

THE PAPAL PACHYDERMS

SILVIO A. BEDINI*

Keeper of The Rare Books, Smithsonian Institution

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For many decades—ever since the great Schism ended in the mid-fifteenth century—it was customary for European sovereigns and ruling princes to send to Rome an ambassador extraordinary upon the election of each new pope. The purpose of these “missions of obedience,” as they were called, was to formally recognize the new pontiff as the Vicar of Christ and the successor to Saint Peter. Even more, however, they were an expression of pride in the achievement of the state by the grace of God, personified in the person of the sovereign sending the mission.

Furthermore, the missions provided opportunities for unlimited ostentation. The number and rank of the participants, and the nature and costliness of the gifts they brought, reflected the importance and achievements of the sovereign, paraded on display before the foreign ambassadors as well as the papal court. The missions were received by the pope with appropriate pomp and ceremony, attended by the full consistory of cardinals, foreign ambassadors, and the Roman nobility.¹

The unexpected death of Pope Julius II in February, 1513, brought a welcome end to his austere and militant reign, and Rome looked to a major change with his successor. The newly elected pope was Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici, who took the name of Leo X. Only thirty-seven years of age, he was a man of considerable erudition and as expected, he brought great changes. The news of the selection of a new pope stirred the world of arts and letters throughout Italy, and musicians, artists, dramatists, poets and poetasters of every rank immediately flocked to Rome to seek papal patronage. The court soon rang out with poetical outpourings and the sounds of music, and became the center of frantic creative activity. The city of Rome, which had remained a small community for centuries, was suddenly transformed into a virtually teeming metropolis, with not enough housing to accommodate

the newcomers who kept streaming into the city from Florence and elsewhere.²

Pope Julius II had initiated some major architectural and art projects at the Vatican, and already at work in the Apostolic Palace were Michelangelo, Bramante, and his young protégé, Raphael of Urbino. Following Bramante's death soon after, Raphael was placed in charge as master of the works of Saint Peter, and he brought together a brilliant galaxy of assistants to work with him. Notable among them were Giulio Romano, Giovanni da Udine, Giovanni Barili, Giacomino Penni, and Raffaele del Colle. Meanwhile, the aging Leonardo da Vinci had traveled from Florence seeking Pope Leo's patronage under the auspices of the pope's brother, Giuliano, and had been accommodated in the Belvedere Palace in the Vatican gardens. There he patiently awaited papal commissions for the next several years, but waited in vain, for Raphael had become the pope's favorite.³

The times were exploding with new endeavors and achievements in almost every dimension of man's creativity. Overseas the ships of the kings of Portugal and of Castile and Aragon were expanding the boundaries of the known world, and their dauntless navigators and military commanders discovered and conquered new lands in the names of their sovereigns and of Christendom. Their ships returned home laden with cargoes of exciting new commodities, spices, gold and gems, as well as exotic flora and fauna from far-off places such as had never been known before. All of Europe shared a mutual curiosity about the distant lands and their peoples, and awaited yet other riches. The Holy See's spirit of ecclesiastical domination combined with the ambitious lust of these nations to command acknowledged jurisdiction over the New World as it continued to exercise over the Old.

At the time of the election of Pope Leo X, Portugal

* 4303 47th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20016.

¹ Le Marquis Patric Mac Swiney de Mashanaglass, *Le Portugal et le Saint-Siège. III. Les roses d'or envoyées par les Papes aux Rois de Portugal au XVI^e siècle* (Paris: Alphonse Picard et fils, Editeurs, 1904), pp. 24–25; Francis M. Rogers, *The Obedience of a King of Portugal. Translated, With a Commentary, by Francis M. Rogers* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1958), pp. 3–6, 105–106.

² William Roscoe, *The Life and Pontificate of Leo the Tenth. Sixth edition, revised by his son, Thomas Roscoe* (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1853) 1: pp. 295–306; Baron Ludwig von Pastor, *The History of the Popes From the Close of the Middle Ages*. Edited by Ralph Francis Kerr (London: B. Herder, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd., 1908) 7: pp. 35–59.

³ Mario Cermenati, “Leonardo a Roma nel Periodo Leoniniano,” *Nuova Antologia*, Anno 54, fasc. 1136, 16 maggio 1919, pp. 105–123; Mario Cermenati, “Leonardo a Roma,” *Nuova Antologia*, Seste serie 202 Luglio-Agosto 1919: pp. 308–331.

had achieved control of the world trade in spices, and established a seaborne empire in India. King Emanuel I now sought to obtain concessions from the Holy See to confirm his conquests, and the election of a new pope provided exactly the opportunity he needed. This was to be his first announcement to the world of Portugal's successes overseas, and he planned to accomplish it by sending to Rome the richest and most dazzling mission that would reflect the Portuguese achievements in every dimension.⁴

The Portuguese king selected the gifts for Rome with considerable care, each designed to appeal to the pope's known interests. Leo's love of gems and jewelry led King Emanuel to select papal vestments, a mitre and altar frontal woven of cloth of gold and embroidered with countless pearls, uncut rubies, and other gems. To these he added a Chinese manuscript and a golden chalice of the finest workmanship.

Noting that the new pope maintained a menagerie at the Vatican, King Emanuel reviewed his own extensive collection of rare beasts and birds from the newfound lands in Asia to include with his other gifts. He selected parakeets, Indian fowl and Indian dogs, a cheetah trained for the hunt and a Persian horse he had received from the king of Hormuz, and finally a young white elephant trained to perform which he had recently purchased from India. He included also the beast's Indian trainer and Saracen custodian.

The personnel of the mission were next selected. Tristão da Cunha, the famous navigator, and Diogo Pacheco, the distinguished orator and jurisconsult, were to be the ambassadors extraordinary. They would be accompanied by a number of Portuguese noblemen, in an entourage totaling seventy men and forty-three beasts, including the horses and mules required for the cavalcade.⁵

The pope had established the date for the mission's entry into Rome to be the first Sunday of Lent, March 12. Late in January the mission was assembled and embarked at Lisbon, setting sail for Port of Hercules, a tiny harbor off Orbitello on the Italian coast, whence it would proceed on foot to Rome.

At each port of call along the route, word of the unusual cargo preceded the ship's arrival, and great



FIG. 1. Portrait of Pope Leo X, shown with his cousins, Cardinal Luigi de' Rossi and Cardinal Giulio de' Medici. Painting in oils by Raphael. Courtesy Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence.

flocks of curiosity seekers crowded the harbors for a glimpse of the foreigners and particularly of the strange large animal called an elephant. At Alicante, Ibiza, and Palma, the countryside was virtually depopulated as the people left their work and swarmed to the waterside to see the approaching mission, surrounded the ship at each port of call with small boats and tried to clamber aboard.

The ship reached Port of Hercules at last, and after some difficulties in disembarking the elephant, the entourage began the seventy-mile journey on foot to Rome. On land they encountered even greater difficulties from the inquisitive public than they had experienced at sea. Word spread like wildfire through the small towns and tiny hamlets of the countryside. Nobles rode in on horseback from the interior, and peasants left their fields, all anxious to see the foreigners in their strange clothes and the elephant. Eager spectators packed the roads along the way, and a large caravan had formed which insisted on following them every step of the route. It was difficult for the travelers to make any progress, and the experience proved to be vexatious and irritating to the tired voyagers and particularly to the harassed elephant.

