

The RA Collection of
**CROSS-CULTURAL
WORKS OF ART**

A Collector's Vision



Helder Carita
Alexandra Curvelo
Maria Antónia Pinto de Matos
Bruno Alexandre Morais
Fernando António Baptista Pereira
William R. Sargent

The RA Collection of
**CROSS-CULTURAL
WORKS OF ART**

A Collector's Vision

No.

The RA Collection of
**CROSS-CULTURAL
WORKS OF ART**
A Collector's Vision

HELDER CARITA
ALEXANDRA CURVELO
MARIA ANTÓNIA PINTO DE MATOS
BRUNO ALEXANDRE MORAIS
FERNANDO ANTÓNIO BAPTISTA PEREIRA
WILLIAM R. SARGENT
VOLUME SIX

1st Edition, 2022
Jorge Welsh Research & Publishing



Edition of 400 numbered copies in English from I to XX and from 21 to 400.

Contents

TITLE	PROOF-READING AND COPY-EDITING	ISBN
The RA Collection of Cross-Cultural Works of Art: A Collector’s Vision – Volume Six	Davina Thackara	978-1-8382163-6-8
AUTHORS	DESIGN	
Helder Carita (HC)	www.panorama.pt	
Alexandra Curvelo (AC)		
Maria Antónia Pinto de Matos (MAPM)	PHOTOGRAPHY	
Bruno Alexandre Morais (BAM)	Carlos Vasconcelos e Sá, Richard Valencia	
Fernando António Baptista Pereira (FABP)	PRINTING	
William R. Sargent (WRS)	Norprint, Portugal	
EDITING		All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reprinted or reproduced or utilized in any form by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without prior permission in writing from the publisher.
Luísa Vinhais		
Jorge Welsh		
EDITORIAL COORDINATION		
Alice Stilwell		
TRANSLATION	1 st Edition, 2022	
(From Portuguese) Nuno Batalha	© Jorge Welsh Research & Publishing	A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.
	116 Kensington Church Street, London W8 4BH, UK	

PUBLISHER’S FOREWORD	006
THE STRANGE POWER OF OBJECTS. ARTS AND THE EUROPEAN MARITIME EXPANSION (16 TH AND 17 TH CENTURIES)	
by Alexandra Curvelo	010
LUXURY GOODS FROM AFRICA	
by Bruno Alexandre Morais	052
ENTRIES	
by Bruno Alexandre Morais	062
INDO-PORTUGUESE ART IN THE RA COLLECTION	
by Fernando António Baptista Pereira	082
ENTRIES	
by Helder Carita, Bruno Alexandre Morais, Fernando António Baptista Pereira	092
CHINESE ARTS IN THE SERVICE OF WESTERN PATRONS	
by William R. Sargent	160
ENTRIES	
by Maria Antónia Pinto de Matos, Bruno Alexandre Morais, William R. Sargent	168
JAPAN AND THE EMERGENCE OF A NEW VISUAL AND MATERIAL CULTURE (CA. 1543-CA. 1640)	
by Alexandra Curvelo	272
ENTRIES	
by Alexandra Curvelo	280
BIBLIOGRAPHY	367
DIGITAL SOURCES	385
PHOTOGRAPHIC CREDITS	387
THE AUTHORS	388
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	391



FIG. 6
Map of Lisbon. Georg Braun and Franz Hogenberg
Civitates Orbis Terrarum (V2), 1st edition 1598

© HISTORIC CITIES RESEARCH PROJECT. COURTESY: OZGUR TUFEKCI. COURTESY OF GETTY THESAURUS OF GEOGRAPHIC NAMES™. © 2000 THE J. PAUL GETTY TRUST. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

of Europe at the beginning of the Modern Age – that is, in the 16th century – Lisbon was unquestionably one of its great cities, significant both from a demographic viewpoint and in terms of commercial transactions. But how great was Lisbon, in terms of population, in the mid-16th century (fig. 6)?

