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THE RHINOCEROS ON TERRACOTTA TEMPLES AND IN JUNGLES OF WEST BENGAL AND BANGLADESH

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Abstract: A rhinoceros is depicted in panels of five ancient terracotta buildings in West Bengal and Bangladesh centred around Malda. The terracotta plaques excavated in Chandreketugarh dating from the first century also include the rhinoceros. All have one horn, often quite short, and some scales on the skin. There are three species of rhinoceros in Bangladesh and westward in Bengal. The greater one-horned rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros unicornis*) is no longer found while it is the common species of Assam and North Bengal. The Sundarbans was the realm of the Javan rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros sondaicus*) until early 20th century. The Sumatran two-horned rhinoceros (*Dicerorhinus sumatrensis*) was found in Chittagong, although only few specimens have ever been seen there. One of those was a female called 'Begum' captured in 1867 and four years later transported to the London Zoo where she lived until 1900. All examples are illustrated with a variety of art works and photographs.

The Rhinoceros of Malda:

In 1812, a French nobleman went to the ruins of the ancient city of Gaur, not to understand the history, but to look for tigers and other wildlife which had come to live in the bamboo forests. Armand Magon de Clos-Doré (1780-1850) teamed up with Capt. W., and seated on two elephants they looked for wild buffalo, hyena and tiger (Magon, 1822: 75-83, Guhathakurta and van Schendel, 2013: 80-82). A passing glimpse of a rhinoceros ended their pursuit, scared as they were that their elephants would take fright. Fifty years later, the collector of Malda, John Henry Ravenshaw (1833-1874) photographed the ruins in relative safety, undaunted by threats of any wildlife left in the area (Ravenshaw, 1878).

The rhinoceros features on terracotta temples constructed in the region around Gaur or Malda (Plate 4.1). In discussing these early art works, our focus will be zoological, while leaving the architecture and history of the buildings to archaeologists and historians. Although the rhinoceros is found in a wide variety of artistic designs through the ages in South Asia, its appearance is rare enough to call for explanations and enquiries (Bautze, 1985, Divyabhanusinh et al. 2018).

Rhinoceros on Terracotta Temples:

The oldest terracotta plaque with a rhinoceros was found in Paharpur (Rajshahi Division, Bangladesh) dating from the 9th century (Das Gupta, 1961: 31; Dikshit, 1938: 56-72;

Panchamukhi, 1951:38). Although the original report by Dikshit says the animal is represented thrice, only one example has been illustrated. In this case the animal definitely looks like a rhinoceros, with some scales on the hind part and belly, although the skin folds are obscured in the design and the horn is absent, possibly broken off (Plate 4.2). It is shown as a mount, possibly of a Vidyadhara or semi-god, in a rare occurrence of the rhinoceros as a vahana, mirrored in a bas-relief in Angkor Wat, Cambodia of the 12th century representing the fire god Agni (Iongh et al., 2005; Stöner, 1925).



Plate 4.1: Sites of terracotta temples and other localities in West Bengal and Bangladesh mentioned in the text.



Plate 4.2: Rhinoceros with rider on a 9th century terracotta plaque found at Paharpur, Rajshahi Division (from Dikshit 1938, pl. XLVI).



Plate 4.3: Rhinoceros facing left attacked by two hunters with guns, in a plaque of the Kantaji Temple in Kantanagar, Bangladesh. (Photo Joachim K. Bautze).



Plate 4.4: Rhinoceros hunted by a rider on horseback as well as two persons with guns, in a plaque of the Kantaji Temple in Kantanagar, Bangladesh (Photo Joachim K. Bautze).



Plate 4.5: Detail of the second Kantanagar plaque with a rhinoceros, from Plate 4.4. (Photo Joachim K. Bautze).



Plate 4.6: Rhinoceros attacked by six hunters with gun in the Ganeshwara Temple in Baranagar. (Photo Asok K. Das, 2018, p.91).



Plate 4.7: Rhinoceros in a panel of the Govinda Temple in Puthia, Rajshahi Division. (From Haque 2014, pl. 214).



Plate 4.8: Small terracotta plaque excavated in Chandraketurgh, from the collection of Julian Sherrier in London. (Photo by Joachim K. Bautze).