An even greater problem developed. The elephant was unaccustomed to the hard surface of the ancient

⁴ Donald F. Lach, *Asia In the Making of Europe. Volume I. The Century of Discovery* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), Book I, pp. 115-118; Boise Penrose, *Travel and Discovery in the Renaissance 1420-1620* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967), pp. 62-63.

⁵ Le comte Salvatore de Ciutiis, *Une Ambassade Portugaise à Rome au XVI^e siècle. Mémoire lu au IV^e Congrès Scientifique International des Catholiques à Fribourg, 1897* (Naples: Est. Tip. Michele d'Auria, 1899), pp. 11-15; [Damião de Góis], *Chronica do Serenissimo Senhor Rei D. Manoel Escrita por Damião de Góis, e novamente dada á luz, e offercida ao Illustrissimo Senhor D. Rodrigo Antonio de Noronha, e Menezes. . .* (Lisboa: Na Officina de Miguel Manescal da Costa, 1749), parte III, pp. 73^v-74; Achille Pellizzari, *Portogallo e Italia del secolo XVI. Studi e ricerche storiche e letterarie* (Napoli: Società Editrice F. Perrella E. C., 1914), pp. 118-124.



FIG. 2. Pen and ink drawing of the elephant Hanno shown with its mahout on its back and the Saracen custodian holding its trunk, with notations of the elephant's measurements. Attributed to Raphael, ca. 1514-1516. Courtesy the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Preussischer Kulturbesitz Kupferstichkabinett.

dusty Roman road, and its feet soon became so worn to the quick and sore that it was unable to proceed except with the greatest difficulty. Its custodians used every means possible to ease the condition, and were forced to make frequent stops to enable the beast to rest.

As the mission finally approached the outskirts of Rome a few days in advance of schedule, it sought refuge in a cardinal's villa outside the city walls. There it would be protected from the mobs of followers that had given the travelers no peace along the way. But little did they foresee the degree of the crowd's curiosity and determination. After the mission had retired to the security of the villa behind its great enclosure, the mob became rabid when it was no longer permitted to see the elephant. They brought tools with which they broke holes through the walls, and with their trampling devastated the cardinal's vineyards and orchards, until finally the entourage made its escape to the pope's cannon factory a short distance away.⁶

On the morning of March 12 the travelers made their final preparations for their formal entry into the Eternal City. The Portuguese noblemen and their attendants donned their silk and velvet finery, the horses and mules were groomed and decorated with elaborate

saddle cloths and fine harness, and the cages of the birds and animals cleaned and made ready. The elephant was scrubbed to remove the dust of the journey, and covered with a rich crimson caparison bearing the royal arms of Portugal embroidered in gold on both sides. A great tower-like structure made of silver which contained the vestments and other precious gifts for the pope was then placed upon the animal's back. The elephant was led by its Saracen custodian and its Indian trainer was seated astride its neck.

By the time that the mission was in readiness, a large group of distinguished hosts from the city had assembled, including senators and other officials of Rome, noblemen, foreign ambassadors and cardinals, who came to offer greetings. Lengthy oratorical exchanges followed, and finally the time came for the cavalcade to move. The papal master of ceremonies arranged the units in proper order according to traditional protocol, and at two o'clock in the afternoon, the procession began at last.

Just as the first units entered through the ruined gate of the Porta del Popolo in the ancient Aurelian wall, as custom decreed, a furious thunderstorm suddenly arose and raged about them. Drenched and confused, the marchers had nowhere to turn, but were forced to continue. No sooner had they passed into the Piazza del Popolo, however, than the storm abated as abruptly as it had begun. The sun emerged with all its earlier brilliance, and the day remained calm and bright thereafter.

The procession slowly wended its way through the streets of Rome towards Vatican hill. The excited crowds pressed along both sides of the way along the route of march and climbed the rooftops for a better view of the foreigners with their rich costumes. The main attraction of the magnificent train, of course, was the elephant, the first to be seen in Rome since the days of the Roman empire, and as it approached the emotion of the bystanders knew no bounds.

As the cavalcade was first sighted from the Vatican, the pope and some of the cardinals ran along the secret passage of the Corridore from the apostolic palace to the Borgia tower in front of Castel Sant' Angelo to obtain a better view. The Castel's papal artillery boomed out at intervals, and the music of the marching fifers and drummers filled the air, and mingled with the raucous sounds of the mob. The pope's excitement as he watched the colorful cavalcade approaching grew until he could hardly contain himself when he obtained his first glimpse of the elephant bedecked in its finery.

Just as the large beast arrived before the Borgia tower, it stopped, genuflected three times, and trumpeted at the pontiff. It then paused to fill its trunk from a water trough nearby, and gently sprayed the pontiff and his companions before proceeding on its way. The pope's delight was boundless, and he behaved like a small boy, jumping about and calling out. The

⁶ Luís de Matos, "Natura intelletto e costumi dell' Elefante," *Boletim Internacional de Bibliografia Luso-Brasileira* 1 1960: pp. 44-55; Joaquim Pedro de Oliveira Martins, *Obras Completas de Oliveira Martins. História de Portugal*. Edited by Dr. J. Franco Machado (Lisboa: Guimarães & Ca., Editores, 1951), Tomo II, pp. 9-15, 27.

procession continued past the Castel and made its way back into the city once more, to the Campo dei Fiori, where quarters had been provided for the mission.⁷

Eight days later the Portuguese ambassadors extraordinary were formally received by the pope with the cardinals and foreign ambassadors in attendance. Diogo Pacheco presented an impassioned oration in Latin extolling the virtues of his king and relating the achievements of the Portuguese overseas, and skillfully specified the concessions from the Holy See which his king desired. To everyone's surprise, the pope responded readily in Latin, expressing his pleasure with the Portuguese endeavors and confirming their importance to Christendom.

The following day the king's gifts were displayed in the Belvedere courtyard, where the pope and the consistory of cardinals examined them. The mission was eminently successful, for not only were the king's requests granted in a series of papal bulls, but he was also honored first with the Golden Rose and then with the *Gladium et pileus*, the highest honors awarded by the Holy See.⁸

Meanwhile, the elephant became the pope's personal pet and that of the Roman populace. A shelter was quickly erected for it near the apostolic palace, where the pope could visit it often. He never ceased to be amused by its antics and its obvious intelligence. Wishing to share his pleasure with the people, he decreed that the public could visit it every Sunday.

⁷ Florence, Archivio di Stato di Firenze, *Fondo Mediceo Avanti Principato*, filza 107, Letters from Balthasare Turini de Pescia to Lorenzo de' Medici, June 8, 1514 and June 10, 1514; E. Rodocanachi, *Histoire de Rome. Le pontificat de Leon X (1513-1521)* (Paris: Librairie Hachette et Cie, 1931), p. 70; Donald F. Lach, *Asia in the Making of Europe. Volume I. A Century of Discovery. Book II* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), pp. 532-533; Ioannis Pierii Valeriani, *Hieroglyphica, sive de Sacris Aegyptiorum altissimum gentium literis, Commentarium Libri LVIII cum duobus alijs ab eruditissimo viro annexis* (Basiliae: Palma Ising, 1556), Liber II, Introduction, pp. 20-21.

