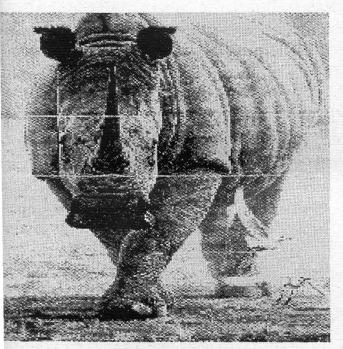
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Volume 14, no.3-4, 2000



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his scanned picture does not do the print astice! Contact John for more information:

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William Daniell's depiction of the rhinoceros in India

L.C. Rookmaaker Archives of Natural History (1999) 26 (2):205-210

The British artists Thomas Daniell (1749-1840) and his nephew William Daniell (1769-1837) have become well known for their aquatints of scenery and buildings made in different parts of the world at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century They worked in the Indian subcontinent between 1785 and 1794. Everywhere they were busy with pencil and brush, sketching the landscapes and monuments encountered on the way. The rhinoceros drawn by the Daniells serves as an example of the gift of observation of these artists. they saw the animal during their journey along the Ganges.

The Daniells left Calcutta on September 3, 1788, traveling by boat by the River Hooghly and the River Ganges. They visited places like Patna, Benares, Lucknow, Agra, Delhi, before they reached the towns of Hardwar and Srinagar in Uttar Pradesh. They returned to Calcutta in November, 1791. Today one would not expect to see a rhinoceros anywhere along this route, at least not in the wild, as the Indian rhinoceros is now confined to localities in northeastern India (Assam and West Bengal) and in the southern part of Nepal. Early records of rhinoceroses seen in the regions north and immediately south of the Ganges are quite rare.

Figure 1 - May be the actual drawing made on the spot or a lter copy of it. Clearly a male Indian rhino.

After leaving Calcutta, the Daniells reached the River Ganges on October 8, 1788. When they saw the jungle, they would have remembered stories heard in Calcutta and expected to see elephants, tigers and rhinoceroses. From the town of Rajmahal they went to see the Moti Jharma waterfall, where William discovered the footprint of a rhinoceros.

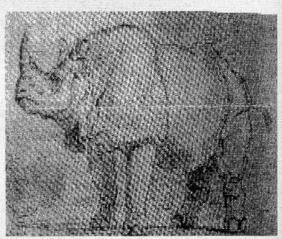


Figure 2 - Shows the animal in a slightly different position with some indications of a landscape. It is signed 'W. Daniel' in the lower left-hand corner. It is quite a good depiction of this powerful animal with along horn.

On April 20, 1789, they were wandering in the hills at 'Coaduwar Gaut, Rohilcunt', now spelled Kotdwara, when suddenly they saw a rhinoceros. Long after their return to England, William Daniell published a series of seven volumes entitled The Oriental Annual: or Scenes in India (1834-1840) with engravings originating from the Daniells' journeys in India, and text written by Rev. Hobart Caunter. In the second volume dated 1835, the encounter with the "Kotdwara Rhinoceros' is vividly remembered:

The elephant is found in the lower regions of the mountains, and so is the rhinoceros, though less frequently. Of the latter animal we were fortunate enough to obtain a view, which is by no means a usual thing, as it is not gregarious like the elephant, and therefore much more rarely met with. We had turned the angle of a hill that abutted upon a narrow stream, when, on the