The Kantaji Temple built from 1704 to 1722 at Kantanagar (Rangpur Division, Bangladesh) contains two plaques with a rhinoceros (Das 2018:92; Haque 2014, pl. 167; Michell 1983, no. 617). In both cases the animal has a body full of scales, no skin folds, a smooth head with a tiny horn, and a long upturned tail (Plates 4.3, 4.4, 4.5).¹ These animals show a saddle or a cloth draped on the top of their back, which should point at some kind of domestication or captivity. However, this is contradicted by their setting in scenes including hunters on foot and on horseback.



Plate 4.9: 'Divers kinds of Rhinoceros' as assembled or imagined by the French traveller François Leguat in 1708 (*A new voyage to the East-Indies*, facing p. 223).



Plate 4.10: Drawing of a nine months old rhinoceros by Robert Home (1752-1834). From a folio of watercolours assembled by John Fleming (1747-1829). 30.2 × 47.2 cm. Victoria Memorial Hall, Kolkata (Provenance: Maharaja Bahadur Sir P C Tagore, 15 March, 1934).



Plate 4.11: Lady Mary Victoria Curzon riding on a *R. sondaicus* owned by Nawab Mohammad Rasul Khanji of Junagadh, Gujarat at the time of her visit on 3 November 1900 (British Library, Curzon Collection, Photo 430/76. Print 39 from Autumn Tour of 1900).

The Gangeshvara Siva Temple in Baranagar (Murshidabad, West Bengal, India) dating from the middle of the 18th century has one terracotta panel with a rhinoceros (Das 2018: 91; Haque 2014, pl. 213; Michell 1983, no. 374). Six hunters are pointing their guns at the rear of the animal. It has a scaly skin throughout, a short but distinctive horn, and three horizontal skin folds on the side (Plate 4.6).

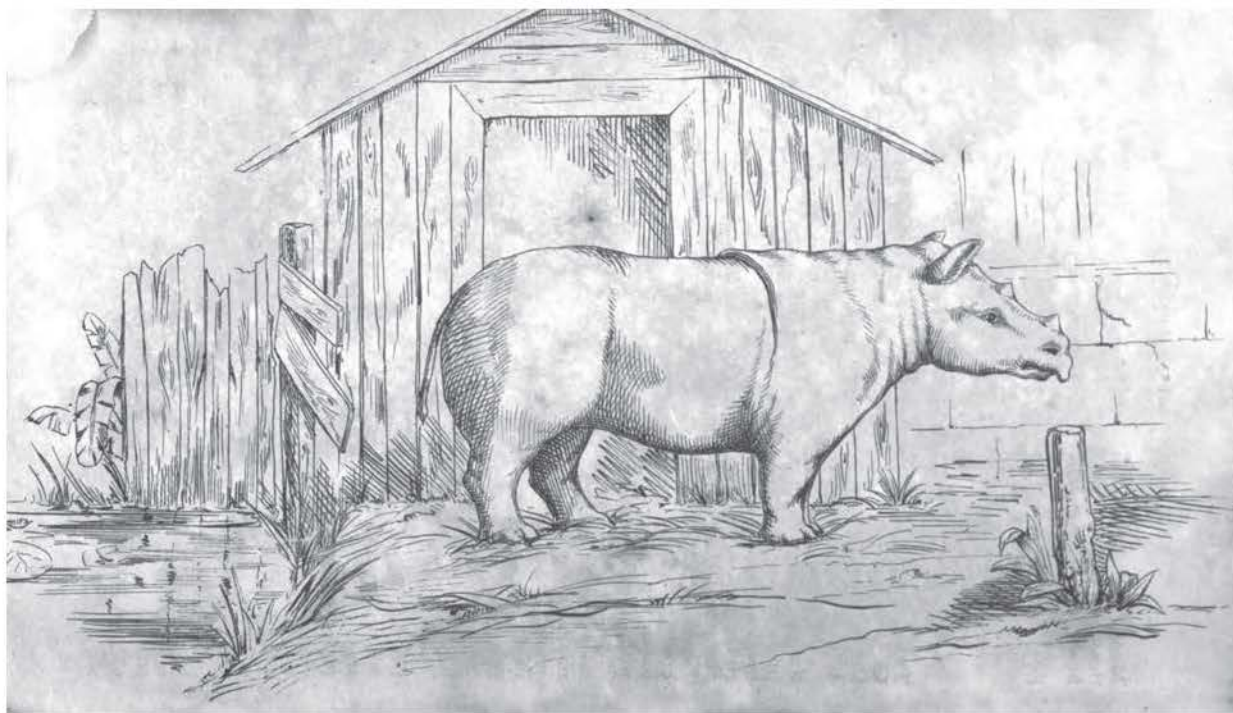


Plate 4.12: Drawing of the two-horned rhinoceros Begum when she was in Chittagong in 1867 or 1868, drawn by Captain Frederick Henry Hood (1837-1875). (*Oriental Sporting Magazine*, March 1869).



