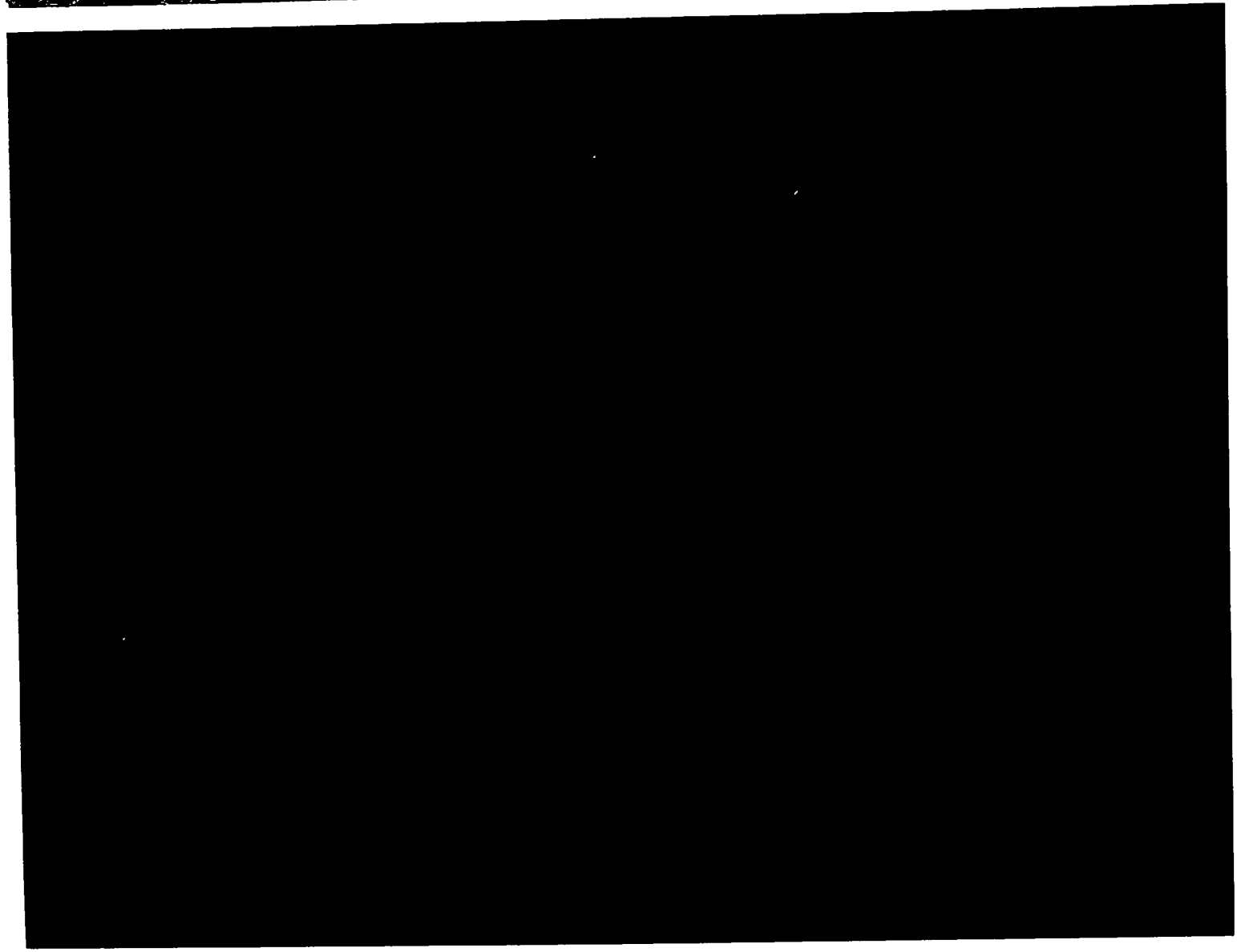
The rhinoceros was always news, its European appearance being so rare compared to that of the elephant. This third London rhinoceros as well as the fourth (of 1799) are the subject of detailed comment by that prolific author, the Rev. W. Bingley, MA (1774–1828),¹¹ Fellow of the Linnean Society and late of Peterhouse College, Cambridge, as he introduces himself on the title page of *Animal Biography, or, Authentic Anecdotes of the Lives, Manners and Economy of the Animal Creation*. We quote from the third edition of 1805:

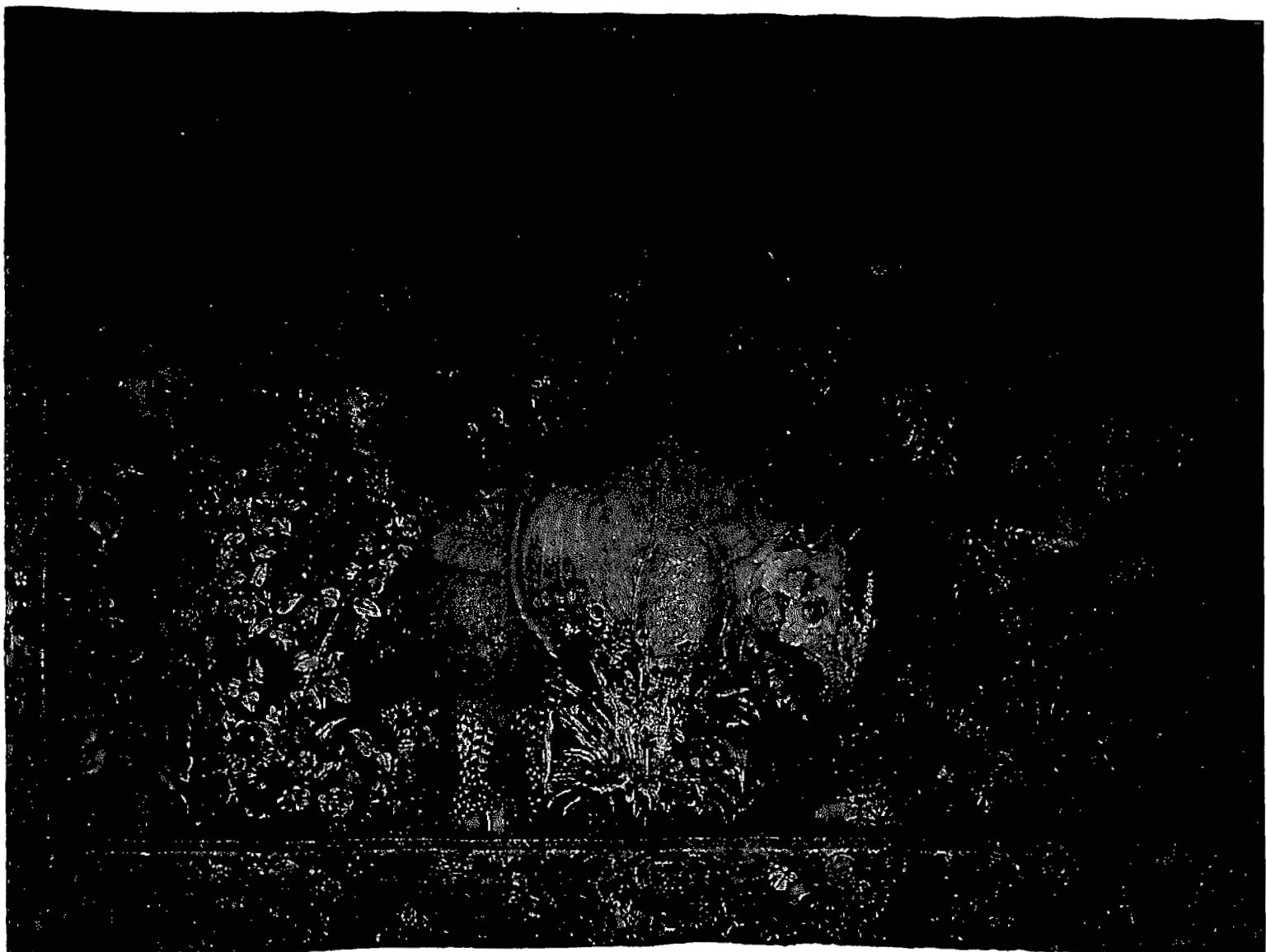
the only two animals of the species of the Single-horned Rhinoceros that have been brought into England during the last half century were both purchased for the exhibition-rooms at Exeter 'Change. One of them, of which the skin is still preserved, came from Laknaor, in the East Indies, and was brought over in the Melville Castle, East Indiaman, as a present to Mr Dundas. This gentleman, not wishing to have the trouble of keeping him, gave the animal away. Not long afterwards he was purchased by Mr Pidcock of Exeter 'Change, for the sum of 700*l*. He arrived in England in the year 1790, and is supposed to have been at that time about five years old. He exhibited no symptoms of a ferocious propensity, and would even allow himself to be patted on the back or sides by strangers. His docility was about equal to that of a tolerably tractable pig . . . He was very fond of sweet wines, of which he would often drink three or four bottles in the course of a few hours. His voice was not much unlike the bleating of a calf. It was most commonly exerted when the animal observed any person with fruit or other favourite food in his hand, and in such cases it seems to have been a mark of his anxiety



XI Dietrich Findorff,
*Rhinoceros after
Oudry*, reduced, oil
on canvas, c.1750-60
(Staatliches Museum,
Schwerin)

XII George Stubbs,
Rhinoceros, oil on
canvas, 1790-1 (By
permission of the
President and Council
of the Royal College
of Surgeons of
England)





XIII Large-leaved verdure tapestry, Flemish, probably
Grammont, c. 1550 (Kronborg Castle, Elsinore)

to have it given him. During the severe illness which preceded his death, this noise, but in a more melancholy tone, was almost constantly heard, occasioned doubtless by the agonies he underwent.

In the month of October, 1792, as this Rhinoceros was one day rising up very suddenly, he slipped the joint of one of his forelegs. This accident brought on an inflammation that about nine months afterwards occasioned his death . . . He died in a caravan at Corsham near Portsmouth [where he was buried immediately because] the stench arising from the body was so offensive . . . About a fortnight afterwards, during the night, it was dug up for the purpose of preserving its skin, and some of the most valuable of the bones.

This account has the feeling of authenticity, as though the Rev. Bingley had viewed the animal in person. It is backed up in particular by extracts from newspapers, from handbills¹² and from examples of token coinage.¹³ Exeter 'Change, in the Strand, had been used for most of the eighteenth century for a wide variety of exhibitions, with an arcade on the ground floor in which were shops specialising in 'toys' or, as the Germans aptly name them, 'Galanterie'; such objects as watches, fans, snuffboxes and porcelain. The upper floor housed recitals, puppet shows and, eventually, a menagerie.¹⁴ In 1770, one Thomas Clark took a long lease not only of the 'Change but also of the Lyceum, a building a few yards to the east. It was in the Lyceum rather than in neighbouring Exeter 'Change that the rhinoceros was to be seen in July 1790. *The Morning Herald* on 26 July published a short puff in the best tabloid tradition: 'we hear Mr Clark of Exeter Change is singular in his possessions, having perhaps what no Englishman before has had, the supporters of the King's Arms alive, a Lion and male Unicorn . . . a greater living curiosity has never appeared in this country.'¹⁵ To equate the unicorn with the rhinoceros may be good public relations, but it is bad zoology. A handbill of a few weeks later (pl. 45) is rather less derivative; it has at least the merit of a short horn more appropriate to the animal's tender age.

By December 1790 'three stupendous Ostriches, lately arrived from Barbary' and also 'the Royal Lincolnshire Ox, allowed by the best judges to be the largest and fattest ever bred in this or any other



The RHINOCEROS,
OR
Real UNICORN,
Just arrived at the
LYCEUM,
NEAR
EXETER - CHANGE
In the STRAND,

FROM the Empire of the GREAT Mogul, he was presented to an English Nobleman by an EASTERN RAJAH, as a Rarity seldom to be met with, and His Lordship has complimented the curious of his native Country by presenting him to a Gentleman who has carefully brought him home for their Inspection

HE is about two Years old in perfect Health

THIS wonderful Beast with his Impenetrable COAT OF MAIL and other singularities is so fully described and admired by Naturalists in general, that we presume it is sufficient to inform those who Contemplate and Admire the boundless Productions of the Creation, that this Herculean Quadruped is to be seen as above.

Admittance One Shilling each Person.

45 'The Rhinoceros or Real Unicorn', broadsheet, 1790 (British Library)

country' had joined the Indian rhinoceros.¹⁶ No advertisements have been found between June 1791 and 7 February 1793. The latter brings onto the scene for the first time Gilbert Pidcock, who 'begs leave to inform the Nobility and Gentry that having purchased the principal part of Mr Clark's Collection, in addition to his own, he flatters himself that it is



46 Four token halfpennies, copper, 1793-c.1800 (Private collection, London)

the largest Collection of the Animal and Feathered Creation ever exhibited to the Public'.

Pidcock's beginnings are something of a mystery. He is known to have shown exotic animals in Durham, Derby and Norwich from 1779. He had a connection with Thomas Clark before buying his stock in 1793. That he was a man of means is shown by his apparent friendship with the eminent surgeon, John Hunter (1728-93), to whom he is alleged to have lent the considerable sum of £500 in cash in 1783, to enable the surgeon to purchase the corpse of an Irish giant, Charles Byrne.¹⁷ An American observer of the London scene, Richard D. Altick, comments that 'the Exeter Change menagerie was the only permanent show of its kind in London. Still under Pidcock's proprietorship as the century began, it became one of the city's most celebrated institutions, partly because of its exuberant advertising'.¹⁸ And so it remained until Pidcock's death in 1810.

Just as King George II had seen the 'Dutch' animal in 1752, so did George III command Pidcock's rhinoceros to appear before him:

This Day June 3 1793 HER MAJESTY sent to PIDCOCK the Exhibitor of the *Rhinoceros*, for that Animal to be brought to the QUEEN's Lodge, for the Queen and Princesses to view it. It was of course immediately drawn in the Machine before the Lodge, the appearance of which highly gratified them and the KING.

'This very surprising and curious animal', as Pidcock expressed it in another advertisement on the royal visit, then moved on to 'Ascot Heath, where it will continue during the races.' From Ascot it must have had made its slow way to Corsham and its painful demise; but there is no more mention in any advertisement of the rhinoceros. No obituary, no regrets.

The Rev. Bingley reported (p. 73) that the rhinoceros injured a foreleg in October 1792. On 7 February 1793 Pidcock bought the animal from Thomas Clark. On 23 April 1793 Pidcock took out an insurance policy 'on a Rhinoceros & Carriage for the same travelling about the Country for Exhibition, not exceeding Two Hundred pounds'. Was Pidcock aware of the injury, and, if so, had he declared this to the underwriters? One doubts it. Further, the value of only £200 sounds absurdly low when compared with the known cost of other such animals, the first London beast of 1684, for example; quite apart from the value of the carriage. Did Pidcock succeed in his claim? Possibly Pidcock never made one. Information recently discovered¹⁹ shows that the remains disinterred at Corsham were used to re-create the animal in stuffed form, so that Pidcock continued to draw an income from the 'Stubbs' rhinoceros after its decease as he had done during its life. The informant is Robert Jameson (1774-1854), who reported seeing the stuffed animal at St Bartholomew's Fair at West Smithfield on 6 September 1793; he mentions its death 'a short time before'.

Pidcock's stuffed rhinoceros was evidently a popular display, for its image was used on token halfpennies, when private coinage in 1787 had to compensate for the grave shortage of official royal coinage. Such advertising must have made more people aware of the general shape of the rhinoceros than did, for example, Stubbs's portrait in oil, to be mentioned later, at any rate as far as the English were concerned. Of the four token copper halfpennies illustrated in pl. 46 two were issued by Pidcock: one was clearly influenced by a poster of 1790 (in the Enthoven Collection in the Theatre Museum, London); the other, with a date of 1795 on the reverse, confirms that the rhinoceros was on show at Pidcock's menagerie, stuffed rather than alive. The taxidermist concerned may well be

T. Hall, 'the first Artist in Europe for preserving birds and Beasts &c.'. Hall's animal has many Dürer features even at this late date: a horn on the withers and the general shape of the head. Finally, Sir Samuel Hannay's patent medicine leaves one guessing what was the 'certain disease' cured by rhinocerotoc application (see note to pl. 46).

One of the most impressive portraits of any rhinoceros by an European artist is the oil painting by George Stubbs (col. pl. XII, p. 71), recently exhibited at the Tate Gallery and at the Yale Center for British Art. Judy Egerton's catalogue of *George Stubbs 1724-1806* for the London exhibition has bravely accepted the information in this chapter (and that in the notes) by unhesitatingly altering the hitherto accepted date of 1772 to 1790 or 1791. Why 1772 was the date selected by all writers on this picture, since its identification as late as 1930, instead of 1770 or even 1775 or later is a puzzle. But what is now established is that the automatic acceptance of a date once in print is a human frailty that applies even to art historians. Enough has been said in this chapter – and much more could be added – to prove that Stubbs painted the rhinoceros that arrived in England in 1790, and not a fictitious animal of 1770 or 1772.

Most modern writers have not only assumed a false date but have also presented other information equally misleading. For example, there is no proof that John Hunter commissioned the likeness of the animal either for his own museum in Leicester Fields or for the Company of Surgeons. Both he and his brother William had in the past both commissioned paintings of exotic animals and also bought them from the artist without commissioning them. John Hunter had also sold at least one of Stubbs's canvases. One writer mistakes Spring Gardens for Exeter 'Change. Others state categorically that the 'Nine studies of the Rhinoceros, in different attitudes' sold as lot 15 in Stubbs's posthumous sale of 26 May 1807 were studies for the oil painting. They may have been; on the other hand, they may not even have been the work of Stubbs, but, for argument's sake, by Johann Elias Ridinger.

More intriguing is to wonder why it took so long for this picture to be accepted as the work of Stubbs. John Hunter's last assistant, William Clift (1775-1849), began work on 14 February 1792 at the tender age of seventeen. His employer died on 16 October

1793, within a few weeks of the rhinoceros. Stubbs's painting must already have been hanging in Hunter's Museum, of which Clift was to become for the next fifty years the Conservator, starting at a salary of £80 a year. Yet when eventually (it seems in 1819) the Museum was handed over to the Royal College of Surgeons, the list of 42 pictures drawn up by William Clift gives no artist to the portrait of the rhinoceros, although it names other painters, and even Stubbs himself in the case of 'Two Monkeys' and a 'Tartar Ox'. As has been pointed out in the recent Stubbs exhibition catalogue, 'subject-matter was more important than connoisseurship'. Nonetheless it is strange that no one took any interest in, or at least mentioned, the Stubbs rhinoceros, which must surely have hung in the newly created museum of the Royal College of Surgeons in Lincoln's Inn Fields throughout the nineteenth century. It was not until 1930 that the name of Stubbs is mentioned, and that in a brief list of paintings by Sir Arthur Keith, an eminent anthropologist.

Despite the authoritative nature of Stubbs's painting, it had little effect on the European vision of this 'Herculean Quadruped'. This was because it was seen by comparatively few people, and had no label of authorship; even more, because it was never engraved. It remained until 1930 a virtuoso performance by an anonymous painter.

The fourth London rhinoceros, 1799

There is little to be said about this last rhinoceros of Pidcock's. Let the Rev. W. Bingley¹⁹ again be our informant:

the other rhinoceros that was at Exeter 'Change was considerably smaller than this [the 1790 animal], and was likewise a male. It was brought over about the year 1799, and lived not more than twelve months. An agent of the Emperor of Germany [Francis II, 1792-1835] purchased it of Mr Pidcock for 1000*l*. It died in a stable-yard in Drury-Lane, after he had been in possession of it for about two months.

How Pidcock expected to ship his quadruped to Vienna through war-torn Europe is hard to envisage. Perhaps he intended to rely on the story, often expressed by travellers, that the hide of the rhinoceros



47 Samuel Howitt, 'Studies from Nature at Exeter 'Change',
sepia wash, c.1799 (Private collection, Madrid)

was 'musket-proof'. Portraits of this animal must of necessity be scarce. There are two claimants. One is a sheet of three studies in sepia wash of the head of a young rhinoceros attributed to Samuel Howitt (1765-1822). Plate 47 is inscribed 'Studies from Nature at Exeter Change', and it was here, and not in India, that Howitt sketched exotic animals to be used in 1806 in the earliest folio edition of Orme's *Oriental Field Sports*.²⁰ The drawing of the three heads, in a Spanish collection, is one of the most sympathetic portraits of the rhinoceros recorded. Another artist also used Pidcock's menagerie in the Strand rather than venturing into the real jungle. The artist was Thomas Rowlandson (1756-1827). In his

caricature (pl. 48) he compares the human and animal kingdoms. It is the 1799 rhinoceros rather than the Stubbs animal that is depicted. That Pidcock's menagerie was the source of both animal and bird, 'The Reef' or ruff, is confirmed by the presence of a stuffed ruff in the posthumous sale of 1810, when it was sold as lot 125 on 20 March for 11/-.²¹

Rowlandson was by no means the inventor of comparative anatomy. We know that he was aware of Giovanni della Porta's *Della Fisonomia* of 1586; a book of serious intent, unlike Rowlandson's drawing. Whether Angelo Politiano was pleased to be described as having a *Naso molto grande*, just like that of the *Rinocerote*, we do not know (pl. 49).

Rhinoceros



The Reef

LSD

48 Thomas Rowlandson, 'The Rhinoceros and the Reef' [sic], watercolour, c. 1799 (Private collection, England)

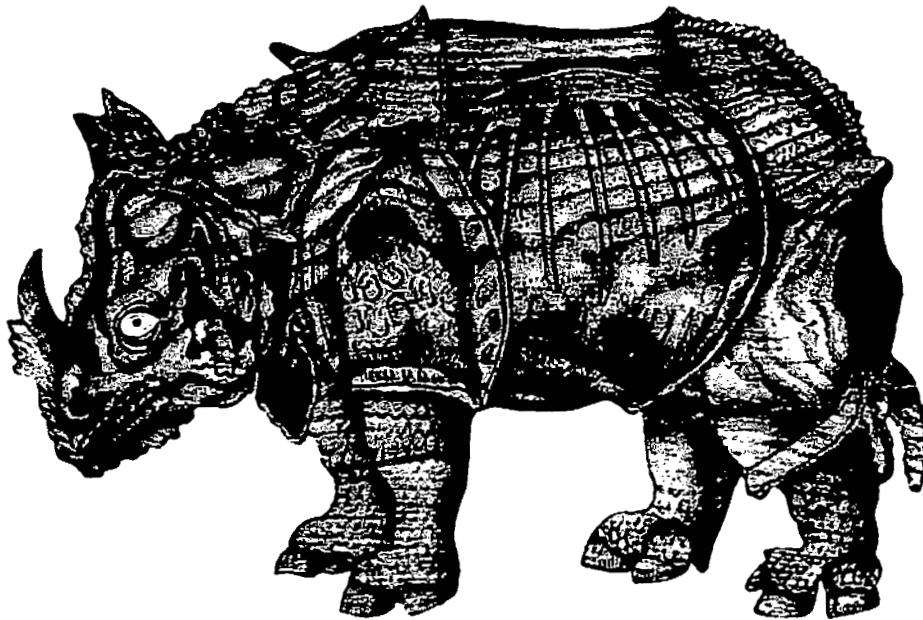
*Lettor hai qui il gran naso del Rinocerote , dal cui mezo nasce vn corno, con la vi-
na effigie di Angelo Politiano .*



Naso molto grande .