When compared to other European cities of the age, it is safe to say that Lisbon was one of the biggest. But it also needs to be understood in the specific context of the kingdom. It has been calculated that in the second half of the 16th century the Portuguese population numbered around 1,400,000 people. By 1636–1638, this figure had increased to 2 million. Around roughly the same period – between 1527 and 1619–1629 – the population of Lisbon more than doubled, amounting to 165,000 people. This made it not just the biggest city in the Iberian Peninsula, but, along with Naples, one of the biggest in Europe.³⁸

However, comparing Europe with Asia forces us to put these population numbers into perspective, even if information on population in this era, both on a global and a regional scale, is purely speculative. Nevertheless, the information available gives us a relatively reliable idea of the true numbers.

It is estimated that, in the 16th century, the Asian continent had between 200 and 225 million inhabitants, including 60 million in China and 20 million in Japan. By the beginning of the 17th century, cities like Peking and Nanking had 1 million inhabitants. There were six Chinese cities with more than 500,000 people and twenty others with an approximate population of 100,000. After China, Mughal India was the most urbanised region in the world, boasting three cities with 400,000 inhabitants and nine cities with 100,000. Aside from these, only Mexico City, and Potosí in present-day Bolivia, in the American continent, Cairo in Africa, and Istanbul at the border between Europe and Asia, had more than 100,000 people.³⁹ These were cities with an impressive



FIG. 7
Description of Cerro Rico and the Imperial Municipality
of Potosí, 1758 by Gaspar Miguel de Berrio (1706–62)

MUSEO CHARCAS, SUCRE, BOLIVIA
©PAUL MAEYAERT/BRIDGEMAN IMAGES

consumption of art, which attracted products from all over the world. In Potosí, which had around 160,000 inhabitants in 1600, one could buy silk from China, a first edition of *Don Quixote*, linen from Portugal, paper from Genoa, diamonds from Ceylon, carpets from Persia and Turkey, paintings and engravings from Rome, crystal from Venice, pearls from Panama, precious stones from India, lace from Brussels, and weapons from Germany: ‘Potosí, in other words, as one of the wealthiest cities in the world, began to consume the finest things the new global market had to offer’ (fig. 7).⁴⁰

These figures are impressive for the scale they provide when we compare different realities – in this case, Europe and Asia. Furthermore, they attest to long term trends in population growth throughout the centuries.

Between 1500 and 1700, in Europe, Asia and Africa, population grew rapidly, sometimes exponentially: during these years, Europe went from around 68 million to 106 million inhabitants, and Asia grew even more, from around 231 million people in 1500 to 420 million in 1700. Africa saw a much slower population growth, from 85 million people in 1500 to 100 million in 1700. In the Americas, the opposite trend is apparent: around



FIG. 11
Equelle with the legend
EM TEMPO DE PERO DE FARIA DE 1541.
white porcelain decorated in underglaze cobalt blue,
Ming dynasty, Jiajing period, dated 1541
H. 7.5 cm Ø16.5 cm

© MUSEU RAINHA DONA LEONOR, DRCA, INV. NO. PI 57/2

State of India's authority and were linked to a place of residence. Moreover, the *casados* (literally, 'the married people'), a term that denotes more than just a civil status, were not a homogeneous group within themselves, but encompassed noblemen and knights of military orders, as well as former soldiers at the bottom of the social pyramid. For all of these people, however, trading in goods, and crucially inter-Asian trading, made up the most significant portion of their income, even if data on transaction volumes and the organization of this trade is largely unknown. Nevertheless, Dutch documentation leads us to believe that the amount of inter-Asian trading undertaken by *casados* would have been significant at the beginning of the 17th century, even if not all of this trade was controlled by them. We must also highlight the role played by high government officials, through business they conducted privately, as well as by religious orders. Also, the mid-17th century saw the progressive rise of unmarried merchants, who had no fixed place of residence and moved more freely in search of relatively easier profits.