Plate 4.13: Drawing of Begum in her enclosure in Chittagong by Arthur Lloyd Clay (1842-1903). This was probably sketched in 1895, hence the shape of the horns which Begum developed in later life in London Zoo. (Clay, *Leaves from a Diary in Lower Bengal*, 1896, Plate facing p.209).

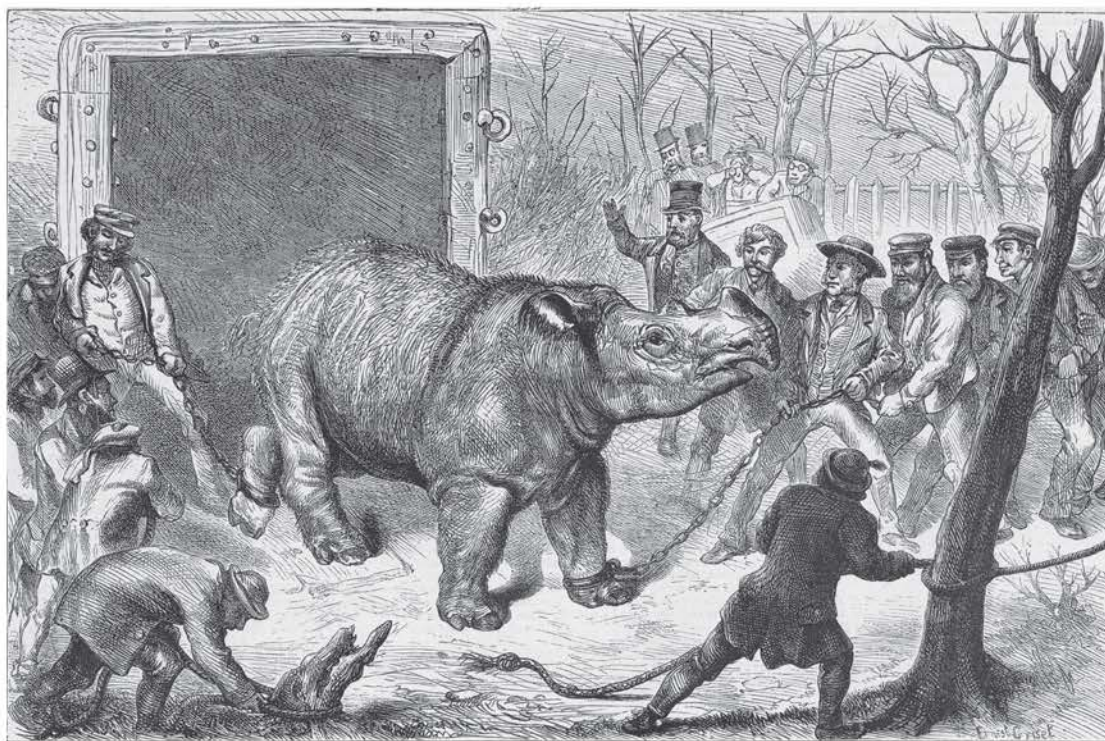


Plate 4.14: 'Transferring the hairy rhinoceros from her travelling den to her cage.' Wood engraving (15 x 22.7 cm) by Ernest Henri Griset (1844-1907). Published in the *Graphic* (London), 2 March 1872, p. 208. The man wearing a top hat behind the animal's head must be the Superintendent Abraham Dee Bartlett.



Plate 4.15: 'Rhinoceros lasiotis, F'. Coloured engraving with printed signatures (left) "J.G. Keuleman lith." and (right) "M. & N. Hanhart imp.", or Johannes Gerardus Keulemans (1842-1912), and printed by Michael Hanhart (1810-1884) and Nicholas Hanhart (1815-1902). Published by Sclater, *Proceedings of the Zoological Society of London* for 19 March 1872, pl. XXIII. Note the spelling Keuleman instead of Keulemans.