**Naso molto grande dimostra huomo che riprende l'opere altui , e che
non**

49 Giovanni della Porta, 'Naso molto grande', woodcut from
Della Fisionomia dell' Huomo, Padua, 1613



Part II

The rhinoceros in the applied arts

6

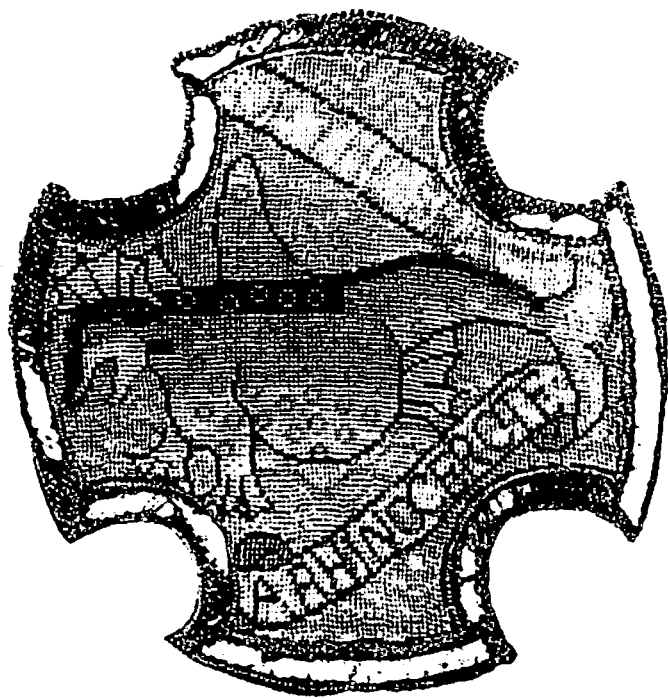
Embroidery and tapestries

Embroidery

The small selection of English and other needlework illustrated in this chapter, from the late sixteenth to the early nineteenth centuries, covers the three main iconographic types – the Dürer, the Philippe Galle and the Oudry/Buffon. We start, however, with a very strange creature indeed, unrecognisable except for the inscription on a ribbon label, 'A RHINOCEROTE OF THE SEA' (pl. 50). It is one of the shaped emblematic devices applied to the Oxburgh Hall hanging in Norfolk, attributed, if not to Mary Queen of Scots in person, then to a member of her court while imprisoned in the 1570s and 1580s. The

source of this extraordinary creature has not been traced; it has more of a bestiary look than a woodcut from Conrad Gesner (1516–65), as has been suggested. Its horn is placed on its back like a fishy Punch, it has forelegs and a sea monster's tail. Happily this amphibious invention had no issue.

Some twenty years later we find the more normal if by now somewhat distorted, Dürer *ganda* on an English crewel-work panel (pl. 51) with the arms of the City of London and the Merchant Taylors' Company. Worked in red on white linen, the *ganda* displays its contempt for human frailty by turning its back on Susannah and the Elders, embroidered with lascivious Elizabethan relish.



50 'A Rhinocerate of the Sea', an embroidered panel, c.1580 (Oxburgh Hall, Norfolk)

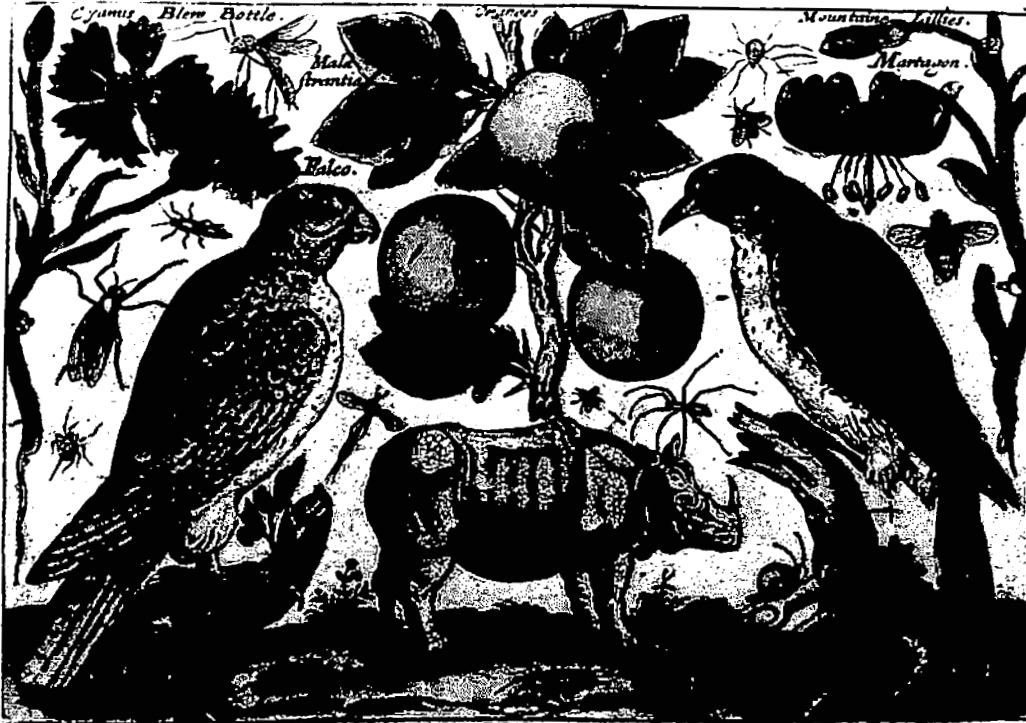
51 Detail of a crewel-work panel, English, c.1600 (Sotheby Parke Bernet, New York)

The next two illustrations refer to English pattern books for embroidery. Both plagiarise without shame a wide variety of largely Flemish sources. Each features a rhinoceros, in each case flanked by birds, flowers and fruit out of all proportion to the poor pachyderm, who is almost reduced to the size of a lap-dog. The earliest is Thomas Johnson's *A Book of Beast, Birds, Flowers, Fruits, Flies and Wormes*, published in 1630 (pl. 52); it is almost up to date in depicting the Madrid *abada* of 1579. This book was the main source of the Mellerstain needlework panel worked in tent stitch by the two daughters of Lady Grisell Baillie with the help of their governess May Menzies in 1706. A later pattern book (pl. 53) with a similar title has plates by John Dunsdall and was published in 1662 (there are many editions). *A Book*

of Flowers, Fruits, Birds, Beasts, Flies and Wormes contains the Dürer *ganda*, to be found on many a Stuart embroidered picture. Another English example is not of a completed needlework hanging or picture but of a design inked onto an unworked panel (in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London), a design which has a hybrid rhinoceros, three-quarters Philippe Galle and a quarter Dürer, notably in the abridged ribcage.

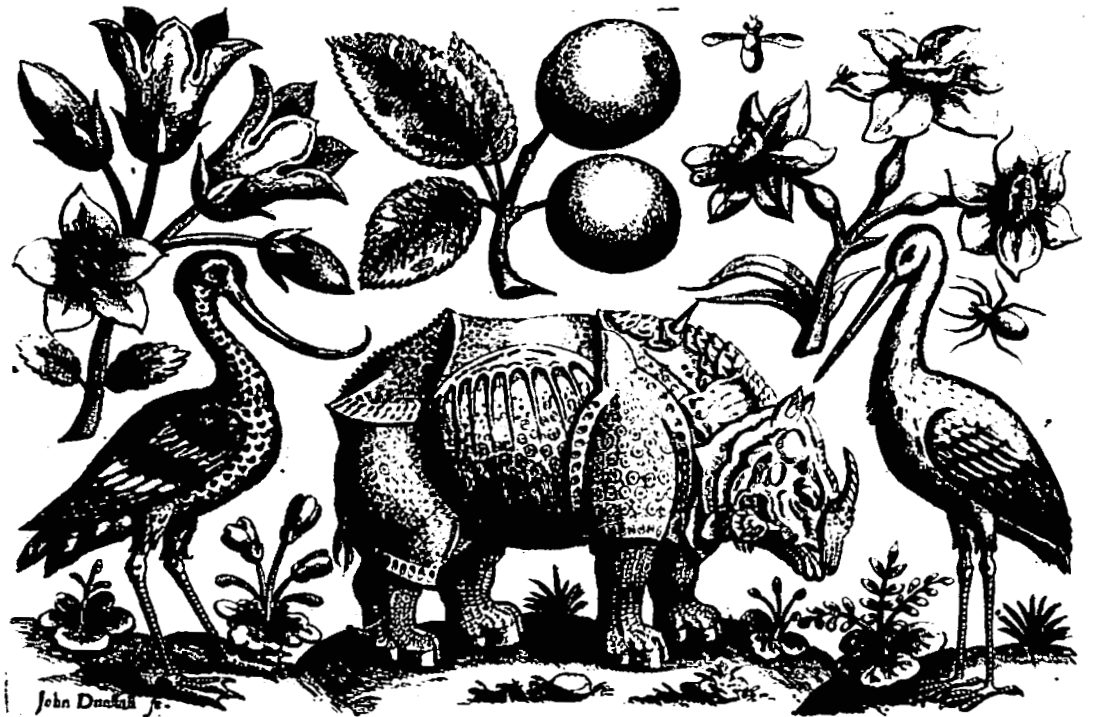
Finally, an Aegean embroidery from the island of Chios in the Benaki Museum, Athens, of early nineteenth-century date, has an odd mixture of real and imaginary animals amongst other items (pl. 54). But the rhinoceros, although wrongly inscribed as African, is a fairly recognisable derivation from the Oudry/Buffon animal of 1750: an image quickly distributed throughout Europe in the countless editions of Buffon's *Histoire naturelle*, both official and pirated. Yet it is a pleasant surprise to find Oudry on a Greek island.

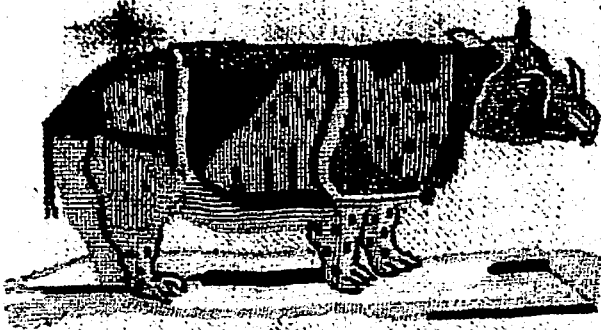




52 Thomas Johnson, *A Book of Beast [sic], Birds, Flowers, Fruit, Flies, and Wormes*, London, 1630

53 John Dunsdall, *A Book of Flowers, Fruits, Birds, Beasts, Flys and Wormes*, London, 1662





54 Detail of an embroidered panel from Chios, early nineteenth century (Benaki Museum, Athens)

Tapestries of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries

The Dürer *Panzernashorn* of 1515 plays a major or minor part in an unusually large number of tapestries woven from the mid-sixteenth to the early nineteenth centuries; neither the 'Madrid' animal of c. 1580, the English visitors of 1684 and 1739, nor even the 'Dutch' rhinoceros painted by Oudry ever appear on tapestries. And perhaps Dürer would never have contemplated designing his woodcut had there appeared a more realistic animal on one of the twenty tapestry panels ordered by King Manuel of Portugal from a Flemish workshop in 1510, a set celebrating *The Conquest of India*.¹ But we shall never know, since by 1571 the whole set had disappeared without trace.

Possibly the earliest, and certainly the most impressive and even poetic, tapestry panel to have survived is the large-leaved verdure at Kronborg Castle, near Elsinore in Denmark (col. pl. XIII, p. 72). Here the Indian rhinoceros is the centre of attraction, standing bewildered in a thick vegetation of mostly European origin, but accompanied by a mythical wyvern and an actual panther or spotted leopard, together with parrots and domestic animals. There are many names for the curling, feather-edged large leaves: cabbage leaves in French (*feuilles de choux*), thistles in German (*Distelblätter*), and perhaps more realistically *Acanthus*. Their latest botanical attribu-

tion is *Aristolochia*, of which there are many species. Nonetheless, despite the European foliage and flowers, there is a very strong exotic feeling, and an unreal one too, for the rhinoceros is in parts so insubstantial, its nasal horn, for example, looking as though formed of a self-curling wood shaving.

This type of Flemish tapestry tends to be localised by historians to the village of Grammont, or sometimes Enghien or Oudenarde, and to date from about 1550.

From the second half of the sixteenth century there have survived a number of such Flemish tapestries with a more or less common theme, that is a wooded landscape inhabited by both local and exotic animals and birds, with small hunting scenes in the background. It is a type that is sometimes called 'animal park' or 'game park' (or in French *parc sauvages*) tapestries. Rabelais (c. 1483–1553) has given us a brilliant word-picture in the Fifth Book of *Gargantua and Pantagruel*² of such tapestries in two chapters on 'the Land of *Satin*', whose

Trees and Shrubs never lose their Leaves or Flowers, and are all Damask and flower'd Velvet: As for the Beasts and Birds, they are all of Tapestry-work. There we saw many Beasts, Birds and Trees of the same Colour, Bigness and Shape of those in our Country, with this difference, however, that these did eat nothing, and never sung, or bit like ours; and we also saw there many sorts of Creatures which we had never seen before.

Among these creatures Rabelais discourses at length on the elephant and cursorily on the rhinoceros. Still describing the animals on tapestries, he says:

I saw a *Rhinoceros* there, just such a one as Harry Clerberg had formerly shew'd me; methought it was not much unlike a certain Boar which I had formerly seen at *Limoges*, except the sharp horn on its Snout, that was about a Cubit long.

Hans Cleberg (or Kleeberg), incidentally, was a Nuremberg merchant resident in Lyons when Rabelais was a physician there. He must have shown Rabelais the woodcut of 1515 or a later edition after Dürer, whose portrait of Kleeberg is in Vienna.³

A rhinoceros is the central figure in a Flemish drawing in the British Museum attributed to the school of van Orley and Koeke, dated to about 1550



55 Sketch for a tapestry, pen and brown ink with grey wash, Flemish, c.1550 (British Museum)

56 Animal verdure tapestry, Brussels, c.1610 (MM. Laloux-Dessain, Brussels)



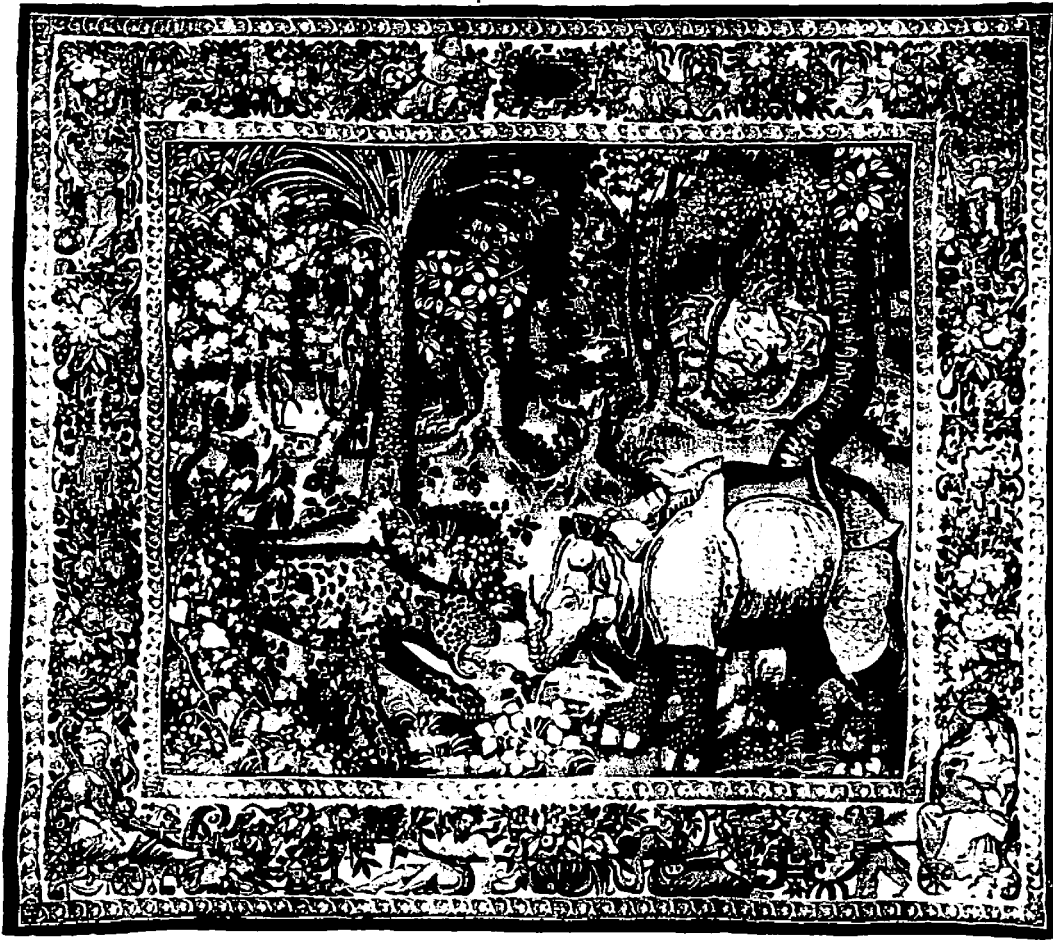


57 'Animal park' tapestry, Flemish, c.1570 (Kronborg Castle, Elsinore, Denmark)

(pl. 55). It is squared as though for enlarging to make a full-sized cartoon for a tapestry, just such a tapestry as Rabelais has described. On the left an elephant approaches the almost leafless wooded glade, the curiously shaped roots apparently floating in the air or growing on tall mounds, mostly inhabited by a variety of local and exotic animals. By no means directly copied from, but yet undeniably closely related to this cartoon sketch, is a tapestry panel signed by Jan Raes (pl. 56), a Brussels weaver recorded in c. 1612. It is not so easy at first glance to recognise the features that drawing and tapestry have in common since the one is the reverse of the other. In particular, one notes the hanging roots, the

double trunk issuing from the central mound, the feline animal looking down from half way up a tree, the otter making off with a fish. The rhinoceros in each case is remarkably close to the Dürer woodcut, but the elephant in the drawing is replaced in the tapestry by the normal pachydermatous fight in the right background. And the tapestry is clothed with flowers and leafy branches.

An upright tapestry panel (pl. 57), also from Kronborg Castle, has an odd mixture of two figures from classical mythology placed as though on a magic carpet beside a suspicious rhinoceros seen from the front in a rather clumsy perspective. Like all the 'animal park' weavings, the outer border has no



58 'Animal park' tapestry, Flemish, c.1570 (Owner unknown)

obvious relation to the action of the central panel. Named Christian virtues are interspersed with masks and rich swags of fruit. The border is edged with a kind of Vitruvian scroll, which links this panel with the next illustration (pl. 58), as do the allegorical figures of the border. In the centre is a dramatic confrontation between a spotted leopard and the usual placid Indian rhinoceros. A palm is the only exotic tree in an otherwise European woodscape, though in the background a serpent is strangling an elephant, a well-known version of the elephant legend. The letter 'N' on the selvage suggests that Nicolas Leynier may have been the weaver around 1570.

Three examples show the various treatments meted out by the tapestry weavers and their designers to the Dürer vision of the Indian rhinoceros. The first

(pl. 59) is in the lower border of a biblical tapestry in the Bayerisches Nationalmuseum, a long strip with a full collection of African and Indian as well as European birds and animals, rendered with no regard to scale, the ostrich perhaps five times larger than the lion. We meet Rabelais's 'Tigers, Leopards, Hyena's Camelopardals', the latter a giraffe of diminutive size. The tuberosities of the Dürer rhinoceros are particularly well delineated. The second comes from an 'animal park' tapestry having an unusually scaly beast (pl. 60) lurking behind trees in the background, and a third example, from the Habsburg collection at the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, shows the animals entering the Ark, two by two (pl. 61). So small is the scale that it was not practical to weave the intricate Düreresque markings.

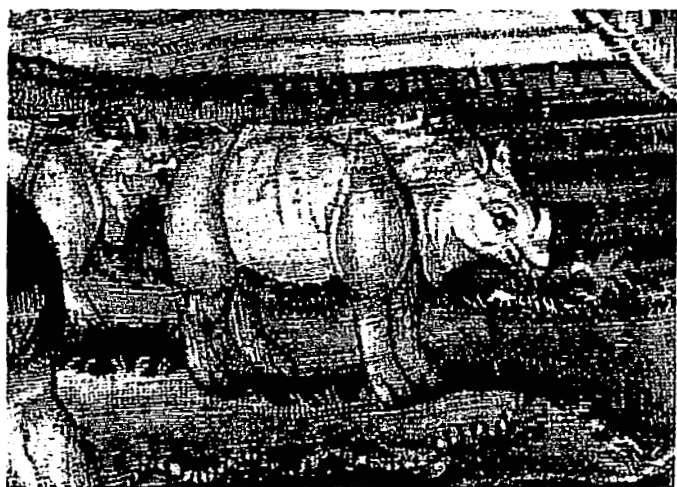


59 Tapestry border with Orpheus playing to the beasts, detail, Flemish, 1575-1600 (Bayerisches Nationalmuseum, Munich)

60 Detail from a Flemish 'animal park' tapestry, Oudenarde, c.1560-80 (S. Frances, London)



61 Detail from the tapestry, *The Animals entering the Ark*, Brussels, late sixteenth century (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna)





62 Cartoon sketch for *Le Char des Rhinocéros* from *The Story of Artemi* Paris, c. 1610 (Bibliothèque National Paris)

OPPOSITE PAGE
XIV Detail from the Gobelins tapestry, *The Triumph of Mars*, woven by Jans and Lefèvre, c. 1695 (Palazzo Pitti, Florence)



63 Tapestry panel, *Le Char des Rhinocéros*, Paris, c. 1610 (Mobilier National, Paris)





xv Detail from the Gobelins tapestry, *Le Cheval rayé*, in the set of *Les Nouvelles Indes*, after Desportes, c.1775. (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna)



64 Noël Coypel, *The Triumph of Mars*, detail, watercolour, pen and Chinese ink, c.1685 (Cabinet des Dessins, Louvre)

That the rhinoceros could be tamed like its fellow pachyderm, the elephant, was common if totally untrue knowledge in the sixteenth century. The myth came from early Portuguese sources concerning Prester John and Ethiopia. One of the earliest manifestations of a pair of yoked rhinoceroses, reduced to the state of oxen, occurs on a sketch for a cartoon (pl. 62) and on the tapestry itself (pl. 63), one of twenty-eight survivors in the Mobilier National from a much larger Paris *tenture* (set of tapestry panels) of the early seventeenth century. The drawing for *Le Char des Rhinocéros*, once attributed to Antoine Caron, is anonymous, as is the cartoon. The subject of the series, *The Story of Artemisia*, is a complicated pro-

gramme based on literary sources and supposed to glorify Catherine de' Medici. In the drawing (from the Bibliothèque National) the somewhat overloaded chariot appears to be attached to the two animals by nothing stronger than several strands of string attached somehow to the armour-plated hide hidden by the accompanying Roman foot-soldiers. But this structural deficiency must have been noted before the tapestry was woven, probably in the life-size cartoon; for in the woven tapestry there has been substituted a thick cord ending in a strapwork arrangement, evidently of metal. This, incongruously, is made to fix over the animals' ears, which are not in nature noticeably firm.



65 Nicholas Poussin, *Rhinoceros and Rider*, drawing in pen and bistre wash, c. 1640 (The Hermitage Museum, Leningrad)

There is little evidence of interest in the rhinoceros in mid-seventeenth-century tapestries. But in the last two decades of the century we find the Gobelins factory, Louis XIV's official tapestry establishment, engaged in two major *tentures* in each of which our animal plays a modest part. Both series, incidentally, were begun within two years, *The Triumphs of the Gods* in 1685 and *Les Indes* in 1687 – the latter is the subject of the last section of this chapter.

The Triumphs of the Gods, also known as *Rabesques* (or *Arabesques*) *de Raphael*, was a set of eight panels, all but one based on an earlier Brussels series. The designer of this brilliant Gobelins *tenture* was Noël Coypel (1628–1707). Fortunately an original drawing in pen and watercolour is in the *Cabinet des Dessins* at the Louvre, and it is a detail of this sketch for *The*

Triumph of Mars that is shown here (pl. 64). The allegory shows Mars flanked by Minerva and Abundance perched precariously on top-heavy chariots all within ephemeral theatrical architecture, while below are six equestrian figures, variously mounted on horses, giraffe, an elephant and a rhinoceros. The interesting feature is that both elephant and rhinoceros are closely based on drawings by Nicolas Poussin (1594–1665) of c. 1640, now in the Hermitage Museum, Leningrad (pl. 65). What other sources Coypel may have used have not been analysed.