Of all the objects that would circulate along these trading networks, Chinese porcelain was particularly relevant, not only because of the significant quantities that were traded between Asia and Europe, but also because it raises a number of issues relating to its production, acquisition and circulation. From the outset, in the period before 1557, when Macao was established, the main Portuguese influence in the China Sea was exerted by people who had established themselves there independently, either as private merchants or as adventurers. These were the people who, even before the establishment of this trading post, made use, in the 1530s and 40s, as well as all through the 1560s, of the ports of Ningbo and Chinchew, in Fujian Province, and later of the ports of Canton (Coloane, Pinhal and Lampacao islands), in order to build the foundations of Chinese-Japanese trade, which was structured through Macao from 1557 because of the Ming Dynasty's prohibition of all foreign trade with Japan.⁵³



FIG. 12
Overview of the collection of plates and dishes
on the ceiling of 'Casa das Porcelanas',
Santos Palace, Lisbon.

PHOTOGRAPH: CHRISTOPHER ALLERTON

Produced mostly in Jingdezhen, thousands of kilometres away from Macao, blue-and-white porcelain was a sought-after product whose commissioning required cooperation with the Chinese (both merchants and artists). Its value depended not only on the materials with which they were made (kaolinite and petuntse), but also the manufacturing technique, quality of work, and other, more abstract symbolisms that are harder to define.⁵⁴ All of these elements determined one of the most significant pieces of evidence of regular relations between Malacca and China in the period preceding the Portuguese settlement in Macao: the porcelain items commissioned in China by Pero de Faria, captain of Malacca in 1528-1529 and 1539-1542, which not only depicted the armillary sphere, but also bore the inscription *em tempo de pero faria*, 1541 [at the time of Pero Faria, 1541] (fig. 11).

The world of porcelain reveals new patterns of taste that came to define novel consumption practices, often linked to the status attached to the ownership of such products. Also revealing is the way in which porcelain was integrated into the daily lives of its elite owners: 'embedded both literally and figuratively into interiors and larger decorative programs'.⁵⁵ The case of the porcelain room in the Santos Palace, present-day seat of the French Embassy in Lisbon, is an important example in the Portuguese case (fig. 12).

The place that quality porcelain came to occupy within the main European courts – such as the Medici, the Habsburgs and the Austrias – as well as in rich families, even led to the emergence of a parallel market for ceramics that sought to approximate Chinese porcelain. Important centres of ceramics production, such as Faenza and Florence, in the Italian peninsula, began integrating formal echoes from Chinese porcelain and attempted to reproduce this product's glaze, which was considered one of 'China's marvels, the height of sophistication, fragility and perfection, similar to other *artificialia* imported from Asia and discerningly collected at European Royal houses' *Kunstkammern*'.⁵⁶



FIG. 14
Coronation casket and detail. Ivory, gold, rubies,
sapphires, H. 18 cm, Kotte, Ceylon (Sri Lanka),
around 1543

KAT. 1241, D1002350, BSV,
© SCHATZKAMMER DER RESIDENZ, MUNICH

markets, and they established a network of agents with interests in Mexico and Peru. People like Jorge de Paz and Afonso Fernandes da Costa were part of this group, and their capital took on a trans-Pacific dimension.⁶²

In the last three decades of the 17th century, the Cape Route (or ‘India Run’) recovered from the arrival of European maritime powers in Asia – albeit on a much smaller scale than the levels of trade observed during the 16th and beginning of the 17th centuries – through a trade that was powered by a new logic. From this moment onwards, vessels from the India Run began occasionally touching on Atlantic ports on the western coast of Africa, or in Brazil, opening the way to contraband. After it was founded in 1549, Salvador da Bahia became one of these ports where it was forbidden to stop, in accordance with the India Run regulations adopted in 1565. However, just as had been the case in Asia, with the routes between Macao and the Philippines, the legislation on Atlantic trade was hardly an impediment. From 1672, direct journeys from Goa to Lisbon began to include Bahia as an authorized port of call on the way back, and the inclusion of this leg became even more commonplace from 1690, when gold was discovered in Minas Gerais.⁶³ Thus, Brazil became a port of arrival for vessels from the India Run even before they reached the mouth of the Tagus, in Lisbon.