Plate 4.16: 'Rhinoceros lasiotis'. Lithograph (23 x 29 cm) signed (left) J.Wolf del. J.Smit lith. and (right) "M. & N. Hanhart imp.", or Joseph Wolf (1820-1899), Joseph Smit (1836-1929), Michael Hanhart (1810-1884) and Nicholas Hanhart (1815-1902). Published by Sclater, *Transactions of the Zoological Society*, volume 9 for 1876, pl. XCVIII.

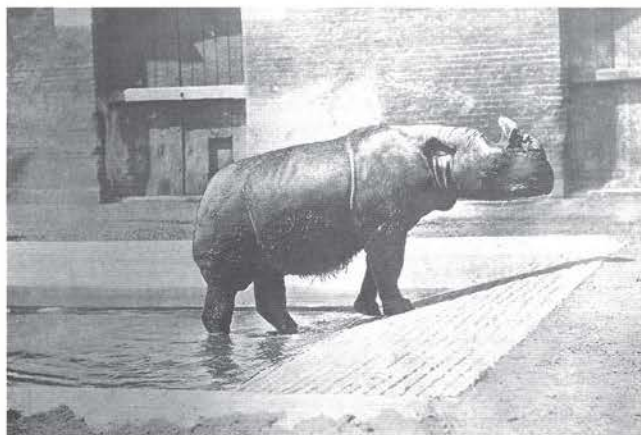


Plate 4.17: Begum, the hairy rhinoceros, at her pool in London Zoo. Anonymous photograph, ca. 1890 (Collection John Edwards, London; see Edwards 1996, p.124).



Plate 4.18: Photograph by Henry Sand land showing Begum in the outdoor paddock in London Zoo in 1890s (Collection John Edwards, London; see Edwards 2012, p.141).

Another terracotta panel with a rhinoceros is found in the more recent Govinda Temple in Puthia (Rajshahi Division, Bangladesh) built around 1850 (Haque 2014, pl. 214). In this case the animal still has the scaly skin, now divided in several compartments by curved horizontal lines (Plate 4.7). The horn is indistinct and probably quite small.

The earliest example of a rhinoceros sculpted in terracotta was once seen in the remains of the Adina Mosque in Pandua (Maldah District, West Bengal, India) built in the 14th century. In this case the panel is no longer visible, hence cannot be described, but it is mentioned in the report of an archaeological tour made in 1880 by Alexander Cunningham (1814-1893), founder of Archaeological Survey of India: 'There are five complete panels, and two half panels, which have been cut through. These two contain portions of an elephant and rhinoceros' (Cunningham 1882:91). A photograph of the pulpit taken more recently shows no sign of any structure depicting a rhinoceros (Khan 1931:133, fig. 26).

Rhinoceros of Chandraketugarh:

From a much earlier era, the rhinoceros is found on several small terracotta plaques excavated at Chandraketugarh near Berachampa, about 35 km north-east of Kolkata. On stratigraphic grounds the remains were assigned to a period between the first century BCE and the first century CE (Bautze 1985:415, 1995:28, pl. XLVb; Das 2002; Mukherjee 1990, fig. 23). There are probably at least five of these plaques, in various states of preservation. All show a rhinoceros with a medium-sized single horn, clear skin folds in the neck region and an otherwise smooth skin (Plate 4.8).

A similar plaque was uncovered during an excavation in 2001-2003 near the historic house built by Lord Robert Clive (1725-1774) when he was Governor General of the East India Company at Dum Dum, Kolkata (C. Das 2008).

The Rhinoceros of Bangladesh:

It is easy enough to identify the animals in the terracotta plaques as a ‘rhinoceros’, and we could even follow the example of the French naturalist François Leguat (1637-1735) who combined five ‘divers kinds of rhinoceros’ on one plate in his work of 1708 (**Plate 4.9**). In some of these the scaly skin resembles the structures on the terracotta plaques.

There is little information why the early artists were inclined to include a rhinoceros in their displays. The known examples look like a rhinoceros, but we should notice that they have scales or knobs on their skins, a rudimentary horn and poorly defined skin folds. To what extent can we expect these representations to be meant to be naturalistic portrayals of actual events? The animals are definitely rhinoceroses, but a zoologist really wants to know which species these could have been.