There were seven weavings in all, the earliest commenced in 1685, its completion delayed until 1701 by warfare. The final weaving was in 1713. Colour plate XIV (p. 89) is a detail from the second weaving by Jan and Lefèvre in *haute-lisse* technique with the use of much gold thread, woven between 1690 and 1703. It comes from one of the five panels of *The Triumph of the Gods* presented for political purposes to Tuscany by Napoleon in 1810.⁴ It is housed in Palazzo Pitti, Florence.

Les Tentures des Indes

The two series called *Les Anciennes Indes* and *Les Nouvelles Indes* were among the most successful of all the Gobelins tapestries of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Each series comprised eight sets of eight pieces. None are more exotic, more colourful or indeed more thoroughly researched.⁵ The word 'Indes' in this connection does not mean India so much as South America, for the idea of Columbus who believed that he had found a western route to the Far East, still prevailed if only in the naming of the inhabitants of the New World as Indians. In particular, the 'India' of these tapestries stemmed from a single country, Brazil. In 1636 Prince Maurice of Nassau (1604–79) was chosen as Governor-General of Dutch Brazil, being the northeastern part wrested by the Dutch from the Portuguese. He brought with him scientists and artists, so that a detailed account of this tropical country could be made. Of the artists it was the painters Frans Post (1612–80) and Alber Eckhout (c. 1607–55) who made the sketches and paintings from the life in Brazil that provided the elements for the tapestries of the first set, known later as *Les Anciennes Indes*. In 1679, the ageing and indigent Prince Maurice gave to Louis XV cartoons and

paintings of the exotic flora and fauna of Brazil, with the request that they should serve for a tapestry.

To what extent these paintings were used and how far they may have been altered by artists of the Gobelins is a matter of uncertainty. Six years were to elapse before work was begun on the first series; all eight panels were completed in the years 1687–8. Of the second set, the panel with the rhinoceros is in the Mobilier National in Paris; it was described in an inventory of 1690 as ‘a large picture in which is represented a horse striped in black and a rhinoceros’. The French title of this panel is *Le Cheval rayé*, that is, a striped horse or rather zebra. Neither zebra nor rhinoceros are South American animals. What were they doing in Brazil? As for the Indian rhinoceros, one could make out a case that already in the late sixteenth century the typical South American animal, the armadillo, was sometimes confused with the rhinoceros, both beasts being actually or reputedly scaly; and one might add that the rhinoceros was perhaps meant to symbolise Prince Maurice of Nassau’s contact with the negroes of Africa, since in 1641 the Dutch crossed the South Atlantic from Brazil to capture the Portuguese port of Luanda on the mainland of Africa, and subsequently there were exchanges of ambassadors. Indeed, one of the tapestries shows a black dignitary reclining in a hammock. But these are specious excuses, if any are needed, for an exciting display of exoticism on the part of the Gobelins designers.⁶

Of the eight sets of *Les Anciennes Indes* officially woven at the Gobelins workshops (others were made ‘on the side’ for private customers), the third was given to Peter the Great in 1717 – a strange choice for an inhabitant of the freezing north or perhaps a witness to the northerner’s passion for the south and the sun. So impressed was the Tsar that *Les Anciennes Indes* was one of the first products of the St Petersburg looms, operating from 1719 and run by French and Dutch émigrés. A version of the zebra and rhinoceros piece is now in the Mon Plaisir Palace at Peterhof outside Leningrad. The fourth set is still complete in Malta (pl. 66). Another set, the sixth, went to the French Academy in Rome. And so the Dürer *ganda* continued its two-hundred-year-old mastery of the rhinocerototic image.

By 1731 the cartoons of *Les Anciennes Indes* were worn out; indeed, they had long been in precarious



66 Gobelins tapestry panel, *Le Cheval rayé*, from *Les Anciennes Indes*, 1708–10 (Palace of the Grand Master of the Order of St John, Valletta, Malta)

condition, since François Desportes (1661–1743) had already been called on to make certain restorations and perhaps modifications after the weaving of the first two sets in 1693. Whether the oil sketch of the rhinoceros from the extensive collection of Desportes in the library of the Manufacture de Sèvres is a modification is hard to tell; it may be only a copy of a part of the original cartoon.⁷

It was to Desportes that Philibert Orry in 1735 gave the commission for a new version of the *Indes*, known as *Les Nouvelles Indes* to distinguish it from the first *tenture*. The cartoon of *Le Cheval rayé*, 12 feet high and 16 feet long, was exhibited at the Salon of 1738; for this, Desportes received 2,000 livres. Happily the original cartoon, slightly flaking but still brilliantly coloured, is preserved in the Musée de Guéret in central France (pl. 67).⁸ The spirit of *Les Anciennes Indes* panel of *Le Cheval rayé* has been carefully preserved, but there are considerable alterations and additions. The rhinoceros is now shown in profile instead of with its head turned, the zebra is attacked by a ‘tigre de la grande espèce’, according to the entry in the 1738 Salon catalogue (but a leopard, surely), and the ‘striped horse’ is said to come from India (whereas Africa is the home of the zebra). In the foreground is a new addition, a pelican.



67 François Desportes, detail of cartoon for the Gobelins tapestry panel, *Le Cheval rayé*, 1737–8 (Musée de Guéret, France)

Of the recipients of complete sets of *Les Nouvelles Indes*, which proved even more popular than the earlier version (about 103 panels were woven with three different borders as against about 67 for the earlier version), one was to have the distinction of carrying the Brazilian fantasies of Post and Eckhout to Vienna, capital of the Habsburg empire. Politics alone were responsible. In 1756, the year of the ‘diplomatic revolution’, France and Austria, for long enemies, joined forces against the brilliant but ruthless Frederick the Great of Prussia, with whom England allied herself to colonial advantage. So it was that when in the middle of the Seven Years War the Archduke Joseph married Isabella of Parma on 6 October 1760, his mother Maria Theresa, Empress of Austria (1717–80), sent Graf Colloredo to Paris to announce the happy event. He returned home with diplomatic gifts that included the entire set of eight tapestries of *Les Nouvelles Indes* (col. pl. xv, p. 90), woven by Jacques Neilson (c.1718–83) between 1753 and 1759, a snuff box, a diamond ring, eighty-seven gold medals and twenty-four volumes of prints specially bound, as well as a Savonnerie carpet.⁹

In Austria was working one of the last fresco painters, Johann Bergl (1718–89). He must have soon

gained access to Graf Colloredo’s set of *Les Nouvelles Indes*, for he based on their varied motives, without slavishly copying, some of the most attractive – certainly the most exotic – room decorations, both in fresco and on canvas panels let into the walls. The earliest of his works to include the rhinoceros from *Le Cheval rayé*, painted in 1762–3, albeit in a distorted version, was in the garden room of Schloss Ober St Veit, now in the suburbs of Vienna (pl. 68). His patron was no less than the Empress Maria Theresa for whom he worked on occasions for the next twenty-five years, both at Schönbrunn and in the Hofburg. A second Dürer rhinoceros by Bergl appears in the garden pavilion at the monastery of Melk, high above the Danube; this was completed in 1763–4. By 1764 the Colloredo tapestries of *Les Nouvelles Indes* had been sold¹⁰ to the Archbishop of Prague in whose episcopal palace they can be still seen. Had Bergl still needed the inspiration from these Afro-Brazilian tapestries he could have relied on his own drawings, or perhaps had access to another set given to the Emperor Joseph II on the latter’s visit to Paris in 1777. But his style developed, and though he continued to paint rooms alive with tropical vegetation and fauna, like other artists in this period he began to assimilate the ideas of the neo-classical movement.¹¹

68 Johann Bergl, detail of wall painting, Schloss Ober St Veit, near Vienna, 1762–3



7

Pottery, porcelain and glass

Pottery

It is disappointing that the Italian Renaissance maiolica painters were never given the rhinoceros as a subject, particularly as many of the finer dishes of the first quarter of the sixteenth century had woodcuts by Dürer as their source; and, as will be seen in Chapter 8, there was no lack of appreciation of the *rinoceronte* in other branches of the applied arts. It seems that England was the first country to appreciate our quadruped enough to perpetuate a debased version of the Dürer type on pharmaceutical wares in tin-glazed pottery. The use of tin as an element of the glaze of ordinary pottery or earthenware gave a clear

white ground on which to apply decoration in blue only or in colours; a technique that originated in the Near East, passed with Islam to Spain, whence it was exported via Majorca to Italy, and thence to northern Europe.¹

In England this potting technique is known today as English delftware; it was manufactured in several cities. Those pieces – wet and dry jars and pill slabs, in particular – with the arms of the Worshipful Society of Apothecaries were largely of London origin.² The dry jug jar in the British Museum here illustrated (pl. 69) shows the arms of the society as granted in 1617, with 'A Rhinoceros, proper' as the crest. In green, blue and yellow, it takes a determined

feat of imagination to recognise the Dürer origin of this fearful caricature. Other pieces, it must be admitted, are more closely related to the original source.

Another specialised sphere of the pottery market on which the rhinoceros is to be found in herds was in the production of tiles. There were dozens of centres of production, most of tin-glazed pottery, usually with decoration in blue only, in every European country. Most productive were the Dutch kilns,³ their tiles all known by the generic term of Delft, although many were made elsewhere in Holland. These are to be found by their thousand in many Dutch museums, some specialising in tiles only. Amongst the subjects depicted were the rhinoceroses of 1515 and 1586 and the 'Dutch' animal of the 1740s and 1750s; after the woodcut by Dürer, the engraving by Philippe Galle and the numerous prints sold by Capt. Douwe Mout. There is even an English tile of Bristol origin made as late as about 1770 with a Dürer rhinoceros described as having 'a senile and weather-beaten appearance'. It was adapted from an engraving in *The Ladies' Amusement* of 1762.⁴ Although tiles have never ceased to be used, the century of their greatest variety and quality as well as fashion was from about 1660 to 1760.

Also probably of Delft origin is a magnificent large vase of octagonal shape, some 55 cm high (col. pl. xvi, p. 99). Made about 1700, the chinoiserie element combined with the exotic animals – a camel, rhinoceros and tortoise, all mounted by inhabitants of Cathay, derived from Dutch travel books of the 1660s and 1670s by such as Jan Nieuhof and from Transitional Chinese porcelain – make this baroque creation one of the most amusing of rhinocerotic artefacts.

Some half a century later a very rare French faience table top from Sinceny (col. pl. xvii, p. 99) underlines the adoption of the rhinoceros as an element of chinoiserie at its most fantastic. It has become a very rococo beast, the painter having transformed Dürer's patterns into a variety of shell formations, a fundamental ingredient of rocaillerie. But what is not at once evident is that the painter of this tray has based his animal on a French sixteenth-century woodcut, a farcical and distant relation of the original: to be found first in André Thevet's *Les Singularitez de la France antarctique* of 1558, again in his *La Cosmographie universelle* of 1575, and copied by another Frenchman, Ambroise Paré in 1573. This is discussed



69 English delftware drug jar with arms of the Worshipful Society of Apothecaries, Lambeth, c. 1650–60 (British Museum)

more fully in Chapter 11, devoted to the elephant and rhinoceros antipathy (see pl. 121 and p. 157). The Chinaman in his egg-yellow and blue robes most likely is taken from a Chinese enamelled dish of the Kangxi period, as in many of the more elaborately decorated Sinceny pieces. Note that there is a barely concealed mark on the lappet protruding below the Chinaman's belt; an 'F' for Fayot, founder of the factory, and 'Si' for Sinceny, all in pseudo-Chinese letters. The date of this tray or table top must be of the late 1740s, when rumours had already reached France of the triumphant progress through Germany of the 'Dutch' animal; as was probably the case with the production of French ormolu and bronze clocks (see Chapter 9).

There is a sad lack of faience rhinoceroses in Germany, which is surprising considering the wealth of such factories in nearly all the towns through which we know the 'Dutch' animal to have travelled in the late 1740s.



70 J. G. Kirchner, rhinoceros after Dürer, Meissen porcelain, 1731-4 (From the Johanneum Duplicate Sale, 1920)

Porcelain

In January 1710 Augustus the Strong of Saxony announced the discovery of hard-paste or true porcelain, and in March it was decided that a factory should be constructed in the medieval castle called the Albrechtsburg at Meissen. At the Leipzig Fair in the same year samples of white porcelain (oak leaves, pipe-heads and other small objects) were on display but not for sale.⁵ Almost exactly nine years later the Dutchman Claudius du Paquier founded the second European porcelain factory in Vienna. Meissen, therefore, had a clear lead. But neither Meissen nor

Vienna were in a hurry to undertake the modelling of such a difficult subject as a rhinoceros; although Vienna did make for the Russian Court a large elephant in about 1730.⁶ In the event it was the Saxon factory that first made a rhinoceros in European hard-paste porcelain.

The occasion was the decision of Augustus the Strong to furnish his recently acquired and rebuilt Japanese Palace with porcelain, both oriental and Meissen.⁷ One order alone, in 1732, amongst much else, was for 198 large and small animals, and the same number of birds. Many were to be of life size: not of course, the rhinoceros (pl. 70) nor its pair, the

elephant. Although there is no firm documentary evidence, both pachyderms are by general agreement the work of Meissen's first sculptor of merit, Johann Gottlob Kirchner (b. 1706). He had worked first for a few months in 1727 and 1728, leaving on account of ill-health; he returned in June 1730 and was appointed 'Modellmeister' in 1731, the year in which he was joined by Johann Joachim Kaendler (1706–75), arguably one of the greatest of European animal sculptors, although his medium was porcelain. It was astonishing to know that both Kirchner and Kaendler in 1731 were only 25 years old.

Although most of the birds and animals for the Japanese Palace were modelled after life or from stuffed specimens, this does not hold true of the two pachyderms. Kirchner is alleged to have used as his source the 'Maschine' or dummy, a stage property left over from the court festivals of 1709 and 1714; but this is unlikely, for there is too great a difference in the interpretation of Dürer's woodcut in the three-dimensional porcelain *Panzernashorn* and the festival dummy preserved in the gouache drawing in Dresden;⁸ it must have been from this that Kirchner is erroneously said to have borrowed his inspiration, for the dummy must surely have collapsed after so many years. Not only are the proportions of the two animals different, but also the stance, with the head held high in the dummy and lowered, threateningly, in the porcelain version; further, the dummy lacks a tail and has its mouth closed.

We can follow in some detail the processes in the production of Kirchner's vast figure, over a metre in length: the length of time for the unfired material to dry out, the difficulties of firing and even the variations in spelling – 'Rhinozero', 'Reinocerus', 'Rhenocerus', etc. It seems that Augustus never lived to see the completed animal, for he died on 1 February 1733, and the earliest mention of the delivery of the first four figures was in 1734. Four more were due for delivery in 1735. We know of the present existence of four only. That illustrated in pl. 70 was sold in 1920,⁹ two are still in the Dresden Porzellansammlung and one is in the Musée National de Céramique at Sèvres. That all were once covered with an unfired brown pigment to simulate the living animal is a strange reflection on the apparent rejection by Augustus of the excitement and esoteric quality of the new medium of hard-paste porcelain.¹⁰

The Dürer rhinoceros recurs on Meissen porcelain a decade or so later but painted on wares and not modelled in the round. Two such pieces are in the astonishing Duke of Northumberland service at Alnwick Castle,¹¹ called in a mid-eighteenth-century description 'The Grand Service for the Table of (Misnia) Dresden Porcelain'. The service dates from about 1745 with some slightly later additions. But here, instead of Kirchner's rather frightening, solemn and primeval beast, the interpretation is comic. Flanked by sprays of almost botanical flowers (the *Holzschnittblumen* of porcelain scholars), the centrepiece or *Tafelaufsatz* (of which there is an almost contemporary watercolour drawing pricing it at 24 Reichsthalers) displays our animal as though squeezed together like the central victim of a multiple motorway crash (col. pl. XVIII, p. 100). And the exaggerated rigidity and stylisation of Dürer's vaguer skin markings are also rather absurd. The large circular dish has, on the other hand, some resemblance to Kirchner's model.

This large dish from the Alnwick service is of particular English interest, for there is an exact copy on an oval dish of Chelsea porcelain¹² in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (pl. 71). The explanation is that the Northumberland Service at Alnwick Castle formed of the major part of a dinner service presented as a diplomatic gift to the British envoy at Dresden from 1747 to 1752, Sir Charles Hanbury Williams (1708–59). Sir Charles sent the service to London for safe keeping to his intimate friend Henry Fox (later Lord Holland) who placed it in the library of Holland House. There are many letters surviving to prove that the Chelsea factory asked, and was given, permission to borrow what it wished as models for the expanding factory, then under the management and at least part ownership of the Huguenot silversmith, Nicholas Sprimont.

The live 'Dutch' rhinoceros arrived in Dresden in April 1747. It remained for a fortnight and then left for Leipzig most likely via the main road which passed through Meissen. Kaendler might well have seen it in either place, and sketched it, for his interest in natural history was well developed. It must have been clear to everyone concerned with the Meissen factory that the Dürer rhinoceros was no longer a valid representation. There must also have been a demand for a figure of this strange animal that had



xvi Delft octagonal vase, late seventeenth century (Private collection, London)

xvii Sinceny faience table top, c.1748-50 (Private collection, London)



Ein Plat de menage.

à 24. Pz.

L.

*18 Zoll lang und breit,
19 Zoll hoch und
14 Zoll breit.*

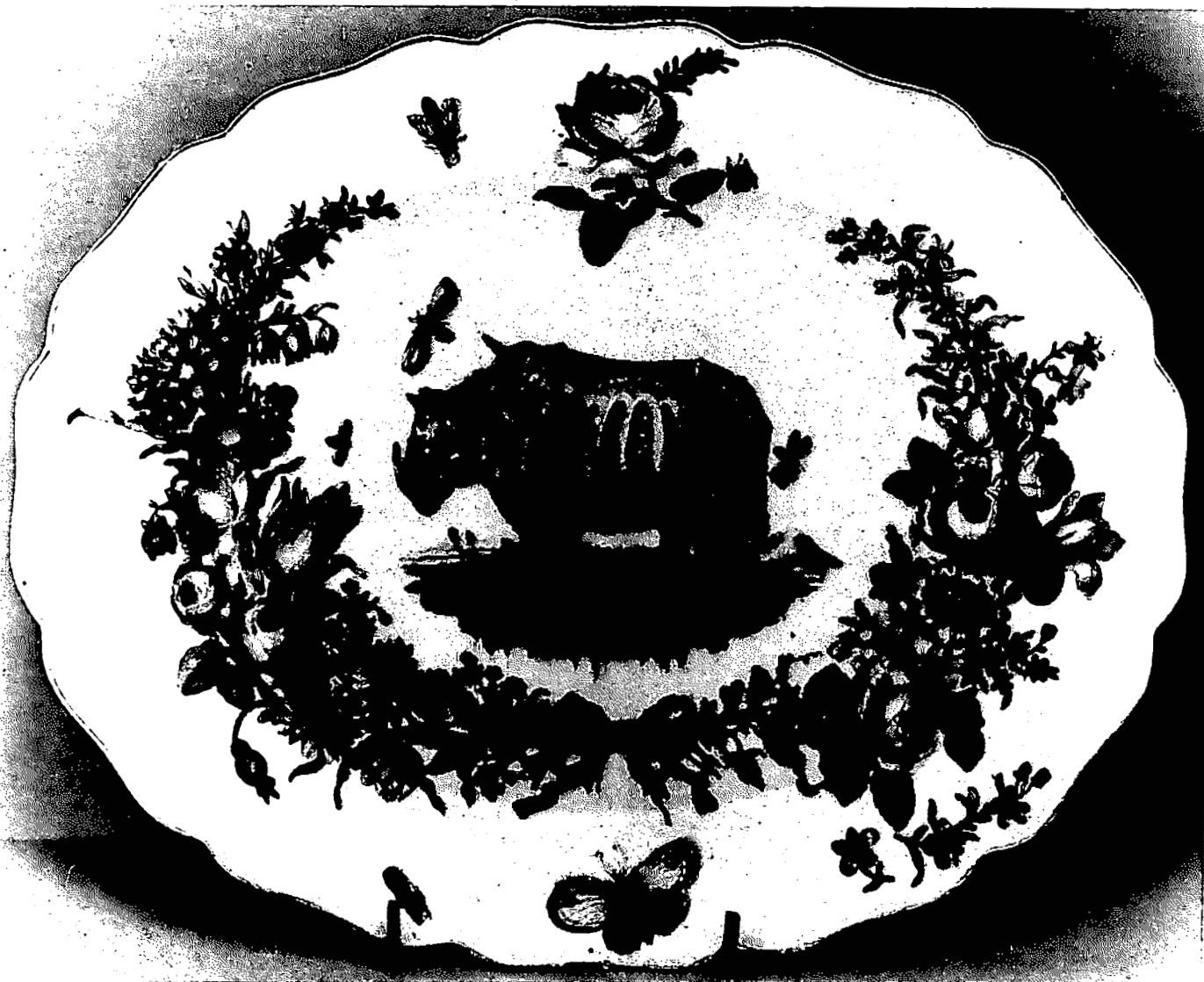


XVIII Watercolour drawing of the centrepiece in the Northumberland Service of Meissen porcelain, c. 1750 (Collection of the Duke of Northumberland)

XIX Meissen pagoda figure and rhinoceros mounted in Louis XV ormolu, the ormolu and animal c. 1750, the figure c. 1735 (Museum für Kunsthandwerk, Frankfurt)







71 Chelsea oval dish, copy of a circular Meissen dish in the Northumberland Service, c.1752-4 (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Untermyer Bequest)

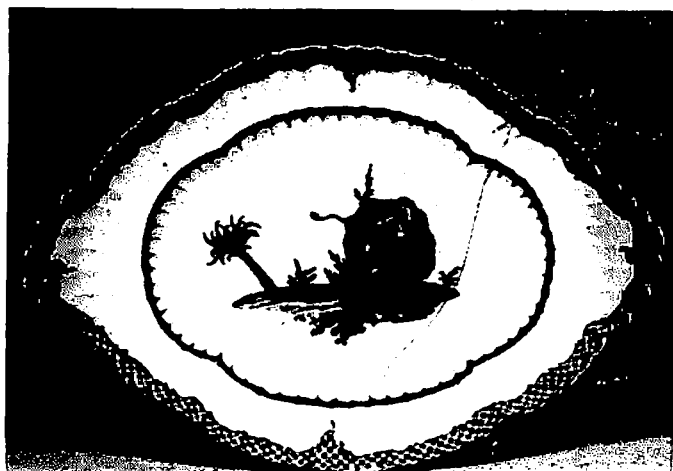
OPPOSITE PAGE

XX J. J. Kaendler, *A Turk Riding a Rhinoceros*, Meissen porcelain, c.1752 (Historisches Museum, Bern)

proved so popular. Hence, a small figure of the rhinoceros was modelled by Kaendler in 1747 or shortly afterwards.¹³ A mere 17 cm long, it is a rather dumpy, porcine figure, derived perhaps from both a drawing by Kaendler and one of Douwe Mout's many engravings. As in the engravings, the mouth is partly open, the ears pricked, the horn stumpy, the ribcage lightly moulded. But there are subtle differences from the usual engraving. The proportion of the back to the

rest of the animal is shorter in the porcelain model, which also tends to have its weight on its back feet, and not to lean forwards in a rather menacing attitude.