⁸ Francesco Cancellieri, *Descrizione storico-critica delle Sale Regie e delle Cappelle Paoline e Sistina del Vaticano e del Quirinale. Parte II. Descrizione delle Cappelle Pontificie e Cardinalizie nelle Feste di tutto l'Anno* (Roma: Presso Luigi Perego Salvioni, 1790), pp. 247-254; Vatican City, Archivio Segreto Vaticano, Paridi de Grassis, *Diarorum*, Tome VII, fols. 107, 176, 182; *Archivio dei Maestri dei Ceremoni pontificali*, Tome CCLXXIII, fol. 82; Florence, Archivio di Stato di Firenze, *Fondo Mediceo Avanti Principato*, filza 107, Letter from Balthasare Turini de Pescia to Lorenzo de' Medici, March 20, 1514; Marquis Patric Mac Swiney de Mashanaglass, *Le Portugal et le Saint-Siège. III. Les Roses d'or envoyées par les Papes aux Rois de Portugal au XVI^e siècle* (Paris: Alphonse Picard et fils, Éditeurs, 1904), pp. 116, 116-119; Eugene Muntz, "Les épées d'honneur distribuées par les Papes pendant les XIV^e, XV^e, et XVI^e siècles," *Revue d'Art Chrétien*, New series, 7, No. 4, 1889: pp. 408-411; Vatican City, Archivio Segreto Vaticano, *Introitus et Exitus Camera Apostolica, a mense Aprilis 1514 per totum Martium 1515*, fol. 178; Marquis Patric Mac Swiney de Mashanaglass, *Le Portugal et le Saint-Siège. I. Les épées d'honneur envoyées par les Papes aux Rois de Portugal au XVI^e siècle. Mémoire lu au IV^e Congrès Scientifique International des Catholiques à Fribourg*, 1897 (Paris: Alphonse Picard et fils, Éditeurs, 1898), pp. 34-37.

The delighted Romans promptly named the great beast "Annone." Historians have anglicized the name to "Hanno" on the assumption that it had been named for the great Carthaginian navigator or possibly for the Roman lion tamer mentioned by Pliny. It is more likely, however, that when the people asked the Indian trainer what he called the animal, he replied "ana," the Malayalam word meaning "elephant," then currently in use in India. Because of the elephant's size, the people probably added the cumulative and called it "Annone."⁹

For the next several years Hanno lived happily at the Vatican, its maintenance superintended by none other than the pope's privy chamberlain and intimate, Giovanni Battista Branconio. The elephant frequently performed for the pope and for the people, dancing to the sound of music and accomplishing a repertory of tricks and special acts it had been taught. The pope devised occasions on which the beast could be publicly displayed on processions through the city, the most memorable of which was the mock crowning of Giacomo Baraballo, Abbot of Gaeta.

⁹ Pasquale Adinolfi, *La Portica di S. Pietro ossia Borgo nell' Età di Mezzo* (Roma: Stab. Tip. di Marco, Lorenzo Aureli e C., 1859), pp. 50-51; Umberto Gnoli, *Topografia e Toponomastica di Roma Medievale e Moderna* (Roma: Staderini Editore, 1939), pp. 99-100; Rodolphus Lanciani, "Notas Topographicas de Burgo Sancti Petri Saeculo XVI ex Archivis Capitolino et Urbano," *Memorie della Pontificia Accademia Romana di Archeologia, Serie 3, 1 parte 1, Miscellanea Giovanni Battista de Rossi (Parte Prima)* (Roma: Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana, 1923), pp. 239, 242; Donald F. Lach, *Asia in the Making of Europe. Volume II. A Century of Wonder. Book I: The Visual Arts* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), p. 138, fn. 78.

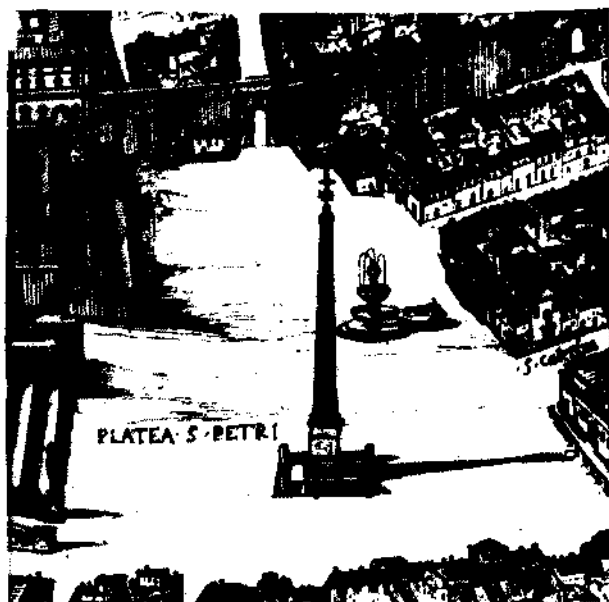


FIG. 3. The location of Hanno's shelter, built against the wall of the Corridore at the junction of the Borgo Sant' Angelo and the Piazza of Saint Peter. From a sixteenth-century plan of Rome. Courtesy the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana.



FIG. 4. Four sketches of Hanno drawn from life in a drawing originally attributed to Raphael but now credited to Giulio Romano. Executed in red crayon on grey paper. Courtesy the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford University.



FIG. 5. Hanno bearing two *putti* on its back, one of them holding a torch. Pencil sketch by Giulio Romano, ca. 1514-1516. Formerly in the Ellesmere Collection, now privately owned.



FIG. 6. Stucco bas-relief by Giovanni da Udine depicting Hanno with its mahout and guide, situated at eye level in the Loggie of Raphael in the Vatican. Courtesy the Monumenti, Musei e Gallerie Pontificie, the Vatican.

An indifferent versifier and hanger-on at the papal court, Baraballo had convinced himself that he was a modern day Petrarch, and failed to recognize the mocking and ridicule which others at the court heaped upon him. When it was suggested in jest that he should be crowned arch-poet on the Capitoline hill, as Petrarch had been before him, Baraballo assumed that his merits had been recognized at last. He almost burst with pride at the prospect, to the amusement of the pope and the papal court. Always seeking new forms of entertainment, the pope selected the feast day of Saints Cosmo and Damian for the event, and arrangements were made for that day befitting the occasion.

Following a great feast in the apostolic palace, a comedy was performed, and the poets at the court read compositions extolling (but in fact ridiculing) the unwitting Baraballo, to his great pleasure. They robed him in a purple and green *toga palmata*, and then hoisted the rotund grey-haired abbot onto a gilt throne placed on Hanno's back. Holding a laurel branch in his hand like a wand, Baraballo worriedly attempted to maintain his balance on his precarious perch, which swayed alarmingly as the elephant was led in a great cavalcade of mounted nobility and cardinals towards the Campidoglio. The pope's artillery at the Castel cannonaded, the fifers and drummers shrilled and thumped, and the people of Rome, always ready for a holiday, swarmed around the mounted riders and added to the discordant din.