Objects and images

In a well-known passage, Pyrard de Laval (ca. 1578–ca. 1623), a French navigator who left a written account of his voyages to the ‘East Indies, Maldives, Moluccas and Brazil’, refers to the Royal Hospital of Goa, a city he visited (fig. 15). His description is the result of lived experience and is particularly important because it describes the inside of one of Goa’s most important buildings, which, like much of the old city, has since been lost. The hospital was where, on arrival of a vessel on the India Run, any passenger would be brought who showed symptoms of disease, or of extreme fatigue, after what was one of the most demanding maritime voyages of the age – several months at sea interrupted only by brief and occasional stops to stock up on water.

According to Laval, *Car aussitôt qu’un malade est guéri et sorti de là, l’on ôte sa couchette, qu’ils nomment esquifé, avec tout l’attirail, de sorte qu’il n’y a point de lits dressés, qu’il n’y ait [de] malades. Ces couchettes furent promptement dressées. Elles sont faites au tour, couvertes de laque et de vernis rouge, quelques-unes sont bigarrées, et d’autres dorées; les sangles pour les enfoncer de coton, et les oreillers de toile blanche remplis de coton, et le matelas et couvertures sont de soie ou de toile de coton façonnée à toutes sortes de figures et couleurs. Ils appellent cela gouldrins* [For, as soon as a patient is cured and leaves the hospital, his cot, which they call a skiff, is removed, along with all of its implements, so that there are no more prepared beds than there are patients. These cots had been promptly appointed. They are beautifully made, covered in lacquer and red varnish. Some have various colours, others are golden. The straps to fasten patients to the beds are made of cotton, and the pillows made of white cloth, stuffed with cotton; the mattresses and covers are made of silk or cotton cloth, fashioned with all manner of figures and colours. They call these ‘godrins’].⁶⁴

The richness and exoticism of these beds and cots, lacquered in red, sometimes with gold inlays, were matched by the silk covers and coverlets (named *godrins* in Portuguese) – stuffed quilts that were not only colourful but also exuberantly decorated. Apart from this universe of furniture and textiles, Chinese porcelain also occupied a privileged place, as, according to Laval, *Tous les plats, écuelles et assiettes sont de porcelaine de la Chine* [Every dish, bowl and plate is made of Chinese porcelain].⁶⁵

Laval’s account of the Goa Hospital points to a fact that is widely known, and yet often forgotten: what was considered a luxury in Europe wasn’t necessarily so in a colonial context. The same can be said of the ‘exotic’ (a term which, as in the case of China porcelain, can be associated with the concept of luxury itself): exoticism is in the eye of the beholder. In fact, this word, derives from the Ancient Greek *eksotikos*, meaning, literally, ‘from abroad’, and this is the precise meaning given to the word by Rafael Bluteau (1638–1734) in his famous *Vocabulário Português Latino*, published in Coimbra between 1712 and 1721: ‘Strange. A thing originating from outside of the land’.

1. OLIPHANT

Ivory
Africa, Sierra Leone,¹
1500-1530
L. 32.5 cm
Inv. no. 1055

Elephant tusk with decoration carved in bas-relief, featuring horizontal scenes of different sizes along the curved surface. At the tip, the mouthpiece connects to a section shaped as an animal head, possibly a mongoose, with an open mouth and sharp teeth, the head enclosed by a bridle made of dotted ropes. The base is carved with three cynegetic scenes representing deer hunting: a lower scene depicting only dogs, followed by a wide band with beads at the intersections, and the other two scenes depicting dogs attacking stags. Towards the tip, the scene is interrupted by the Portuguese royal coat of arms, a reserve enclosing a representation of the cross of the Order of Christ and a band of stylized foliate motifs, the whole separated by narrow dotted bands. The concave side bears three suspension rings.