Many examples have survived, mostly coloured. Some are gently painted in soft grey, others – and they seem to be the majority – are still under the seemingly endless influence of Dürer's woodcut in their decoration. Of the latter, a notable and enchantingly exotic and chinoiserie example is the ormolu-mounted con-



72 Meissen tureen stand from the 'Japanese Service' made for Frederick the Great, 1762-3 (Musée National de Céramique Adrien Dubouché, Limoges)

fection in the Frankfurt Museum für Kunsthandwerk (col. pl. XIX, p. 101).¹⁴ Note the Dürer scale-pattern of the legs, and the curving ribs degenerating into a series of peas or corn on the cob. The delicate modelling of the skin and the protruding bones are ignored by the decorator. The absence of the *pointon* of the crowned 'C' on the ormolu, used on most French metal objects up to 4 February 1749, is also a useful indication of date.¹⁵ It will be recalled that the 'Dutch' animal arrived in Paris on 3 February 1749. The mounting of this group, then, was in all likelihood made soon after the 4 February in response to the popularity of the rhinoceros amongst the Parisians, who had never before had the opportunity to see such an animal in their town. It is typical of the visual genius of such a creative dealer as Lazare Duvaux.

An enlarged version of Kaendler's small animal, 27.5 cm long against 17 cm, was produced at least by 1752, for the mould or model number in the Meissen records is 1692, which approximates to the year 1752: a period when we no longer have the individual sculptor's work notes (*Arbeitsberichte*) to help us.¹⁶ But now the Nashorn has on its back a turbaned Turk, lolling nonchalantly against a green bolster (col. pl. XX, p. 102). How he maintains this position of royal ease when the animal walks or gallops is a matter of speculation. Note again the Düreresque markings, and, a novel feature, the cagework of fine lines all over the animal's head like a broad-meshed net of fishing

twine: a detail which once more recalls the standard engraving. The mounted rhinoceros is accompanied by a mounted elephant, the pair making a remarkable *turquerie*: a foil to the contemporary mode of extravagant chinoiserie.

Still on occasions the woodcut of 1515 makes comeback, but in the main a more up-to-date animal based on prints by the Augsburg artist, Johann Elias Ridinger (see Chapter 4, p. 52), is to be found on the useful wares of Meissen. Most distinguished of these is a recently identified tureen and stand (pl. 72) in the Musée Adrien Dubouché at Limoges.¹⁷ It forms part of the 'Japanese Service' ordered by Frederick the Great (ruled 1740-86) in 1762, when Prussian troops were in occupation of Meissen towards the end of the Seven Years War. Frederick himself had a personal hand in the design, with the pierced plates derived from French silver. Happily the whole story is well documented. There are yellow-scale borders, and on the inner edge of the rim a blue band of Sèvres inspiration. The tureen has an awkwardly drawn rhinoceros running at top speed, but the stand (pl. 72) has a slightly calmer animal, copied from one of Ridinger's set of prints of Paradise and resembling too in attitude one of the crude depictions of Dr James Parsons in 1743 (see pls. 25 and 33). This same Ridinger print seems also to have been used by the Parisian clockmakers around 1750 (see Chapter 9 on clocks).

Of other German porcelain factories, only Frankenthal produced a rhinoceros, of which two examples have survived. One, in white, is dated 1777.¹⁸ It differs in having a longer body than other ceramic models and longer than the prints which Capt. Douwe Mout sold in quantity on his rhinocerotical travels. The exact source is a slight mystery but is connected with a bronze figure (Chapter 8 pl. 87). It may be recalled that the Elector Palatine Carl Theodor, saw the 'Dutch' animal in his capital Mannheim, on 20 November 1747. He must have been very impressed to have waited thirty years before producing a model in his own factory. A second example, with a clock on its back, is in the Munich Residenz, and illustrated with the clocks in Chapter 9 (see col. pl. XXVI).

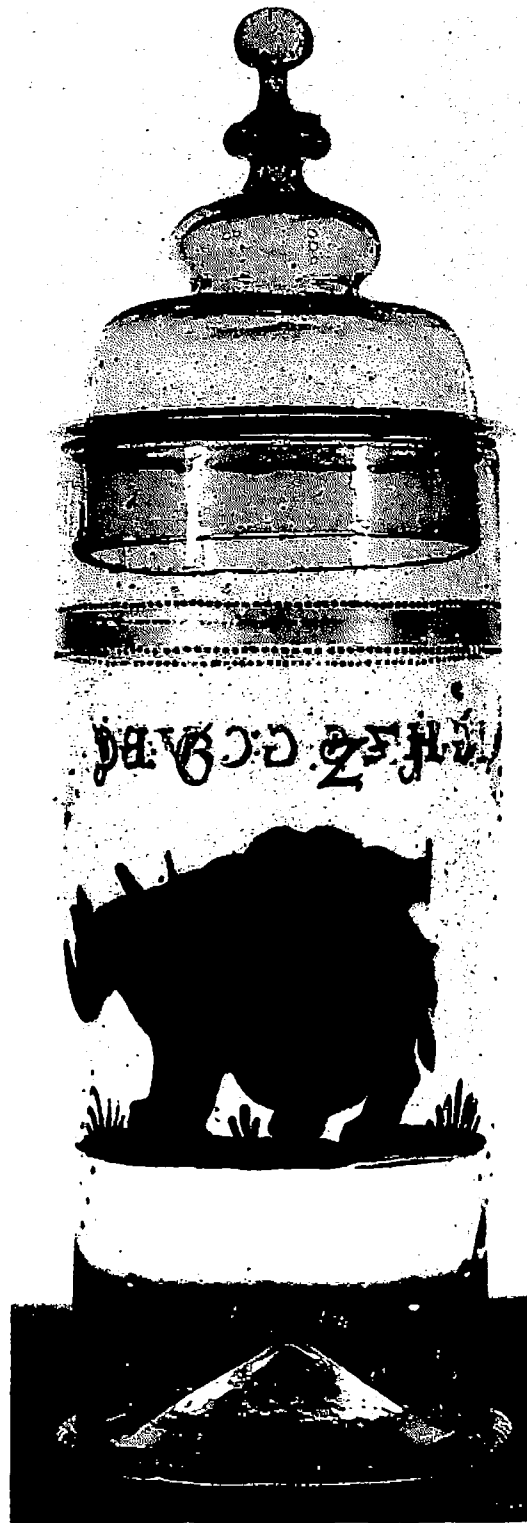
As for the French and Italian factories, mostly making soft-paste porcelain, if any of them did produce models of our Indian animal, then they have no

yet been found. Chantilly, St Cloud, Vincennes, Capodimonte were all on the animal's route. Only the manufactory of Doccia is known to have produced a pair of figures of elephant and rhinoceros, mentioned in a list of about 1790;¹⁹ but whether they were exotic fantasies or modelled after life we may never know. As for London, we know of at least one visit by the Dutch sea captain and his charge in 1751-2; and it is also alleged that the animal died in London in 1758. Why, one wonders, did the ambitious Chelsea factory not add just one more model to its other exotica? If dwarfs, why not so much rarer a creature? And why bother to borrow Meissen dishes from Sir Charles Hanbury Williams's service, when they could have observed the creature alive?

Glass

The enamelling or engraving of the rhinoceros on glass was always exceptional. Although the Venetian glasshouses of Murano produced services with the arms of Medici popes in enamel colours, they never went a step further to produce an enamelled rhinoceros, emblem of the Medici since the early 1530s, and the right period for decoration of this sort. The earliest recorded rhinoceros, the Dürer model, of course, is enamelled on one of a set of a dozen surviving lidded cylindrical tankards (*Humpen*) made in Saxony for the Elector Johann Georg I (ruled 1611-56) (pl. 73); others have a giraffe and domestic animals. All are to be seen at Schloss Pillnitz near Dresden.

It is only natural that Nuremberg should have remained faithful to the image of the *Panzernashorn* created by Dürer, its greatest artist. Johann Schaper (1621-70), initiator of the technique of painting on small glass vessels in the brownish-black pigment known as *Schwarzlot*, has given us one of the more entertaining examples of exotica on a bun-footed beaker typical of Nuremberg, in the collection of Prince Oettingen-Wallerstein (pl. 74). It can be dated around 1665. Not only do we have a camel and diminutive rhinoceros strolling happily together at the end of a broad alley of lime trees, but this caricature of Dürer's noble armoured beast is unique. The typical Dürer feature of the hornlet on the withers has been substituted by two barley-twist ears, while the tail has become long, thick and striped like



73 A Saxon enamelled glass *Humpen*, dated 1621 (Schloss Pillnitz, near Dresden)



74 Johann Schaper (attributed to), glass bun-footed beaker with Orpheus playing to the animals, Nuremberg, c.1667-70 (Schloss Wallerstein, Fürstlich Oettingen-Wallerstein'sche Kunstsammlung)

75 Detail from an engraved glass goblet (Roemer), N. German, c.1730-40 (Kestner Museum, Hanover)

a tiger. A later imitator of this technique of *Schwarzlot* on a beaker of similar form is decorated with emblems typical of the period, one of them being the *ganda* (descended from a collateral Dürer line), again with a motto appropriate to its invincibility, a descendant of Paolo Giovio's *impresa* invented for Alessandro de' Medici. Its date is about 1675.

Finally, a North German covered goblet of *Roemer* shape, in the Kestner Museum, Hanover (pl. 75) in clear, not green-tinted metal, is engraved with the Four Elements in matt and polished technique. The rhinoceros is mostly the 'Madrid' beast derived from Philippe Galle's print, except that it has the Dürer hornlet added for good measure. It fixes its beady eye on its traditional adversary, the elephant. A date of c.1730 is suggested.



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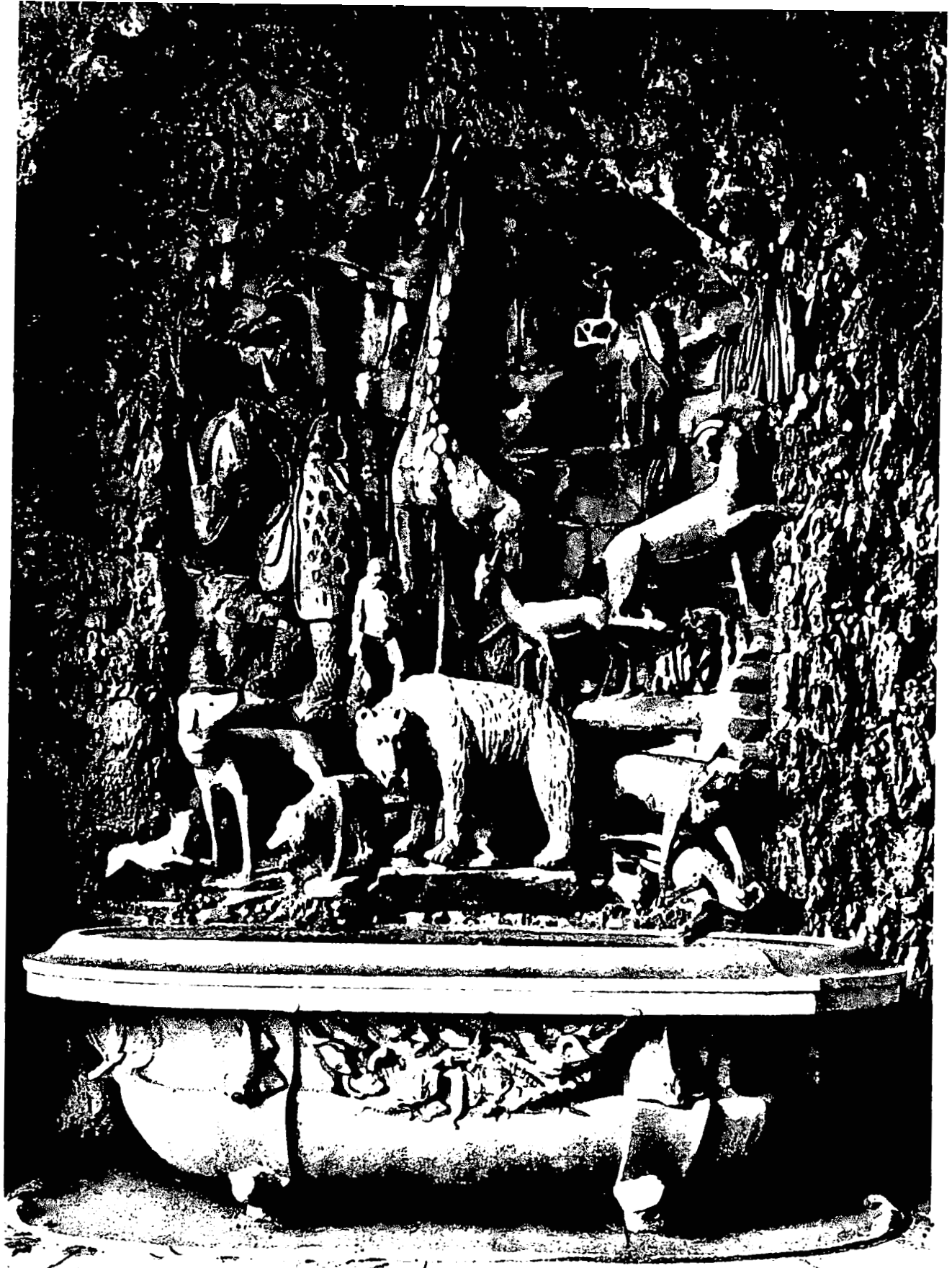
Sculpture, furniture, arms and armour

Sculpture

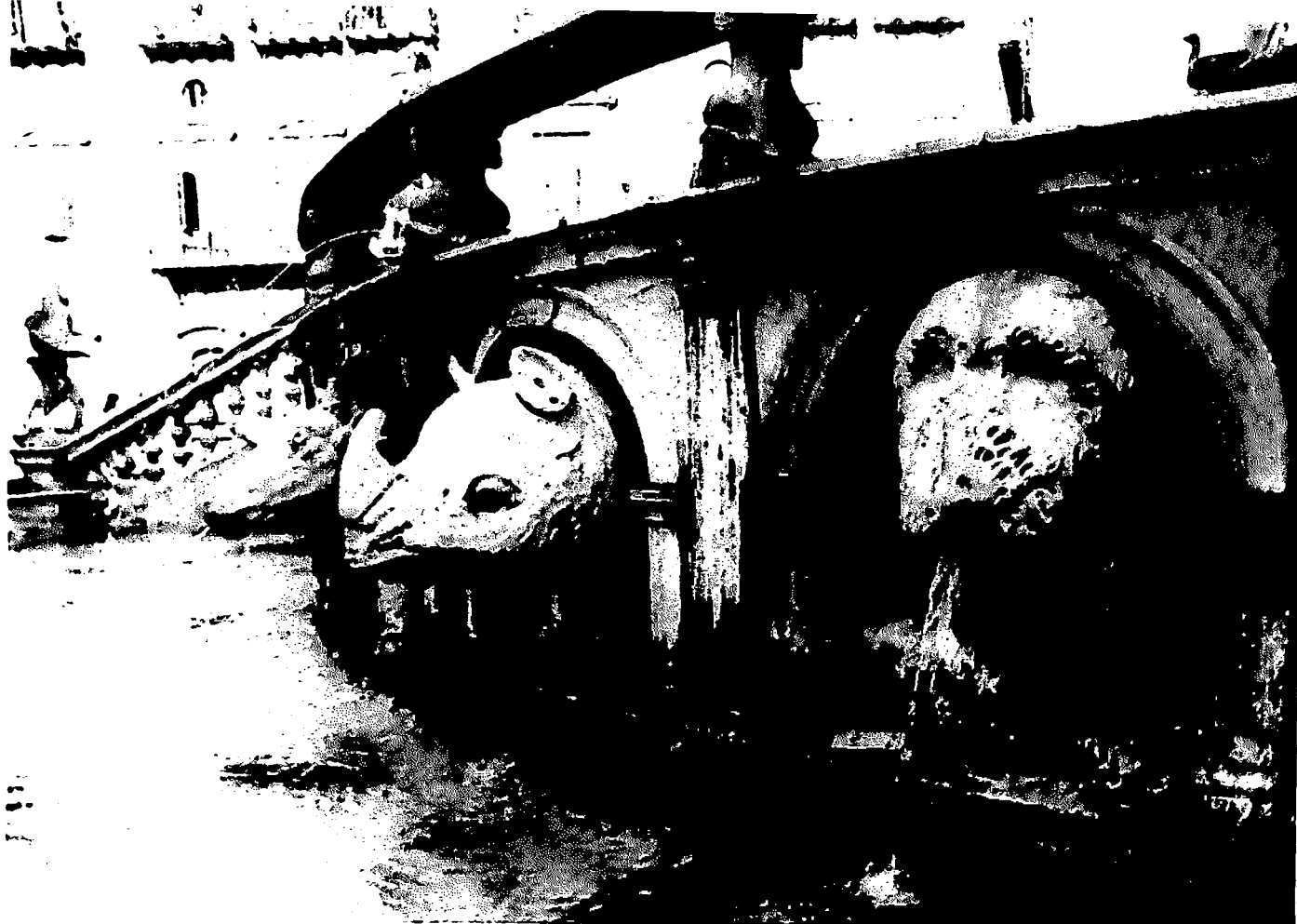
It is surprising how seldom the Dürer *ganda* was used in Germany, its starting point, by sculptors of the sixteenth century; and the few instances that have been noted are all miniature in scale.¹ But there is one relief of a rhinoceros by a northern artist, Adrian de Vries (1545–1626), which has escaped notice. And no wonder, for it is only a small part of the important Mannerist bronze font made by de Vries in Prague for one of his best clients (apart from the Emperor Rudolf II at whose court he was working). This was Graf Ernst von Schaumburg-Lippe, and the font was for the new Protestant Stadtkirche at Bücke-

burg. The rhinoceros is here used in low relief as an attribute of a river god representing Phison, one of the four rivers of Paradise. It is a free interpretation of Dürer, which is a pity, for Emperor Rudolf II of Prague (ruled 1576–1612) was a passionate supporter of the new natural sciences, and could easily have lent de Vries his drawing of the 'Madrid' *abada* of c. 1579 (Chapter 2, col. pl. iv). The font was signed, dated and delivered in 1615, having been cast in Prague.²

But in Italy the first Lisbon rhinoceros of 1515 enjoyed considerable prestige. For one thing it had a Papal flavour, having been intended as a gift to the Pope. It also had Medici connections. And, too, the work of Dürer had many admirers in Italy, where his



76 Grotto by Tribolo at the Villa Castello near Florence, c. 1550



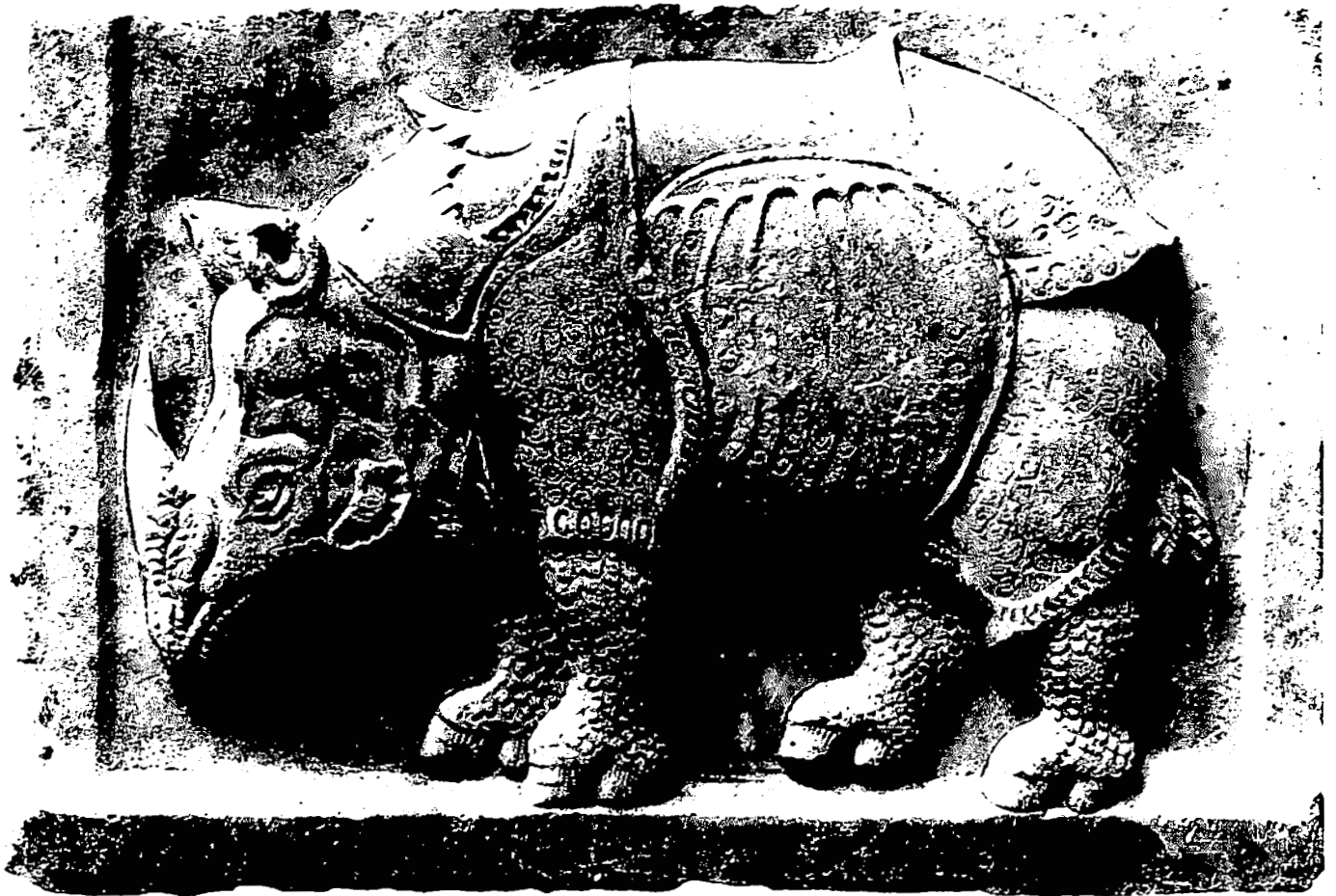
77 Detail of a Florentine fountain by Francesco Camilliani in the Piazza Pretoria, Palermo, c.1560

woodcut of the *ganda* must still have been in circulation in one of its many editions as well as the faithful copy of 1548 by the Florentine, Enea Vico (1523–67) (see pl. 79). The ever-growing literary fashion for books of devices and, later, emblems was a perpetual reminder of the special relations between the Medici and the rhinoceros. Although the rhinoceros was invented as an emblem for Alessandro by Paolo Giovio,³ the former's murder in 1537 applied only to the man and not to his emblem.⁴

Thus, it was considered appropriate that Alessandro's successor Cosimo I (1519–74) had no objection to the inclusion of the rhinoceros (together with other exotic animals, including a giraffe) in the left of the three animal groups of almost life size, carved in stone and marble of many colours in the grotto that dominates the garden of Castello, Cosimo's favourite villa just outside Florence (pl. 76). This grotto by Niccolò Pericoli called Tribolo (1500–50) was completed by about 1550. There is no positive evidence that the rhi-

noceros in the left-hand group carved in *verde di Prato* or green serpentine, probably by Giovanni Fancelli (d.1568), had a Medici significance; but it is unlikely.⁵ It is the unicorn in the central group which presides over this example of 'le style rustique', with naturalistic bronze birds by Giovanni Bologna (1529–1608) lodged in the tufa walls and ceilings. But to the public, the water tricks appealed even more than the posed groups of animals. The English traveller, Fynes Morison, wrote in the summer 1594: 'Here in another Cave are divers Images of beasts of Marble, curiously wrought, namely of Elephants, Sheepe, Harts, Wolves and many other beasts, admirable for the engravers worke.' The guide then proceeded, as today, to soak the visitors by 'turning a cock powrd upon us a shower of raine, and therewith did wet those that had most warily kept them selves from wetting at all the other fountains'.⁶