Hanno was greatly distressed by the noise and the confusion around him, and became increasingly nervous. By the time that it reached the bridge of Sant' Angelo, it panicked. Tossing throne and portly burden to the edge of the Tiber, the great beast cantered away, in its fright refusing its trainer's commands. The arch-poet, covered with dust and mud, scrambled up the riverbank and through the crowd, and was not seen in Rome again. The pope derived great pleasure from the event, and had it commemorated in an intarsia panel executed by Giovanni Barili installed in a door in the Raphael Apartments.¹⁰

Hanno was featured also in the great parade that was sent out of the city gates to meet the pope's brother, Giuliano de' Medici, upon his arrival in Rome after his marriage in France. This time Hanno was

equipped with a battle turret containing a number of the pope's guards. Something happened to frighten the horses in the cavalcade causing great confusion, and the elephant stampeded, casting the turret and the guards tumbling to the ground, with some injuries. These were isolated incidents in what was otherwise a happy and pacific existence for Hanno, loved by all of Rome.¹¹

It was at about this time that the second papal pachyderm enters the scene. In 1515 Afonso de Albuquerque, the Portuguese military commander of India, had acquired a large rhinoceros as a gift from Guzerat, and sent it to Lisbon as a gift for King Emanuel to be added to his menagerie. It was the first rhinoceros to come to Europe since the time of the Roman emperors, and the king was delighted with the new addition to his zoological park at Ribeira. He often had the ponderous beast led along the streets in front of his mounted entourage for the amusement of the people. Then, determined to test the ancient claims of the traditional enmity between the rhinoceros and the elephant, he pitted his new acquisition against a young and inexperienced elephant from his menagerie. In a festive gala event held on the palace grounds, the elephant was terrorized and ran away, and the rhinoceros won the contest by default. A sketch by an unknown Portuguese artist was sent to Nuremberg, from which Albrecht Dürer produced his famous woodcut, without ever having actually seen the beast itself.¹²

Remembering the success achieved by the young elephant he had sent to Rome, King Emanuel decided to send the rhinoceros to the pope with other gifts of silver. Preparations were made for the journey and in December, 1515, a Portuguese ship bearing the rhinoceros and the other gifts sailed from Lisbon bound for Italy. Accommodating the large beast on shipboard was no small feat, and it was shackled to the deck during the voyage.

¹¹ [Marino Sanuto], *Diarii di Marino Sanuto* (Venezia: A spesa degli editori, 1887) 20: pp. 99-100; A. E. Popham, "Elephantographia," *Life and Letters*, 5, No. 27, August 1930, p. 184; E. Rodocanachi, *Le premier Renaissance, Rome au temps de Jules II et de Léon X* (Paris: Librairie Hachette et Cie, 1909), pp. 96-97.

¹² A. Fontoura da Costa, *Les déambulations du Rhinocéros de Modofar, roi de Cambay de 1514 à 1516* (Lisboa: Division de Publication et Bibliothèque Agência Geral das Colonias, 1937), pp. 19-26; Gomes de Brito, "Os pachidermes do Estado d'EL-Rei D. Manoel," *Revista de Educação e Ensino* 9, 1894: pp. 79-86; Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, *Cod. Stroziano 20, CL-XIII 80*, "Lettera scripta da Valentino Maravia germano a li mercanti di Nuremberg"; Angelo de Gubernatis, *Storia dei Viaggiatori Italiani nelle Indie Orientali* (Livorno: Coi Tipi di Franc. Vigo, Editore, 1875), pp. 289-292; Alfred Fowler, ed., *The Romance of Fine Prints* (Kansas City, Mo.: The Print Society, 1938), "The Story of Dürer's Ganda," by Campbell Dodgson, pp. 45-46; Luis de Matos, "Forma e natura e costumi del Rinoceronte," *Boletim Internacional de Bibliografia Luso-Brasileira* 7, No. 3, Julho-Setembro 1960, pp. 387-398.

¹⁰ Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, *Cod. Vat. 172, 5356*; L. Onori, "L'Elefante Annone e il Poeta Baraballo," *La Letteratura*, Anno X, 1910, pp. 1143-1146; G. A. Cesareo, "Pasquino e la Satira sotto Leone X. I due Archipoeti," *La Nuova Rassegna*, Anno II, 1894, pp. 133-138, 190-194; Fabio Colonna di Stigliano, "L'Elefante di Leone X e il Poeta Baraballo," *Roma, Rivista di Studie di Vita Romana*, Anno I, No. 5, Maggio 1923, pp. 169-175; Johann D. Passavant, *Raffaello d'Urbino e il padre Gio. Santi. Translated into Italian by G. Guasti* (Firenze: Successori Le Monnier, 1882-1889) I: pp. 167-168; [Giorgio Vasari], *Le Vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori, ed architettori scritte da Giorgio Vasari pittore Aretino con nuove annotazione e commenti di Gaetano Milanesi* (Firenze: G. C. Sansoni, 1906) 4: p. 363; 5: p. 524; 6: pp. 554-556.



FIG. 7. Water color sketch of Baraballo mounted on his throne on Hanno's back, by an unidentified artist of the early sixteenth century. The legend in Italian may be translated, "This was executed in intarsia on a door of the hall near that of Constantine in the Vatican palace, of which mention is made in Giovin's *Elogia*." From fol. 32' of *Cod. Barb. lat. 4410*, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana.



FIG. 8. Pope Leo X being carried in procession on his *sedia gestatoria* as he blesses the people with one hand and holds a rose in the other. Surrounded by mounted cardinals and courtiers, musicians and the Swiss Guard, the pope is preceded by Hanno. Maiolica dish made in the Cafeggiolo factory in about 1516. Courtesy the Victoria and Albert Museum.

All went well until the ship was approaching the coast of Genoa. Then a sudden sea storm arose which swamped the ship, and it sank, with all hands aboard. Days later the carcass of the rhinoceros was washed ashore. It was recovered, mounted, and sent on to Rome again as if nothing had happened.¹³

The arrival of the mounted rhinoceros in the Eternal City in February, 1516, was reported by contemporary writers, but it was not mentioned again thereafter. The pope was out of Rome at the time, and returned several weeks later from an extended visit to Bologna and Florence. Soon thereafter he suffered a severe attack

¹³ [Paolo Giovio], *Dialogo dell'imprese militari et amorose*; de Monsignor Giovio vescovo di Nocera, *con un ragionamento di Messer Lodovico Domenichi, nel medesimo soggetto* (Vinegia: Appreso

Gabriel Giolito de' Ferrari, 1557), p. 55; Góis, *op. cit.*, Parte IV, capit. 18: p. 491; Brito, *op. cit.*, pp. 85-86; Fontoura da Costa, *op. cit.*, pp. 54-55.

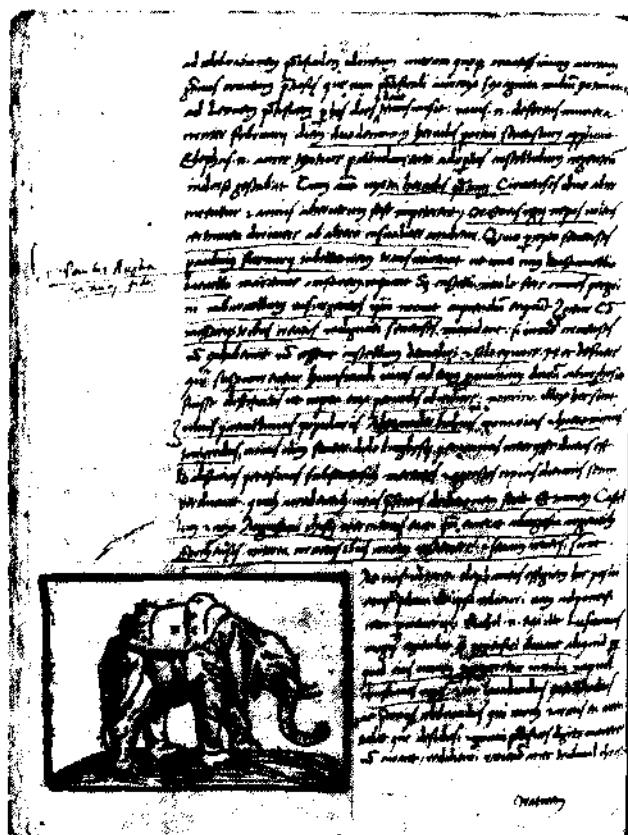


FIG. 9. Woodcut of Hanno by an unknown artist in *Ms. Chigiana G. II-37*. Courtesy the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana.

