

Love, War and Circuses
The Age-Old Relationship between Elephants and Humans
by Eric Scigliano. Bloomsbury 2004.

The elephant is probably one of the best-loved animals on the planet, and third in the list of creatures with whom mankind has enjoyed a close and abiding relationship, after the dog and the horse. Yet general knowledge of elephants, their history and prehistory, is less well known to many, and our treatment of them over the centuries poorly reflects the love and awe which they have engendered within us.

Eric Scigliano, an American journalist who fell under the spell of elephants when he was a child has produced a fascinating analysis of the elephant and the innumerable ways in which the species has shaped countless aspects of human life.

His chapters on the use of elephants in warfare, and on circus and zoo elephants and the challenges presented by the latter, are extremely satisfying, but most significant are those which detail the twin assaults on the surviving elephant population of habitat loss and poaching.

Many times, directly or by inference, Scigliano poses the question about a world without elephants, and the enormous impact that their extinction would represent: no one who reads *Love, War and Circuses* would do other than agree that the conservation of this extraordinary animal is a challenge and a duty for us all.

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