From a Florentine grotto to a Florentine fountain exported to Sicily is the next stop in our search for



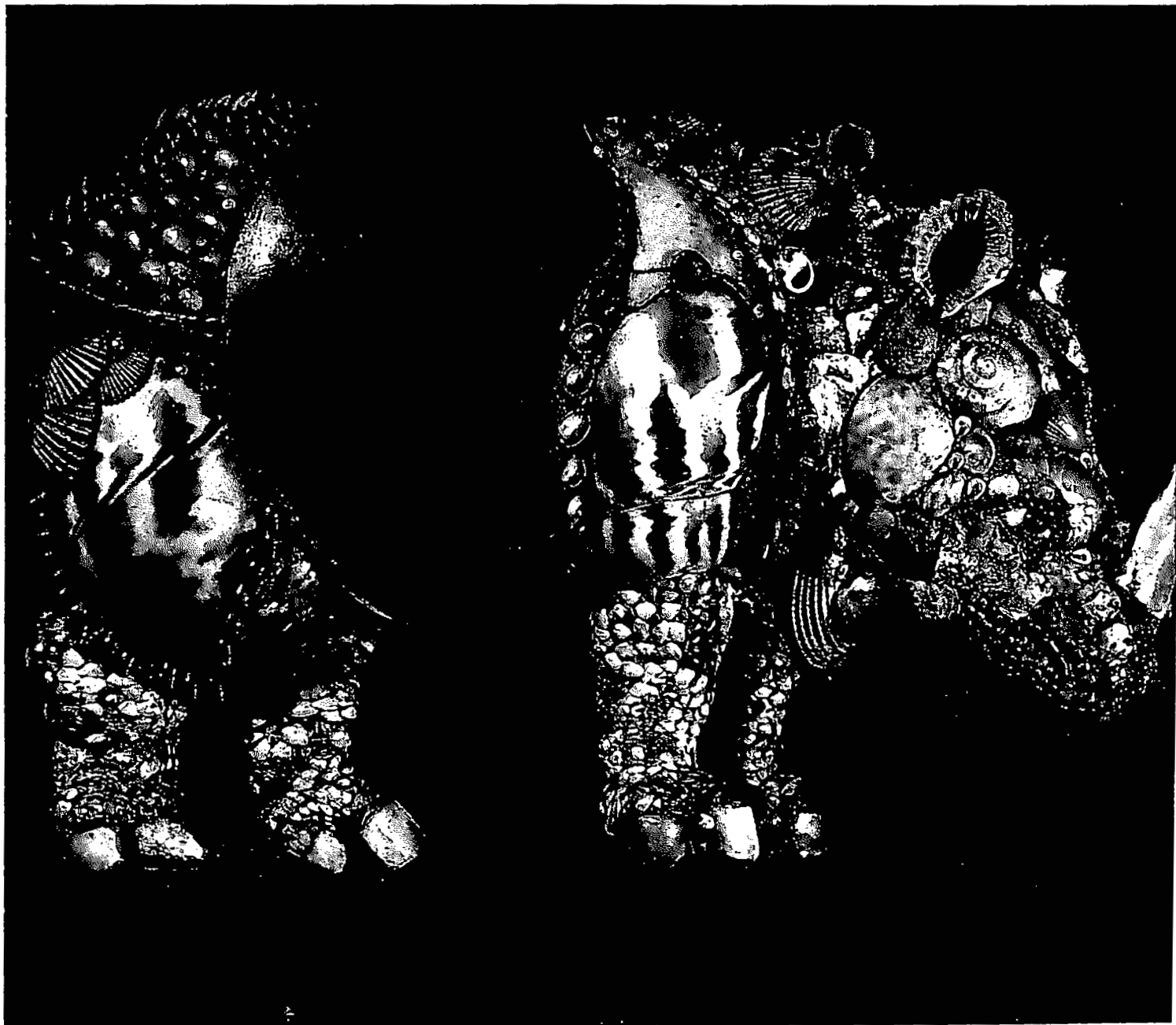
a sculpted rhinoceros. An enormous affair, ordered in 1550 by Don Pedro de Toledo from a minor Florentine sculptor, Francesco Camilliani (d.1588), as surrogate for the deceased Tribolo, it had a chequered history. For Don Pedro died, and eventually all 650 or more pieces of marble were bought for the city of Palermo, where they were re-assembled in the Piazza Pretoria. Centred by a slender bronze fountain of Tribolesque derivation, a double-tiered platform has a sunken moat between the two tiers, into which the heads only of a number of animals set under rounded arches spew thin streams of water (pl. 77).

Rome and Naples also had their marble rhinoceroses in the late sixteenth century, although in most cases they were claimed to be classical antiquities. There is a well-known large head, excavated in 1586 near Trajan's Forum, now placed in a cloister of the

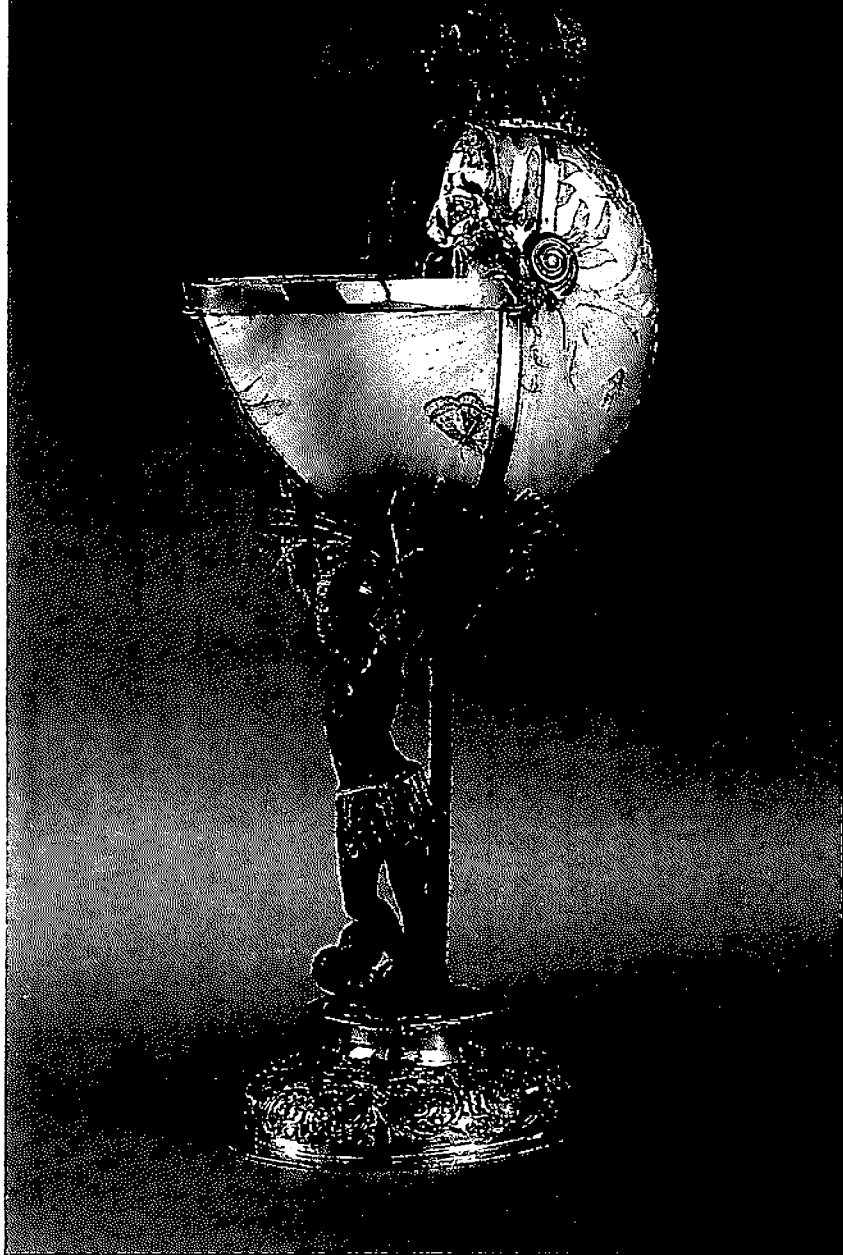
78 Marble relief of a rhinoceros, Italian, c.1550 (Museo Nazionale, Naples)

79 Enea Vico, *Rhinoceros*, engraving after Dürer, Florence, 154





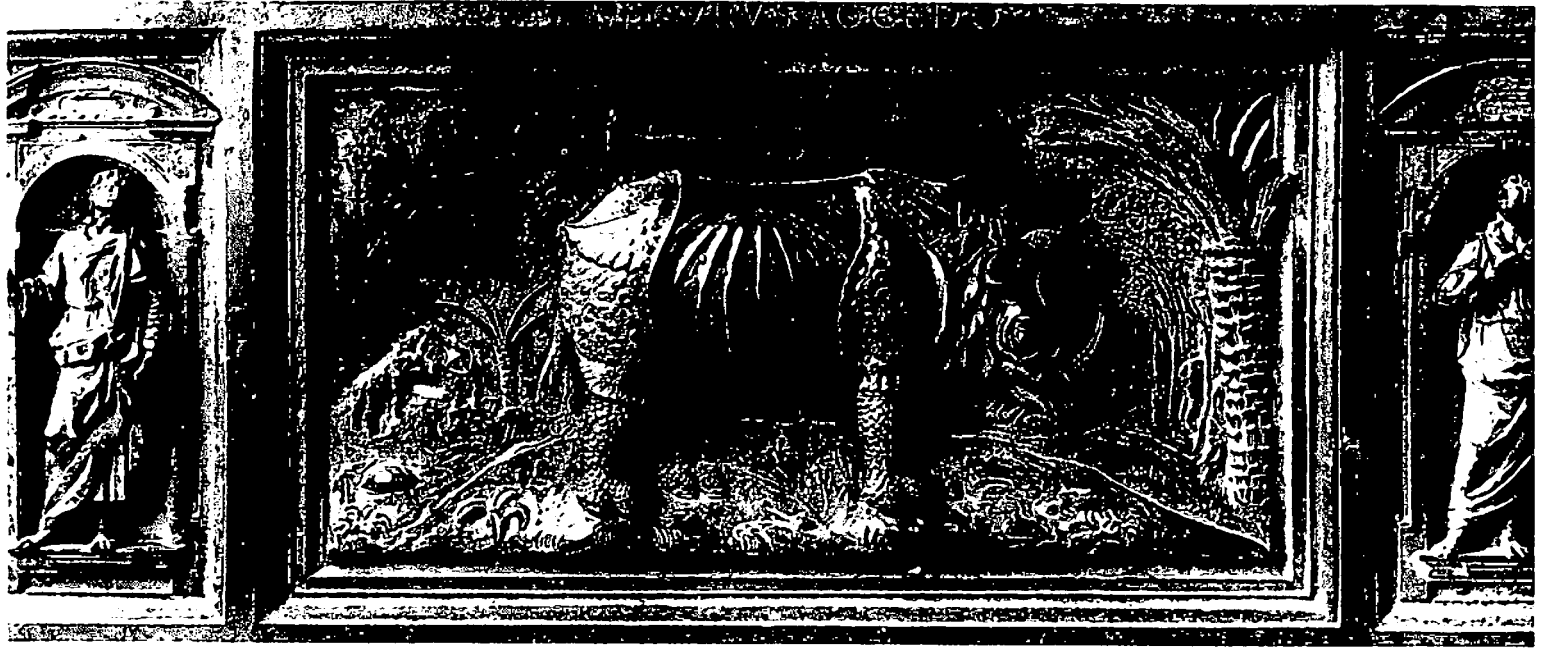
xxi The Dürer rhinoceros as a collage of shells, German, seventeenth century (Graf von Schönborn, Schloss Pommersfelden, near Bamberg)



xxii Goblet of nautilus shell, silver and rhinoceros horn, Vienna, 1691 (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna)



xxiii Johann Melchior Dinglinger, *The Goblet with the Moorish Girl*, Dresden, 1700–9 (Grünes Gewölbe, Dresden)



80 Detail of a bronze door of Pisa Cathedral, School of Giovanni Bologna, 1602

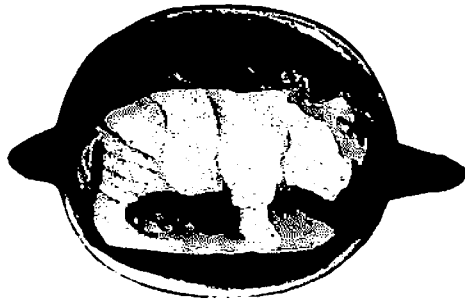
Museo Nazionale Romano; quite obviously after the Dürer model, as is a smaller head in the Museo Pio Clementino in the Vatican.⁷ But the villain of the group is a small stone or marble relief (pl. 78) in the Museo Nazionale in Naples, where it hung for nearly a century as a much-admired 'Pompeian' relief. Published as such in Otto Keller's authoritative *Die antike Tierwelt* in 1909, it was shortly afterwards shown up as a very competent copy after the woodcut by Dürer or, more likely, the engraving by Enea Vico (pl. 79), his Italian imitator of 1548. Now it has been disgraced as a classical fake and can with some difficulty and persistence be seen behind the door in the *Deposito dei Frammenti*.⁸

Best known of all the High Renaissance images is without doubt the bronze relief at the foot of one of the side doors of the Porta Regia of Pisa Cathedral (pl. 80). These western doors were made to replace others ruined in a fire in 1595. The work, it was hoped, would appeal to Giovanni Bologna, but as he was too busy it was parcelled out among a number of his pupils and colleagues. One Angelo Scalani was paid for the rhinoceros and other animals, completed by 1602. The doors were shipped to Pisa from Florence and put in place by March 1604. Whether

the rhinoceros has any emblematic significance is difficult to establish.

Here we interpolate before leaving Italy a miniature work of sculpture, that is, a late sixteenth-century cameo mounted in an eighteenth-century ring (pl. 81). It measures 13 mm wide. This onyx portrait, it will be noted, shows two animals, one in front of the other. This is a feature which links it with two double animal portraits in Palazzo Pitti, Florence, now mounted as buttons. Apart from these two double portraits (of a tiger and dog), there is also a single rhinoceros in agate in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, part of a series of twelve animal cameos, with late sixteenth-century enamelled gold mounts. All have been attributed to Gian Antonio Masnago on rather slender grounds, as has the cameo first mentioned. Masnago was described (by Morisia in *Nobiltà di Milano*, 1595) as 'a man of considerable talent in the art of cameos, particularly in carving animals and fruit in their correct natural colours'. He may be excused in this instance for rendering the *ganda* in white, when it was generally called boxwood or tortoiseshell in tone.

For our next figure of the rhinoceros carved in the round, we must leave Italy and travel north to Eng-



81 Onyx double cameo of the Dürer rhinoceros, Milanese, c. 1600 (Private collection)

land, to the village church of St John at Elmswell in Suffolk.⁹ Here there is a typically flamboyant early Stuart alabaster monument (pl. 82), erected to the memory of Sir Robert Gardener who died in 1619 at the age of 80. He leans elegantly on a cushion, at his feet his son stands, having predeceased him, while between the man's feet and the boy is inserted an alabaster figure of a rhinoceros, Sir Robert's crest. What is unusual is that it is quite definitely the 'Madrid' animal of Philippe Galle, derived either from the print of 1586 or from an emblem book, such as Camerarius's.¹⁰ The sculptor is perhaps the Huguenot, Maximilian Colt (fl. 1600-41).

Nearly a century passes before the next noteworthy carved rhinoceros. This consists of the head and fore-shortened forelegs carved in ebony by the Venetian wood sculptor and furniture designer, Andrea Brustolon (1662-1730), from Belluno (pl. 83). It forms part of the base of one of the large figures of a Moor or Ethiopian, from a large and luxurious set of furniture, now in the Ca' Rezzonico in Venice, ordered by the patrician family of Venier on Brustolon's return to Venice from Rome in about 1715. It is not easy to find a prototype for this very individual version, with its odd strand of hair falling over its forehead. Brustolon cannot have seen a live specimen, unless he was in London in 1684-6. It must therefore remain for the moment an imaginative creation, a highly successful essay in the baroque exotic.

The arrival of the 'Dutch' rhinoceros, also known as 'Jungfer Clara', in 1741, and its later brilliantly advertised tours round Europe, from 1746 to 1758, had a profound effect on the European vision of the rhinoceros, up till then nurtured by the fantasies of



82 Detail of an alabaster monument to Sir Robert Gardener, 1619 (St John's Church, Elmswell, Suffolk)

a Dürer or Philippe Galle. But there was no immediate reaction to the triumphant European deambulations of 'Jungfer Clara'. Still the older ideas of the shape and character of the rhinoceros continued to prevail. During the first years she only made short journeys from her Dutch base. It was not until 1740 that Capt. Douwe Mout began his longer travels; and it was therefore only natural that the medallist, Antonio Francesco Selvi (1679-1753), in his medal from the series of seventy-six retrospective portraits of the Medici, first announced in 1740, gave, as the reverse of the portrait of Alessandro, a Florentine baroque rhinoceros, with the motto provided by Paolo Giovannini (pl. 84). The model was still the Dürer woodcut.

The earliest of the small bronzes to appear seem to be that based on the porcelain figure created by the Meissen factory as the result of the animal's visit in April 1747 to Dresden. Several examples a



83 Andrea Brustolon, pedestal base with an ebony head of a rhinoceros, Venetian, c.1715 (Ca' Rezzonico, Venice)

84 Anton Francesco Selvi, bronze medal of Alessandro de' Medici, Florence, c.1740 (British Museum)



85 Bronze rhinoceros, German (or possibly French), c.1750 (Private collection, England)

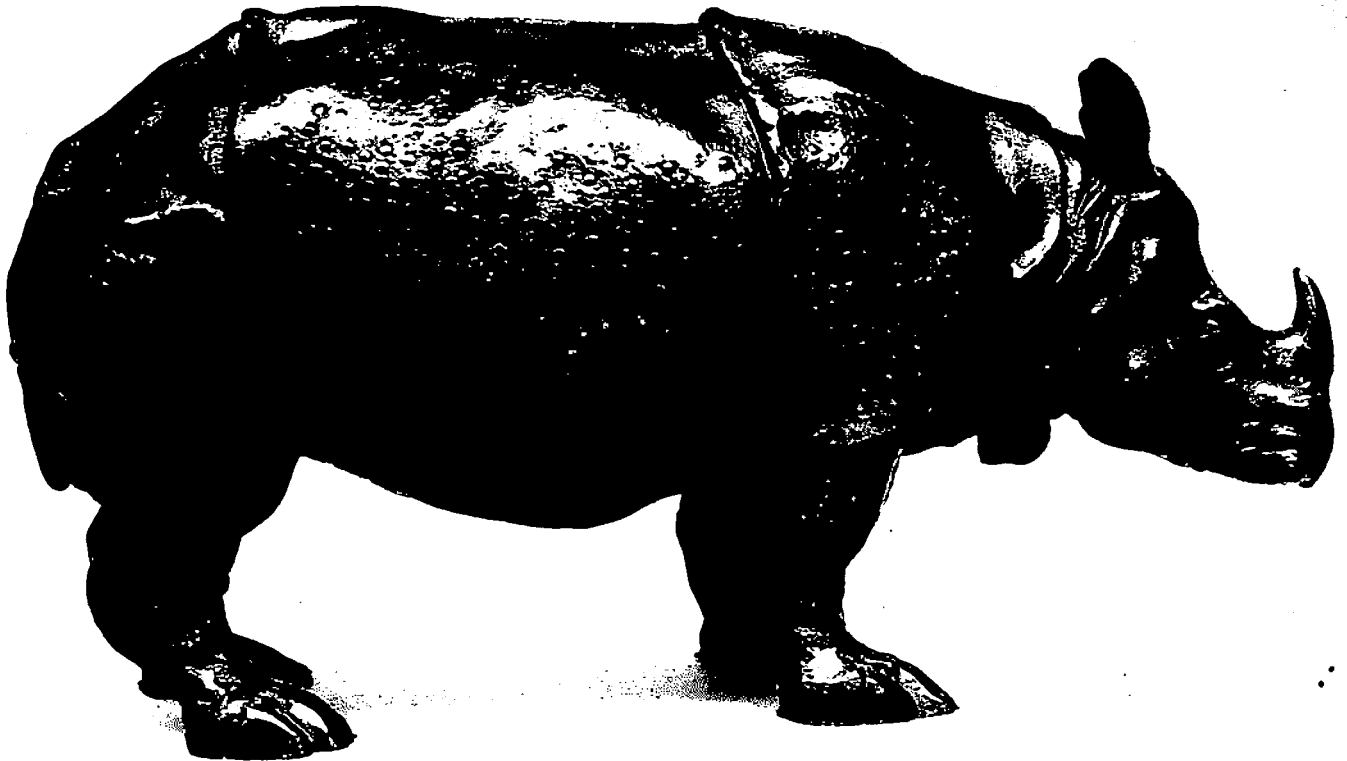
known of this model, at least one pair being recorded, with their bodies identical but the heads facing each a different way. All are set on shaped and moulded flat bases (pl. 85). Their date would seem to be about 1748–50 and their nationality German rather than French.

There is too another model known both in marble and bronze of approximately the same date, that is about 1750. A large white marble figure came from the Rothschild house at Grüneburg, Frankfurt,¹¹ a town which 'Jungfer Clara' visited for most of September 1747. There is a smaller example, also in white marble, in the Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle, England (pl. 86). There are a number of fairly large bronzes 46 cm wide (some of later date) that are so close in modelling to the marbles as to postulate a common source, quite possibly a print or drawing by Ridinger of the following year, June 1748. In all the head is held low, the toes are cloven, the folds of roughened skin are the same. Two noted examples are those in the Louvre and in the Barber Institute, Birmingham (pl. 87), both called German. However, one man did not agree either with date or provenance. This was the great Berlin museum director, Wilhelm Bode, who considered this model 'generally in conception and execution may confidently be pronounced one of the best animal bronzes of the



86 White marble rhinoceros, German, c.1750 (Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle, England)

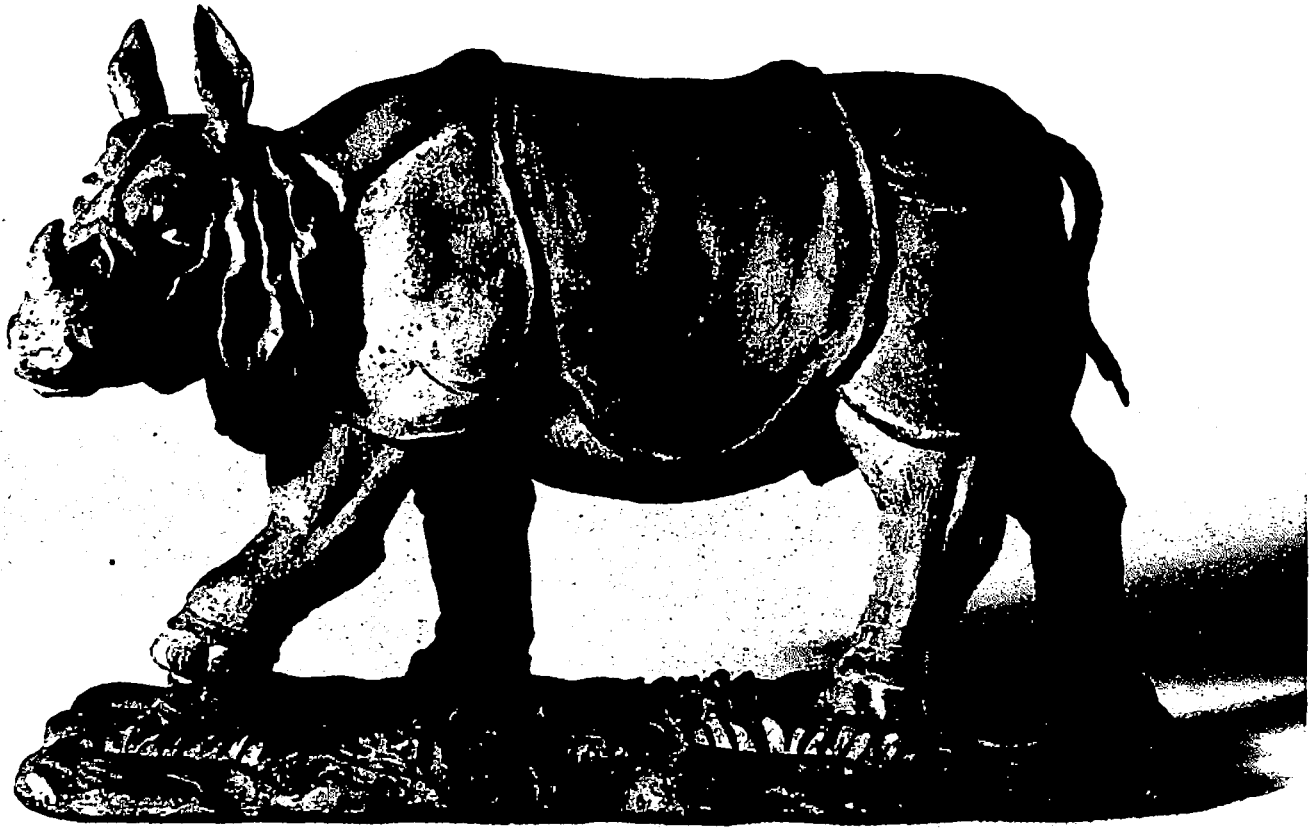
87 Bronze rhinoceros, German, c.1750 (The Barber Institute of Fine Arts, University of Birmingham, England)



Renaissance'. This was the exception – or rather one of the exceptions – that proved the rule of his usual brilliance.