of tertiary fever and for a time was extremely ill, during which he was informed of the death in Florence of his favorite brother, Giuliano.¹⁴

To compound the pontiff's problems and depression further, it was just at this time that there arrived in Rome an apostate monk named Fra Bonaventura, said by some to have been from Subiaco. He came amidst a horde of twenty thousand followers, preaching doom and gloom. He proclaimed himself the Vicar of Christ, and excommunicated the pope and all the cardinals, urging the people to seek salvation by putting aside the Roman Church. He then prophesied the imminent death of the ailing pope, of five named cardinals, and for good measure, of the elephant Hanno. He created such consternation in the city that the pope had no recourse but to order the monk incarcerated in Castel Sant' Angelo. Although he was tortured on the rack, Fra Bonaventura refused to reveal the source of his prophecies.¹⁵

The five cardinals named by the heretic monk fell

¹⁴ Vatican City, Archivio Segreto Vaticano, Paridi de Grassis, *Diarorum* 4: fols. 139, 154; Rodocanachi, *La première Renaissance*, op. cit., p. 101, fn. 8; Sanuto, op. cit. 22: pp. 412, 443–444, 30: p. 466.

¹⁵ Baron Ludwig von Pastor, *The History of the Popes From the Close of the Middle Ages*. Translated by Frederick Ignatius An-

ill, and one by one they eventually died. In the first week of June, Hanno became listless and increasingly ill. The pope was greatly alarmed and he summoned his personal surgeon and the court physicians to attend the beast. They examined its blood and its urine, and pronounced that it was suffering from *angina*, or suffocation. Veterinary medicine had not yet been born, and there was little they knew to do to cure the beast or assuage its suffering. In desperation they resorted to the standard remedy. They concocted a powerful purgative reportedly containing five hundred grams of gold which they forced Hanno to ingest. Possibly because of it, the afflicted elephant died.

The pope, himself unwell, was grief-stricken by the loss of his pet. He personally composed a poetic epitaph which he had rendered into Latin hexameter by the court poet, Filippo Beroaldo. This was inscribed on a tablet attached to the wall at the main entrance to the Vatican.

The pope then ordered Raphael to execute a painting of the elephant in its full size and natural color on the same wall, so that the people of Rome, who had been deprived of the playful animal, would nonetheless have a fitting memorial with which to remember it. Raphael undertook the project, undoubtedly aided by one or more of his assistants, and the mural and epitaph remained on the entrance wall for almost a century.¹⁶

During the next few years the brilliant court of Leo X suffered troubled times, with the beginnings of the Reformation in Germany and political developments elsewhere in Europe. Raphael died at an early age in 1519 and in the following year Pope Leo X died after a brief illness.

trobus (St. Louis: B. Herder & Co., 1923) 5: pp. 224–225; Pastor, Kerr translation, op. cit. 8: pp. 449–450; Constantin Höfler, "Analecten zur Geschichte Deutschlands und Italiens. II. Italienischen Zustände gegen des 15. und Anfangs des 16. Jahrhunderts," *Abhandlungen der III Klasse der k. Bayrischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, Band IV, 1845, Abt. 3, pp. 36–37, 56–57; Sanuto, op. cit. 18: p. 139.

¹⁶ Munich, Universitat-Bibliothek, *Biblioteca Frisingensis* [Stephan Rosin], "Exemplum literarum Domini Stephanus Rosin Caesaris Majestatis apud S. Sedem Sollicitatoris ad Reverendum principem D. Carolum Gurcensem, 12 mai 1516"; Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, *Cod. Ottob. lat. 2602*, Parte II, fol. 262, "Diario di Branca Tedallini; *Cod. Barb. lat. 3552*, fol. 27, *Diario*, entry for "Lunedì, XVI giugno 1516"; A. von Reumont, *Geschichte der Stadt Rom* (Berlin: Verlag der Königlichen Geheimdoer-Hofbuch Druckerei R. V. Decker, 1867–1870), Band III, pp. 2, 81, 147, 857; Sanuto, op. cit. 22: p. 316; Pastor, Kerr translation, op. cit. 7: p. 76; Joseph A. Crowe and Giovanni B. Cavalcaselle, *Raphael: His Life and Works, With a Particular Reference to Recently Discovered Records and an Exhaustive Study of Extant Drawings and Pictures* (London: J. Murray, 1882–1885), pp. 355–357; Winner, op. cit., pp. 71–109; Francesco Cancellieri, *Storia de' Solenni Possessi de' Sommi Pontefici detti Anticamente Processi o Processioni dopo la loro Coronazione della Basilica Vaticana alla Lateranense* (Roma: Presso Luigi Lazzarini, 1802), p. 62, n. 1; Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, *Cod. Ottob. lat. 2967*, fol. 94^r.

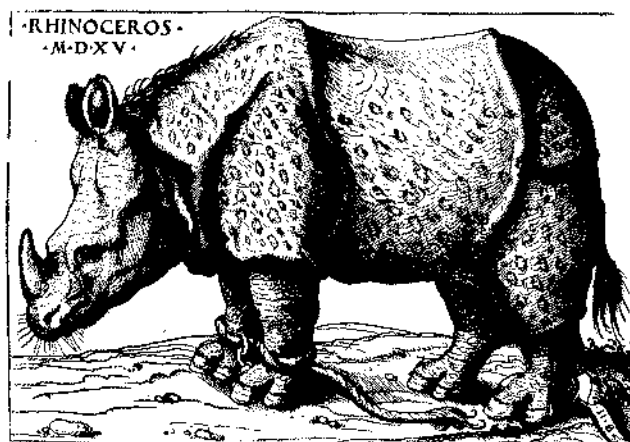


FIG. 11. The Lisbon rhinoceros executed in a woodcut by Hans Burgkmair of Augsburg. From the only known surviving example. Courtesy the Grapische Sammlung Albertina, Vienna.

surely erased first one and then another vestige of the memorable mission of obedience that had forged such a strong link between Portugal and the Holy See, and

every relic that had symbolized this association disappeared, one by one.

The great life-size mural of Hanno by Raphael, which had greeted ambassadors and pilgrims alike arriving at the Vatican survived the dreadful sacking of Rome in 1527, but fell victim to the redesign of the Vatican under Pope Paul V. The wall on which it had been painted was replaced by the new construction of the Porta Horaria designed by Carlo Maderno a century later, almost to the year. The Porta itself was destroyed fifty years later, to make way for Gianlorenzo Bernini's colonnade.¹⁸

Several depictions of Hanno survive to the present in the Loggie of Raphael at the Vatican, as well as the intarsia panel of Baraballo's famous ride, but they have long lost their association and are ignored or forgotten today.