An answer to that question will probably prove elusive. When it concerns undivided Bengal comprising districts of Bangladesh and West Bengal, it is one of the few regions in the world where three species of rhinoceros have occurred in historic times, in fact all three known Asian species.² The Greater one-horned rhinoceros is still well-known in the parks of North Bengal and Assam. The Javan or lesser one-horned rhinoceros was found in the Ganges delta of Bangladesh and India, where it became extinct at the start of the 20th century. The Sumatran two-horned rhinoceros was once found on the border between Myanmar and both India and Bangladesh.³

The Rhinoceros of the Sundarbans:

The presence of a rhinoceros in the Sundarbans (Ganges delta) of Bangladesh and West Bengal is well-attested. An early report of March 1832 came from Saugor (Sagar) Island, situated where the Hooghly River meets the Bay of Bengal. The pseudonymous A. Shekarea (1832) described how he shot a rhinoceros near Middleton Point on the island. Just a few years earlier, the French pharmacist and explorer Christoph-Augustin Lamare-Picquot (1785–1873) shot two rhinos in the Sundarbans south of Khulna on Monday 17 November 1828 (Lamare-Picquot 1835, Rookmaaker 2019). The two specimens, a mother and her female calf, were taken to France and then sold to Berlin where the skulls and mounted skins are still preserved in the Museum für Naturkunde. Earlier in Paris, they were examined by the zoologist Rene-Primivère Lesson (1794–1847) and then described as a new species, now considered a subspecies: *Rhinoceros sondaicus inermis* Lesson, 1836.

It is important for an understanding of the zoögeography of the rhinoceros to realize that only this species (*Rhinoceros sondaicus*) was ever known in the Sundarbans. Although the Sundarbans were within traveling distance from Kolkata or Dhaka, they long remained inaccessible and considered dangerous due to diseases and man-eating tigers. Not only is there no art-work with a rhinoceros from that part of the country, there is not even a single photograph

or sketch from the field. Therefore, we provide two images showing an animal in captivity to clarify the animal's appearance, especially noting the characteristic posterior cervical fold which extends across the shoulder to form a kind of triangle in the skin. The sketch (**Plate 4.10**) dated 1799 by Robert Home (1752-1834) shows a nine months old rhinoceros in a Calcutta collection (Vaughan 1997:94). The photograph (**Plate 4.11**) was taken in Junagadh (Gujarat) on 3 November 1900 during a visit of the Viceroy George Curzon (1859-1925) and his wife Lady Alexandra Curzon (1904-1995). While the origin of the animal is not known, it is most likely a specimen captured in the Sundarbans (Rookmaaker 2018).

The rhinoceros of the Sundarbans was also known to stray to the vicinity of Kolkata (Rookmaaker 1997). Although records are few, there is no indication that the species crossed the Meghna River in the east, or lived north of the Padma–Ganges river system. Therefore the animal in north-western Bangladesh, West Bengal and further west in Jharkhand must be the other single-horned species, *Rhinoceros unicornis*.

The History of Begum, the Two-Horned Rhinoceros from Chittagong:

The third species of rhinoceros known from Bangladesh has an interesting history, largely because this two-horned species has so rarely made an appearance. The Sumatran rhinoceros has only been noticed in Chittagong, and even then, probably on less than a handful of occasions. One specimen in particular has become famous on an international scale, and her story is one worth telling.

Chittagong in eastern Bangladesh, wedged between the Sundarbans (Ganges delta) and Myanmar, was the realm of the two-horned Sumatran Rhinoceros. The rhinos were far from common, or if they were, they remained undetected in the dense forests of the interior mountains. Only a handful of rhinos have ever been reported from Chittagong, two of which were captured. One from the Estate of Begum Latifa Khatun of Ramu was exhibited in the Kolkata Zoo from June 1882 to 1892 (Rookmaaker 1998:143). An earlier one has become far more famous.