Amongst mid-eighteenth-century bronze sculpture must be considered the three types of rhinoceros used by the Louis xv clockmakers, models that appear not to have been marketed on their own (see Chapter 9). In this connection one terracotta deserves mention. Anonymous, but probably French (pl. 88), it has the appearance of a model, again perhaps for a bronze for use as a clock in 1749, or soon after. What is remarkable is that we have at so late a period an animated figure after the engraving by Philippe Galle of the 'Madrid' animal of the 1580s.

Finally, a brief mention of the Cabinet of Curiosities or, as John Tradescant called it, 'A Closet of Vanities'. For indeed it was in part vanity that was an important element in the creation of these forerunners of museums: confined to rulers and a few rich commoners, particularly in Germany, where such collections were called by a number of names: *Kunst- und Wunderkammer* or *Raritäten-Kabinett*, to mention only two. We are concerned only with the rhino-



88 Terracotta rhinoceros, probably French, c.1750 (Private collection, France)

cerotic contents of these collections and can here give only three typical examples of the richer types: there is material enough for a book, since so many of these turned and carved rhinoceros horns, many of them mounted in gold and precious stones, have survived (particularly in Vienna and Munich), as well as documentary material.

The ideal object for such a cabinet is the *bassorilievo* formed of tortoiseshell, coral and exotic shells, arranged in the form of the Dürer woodcut, probably in the seventeenth century (col. pl. XXI, p. 111). It stands on an ebony cabinet, itself said to be filled with spare shells for replacements in a bedroom of what is generally called Schloss Pommersfelden, the baroque palace near Bamberg created for the Schönborn family in the early eighteenth century. Such a collage combines two of the main features of these *Wunderkammer*: the *artificialia* and *naturalia*. The shells are natural curiosities, artificially arranged to form a relief of an animal.

But it is the ornately carved or more simply lathe-turned goblet of rhinoceros horn, often mounted in enamelled gold and jewels, that is the glory of the Cabinet of Curiosities. For the most part these, or their remnants, are situated in the Germanic countries – Vienna, Prague, Dresden, Munich, Sweden, Denmark – although specimens can be found in Italy, particularly in Florence, and even in England. The Emperor Rudolf II of Prague had a large collection both of plain rhinoceros horns and others carved and mounted by the leading silversmiths of the day. Most of these are described in a manuscript inventory begun in 1607; many of them still exist in Vienna.

Although the late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century rhinoceros horn goblets were mostly turned on the lathe in simple shapes, yet elaborately mounted in gold and enamel, the later products of South Germany, in particular Augsburg, made after the Thirty Years War were extremely complicated. Three or even four horns, an expensive commodity, might be

used for a single goblet for display. These baroque extravagances can most easily be seen in a single cabinet in the Munich Schatzkammer or Treasury, housed in the Residenz. Also on public display are the majority of pieces in the Vienna Kunsthistorisches Museum, whence we illustrate an unusual example (col. pl. xxii, p. 112): unusual, because the horn of the rhinoceros only forms a part of the whole. A carved nautilus shell is the main focal point, supported by a silver palm tree and a wooden negro with coconut shells at his feet. For once the goblet is by a Vienna maker signing I.E.G., and dated 1691.

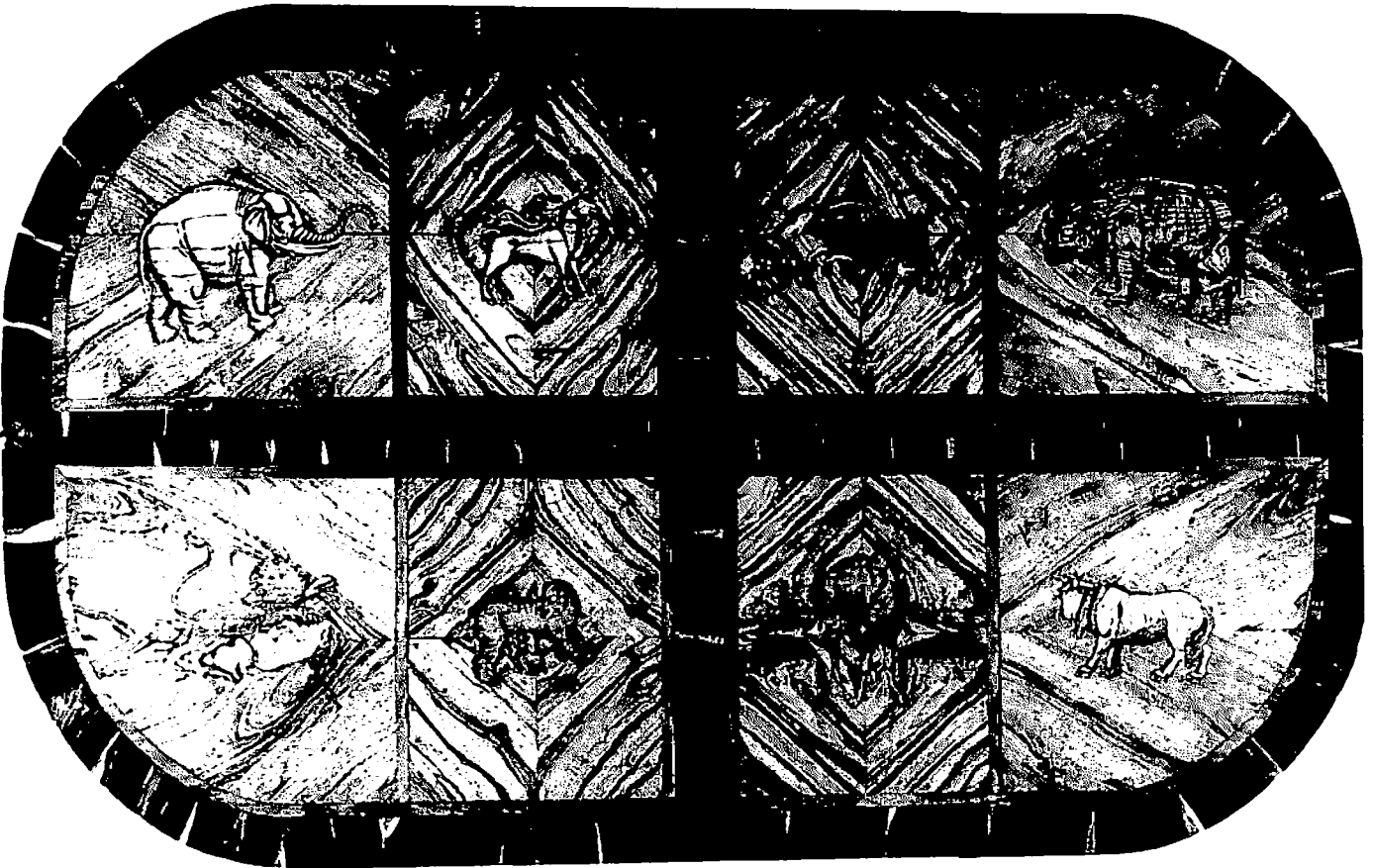
From the Grünes Gewölbe in Dresden, the most curious of cabinets and the greatest, comes our last example (col. pl. xxiii, p. 112). It is the work of Johann Melchior Dinglinger (1664–1737), the inimitable creator of 'objects of virtu', as the English call such things. Again, rhinoceros horn is only a part of the whole. 'The Caryatid with a shell', or, as

Dinglinger himself called it, 'the goblet with the Moorish girl', has the torso of a young woman a stem, dissolving into a term or pedestal of gold enamel and diamonds, while the shaped base is inlaid with enamels by another member of the family, Geor. Friedrich. The shell bowl on the girl's head has an enamelled gold dragon as handle, holding by its beard the badge of the Danish Order of the Elephant. No wonder that Augustus the Strong, Elector of Saxony and King of Poland, was charged in September 1711 3,500 thalers for this bauble.

Furniture

The only serious attempt to display the Indian rhinoceros on a piece of furniture occurs on a remarkable card table, probably of South German origin and dating from around 1700 (pl. 89). The surface of the table

89 Marquetry card table, probably S. German, c.1700 (Private collection, W. Germany)





90 Venetian green lacquer bureau-cabinet, detail of drawer front, early eighteenth century (Civiche Raccolte d'Arte, Castello Sforzesco, Milan)

when opened shows in very competent marquetry eight animals, mostly exotic, of which the most entertaining is perhaps the camel seen from the front. The rhinoceros is a fair rendering of the Dürer woodcut except for the odd foliation springing from the base of the horn. The zoological work from which these intriguing portraits has been drawn remains to be precisely identified. The signature on the frieze in large ivory capitals has also not been identified.

The next attempt to delineate our animal on a piece of furniture is hilarious. Lacquered, or more correctly in English usage, japanned, in pale green, on the drawer of a Venetian bureau-cabinet (pl. 90) in Milan (Castello Sforzesco) is a vase of flowers towering over a caricature of the *ganda* on one side, and positively dwarfing a giraffe on the other. This kind of mass-produced 'lacquer' furniture, made by the use of prints glued to the surface and varnished over, a technique known as *arte povera*, was a Venetian speciality. This cabinet is called early eighteenth century.

The next four pieces are not all strictly speaking furniture, but they all come from the same place of origin, Augsburg, are all fashioned in the same boule

technique, and all have chinoiseries as their decoration. Admittedly, this ensemble of two tables, a clock and a chessboard have only a minor rhinocerotie interest. The mere presence of the rhinoceros, whether Düreresque or after Philippe Galle, combined with the host of imaginary Chinese figures and groups confirms the point made earlier that by the start of the eighteenth century the rhinoceros was no longer considered of exotic interest on its own or indeed of zoological interest, but existed in the European imagination merely as an adjunct of chinoiseries. One of the reasons for this was the paucity of living animals in Europe in the first forty years of the century. The London beasts of 1684 and 1739 had no European impact. It was not until the 'Dutch' rhinoceros set out from Holland for Hamburg early in 1744 that a new attitude to the rhinoceros became evident. Another reason for the subsidiary role of the rhinoceros in the decorative arts in this period is that the public preferred the chinoiserie prints turned out by the presses of Nuremberg and Augsburg by such distinguished German *ornemantistes* as Paulus Decker, Martin Engelbrecht and Elias Baeck, to name



91 Detail of a boule table top, Augsburg, c.1712-15 (Badisches Landesmuseum, Karlsruhe)

only a few. One must be thankful that our pachyderm was not totally ignored.

As to the Augsburg artisans, although some are known by name most of their work has remained anonymous. George Keyser, the admirable cicerone often quoted, was in Augsburg on 1 July 1729, when he mentions a Mr Mann 'now at Vienna, disposing of a looking-glass, a table and two stands for candlesticks', for which he hoped to get twenty thousand dollars.¹² Just such a set, but lacking the mirror, has been acquired by the Badisches Landesmuseum in Karlsruhe (pl. 91). 'Mr Mann' was Johannes Mann (1679-1754) and just conceivably might have been the maker of the Karlsruhe set. Its date can be established by the marks of the goldsmith Jeremias Jakob Ab(e)rell (1678-1716) who died shortly after finishing work on this suite, which bears the Augsburg silver marks for 1714/5. The tiny rhinoceros is more than Düreresque in that its engraved mother-of-pearl body has a third horn on its rump.

Another table, also in ivory and mother-of-pearl but with a lot more wood taking the place of tortoiseshell in the former table, was for long in the possession of the Schönborn family at Schloss Pommersfelden (pl. 92). Many of the chinoiserie scenes are repeats of the former table, but in the top left-

hand corner there is an allegory of Asia of some iconographic interest. The thick and columnar forelegs and the absence of the dorsal horn suggest either that it is derived from the Galle print of 1586 or that it is a hybrid beast; because it is ridden by a young woman with feathered hat, and holding a staff like a broom, her legs elegantly crossed, seated on a saddle cloth reaching to the ground, it is impossible to be sure of the animal's origin. But the fact that this allegory seems to be derived from an English title-page to a book on botany, where the animal is clearly the 'Madrid' one, tends to confirm the fact that the Augsburg furniture-makers relied on outside as well as local engravings. The book, published in 1640, is *The Theater of Plantes* by John Parkinson (1567-1650). The date of the table must be about 1720.

The exact woman on the same rhinoceros is repeated on a clock formerly at Mentmore in England, but this time in hardstones in imitation of the Florentine *pietra dura* technique. Either this must be by the same hand as the table, or there was a common source of engravings. It is a situation which one meets also at Augsburg in the decoration of Meissen porcelain by the two leading families of Hausmaler decoration, the Aufenwerths and the Seuters.

Many of the details on the two table tops are repeated on an Augsburg chess set of the early eighteenth century of typical boule technique (pl. 93). Here each square is of tortoiseshell, the alternate ones further enriched by chinoiserie subjects in engraved mother-of-pearl and stained ivory, derived for the most part from Jan Nieuhof's account of the

92 Detail of a boule table top, Augsburg, early eighteenth century (Formerly at Schloss Pommersfelden)

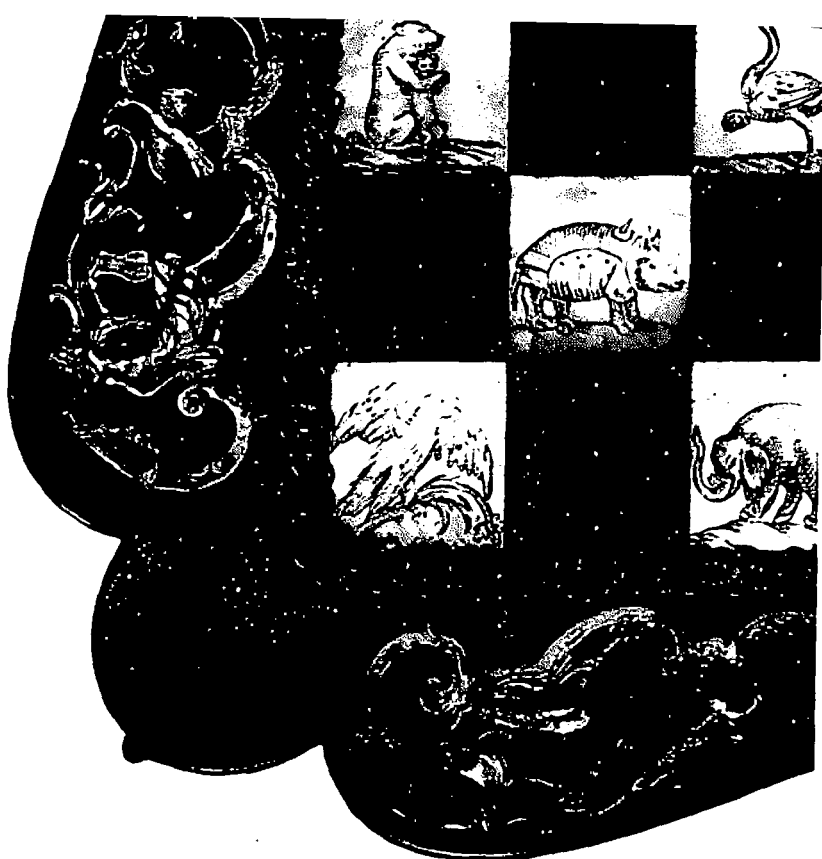
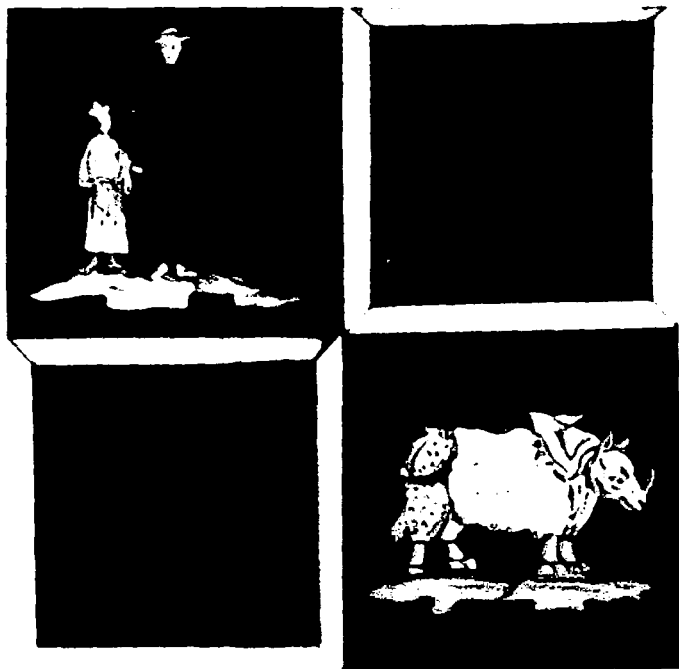


first two Dutch embassies to China, published in 1665. Our pachyderm is a hybrid beast, kept well away from his deadly rival, the elephant.

The materials used in this chess set recall those of another in the Schatzkammer in the Munich Residenz (pl. 94). Here the alternate squares are mother-of-pearl and tortoiseshell, the latter ornamented in *piqué point*. Each 'side,' as it were, has a rhinoceros engraved on mother-of-pearl, the rhinoceros one of the more outrageous caricatures of Dürer. The chess set belonged to the Electress of Bavaria, later the Empress Amalia (1701-56). Its nationality, it is suggested, is Austrian.

The *piqué* decoration on the Munich chessboard is the excuse for illustrating here one of the outstanding of rhinocerotical artefacts, the celebrated (and much altered) Paris snuffbox, from the René Fribourg and Wrightsman collections in this century and the Louis-Jean Gaignat (1697-1768) and Grimode de la Reynière sales in 1769 and 1797. It is the lid which concerns us (pl. 95). The technique of inserting very narrow strips of silver and gold onto a black shell ground, a process needing infinite skill, is just one of the types of *piqué* decoration, the study of which is in its infancy. This low-slung rhinoceros with its

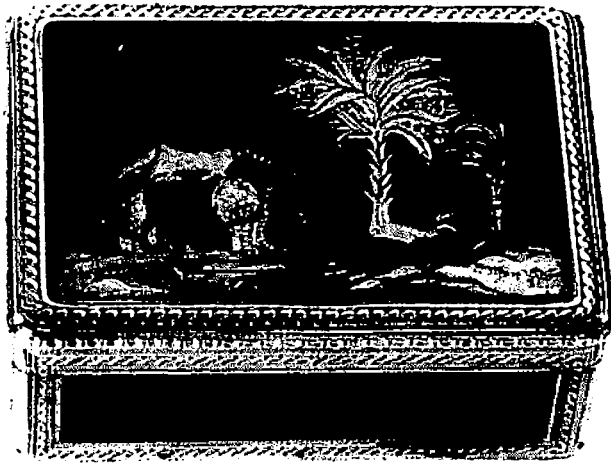
93 Detail of an Augsburg chessboard of tortoiseshell and mother-of-pearl, c.1710-30



94 Detail of a chessboard, S. German or Austrian, c.1710 (Schatzkammer, Munich)

bushy tail, three exotic birds in flight in the left top corner and two equally exotic palms on the right, in two tones of gold and silver contrasting with the chased and cast gold mount, is a triumph not only of technique but also of the Indian rhinoceros in the European imagination.

As for the date of the 'hair' *piqué* plaque, as this technique is sometimes called in England (*coulé* in French), it is clearly much older than the cagework mounts dated 1768-9. It may even date from 1730 or earlier; it might not even be French. For the source of decoration of the rhinoceros and two palms comes from two neighbouring engravings in Jan Nieuwhof's book on China, first published in Amsterdam in 1665. Since, in the many editions of this popular book, the foundation of European chinoiserie, the rhinoceros faces the other way round, it may well be that a later edition was used, such as the pirated English edition by John Ogilby, dated 1669. Called *An Embassy from the East-India Company of the United Provinces, to the Grand Tartar Cham Emperor of China . . .*, its plates were copied from the original and so are in reverse, as is the rhinoceros. The English text has this delightful comment: 'in bigness and thickness of body the Rhinoceros differs but little from the Elephant, only



95 Louis Roucel, gold and *piqué* snuffbox, Paris, 1768-9
(Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York)

96 Detail of *verre églomisé* and tortoiseshell cabinet on giltwood stand, Dutch, c. 1690-1700 (The Art Institute of Chicago)



it has much shorter feet: and that is the reason why it is not so comely to the eye'. For feet, of course, one should read 'legs' (see note to pl. 95).

Nieuhof is the common denominator between most of the objects mentioned in this chapter, and too in the last of the illustrations (pl. 96), a detail from an unusually well-preserved cabinet with large upright *verre églomisé* (reverse painting on glass) panels on a ground of tortoiseshell veneer. This masterpiece of chinoiserie in The Art Institute of Chicago is of Dutch origin, dated to the last decade of the seventeenth century. The double-doored cabinet enclosing numerous drawers, all with *verre églomisé* panels, has a sophistication not often seen at so early a period. The straightforward accounts and engravings of the Dutch and other travel books have been quickly assimilated and transformed into the land of Cathay. On one panel, elephant and rhinoceros face each other in a landscape dominated by an outsize rhubarb plant. Both face in opposite directions to the early editions of Nieuhof; possibly the artist used the same edition as the creator of the *piqué* snuffbox just mentioned (pl. 95).

To sum up, as far as the furniture is concerned, the rhinoceros has, with one exception (the table first mentioned), been turned into a frivolous inhabitant of an imaginary world, that of chinoiserie.

Arms and armour

It is disappointing that there remain so few instances of the decorative treatment of the *Panzernashorn* on weapons of war since, as its German name implies, the Indian rhinoceros was for two and a half centuries regarded as a beast clad in defensive and offensive armour, thanks to the genius of Dürer's interpretation of 1515. Those few noted are all of sixteenth-century date.