¹⁸ Ludovico Barone von Pastor, *Storia dei Papi dalla Fine del Medio Evo. Versione Italiano del Sac. Prof. Angelo Mercati* (Roma: Descles & Ci, Editori Pontificali, 1945) 4, parte I: p. 48; Deoclecio Redig de Campos, *I Palazzi Vaticani* (Bologna: Casa Editrice Lincio Cappelli, S.P.A., 1967), pp. 203-211.

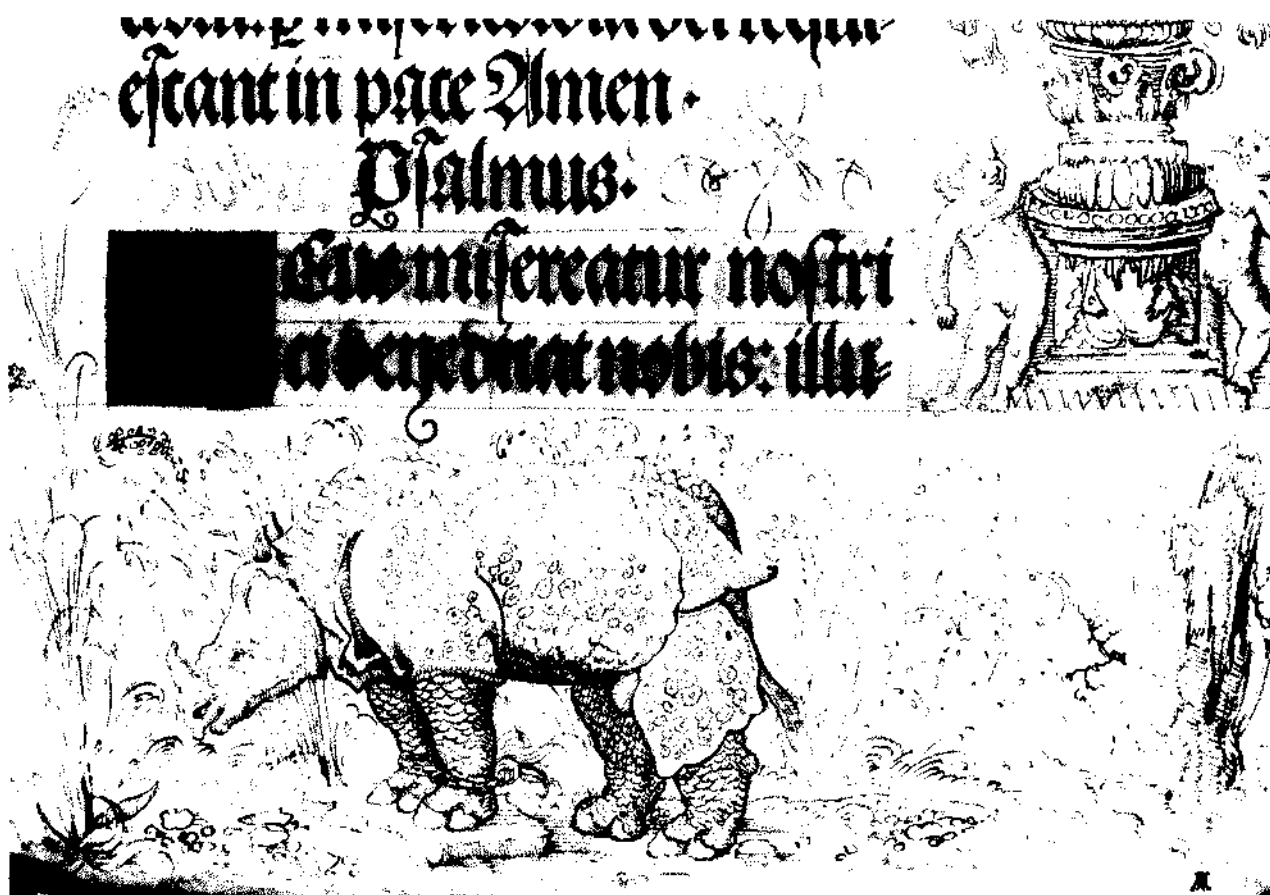


FIG. 12. Pen drawing in red ink of the Lisbon rhinoceros drawn at the bottom of a page of the prayer book of Emperor Maximilian I, bearing the monogram of Hans Altdorfer in the lower left corner. Courtesy the Bibliothèque Municipale de Besançon.

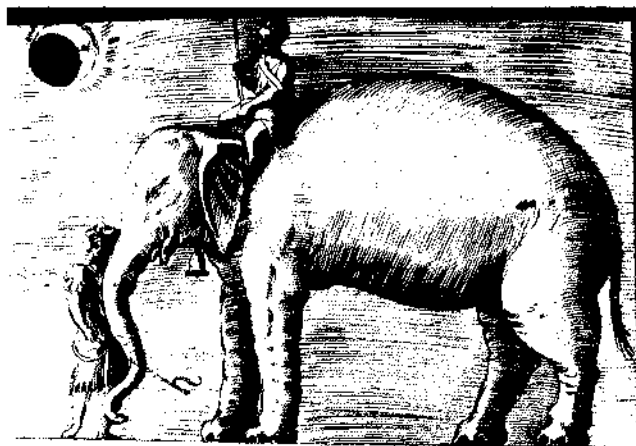


FIG. 13. Sketch of Hanno's mural at the entrance to the Vatican executed in pen and ink by the Portuguese artist, Francisco d' Ollanda on his visit to Rome in 1538-1539. Courtesy the Biblioteca del Real Monasterio San Lorenzo, El Escorial.

Also surviving in various collections throughout the world are drawings and sketches made of Hanno from life by Raphael or his assistants, and others derived from these representations. Undoubtedly the most important and realistic of these is an ink drawing attributed to Raphael or copied from an original by him which is in the Kupferstichkabinett in Berlin. This drawing, or the original from which it was made, may in fact have served as the basis for the mural. This and other depictions of Hanno influenced the manner of representation of elephants in numerous works executed during the sixteenth century, bringing to the animal's depiction a new type of realism which had not existed previously. Those derived directly from contemporary drawings of Hanno can usually be detected by the presence of the prod (cornac or ankus) and the presence of Hanno's trainer and custodian. Other characteristics are the ribbed ear, short tusks, and curvature of the trunk, and the bell around its neck.¹⁹

After Raphael's death, his former assistants used the elephant freely in their works but gradually fan-

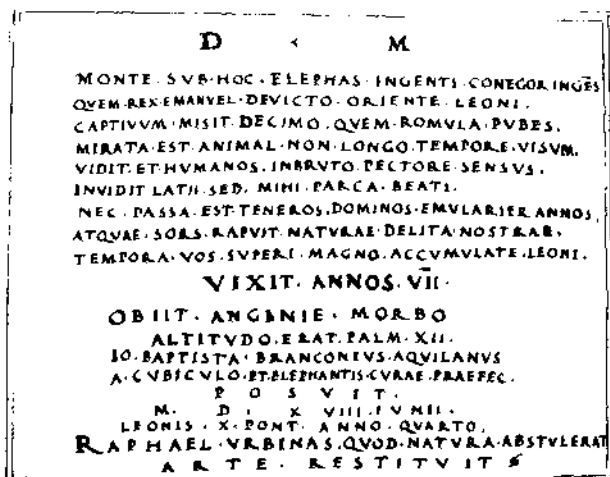


FIG. 14. Hanno's epitaph as it appeared on the wall at the Vatican entrance and copied in pen and ink into his sketchbook by Francisco d' Ollanda during his visit to Rome 1538-1539. Courtesy the Biblioteca del Real Monasterio San Lorenzo, El Escorial.

tasized it with the introduction of characteristics and attributes derived from ancient, medieval, and fifteenth-century illustrations. These fanciful depictions served as inspiration for others to be found elsewhere in Italy and in France.