In November 1867, unexpected news reached Chittagong that a rhinoceros had been captured. In charge of the Kheddah (elephant capture) department, Captain Frederick Henry Hood (1837-1875) was one of the English officers stationed there, later described as 'a pleasant fellow, fond of the jungle, a keen sportsman with rod and rifle, and had seen service in the mutiny' (Clay 1896:203).⁴ Hood was told by headmen of a village near the Sungoo (Sangu) River that they had found an unknown large animal stuck in quicksand. A small army of 200 villagers had rescued her by throwing a noose over the head and hauling it to dry land, where they had tied it securely to a tree. They did not know what to do with this animal which they had never seen before.

Hood lost no time, he gathered all eight elephants available in camp, and set out accompanied by the engineer Thomas Haines Wickes (1840-1899). After covering about 30 miles (50 km) in 16 hours, they reached the village on the evening of the following day. They tied the rhinoceros so that she could walk between two elephants. The journey back was even slower and not without challenges, because the rhino at least once struggled free and rushed into a muddy patch: 'when Capt. Hood was wondering by what means he could succeed in extricating the rhinoceros from the mass of mud, in which she had embedded herself, a female elephant of more than usual intelligence, that was one of the guides, quietly walked into the morass and placed herself behind the rhinoceros, applied her gigantic forehead to the animal, and forcibly pushed her clean out of the morass' (M.D. 1872). They crossed the Sungoo River by towing the rhinoceros between two elephants as she could not swim, while the Kurnafoolie (Karnaphuli) River was crossed on the cattle ferry (Sclater 1876). During the journey the curious onlookers were often so numerous that the queue was up to a mile long (Tegetmeier 1872). They reached Chittagong six days after leaving the capture site.

Close to Hood's house near Tempest Hill, a stockade was quickly erected, a small pool or mud bath was dug out, and a covered shed was built (Clay 1896). The rhinoceros was extremely restless, so Hood decided that he needed to investigate. He told his Indian helpers to feed her pieces of sugarcane, while he entered the stockade. The investigation revealed two large ulcers beneath each shoulder as a result of the ropes used to tie her during the transport. Hood cleaned the wounds, and continued to dress them daily. She became completely tame and even allowed herself to be ridden about (M.D. 1872). Although the rhino was most particular to sugarcane and bananas, she ate such great quantities costing Rs. 2 per day, that she was slowly accustomed to the fodder and browse given to the elephants (Hood 1869:168). On arrival, probably still in November 1867, Hood thought that she was full-grown but only just adult, with an anterior horn of 3 inches (7.5 cm) high and a posterior of 2 inches (5 cm). Already the front horn was starting to be misformed: 'the anterior horn she has worn much away from rubbing it against the palings of her stockade, but it has developed considerably at the base' (Hood 1869). The rhinoceros was a female, and Hood called her Begum.

There are two drawings of the rhinoceros in her enclosure in Chittagong. The first probably made by Frederick Hood and illustrating his paper in the *Oriental Sporting Magazine* (1869) gives a close-up of the animal in front of her shed (Plate 4.12). She has here two small horns of equal size, and noticeably no hairs are shown on the ear fringes. The second was prepared by Arthur Lloyd Clay (1842-1903) of the Bengal Civil Service, who stayed with Hood in Chittagong until June 1868 (Clay 1896). This is signed 'A.L1.C. 23.7.95' being the initials of the artist and presumably a date (Plate 4.13). If he actually prepared this drawing in 1895 rather than on the spot in 1867, this might explain the shape of the horns, which both are large and of a peculiar shape. As this shape is found in photographs of Begum taken much later in her life, we suggest that Clay went to see her in London Zoo to refresh his memory.

Begum was to stay in Chittagong for about four years, cared for by Hood as well as briefly by Charles F. Manson, Deputy Magistrate (Manson 1876:177). The editor of Manson's paper also saw her there, commenting that 'she was neither savage nor tame; quiet, but there was risk in going into her enclosure.' When a Calcutta newspaper (quoted in Sclater 1876) wrote about the rhinoceros in early 1868, the news reached London, where Philip Lutley Sclater (1829-1913), the Secretary of the Zoological Society of London, realized an opportunity to add the species to the collection for the first time in history. He immediately wrote to Hood, who was willing to part with Begum, but 'as they steadily decline to bear any of the cost of passage, or risk, and merely offer a certain sum for her on delivery in good condition in London, we have not, up to the present, been able to come to terms' (Hood 1869:169). Sclater (1872c) claimed that it wasn't entirely his fault, as 'there seemed to be some question of the true ownership.' He then asked for help from the well-known animal dealer William Jamrach (1843-1891), who maintained a base in Calcutta at the time and who sold some special animals to the London Zoo in the 1870s. Jamrach made three journeys to Chittagong and finally made all arrangements (Clay 1872, Tegetmeier 1872). From Tempest Hill to the harbour was only a few miles, but the authorities had refused permission to transport the animal on the main road through the villages. The rhino was made to walk through back roads at night, following her keeper who carried a lantern and sang all the way. On arrival in Chittagong, the rhino was embarked in a small vessel, chained to the deck, to make the journey to Calcutta (Kolkata) in a few days (Clay 1872).