Schloss Ambras,¹³ perched high to the south of Innsbruck, looks like a romantic fairytale castle, but it was – and again to a certain extent is – the home of one of the two most celebrated collections of encyclopaedic material, of the type commonly called then and now a *Kunst- und Wunderkammer*. A mixture of the natural and the artificial, of genuine works of art, of freaks of nature and, in this particular case, also of the personal body armour of famous men, the collection was the life work of Archduke Ferdinand of Habsburg (1529–95), Regent of the Tyrol from 1565 to 1595. It was only in the armour that he exceeded in quality and interest the larger collections of his nephew, the Emperor Rudolf II in Prague. Famous contemporaries or those of a generation earlier were his armorial victims. He went to immense pains to acquire 'a large quantity of armour both for pomp and use'; also he purchased the coats of armour made use of by several princes and noblemen', in the words of that eighteenth-century Baedeker, George Keyser, written in the form of a letter in 1729.¹⁴

Some of these 'famous princes and noblemen' had also been his friends; and it is one of these, Gian Giacomo de' Medici, Marquis of Marignano (1498–1555),¹⁵ who is of rhinocerot interest. When Archduke Ferdinand was governor of Bohemia (1547–1563) he is recorded as having given to Gian Giacomo (very distantly related to the Florentine dynasty) a gold chain on 28 September 1547.¹⁶ At the latter's death in 1555, Ferdinand evidently acquired his armour, described in his posthumous inventory of 1596 as a black half suit of armour 'together with a roundel covered in leather, on which are painted and gilt all manner of animals and mottoes'.¹⁷ It is this roundel or shield (pl. 97) which is clearly shown on one of the plates of Schrenck von Notzing's catalogue¹⁸ of the armour at Schloss Ambras, the earliest serious catalogue of armour ever printed. It was pub-

lished after drawings by Gio. Fontana in Innsbruck by J. Agricola in 1601, with a German edition in 1603;¹⁹ Ferdinand had died six years earlier.

The shield has survived, like so much of the Ambras armour, which is the core of the Viennese collection. At the bottom is one of five devices or *imprese*, none other than the Dürer rhinoceros, shorter-legged and longer in the body than the woodcut. It is something of a mystery as to how this device, which must stem from that 'invented' by Paolo Giovio for Duke Alessandro de' Medici (1510–37), came to be used at so early a date. For most of Giovio's devices were not published in illustrated editions until after his death in 1552; the earliest is said to date from 1555, the year of Gian Giacomo's death. But the oval border and the motto (in Latin and not Spanish as in the original) are similar to those in the *Dialogo dell' imprese militari et amorose* (1555). There is, of course, a possibility that Gian Giacomo might himself have known of Alessandro de' Medici's breastplate, which was engraved with the rhinoceros and the motto NON BUELVO SIN VINCER, and so pre-dating the illustrated editions of Paolo Giovio's books.

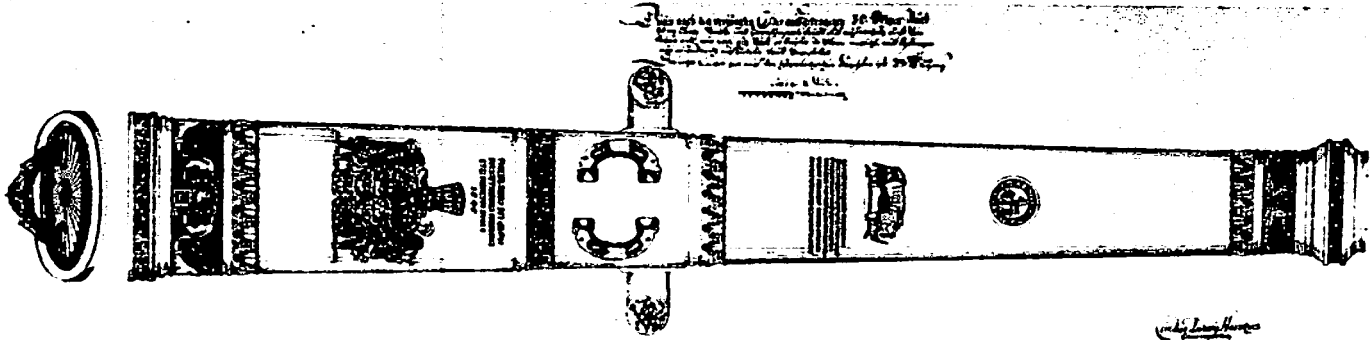
There is mention of another shield or targe in the collection of Ferdinand's nephew, the Emperor Rudolf II, in Prague. But this is probably Indian, made of rhinoceros skin with the horn attached at one end: the shield painted in green and gold, was brought from Spain by the Emperor's valet (*Kammerdiener*), H. Nusser (or Nussert).²⁰

Also of rhinocerot interest are two sixteenth-century gun barrels, known only from drawings. The earliest is a Pomeranian gun barrel (pl. 98), cast in 1545 by Wolf and Oswaldt Hilger for Philip I, Duke of Pomerania (d. 1560).²¹ The measured drawing was made by Christian Ludewig Hannitzes in Stralsund in 1674, when the gun barrel was presumably still in existence. The figure of the rhinoceros is of uncertain origin, though it certainly has connections, very debased, with the Dürer woodcut, for there was no other known printed source except for the Burgkmair woodcut, which it resembles not at all. Besides an enlarged nasal horn, it has the 'Dürer hornlet' above a row of filled circles, a body stretched by the rack or by medical traction and pig's trotters as feet. The animal itself has no doubts of its good breeding: 'I am called and indeed I am a rhinoceros (*Ich heis und bin Reinoceros*).



97 Leather shield or roundel of Gian Giacomo de' Medici, Marquis of Marignano, Italian, c.1550 (Imperial Armouries, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna)

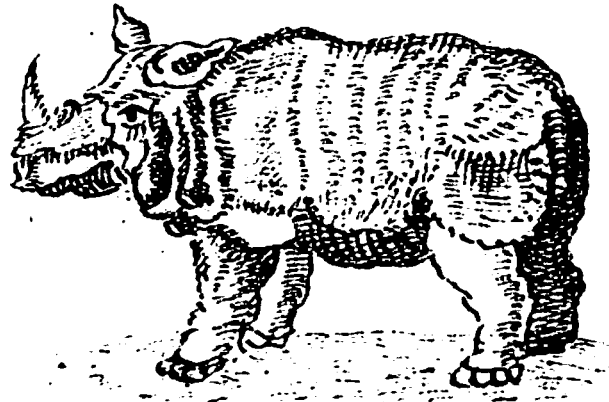
The second gun barrel (pl. 99) is more problematical, at least iconographically. The drawing comes from the *Codex 'Artillerie'* in the Landesbibliothek, Dresden.²² The maker signs himself on one of the trunnions *Wolf Hilger von Freiberg gos* (cast by Wolf Hilger of Freiberg). Freiberg is in Saxony, and the



98 Scale drawing of a Pomeranian gun barrel, dated 1545
(Kungl. Armémuseum, Stockholm)

99 Detail of a Saxon gun barrel, dated 1559 (Landesbibliothek,
Dresden)

RENOCERVUS THVMICH
NENNEN. THVREN VND
MAVREN ICH THV TREN
NEN.



barrel bears the arms of a member of the Ernestine branch of the Wettins, Duke Johann Friedrich II, known as *der Mitler* (the Mediator). Despite this laudable soubriquet for the Duke and despite his foundation of the University of Jena in 1558, his Albertine relation, the Elector of Saxony, disapproved of his activities and gaoled him in 1560; in gaol he remained until his death in 1595. The gun barrel is dated 1559 and is ornamented with a delightful rhinoceros that has clearly no connection with Dürer but is a rough but by no means unrecognisable copy in bronze relief of the Antwerp print of 1586 by Philippe Galle. For example, it rightly lacks the Dürer hornlet, the Dürer stance and the Dürer armour-plating; on the contrary, it has the rounded plicae, the solid stance, the flattened near-side ear, the position of the eye, all features of the 'Madrid' animal as engraved by Galle.

But how can one reconcile the date of 1559 on the gun barrel with Galle's print dated 1586? We do not know when the measured drawing was made, whether after the existing barrel or possibly after an earlier drawing in which the figure of the rhinoceros was in some way difficult to interpret because of the poor condition of the earlier drawing. Alternatively, one might suggest that the barrel be regarded as a commemorative piece, made to the order of a political

sympathiser after 1586 and before 1595 when the Duke died: an unlikely solution. Or it might be an invention of the draughtsman, who was probably working in the late seventeenth century. We must leave it as an unsolved puzzle.

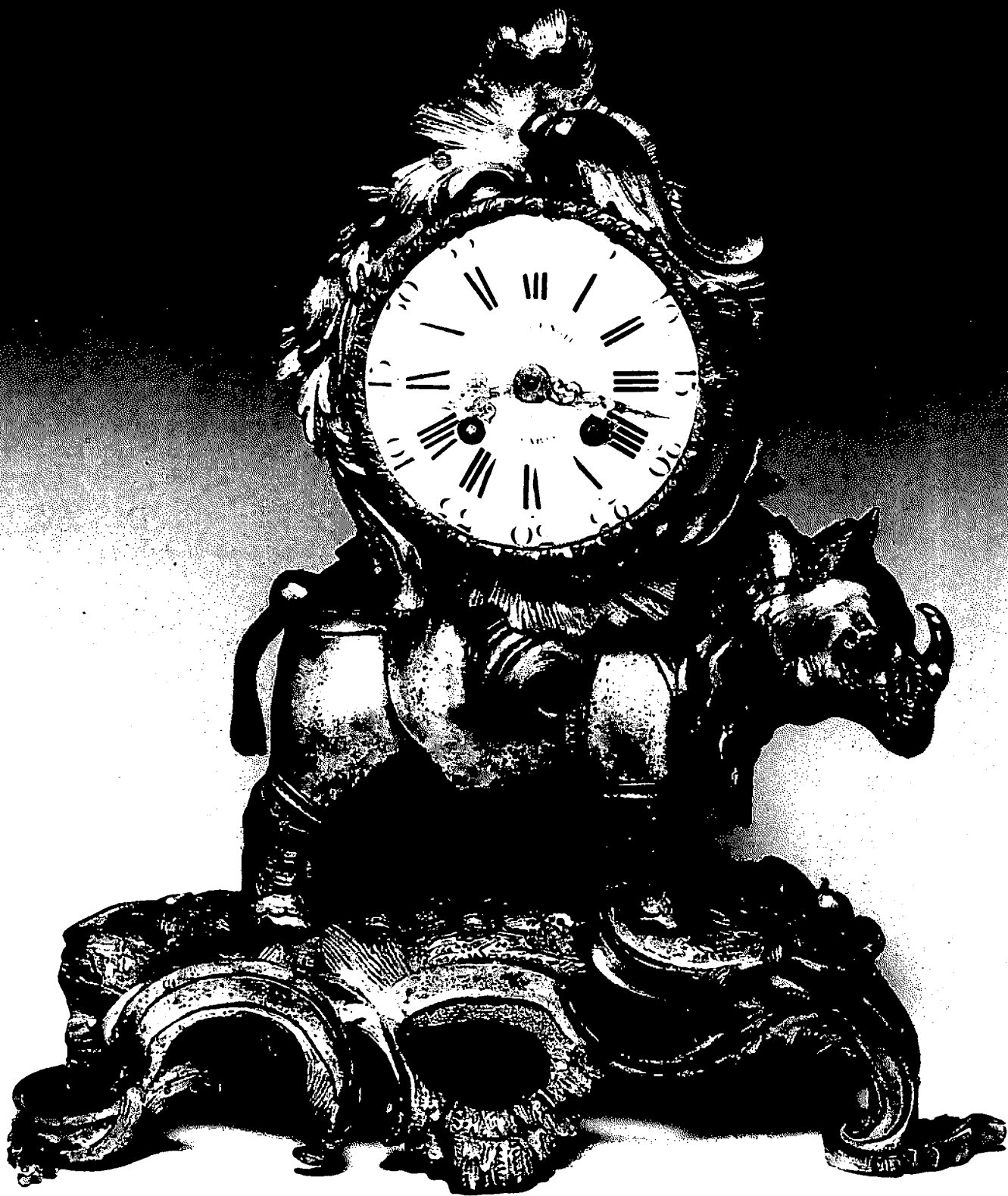
One more military note, again Saxon. The infantry regiment of Saxony-Altenburg was presented with colours in 1737, a rhinoceros standing on an islet beside a palm tree, on a green ground inscribed with the familiar legend, 'Non recedo nisi vincam' (I return not unless I have conquered).²³

9

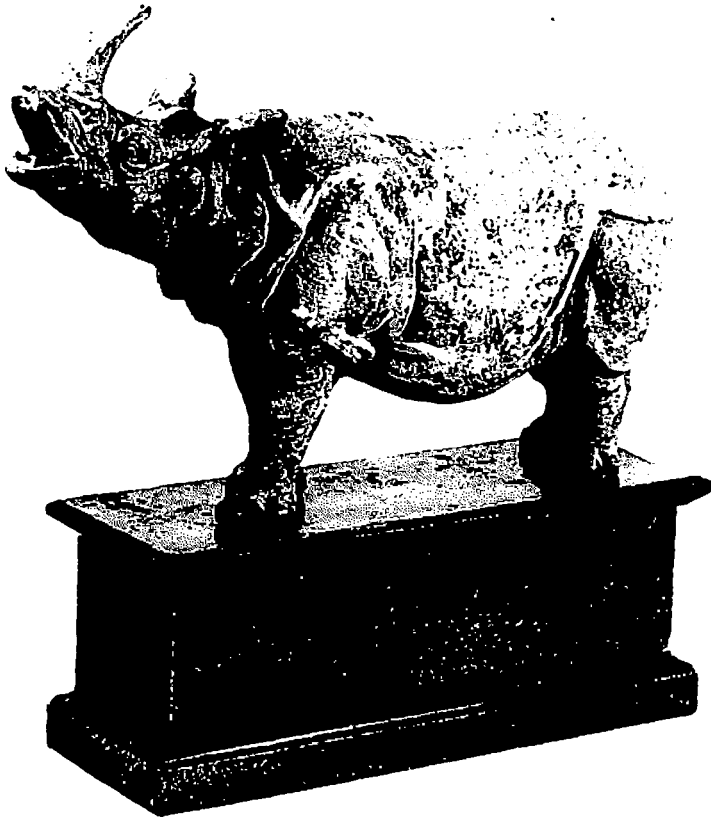
Clocks

The earliest record of a rhinoceros clock is of one that belonged to Queen Elizabeth I of England. It was described by a German traveller Paul Hentzner, who was in London in 1598. At Whitehall Palace he noted 'a piece of clock-work, an Aethiop riding upon a Rhinoceros, with four attendants, who all make their obeisance, when it strikes the hour; these are all put into motion by winding up the machine'. The Latin original is thus translated in Horace Walpole's Strawberry Hill edition of 1757.¹ But machinery is fragile, and no trace remains of what was most likely an Augsburg production. Was it the Dürer or the Madrid animal? We shall never know. Of the other large pachyderm, the elephant, there are a number of clockwork survivors.²

There must have been other rhinoceros automata or clocks from the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but any survivors remain undetected. On the other hand, from the mid-eighteenth century until around 1800 there is a plethora of table or mantel clocks with the rhinoceros as the main theme. These can be divided into two main groups. The first is mainly French, dating from the decade either side of 1750, magnificent creations of bronze and ormolu in the style of Louis xv, rococo at its most typical; the second group is English of the 1770s, associated with the jeweller and impresario, James Cox (d. 1788), who specialised in exports to the Far East, in a highly decorative idiom – all glitter and superficial richness in a late English rococo manner.



100 Louis xv ormolu rhinoceros clock, c.1750 (Sotheby's, London)



101 Terracotta rhinoceros, perhaps a model for a clock, on a wood stand painted to imitate jasper, c.1750 (Maîtres Ader Picard Tajan, Paris)

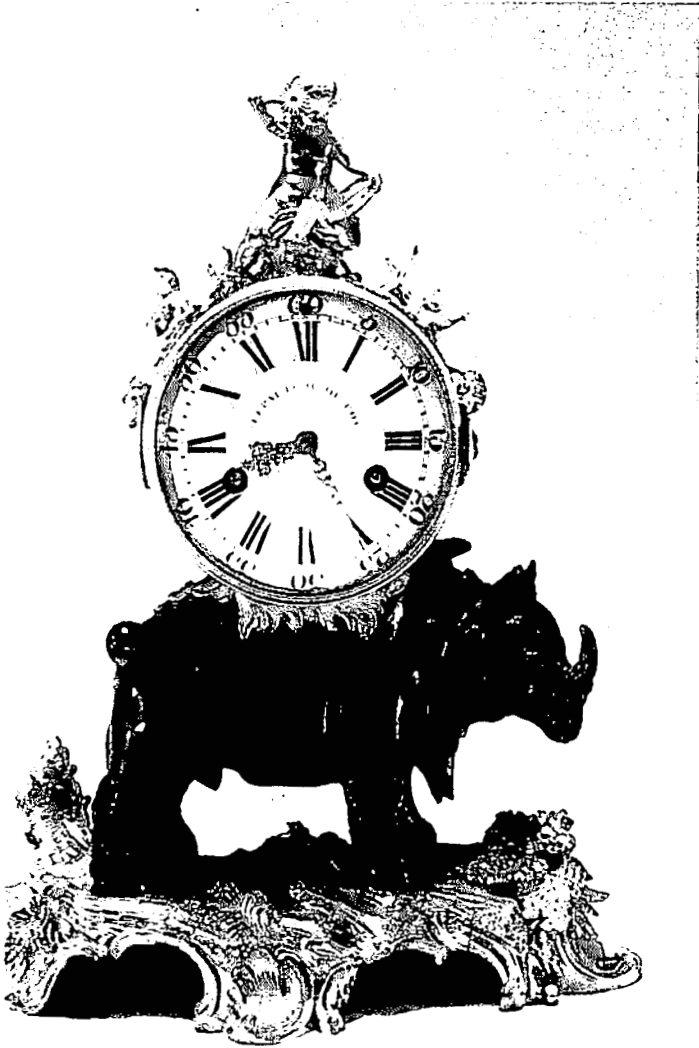
In the decade between 1746 and 1756 a wealthy visitor to Paris, or indeed a resident, would have been able to buy from one of the *marchands-merciers* at least three different models of the rhinoceros as the supporter of a drum-shaped clock movement, the whole embellished with *ormolu* mounts, often of the highest quality; to which was often added a *boîte-à-musique*. Such *bronzes d'ameublement*, a term which embraced, besides clockcases, all kinds of chimney furniture and of lighting equipment such as chandeliers, wall lights and candlesticks, were the work of the *fondeurs* and *doreurs*, each of which had its own *corporation* or guild. The *fondeur* had the right to finish his work by various degrees of chasing (*ciselure*), as had the gilder. The *fondeur* might have himself created the model he was casting; or this might have been provided by a sculptor working in wood, wax or terracotta. The founder had the right to mark his pieces, a right seldom exercised.³ A notable exception to this

anonymity was the celebrated bronze-founder, Jean-Joseph Saint-Germain (1719–after 1787).⁴

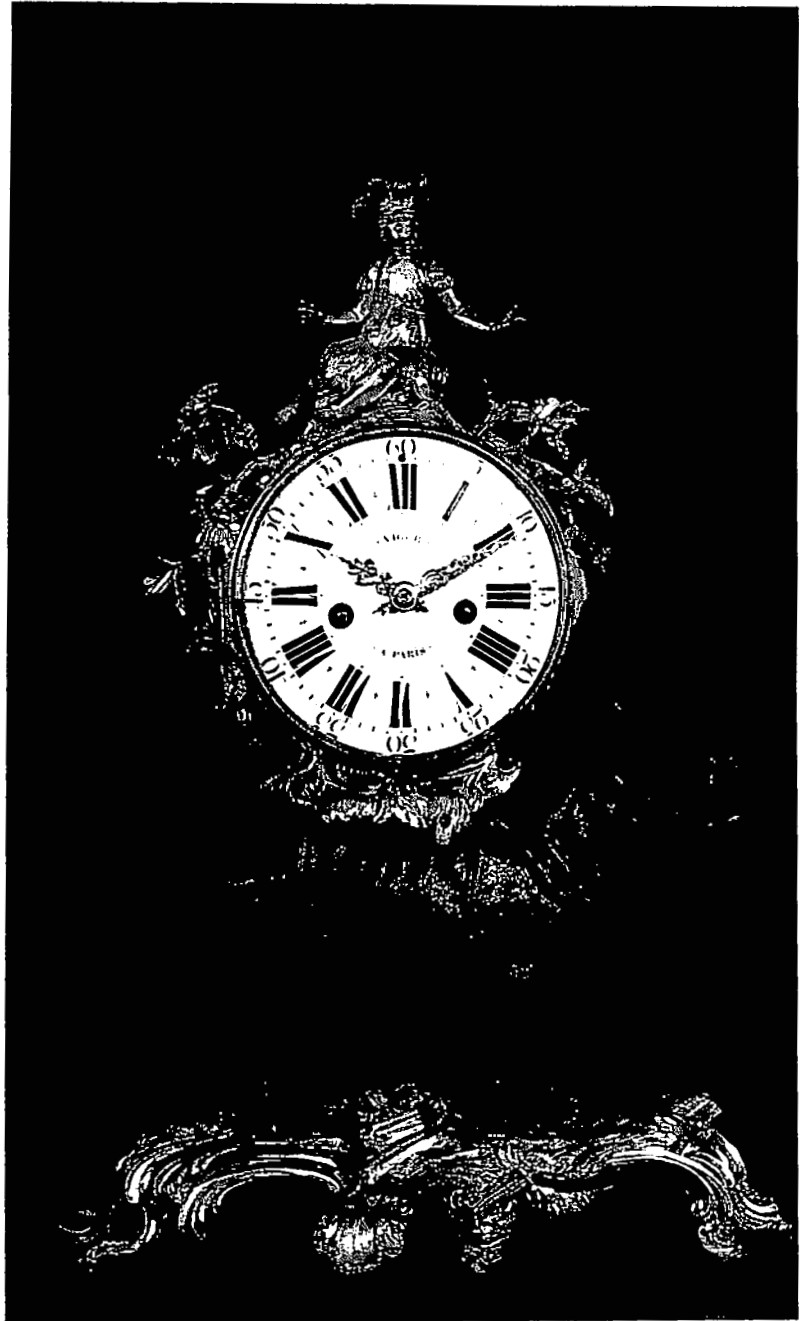
Registered as a *maître-fondeur en terre et sable* in 1748, *juré* of the *Corporation des Fondeurs* in 1765, Saint-Germain (not to be confused with the even more celebrated goldsmith and bronze-worker, Thomas Germain) was one of the few *fondeurs* to sign his work on a fairly regular basis. He was particularly famed for his clockcases; and he signed many of the rhinoceros clocks that he cast and possibly also modelled, as will be seen in the following paragraphs.

Why, one wonders, did the rhinoceros clocks seem to have been made in larger quantities than other animals? The answer can only be found in the rhinomania already described on p. 58. Other countries were amazed, astonished and delighted at the chance of just seeing so rare and monstrous a creature; but it was in Paris only that fashion decreed that this extraordinary beast should be influential in verse, prose, clothing, both male and female, and in hair-dressing. It was a short-lived object of fashion, except for its perpetuation in clocks and the painting by Oudry. After all, its stay in Paris was only five months, from early February 1749 until early summer.