Just as Raphael's representation of Hanno is one of the earliest examples of scientific naturalism derived from the living model, so was Dürer's woodcut of the rhinoceros. Although not drawn directly from the living beast and not as realistic as Raphael's work, nonetheless it introduced a new approach to the depiction of animal life. Dürer's woodcut remained the primary representation of the rhinoceros for the next several centuries, although another by Hans Burgkmair was more accurate. It was not until the end of the century that the rhinoceros was presented in a more realistic form.

Of the mounted rhinoceros, all trace has been lost, although art historians have sought evidence of it in Rome and Florence. It may in fact still lie forgotten in some neglected basement storage room or vault awaiting discovery.

The rich, bejewelled vestments and the gold chalice brought to Rome by the mission of obedience managed to survive three centuries at the Vatican, but fell prey to Napoleon's greed during his conquest of Italy at the end of the eighteenth century. In an effort to raise the great ransom required by the terms of the Treaty of Tolentino, Pope Pius VI was forced to collect all the gold, silver, and precious stones in the Vatican, including the great masterworks of the goldsmith of previous reigns. Still these were not enough. Finally, in desperation the pope ordered that all of the pearls and precious stones be detached from the cloaks, copes, chasubles, altar frontals, and other antique pontifical vestments that were no longer in use. Among

¹⁹ Winner, *op. cit.*, pp. 71-75; Escorial, Palacio del Escorial, Biblioteca del Real Monasterio San Lorenzo, *Libro de diseños o dibujos de Francisco de Hollanda*, fol. 31; Renzo U. Montini and Riccardo Averini, *Palazzo Baldassini e l'Arte di Giovanni da Udine* (Roma: Istituto di Studi Romani, Editore, 1957), pp. 12-13, 24-25, 30-36; Valerio Mariani, *Il Palazzo Massimo alle Colonne* (Roma: Casa Editrice 'Rome', [193-]), p. 41; A. E. Popham and Johannes Wilde, *The Italian Drawings of the XV and XVI Centuries* (London: Phaidon Press, 1949), p. 239; Sir J. C. Robinson, *A Critical Account of the Drawings by Michel Angelo and Raffaello In the University Galleries*, Oxford (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1870), pp. 294-295; Luigi Salerno, "Disegni inediti di Tiziano e lo studio d'Alfonso d'Este," *Commentari, Rivista di Critica e Storia dell'Arte* Anno 3, No. 3, 1954, pp. 198-200; J. C. J. Bierens de Haan, *L'oeuvre gravé de Cornelis Cort graveur Hollandais 1553-1578* (La Haye: Martinus Nijhoff, 1948), pp. 177-181.

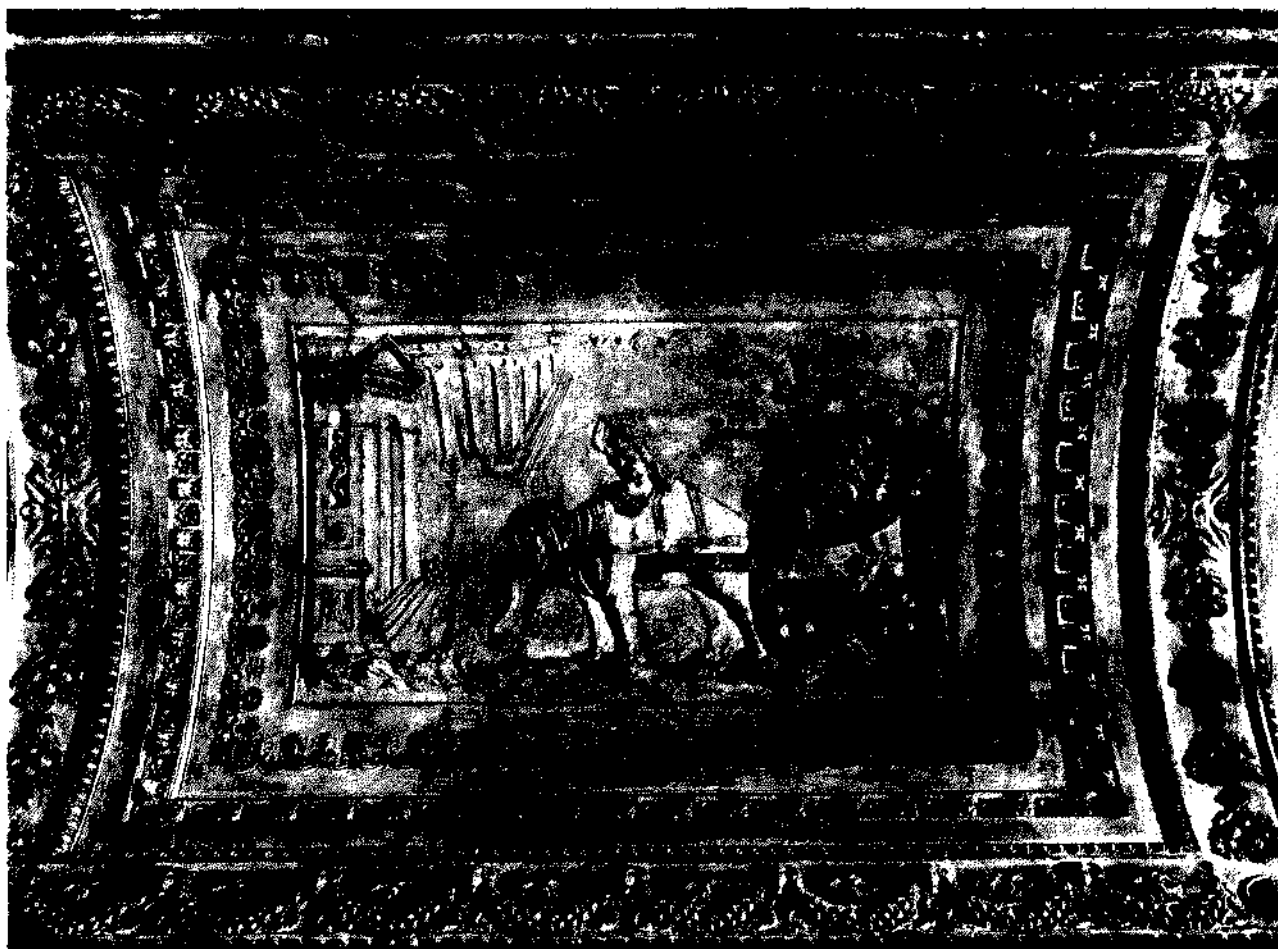


FIG. 15. Chariot with *putti* drawn by an elephant executed in stucco bas relief by Giovanni da Udine on the ceiling of the atrium of the Portinaria of the Palazzo Massimo alle Colonne in Rome. Produced between 1515 and 1520. Courtesy Fratelli Alinari, Florence.