The visual memory of elephants had disappeared from Europe since they inhabited the Roman imperial stables, with the first animals reaching the continent at the beginning of the 16th century.² Even though the elephant to which the tusk belonged was unknown to Europeans, they knew of the species’ Asian and African origins because these tusks were received, either carved or in their natural state, through ancient trading routes, including the Silk Road and the Mediterranean Route. In his *Chronica do Descobrimento e Conquista de Guiné* [Chronicle on the Discovery and Conquest of Guinea, 1453], Gomes Eanes de Zurara (1410–1473/4), the main chronicler of the kingdom, reveals his knowledge of the ivory trade at the ports of the *levante desta parte do mar Medyo Terrano* [east of this part of the Mediterranean], where elephant tusks *vallem razoadamente mil dobras a ossada* [are worth approximately a thousand dobras per bone],³ but does not mention any

other route. However, with the Portuguese presence in the Atlantic, a new commercial passageway for the ivories opened up, competing with these ancient routes.

This oliphant belongs to the important and restricted group of ivory objects usually referred to as Sapi-Portuguese, made under Sapi cultural influence during the 15th and 16th centuries along the western coastal region, which includes a wider area than present-day Sierra Leone. These instruments bear witness to the first encounters and interactions between European culture and that of the peoples of the west coast of Africa. A detailed analysis of this period in history, including the study of power relations between the players involved, helps to expand knowledge of the artistic hybridity on display in these works.⁴ Each of these objects fuses decorative elements from European visual culture, applied by an African carver onto a type of object and medium typical of local societies. The provision of suspension rings and of a mouthpiece on the end of the tusk are also foreign details, when compared with the production of oliphants for local consumption.⁵

Sapi-Portuguese oliphants were most likely produced to commission by Portuguese and Luso-African traders settled along the coast. They are decorated with heraldic elements – almost always associated with the House of Aviz, which ruled in Portugal between 1385 and 1580 – the most prominent of which are the royal coat of arms, the cross of the Order of Christ and the armillary sphere, which was a personal emblem of King Manuel I (1495–1521). The emblems and insignias are sometimes accompanied by Latin or Portuguese inscriptions, which would have

been a complex task for a probably illiterate carver.⁶ The remaining decoration refers to hunting scenes of late Gothic inspiration, including hunters and animals associated with European settings, African and Asian fauna, and, occasionally, creatures from European mythology, such as dragons, harpies, unicorns and centaurs.⁷ Perhaps also the result of European inspiration is the animal head carved on the tip of these instruments, as similar decorations can be found on the barrels of European firearms, possibly used by the Portuguese during this period.⁸ The decorations on these oliphants are organized into horizontal sections that differ in number according to the tusk’s dimension.

The cynegetic scenes on some of the oliphants were also inspired by European iconography as evidenced by the animals represented – wild boars, rabbits, stags, dogs and horses – as well as by the clothing and weaponry. The images that adorn the margins of the book of hours, *Horae Beatae Mariae Virginis*, printed in Paris in 1498 by Philippe Pigouchet for the printer Simon Vostre, may have been one such source for Sapi artists.⁹ These same prints were published a year later in another incunabulum, at Thielman Kerver’s workshop, and a Portuguese edition, probably the one used by Sapi carvers, was printed in 1501 by Narcisse Brun, bearing on its frontispiece the Portuguese royal shield similar to that depicted in some oliphants,¹⁰ as well as scenes of a stag being attacked by dogs – an image that reminds us of the decoration on the present instrument (fig. 35).¹¹ These books of hours bear images of Christian themes that have also been reproduced in at least three ivory pyxes, all possibly manufactured by the same artisan or workshop (figs 36 and 37).¹² All tusks display interesting ornamental



10. CUP

Rhinoceros horn;
silver filigree fittings
India, Goa, late 17th–early
18th century (filigree)
H. 10.6 cm Ø 10.3 cm
Inv. no. 1096

A translucent cup in rhinoceros horn (rhinoceros sondaicus), with a truncated cone shape and edges slightly turned outwards. It rests on a base of silver filigree, with its upper section decorated with repeated petal-shaped medallions, each petal filled with scrolling designs made in a thick metallic thread, and another, thinner, granular thread. These medallions are interspersed on the upper section with small petals, and in the transition to the narrow joint at the foot, with a row of dots framed by filigree leaves and an edge highlighted by a double band of dotted designs, separated by a thin, S-shaped, granular thread.