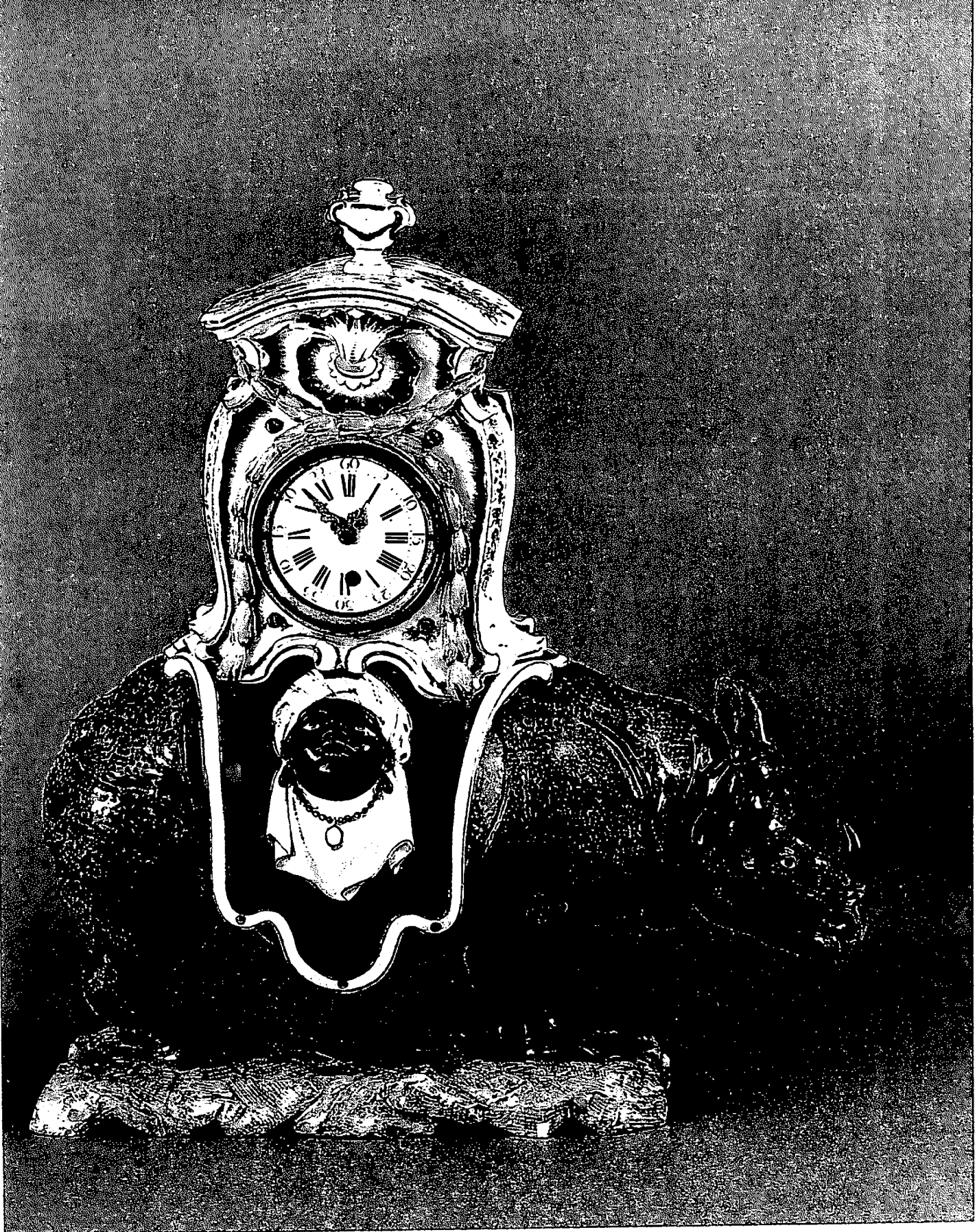
Rumours of Capt. Douwe Mout van der Meer and his prize possession must have reached Paris long before the actual arrival in Paris on 3 February 1749; and not only rumours, but also prints, medals, possibly a Meissen porcelain model and too a bronze figure. Indeed, as we shall see later, a rhinoceros clock existed as early as 1747. Louis xv animal clocks were not rare. Nearly all, and certainly the rhinoceros, were constructed on the same plan; that is, the animal on an *ormolu* base, supporting a drum-shaped movement, which in turn is finished off by a monkey or Chinaman, a putto or child, often of allegorical meaning. The massive back of the thick-skinned and pleated rhinoceros was peculiarly apt for such a purpose, as was the elephant. But more models of the former seem to have survived. Of the three distinct varieties of Louis xv *pendules au rhinocéros*, the earliest was based, if rather distantly, on the woodcut of 1515 by Dürer. It is easily recognised by having the extra horn on its withers (col. pl. xxiv, p. 129). The second model (col. pl. xxv, p. 129) is a contemporary portrait, with the head raised high, and lacking the armour-plating which we associate with



xxiv Louis xv bronze and ormolu 'Dürer' rhinoceros clock, signed St Germain, c.1749 (Sotheby's, New York)



xxv Louis xv bronze and ormolu rhinoceros clock, signed St Germain, 1749-52 (Alexander and Berendt Ltd, London)



Dürer; the jaws are wide open, as though either yawning or about to munch a tall shrub (for the animal is vegetarian). The third model is of the animal with its head level with its body, the mouth not quite closed, and always facing the spectator's left whereas the first two faced the opposite way, the spectator's right. And there are other models differing only slightly from those mentioned.

The earliest model has the dorsal horn shaped like a French loaf. The modeller has simplified the original by omitting all dermal excrescences which Dürer had so exaggerated, leaving a smooth surface except for the invariable scale pattern of the legs, looking like socks or rather stockings fastened to the tight-fitting skin. Most clocks of this model bear the well-known *poinçon* of the crowned 'C', a mark which can be taken to indicate a date between 5 March 1745 and 4 February 1749;⁵ but few, if any, bear the signature of the *fondeur*, Saint-Germain.

Since the 'Dutch' animal did not arrive in Paris until 3 February 1749, and since the second version of the rhinoceros clock with jaws wide open never has the crowned 'C' mark, it can only mean that the early Dürer version must have been in production for some time. Such clocks cannot be conceived, modelled, cast, chased and gilt within days. This inference has become a virtual certainty with the discovery by M. Augarde of an inventory taken on the death of Saint-Germain's first wife late in 1747, mentioning a rhinoceros clock as her property (see note to col. pl. xxiv). M. Augarde argues reasonably that this 'Dürer' type must be the work of Saint-Germain, although his signature does not occur on specimens noted. Other metal-workers may have produced a similar model, such as that shown in pl. 100.

The second model, of which most examples bear the signature of Saint-Germain on the back of the rocaille ormolu base, is never found with the 'C' stamp. This would suggest that it was not conceived by Saint-Germain until the living animal reached Paris on 3 February 1749: although he could have started work earlier, basing his design on the flow of prints, medals and other rhinocerotical paraphernalia with which the Dutch owner of the animal ensnared

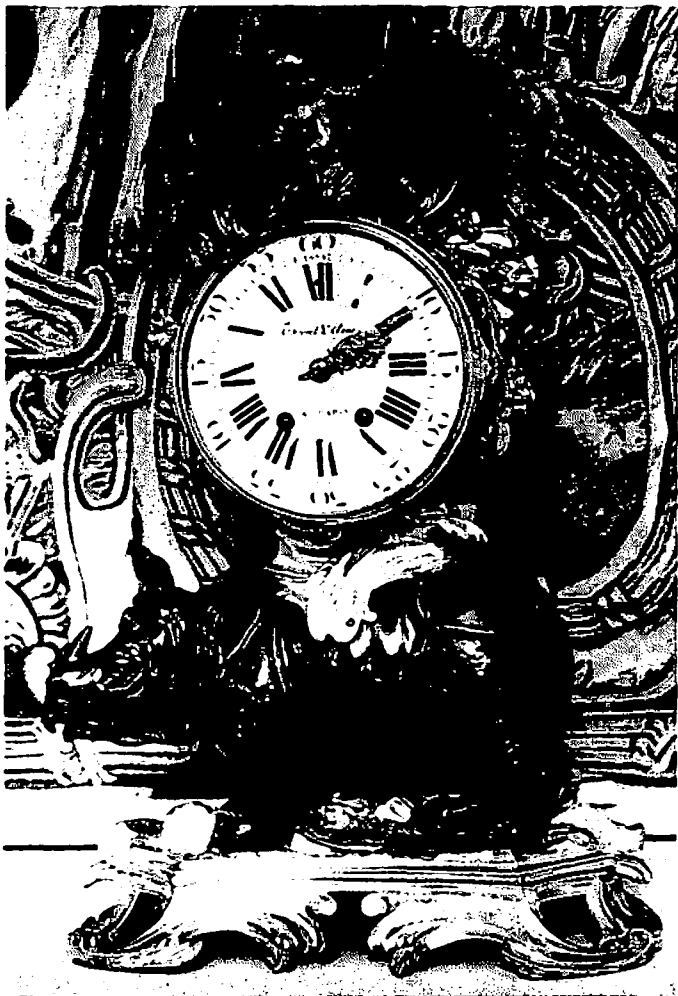
the curious onlookers. Many of these must have reached Paris before the animal itself.

More examples of this naturalistic rhinoceros clock seem to have survived than of the Dürer model of 1747. Although the particular clock illustrated as col. pl. xxv lacks a carillon musical base, yet it is chosen as showing the brilliance of the metalwork, both the dark patinated animal and the rocaillerie of the mounts, with their subtle chasing. Other examples are listed in the note to this plate. All have the same ormolu base, most have an allegory of America as a young boy in feathered head-dress holding a bow, and with a quiver of arrows. As for the centre of attraction, the rhinoceros, this is displayed with its head raised and its jaws wide open, so that it appears to be a dangerous beast; in fact, it is a herbivore, usually harmless unless attacked. The ribcage, such a feature of the Dürer image, is scarcely marked, but there are the usual rough markings on the skin. In colour the bronze animal varies from nut-brown to black lacquer, and in one case is gilt, possibly a later 'improvement'.

Where did Saint-Germain, if indeed he was the creator of this image, go for his inspiration? It has been suggested that he might have been acquainted with the prints published in Augsburg by the eminent animal artist, Johann Elias Ridinger, and, in particular, by one of the set of engravings depicting Paradise (see pl. 33), of which drawings exist from the mid-forties, and the prints themselves from about 1748 onwards. In the background is such a beast, the single horn rather smaller than in the bronze, and with a long tail sticking out almost horizontally; an awkward position, altered by the bronze's creator to a tail held close to the body. A terracotta figure that passed through the Paris salerooms in 1974, although catalogued as nineteenth century, might just as likely be a preliminary model for the use of a *fondeur* (pl. 101).

In view of the Parisian rhinomaniac, there is little doubt that both these two models were available at the same time, as was the third, in which the animal faces to the left (pl. 102). The Hermitage example here illustrated is a particularly good example of this version, based possibly from a study after life while the rhinoceros was on show at the Fair of St Germain from February 1749. It has a likeness to the first Meissen porcelain figure (see col. pl. XIX, p. 101), a hint of the Oudry portrait, but little resemblance to

xxvi Frankenthal porcelain clock-case,
c.1770-80 (Residenz, Munich)



102 Louis xv bronze and ormolu rhinoceros clock, c.1750 (The Hermitage Museum, Leningrad)

prints or posters. It is doubtful whether this third Parisian clock model, which in two examples has a half-clad Chinese boy with parasol, and in the third a fully-grown Chinaman in ormolu above the dial was also produced from the workshop of Jean-Joseph Saint-Germain, for no signed piece seems to be recorded. It looks perhaps as though another enterprising *fondeur* was taking advantage of the fashion for all things rhinocerotic. The animal itself left Paris for Lyons in May; but possibly paid a second, less publicised visit in late 1751 on its way from Vienna to London.

There is a fourth example that may be the same model, but known only from a painting, and so one can expect some artistic licence. It stands on a console

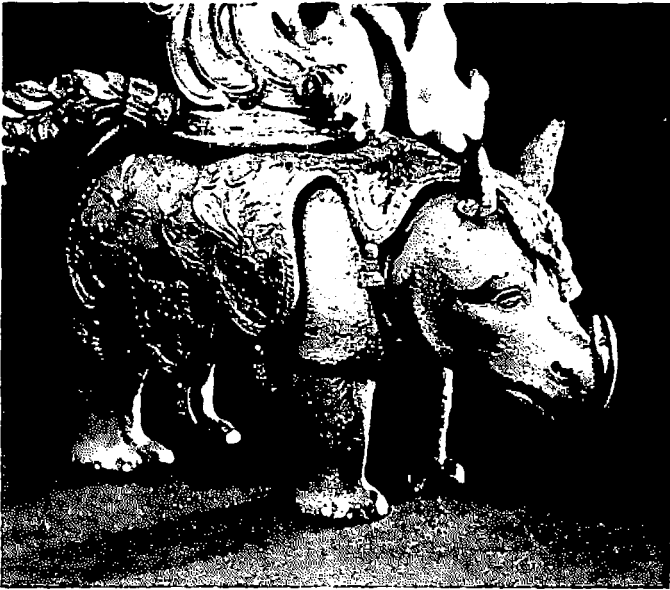
table in a portrait of Maria Luisa of Bourbon-Parma by Laurent Pécheux (1729–81), dated 1765 and now in Palazzo Pitti, Florence (pl. 103). Above the dial, instead of a Chinese boy there is a naked putto leaning on a pile of books, and holding a telescope or possibly a flute, an allegory of Sight or Music. A further change is the method of fastening the tambour to the animal by two metal bands, and the solidity of the base with applied flowers, all presumably in ormolu. Maria Luisa (or Marie Louise) of Parma is shown when betrothed to the future Charles IV of Spain; this painting is a replica with differences of the original Pécheux portrait now in the Metropolitan Museum, New York: the difference is that the latter shows an elephant clock. Both clocks doubtless were part of the court furnishings of Parma acquired by Maria Luisa's mother, Louise Elisabeth, the only married daughter of Louis xv. Her records of expenditure are preserved in the Parma archives; she was still buying Sèvres porcelain in 1769. That a rhinoceros clock was thought worthy of being included in a state portrait as late as 1765 shows how long that animal was considered to be in good taste but this does not invalidate the date when the clock was made, around 1750, as its style suggests. Incidentally, the companion elephant clock is still amongst other Parma furnishings in Palazzo Pitti, Florence.⁶

It is strange that none of the three models used by Saint-Germain and others as the main element of their clocks should have been used independently as works of sculpture. The day of the *animaliers* had not yet arrived. It almost seems that to take the rhinoceros seriously as an animal of interest in its own right would have been considered pedantic and not in keeping with the essential frivolity of Louis xv taste. Buffon's *Histoire naturelle*, of which the first volume appeared in 1749, and the writings of the Encyclopaedists (1751–65) were too serious in intent.

Included in this chapter, rather than in Chapter 7 (porcelain), is a clock supported on the back of a coloured rhinoceros of Frankenthal porcelain (col. pl. xxvi, p. 130). Its exact date is not known, but the animal alone was being made in 1777, the date of a price list in which the clock was also mentioned. However, it might well have been made to celebrate Carl Theodor's promotion from the Palatine to the Bavarian Electorate in 1777. The unusually long body recalls the white marble figure mentioned earlier in



103 Laurent Pécheux, *Portrait of Maria Luisa of Bourbon-Parma*, oil on canvas, 1765 (Palazzo Pitti, Florence)



104 Detail of a James Cox musical table clock for the Chinese market, c. 1765-70 (Palace Museum, Peking (Beijing))

Chapter 8 (p. 115). This porcelain model echoes the earlier Louis xv metal clocks already mentioned not only in the device of the rhinoceros mounted, as it were, by a clock, but also in the exotic addition of oriental masks, blackamoors rather than Chinese. Nevertheless, these features, added to the rococo elements of the howdah surmounted by a small vase, show how our rhinoceros has been adopted by the chinoiserie mode, lasting longer in S. Germany than in France, which had already yielded to a superficial marriage with the Antique.

The second eighteenth-century group of clocks using the rhinoceros as a main or subsidiary element was made with the specific intention of export to the East – to China, above all, to Russia, India and the Ottoman Empire. Most of the manufacturers were English. These fantastic mechanical and musical creations lacked not only the solidity of the Louis xv bronze and ormolu but also their unvarying good taste, as was to be expected. The best-known of these exporters, James Cox, makes exactly this point, in an introduction to *A Descriptive Catalogue of 1772*⁷:

A curious spectator may find here wherewith to satisfy himself, in considering the difference between the European and Asiatic tastes. This is ever a preliminary distinction of which it is necess-

ary not to lose sight. These pieces of work having been originally designed for the Orientalists; it is but natural that a certain conformity should have been retained to the barbaric cast of their taste and customs; a conformity which is so far from hurting the objects presented that it rather gives them a poignant and instructive variety. He must be little acquainted with the nature of things, that would judge of these pieces, which were calculated for the Indian and Chinese markets, by the austere rules of our European Arts.

There is still much to learn of the life of James Cox,⁸ one of the principal exporters of 'pieces of mechanism and jewellery' to the East. First recorded in 1751, he was at his most active from 1766 to 1772. Declared bankrupt in 1778, he lived on as a retailer rather than creator of watches, clocks and automata until his death late in 1791 or early in 1792. At the height of his career in 1772, at a time when the Chinese market was glutted with a profusion of English 'toys' and 'sing-songs',⁹ Cox held an exhibition of his larger pieces in the Great Room at Spring Gardens (near the present Admiralty Arch) in London, charging half a guinea entrance fee, and issuing *A Descriptive Catalogue*. It is in the *Descriptive Inventory of 1773*¹⁰ that we first encounter the rhinoceros as created by Cox. One of a pair is effusively listed as:

A Rhinoceros, standing on a rock of gold stone, supporting an onyx and gold cabinet . . . This is made of copper overlaid with gold; the various foldings, which, like a natural coat of mail, compose the skin of hide of this extraordinary beast, are wonderfully imitated by the artist, who executed this truly capital piece of exquisite workmanship. In the body is contained a curious chime of eight bells, playing six tunes, and standing on a large rock of the finest avanturine gold stone . . . This elegant piece is placed upon a ground of crimson velvet, enclosed within a shade of glass, so as to be preserved from air and dust.

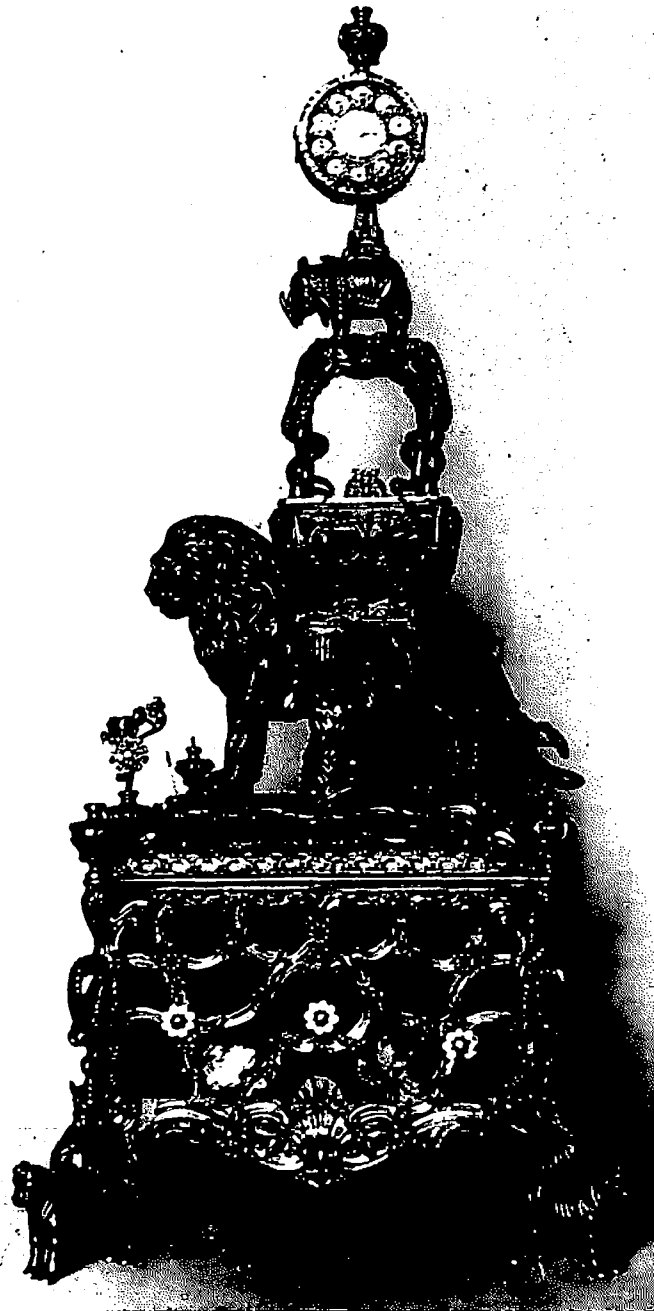
What model was used is impossible to say: the 'natural coat of mail' could apply equally to the Dürer- and 'Dutch' rhinoceros, which is reported to have died in London in 1758. This pair, size unknown, has disappeared.

But there were, and still are in Beijing (Peking), three clocks, or rather two pairs and a single, described by Simon Harcourt-Smith in 1933. All of them are earlier in date than the pair just mentioned. According to Harcourt-Smith, the earliest dates from 1765-70, and luckily is illustrated in the *Catalogue of various clocks, watches . . . in the Palace Museum and the Wu Ying Tien, Peiping*. This clock is definitely still in the Palace Museum, as can be seen from col. pl. xxvii (p. 139), generously provided by the Chinese authorities. The mirror and escritoire with enamels from the *commedia dell'arte* are self-evident; it is the rhinoceros feet (pl. 104) that interest us. Modelled as animals with tasselled saddlecloths somewhat reminiscent of the 'Madrid' rhinoceros of the 1580s, their bodies lack the usual markings, and the head is too large in proportion; but they are nevertheless more naturalistic than most other images of the period.

Of the clocks, probably still in Peking, in which the rhinoceros is the main rather than minor element, there are at the moment no photographs available. There is little doubt that Cox was eclectic in his rhinocerotic taste, for a multitiered clock in the Hermitage, with a lion as the main feature, includes too a miniature 'Dürer' animal carrying the typical Coxian watch or small clock with revolving paste dials (pl. 105).

The Cox clocks so far discussed are all earlier in date than 1773. But that he went on commissioning automata and shipping them to China there is the evidence of a single printed sheet headed 'Inventory of Goods that have already been sold at Canton, in China, on Account of the Assignees of Mr. Cox's estate', presumably to be dated about 1792. This is the last information we have of Cox and the rhinoceros: two of the items included are 'One pair of rhinoceroses [*sic*], with clocks, &c.', sold for £200 or 1,000 dollars, and 'One pair larger ditto, with ditto', naturally at a higher price of £550 or 2360 dollars.

The last clock to be considered falls into neither of the two groups, the Louis xv or the Chinese market, although it has elements of each: the solidity of the French mid-eighteenth century, and the exoticism or at least strangeness of the Coxian group. The animal itself is of a dark patina, the modelling akin to the third of the French clocks, although there are



105 James Cox, musical table clock with lion and rhinoceros, c.1770 (The Hermitage Museum, Leningrad)

many points of slight difference, such as the deeply chiselled triple lines below the horn, like cicatrices, and the eyes too close to the horn. The uneven nodules of the skin surface are partly concealed by the surprising neo-classical gilt-bronze tasselled saddle-cloth, with Pan and a nymph in low relief (a curious contrast to the sturdy pachyderm), and with laurel garlands and similar motifs, all supporting in a cup-shaped container a celestial globe containing a clock with moving hour-band. The special feature is the inscription WEEKS'S MUSEUM, on the hour



106 Detail of an English bronze and gilt-metal rhinoceros mantel clock from Weeks's Museum, c.1800 (Private collection, New York)

band (pl. 106). It is this that links this clock with James Cox. For the jeweller Thomas Weeks (c.1743–1834)¹¹ established a Mechanical Museum at Tichborne Street, off the London Haymarket, about 1797, just a quarter of a century after James Cox's exhibition at Spring Gardens. Weeks's Museum included some of Cox's unsold creations; it was still a going concern in 1819, when Weeks commented to the American Minister in London, Richard Rush, that

'one of these days England will oblige China to receive her wares, by making her feel the strong arm of her power'. Power politics and economics have not changed since.

This clock was eventually acquired by a member of the Codrington Family of Dodington House. It may well be connected with the third London rhinoceros of 1790–3 (see Chapter 5), and so a portrait in bronze of the same animal that Stubbs painted.