When Begum arrived in Calcutta, 'she was so exhausted by her efforts to escape that she lay down after being landed, and had to be dragged by main force into the bazaar' (Tegetmeier 1872). Here she was spotted on 5 December 1871 by a correspondent of the English naturalist Henry Lee (1826-1888), who signed his letter 'O.L.', therefore possibly Oscar Louis Fraser (b.1849), an assistant at the Indian Museum: 'The other morning when riding through Jawn Bazaar I was stopped by an immense crowd who were apparently very much interested in something in the middle of the road. Working my way through I found the obstruction was caused by a huge animal which had taken a fit into its head to lie down there, and no effort of its attendants could persuade it to get up again. As a last resort they threw about 50 buckets of water over it' (Lee 1872). The animal dealer William Rutledge (1830-1907) had premises at Jaun Bazar Street 32, just off Chowringhee (Anonymous 1875).

While in Calcutta, Jamrach arranged for transport and had a new crate made of teak, 12 × 9 ft (365 × 275 cm) and 8 ft (243 cm) high (Buckland 1872b). The rhino was shipped on the Screw Steamer *Petersburg* (Captain Blake) from Calcutta through the Suez Canal, departing on 27 December 1871, reaching London Gravesend on 13 February 1872 (Anonymous 1871, 1872). Two days later, on Thursday 15 February 1872, the rhinoceros in her large crate was taken from Milwall Docks to Regent's Park. On arrival, it was found that the crate could not fit through the entrance, and the only option was to let the animal walk to

her new home (Tegetmeier 1872). An engraving by Ernest Henri Griset (1844-1907) in *The Graphic* (Plate 4.14) shows the scene directed by Abraham Dee Bartlett (1812-1897), Superintendent of London Zoo 1859-1897 (Buckland 1872). After walking like this for some 60 or 80 yards, Begum arrived at her new home in the Elephant and Rhinoceros House which had been constructed by the architect Anthony Salvin (1779-1881) in the northern section of the Zoo and opened in May 1869 (Anonymous 1869). London Zoo paid £1250 to Jamrach, and was justly proud of their new acquisition (Sclater 1872a). Begum was only the second Sumatran rhinoceros ever exhibited in a zoological garden, was one of 48 imported between 1872 and 1909, and would set the longevity record for the species (Rookmaaker 1998:129). Begum was also the type specimen of a new species of rhinoceros.

When Begum was still in Calcutta, observers like John Anderson (1833-1900), Superintendent of the Indian Museum already commented on the long hairs on the ear fringes (Anderson 1872). When she could be properly examined after arrival in London, a keen naturalist like Philip Sclater would have wondered if this was a specific characteristic of the Sumatran Rhinoceros as previously described, or that it might point at a new species. He only took further steps after the Zoo acquired another double-horned female rhinoceros from Malacca on 2 August 1872. This new animal was smaller, had a longer tail, and most importantly, showed no signs of the long hairs on the ears. Sclater decided that these were two separate species, of which the Malacca specimen represented the previously described *Rhinoceros sumatrensis*. Begum from Chittagong therefore belonged to a new species, which Sclater decided to name *Rhinoceros lasiotis*. He presented the new species at the annual meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science held in Brighton, in the afternoon of Friday 16 August 1872 (Sclater 1873). By a rather unfortunate twist of events, the zoologist and author Francis Trevelyan Buckland (1826-1880) anticipated the meeting in his regular column in the weekly magazine *Land and Water* in the issue dated Saturday 10 August 1872, writing that the Chittagong rhinoceros 'has been named by Dr Sclater *Rhinoceros lasiotis*, or the hairy-eared rhinoceros' (Buckland 1872a). Following the Principle of Priority in the rules of zoological nomenclature, the name for the continental subspecies of the Sumatran Rhinoceros now stands in the combination *Dicerorhinus sumatrensis lasiotis* (Buckland, 1872).