Rhinoceros horns were among the raw materials associated with luxury goods produced for export to the European market from the beginning of the 16th century (fig. 58). What most fascinated the owners of these pieces was the material's translucent colour, obtained from polishing, and the elegant shapes into which it could be sculpted. This cup is a perfect example of that sophistication, with its soft and delicate colour on a fine silver filigree foot, which stabilises the cup and facilitates its use.

Several unusual features were attributed to rhinoceros horns. It was thought that this material was imbued with supernatural powers which could be used as treatment against melancholy, plagues and epilepsy.¹ If the horn was used as a recipient for drink, its properties would dissolve any kind of poison mixed into the drink. When turned into powder, it was also considered a powerful aphrodisiac.²

Objects in rhinoceros horn have been produced in several Asian regions and, regardless of their shape and the quality of the craftsmanship, these were expensive pieces highly sought after by European collectors, hence the inclusion of so many in royal and aristocratic Kunstkammern.³ The horns were displayed next to other objects of the animal-, plant- or mineral-origin naturalia group. Some of these objects – if their form or the material in which they were made allowed – were enriched in Europe with noble metals, and adapted to a new use, such as a drink container. Rhinoceros horns, shells (nautilus), ostrich eggs and coconut shells were the main rarities adapted to this function. As noted by Adam von Dietrichstein, ambassador

and collector of works of art for Maximilian II's (1527–1576) Kunstkammer in Vienna, whenever he was interested in 'foreign objects', especially 'when it comes to Indian goods and other, similar rare objects', one of the main criteria for deciding on the aquisition was 'the rarer the better' (quanta rariora tanta meliora).⁴ Although the contents of his collection are not known, it is a fact that Maximilian enjoyed giving guided tours to eminent guests, who would be fascinated by the encyclopaedic nature of his treasury, so much so that it was considered the most important collection of all those mentioned in Samuel Quiccheberg's (1529–1567) *Inscriptiones vel tituli Theatri amplissimi* (1565). This text was considered the first theoretical reflection on how to organize a museum or collection, and was probably heavily influenced by the way Emperor Maximilian II's collection was exhibited.⁵

The absence of decorative carvings does not allow for the identification of the production centre of this example. Rhinoceros horns made in Southern China were exported to Portuguese India and later sent to Lisbon.⁶ Both in Asia and in Lisbon there were





FIG. 80
Portrait of a Naval Officer, LL 8824

COURTESY NATIONAL MUSEUMS LIVERPOOL,
LADY LEVER ART GALLERY

The identity of Spoilum is unknown. There is speculation that his Chinese name was Guan Zuolin, and that he may have been the grandfather, father or uncle of Lamqua (Guan Qiaochang, ca. 1820-1855),⁵ though it is also possible that Guan Zuolin referred only to Lamqua.⁶

No records from Spoilum's sitters for glass portraits are known, but for his later work in oils there are valuable observations. In 1787, Captain John Meares (1746-1801) and several British merchants embarked on a trading mission to the North West Coast of America, and wintered in Hawai'i. From there they travelled to Canton, taking with them Tianna (Ka'iana), 'a prince of the island of Atooi (Kauai), a chief of illustrious birth and rank'. He was described as 'about thirty-two years of age; he was near six feet five inches in stature, and the muscular form of his limbs was of an Herculean appearance'. He was admired by all

and given a number of gifts for his return to Hawaii:

But of all the various articles which formed his present wealth, his fancy was the most delighted with a portrait of himself, painted by Spoilum, the celebrated artist of China, and perhaps the only one in his line, throughout that extensive empire. The painter had, indeed, most faithfully represented the liniments of his countenance, but found a graceful figure of the chief beyond his powers of genius. The surprise that Tiana (Kiana) expressed, as the work proceeded, was various and extreme, and seemed to follow with continual change every added stroke of the pencil. When this painting was presented to him, he received it with a degree of solemnity that struck all who beheld it...⁷