FIG. 16. Hanno shown with Giovanni Battista Branconio, the pope's privy chamberlain, in a frieze in the Branconio Chapel of the Church of San Silvestro in l'Aquila dell' Abruzzo. Painted by Giulio Cesare Bedeschini in 1625, on the centenary of Branconio's death.

the oldest of these were those sent by King Emanuel to Pope Leo X, and they too were shorn of their precious decorations. The prefect of the apostolic sacristy noted at the time that the pearls removed from the vestments weighed 50 Roman *libbre* and seven ounces, and that the weight of the rubies, diamonds, garnets, and other stones was slightly less than one *libbre*.

The fragile aged fabrics, after being divested of the stones, were carefully preserved according to the pope's instructions, and stored away to insure that at least these denuded historical relics would remain for future generations.

But that was not to be. In February, 1798, almost immediately after the pope's departure from Rome as a captive of the French emperor, the commissioner of the French Directoire swept into the Vatican with a company of soldiers, and ordered that the cloth robes and altar furnishings be brought into the Belvedere courtyard. There he had them burned to ashes to recover the small amounts of gold and silver from the thread with which they had been woven. Thus nothing



FIG. 17. Sketch for the painting "The Triumph of Scipio" by Giulio Romano featuring two elephants shown in poses similar to those in figure 4 by the same artist. Courtesy Cabinet des Dessins, the Louvre.

survived in Rome of the gifts that had come from Portugal.²⁰

And what remained in Portugal relating to King Emanuel's relations with the Holy See? A valuable illuminated *Book of the Hours* which had been a gift from the pope survived for more than two centuries, only to perish with the rest of the King's library when his palace at Almeirim was destroyed by the great earthquake of 1755. It may have been at the same time that the Golden Rose and the *Gladius et pileus* disappeared.²¹

A lone survivor, however, may be a large carved

chimneypiece of white marble which tradition claims was sent from Pope Leo X to King Emanuel as a counter-gift for the elephant in 1514. Originally installed in the palace at Almeirim, it was recovered from the ruins after the earthquake and installed in the royal palace at Sintra, first in the Hall of the Caesars and then moved in the late nineteenth century to the Hall of the Magpies, where it presently remains. No documentation can be found to confirm the association, however, and art historians have been divided in their attribution of the piece, possibly because as a consequence of the earthquake and several re-installations, it no longer appears as it did originally and may now include replacement pieces where original parts may have been broken.²²

²⁰ Mons. Pietro Baldassari, *Relazione della avversità e patimenti del glorioso Papa Pio VI negli ultimi tre anni del suo pontificato* (Roma: Tipographia Poliglotta della S. C. Propaganda Fide, 1889) I: pp. 175–180.

²¹ Lisbon, Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo, *Arquivo Mesquita; Conselho Nobiliarcho de Portugal*, pp. 117–120; A. S. Gaveas da Torre do Tombo, *Centro de Estudos Historicos Ultramarinos*, Livro XV, pp. 8–9, Livro IV, pp. 208–211.

²² Antonio Teles da Silva Caminha e Meneses, Marques de Resende, "Embaixada de El-Rei D. Manuel ao Papa Leao X," *O Panorama, Jornal Litterario e Instructivo*, Terco da Terceira Serie 11, 1854, pp. 219–222, 253–255, 261–263, 271–272, 274–275; Le Marquis Patric Mac Swiney de Mashanaglass, *Le Portugal et le Saint-*



FIG. 18. Chimneypiece of carved white marble traditionally claimed to have been a counter gift from Pope Leo X to King Emanuel I and sent to Lisbon in 1514. In the Sala des Pegas, of the royal palace at Sintra.

That corner of Rome in which the elephant had been domiciled, in a shelter built against the Corridore at the junction of the Borgo Sant' Angelo and the Piazza of Saint Peter, had been named Borgo del Lionfante in Hanno's time, and the street was known as the Via del Elefante. An inn across the street, "At the Sign of the Elephant," accommodated travelers to Saint Peter's for a full century. After the end of the sixteenth century, however, the inn disappeared, the section and the street were renamed, and all evidence of the former presence of its great denizen disappeared.²³

The only remaining relics of Hanno came to light quite unexpectedly in February, 1962. A crew of workmen excavating the site of the Vatican Library's air

Siege. I. Les épées d'honneur envoyées par les Papes au Rois de Portugal au XVI^e siècle (Paris: Alphonse Picard et fils, Editeurs, 1898), p. 34; António Maria José de Melo, Conde de Sabugosa, *O Paço de Sintra, Desenhos de Sua Magestade a Rainha a Senhora Dona Amelia* (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1903), pp. 136, 163-164.

²³ Rome, Archivio di Stato di Roma, *Archivio di San Spirito 1458*, cc. 24-25, 1460, cc. 3435; Lanciani, *op. cit.*, pp. 239, 242; Adinolfi, *op. cit.*, pp. 50-51.



FIG. 19. Top view of third or fourth cheek tooth of a young Indian elephant, recovered from the Vatican Library courtyard in 1962. Courtesy the Vatican's Monumenti, Musei e Gallerie Pontificie.

conditioning unit in a corner of the Library courtyard encountered some fragments which at first were believed to be dinosaur bones. The work was immediately halted and the fragments were carefully collected and removed. They were taken to an authority in Rome who preserved them and ventured the opinion that they were bones from an *elephans antiquus*, and not a dinosaur after all. The presence of an *elephans antiquus* on Vatican hill was not viewed with great surprise, for geologists at work in the region in the 1930's had uncovered fossil bones from a veritable primeval animal cemetery between the new Pinacoteca and the ancient Leonine wall.²⁴

Paleontologists at the Smithsonian Institution were subsequently able to determine that the bones recovered from the Library courtyard had not been fossilized, and were of a much more recent period. They identified them as parts of the mandible and a third or fourth cheek tooth of a young Indian elephant less

²⁴ Gioacchino de Angelis d'Ossat, *La geologia del Monte Vaticano* (Citta del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1953), p. 57; Gioacchino de Angelis d'Ossat, "Storia geologica della Campagna Romana," *Roma, Rivista di Studi e di Vita Romana*, No. 9, fasc. 7, 1931, pp. 421-434.



FIG. 20. Side view of elephant's tooth recovered from the Vatican Library courtyard. Courtesy the Vatican's Monumenti, Musei e Gallerie Pontificie.

than fifteen years of age. Hanno was seven years of age at the time of its death. More recently the tusks of an elephant of the same age and place of origin have been found at the Vatican, and are undoubtedly Hanno's tusks.²⁵

²⁵ The tooth and bone fragments were identified by Dr. Frank C. Whitmore, Jr., of the Paleontology and Stratigraphy Branch of the U.S. Department of the Interior, working at the Smithsonian Institution. More recently the tusks of an elephant found at the Vatican have been identified by Prof.ssa Dott.ssa Margharita Guarducci, of the Pontificia Accademia di Archeologia, as having been those of the papal elephant. Her paper on "Antichi elefanti in Vaticano" delivered before the Accademia will be published in the next issue of the *Rendiconti* of the Vatican.

The only relics then, that survive of the brilliant mission of obedience sent to Rome by King Emanuel, are the bones of the elephant. Whether the remainder of its skeleton still lies buried in the Belvedere courtyard has not been determined. One day an excavation may be undertaken to resolve the question. Perhaps then its poetic epitaph will be erected once more on the site to mark the burial place of the playful ambassador elephant that had been the plaything of Pope Leo X.²⁶

²⁶ The elephant of Pope Leo X and the Lisbon rhinoceros are the subjects of a book-length work by the same author, entitled "*The Pope's Elephant*," scheduled for publication in the near future.