Sclater, as Secretary of the Zoological Society, reported on new additions to the menagerie in most of their meetings and highlighted Begum's arrival in the meeting of 19 March 1872 (Sclater 1872b). The volume of the *Proceedings* was printed in November 1872, hence Sclater had a chance to refer to the new name in a footnote and commission Begum's likeness to be drawn by the artist Johannes Gerardus Keulemans (1842-1912). The colour of the animal is quite dark in this plate, and note that both horns are of almost equal small size (Plate 4.15). Another coloured plate of *Rhinoceros lasiotis* illustrated Sclater's grand monograph on all rhinos in the London Zoo in the *Transactions of the Zoological Society* for 1876 (Plate 4.16).

This was drawn by the Joseph Wolf (1820-1899) and engraved by Joseph Smit (1836-1929), and depicted two animals, although actually both should be representations of Begum in two different positions.

During her long life in London Zoo, Begum was photographed several times (Edwards 1996, 2012). All known examples show her with a large and bulky posterior horn, and an anterior horn of equal size bending backwards at the tip. One showing her at the edge of her pool was taken around 1890 by an unknown photographer (Plate 4.17). Another in the outside paddock dates from the 1890s is by Henry Sandland of Birling House, Thurnham, Maidstone (Plate 4.18). The peculiar shape of her horns is easily seen.

Begum died on Friday 31 August 1900, after 28 years 6 ½ months in the London Zoo. She was then at least 32 years old, but more likely 35 years. Her death was attributed to old age at the time, probably rightly, although Thomas (1901) mentioned that ‘the animal had become very much diseased’ so that only skull and head-skin were worth preservation. He did not say anything about the horns.

Conclusion:

The rhinoceros of the terracotta temples has three noteworthy characteristics. The animal is portrayed with a single horn, often quite small. It is shown with a skin covered largely with scales or knobs. The skin folds are always peculiar and very different from the arrangement in the living animals. It is difficult to understand why the artists found it impossible to copy the actual structure of the folds, unless they had not actually seen a rhinoceros, or because a naturalistic portrayal was of secondary importance. It doesn’t help to reach a zoologically sound conclusion. The region where the terracotta temples are found lies almost equidistant from the Sundarbans and from North Bengal. Even that might be irrelevant as the rhinoceros could have been kept in captivity, often when they were still young. Although we may never be sure, we suggest that the rhinoceros shown on the terracotta plaques were modelled after the rhinoceros better known from regions further north, the well-known greater one horned species (*Rhinoceros unicornis*). Unfortunately the arrangement of their neck folds was never properly depicted and leaves much scope for different interpretations.

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Notes:

1. The photographs of these rare items were taken by Joachim K. Bautze and kindly made available.
2. The biology and appearance of the three species can easily be found in standard zoological texts. All published information of any type of rhinoceros is available on the Rhino Resource Center, www.rhinoresourcecenter with free global access.
3. The scientific name of every animal is governed by rules of the International Commission of Zoological Nomenclature. The name of a species is at least a binomen, where the first part denotes the genus (compulsory written with an initial capital), the second part the species (entirely lowercase). A further division can add a subspecies to make a trinomen. In zoological texts it is usual to follow the name by its authority (name, and date), which is enclosed in brackets if there has been a change from one genus to another. Hence the names for the three Asian species of rhinoceros: the greater one-horned *Rhinoceros unicornis* Linnaeus, 1758; the Javan or lesser one-horned *Rhinoceros sondaicus* Desmarest, 1822 and the Sumatran rhinoceros *Dicerorhinus sumatrensis* (G.Fischer, 1814). The first species is monotypic, for the others the subspecies in South Asia are *Rhinoceros sondaicus inermis* Lesson, 1836 and *Dicerorhinus sumatrensis lasiotis* (Buckland, 1872).
4. Hood served in the 30th regiment of the Bengal Native Infantry, from 20 August 1855 as 2nd Lieutenant, promoted on 17 November 1857 to Lieutenant and on 20 August 1867 to Captain (*The New Annual Army List, Militia List, and Indian Civil Service List* for 1875).

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