

JAIME EGUIGUREN

ART & ANTIQUES

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An Imperial Ivory Fan
from Ceylon



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Artistic Confluence and Global Gift Exchange
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Hugo Miguel Crespo and Annemarie Jordan Gschwend

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Preface

From the Lost Kingdom of Kōṭṭē: An Imperial Ivory Fan from Renaissance Sri Lanka

Jaime Eguiguren

It is with great pleasure that I present this beautiful book. A singular, outstanding object such as this carved ivory fan called for an equally singular book by two renowned authors and specialists in their fields. This carved ivory fan, nicknamed the “Pangolin Fan”, because of the unusual representation of an Indian pangolin on its upper handle, belongs to a small group of exclusive ivory fans made in Renaissance Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka). The Portuguese royal family received these fans, alongside other imperial ivories, as diplomatic gifts from the King of Kōṭṭē, Bhuvanekabāhu VII. The delegation he sent in 1542 from Ceylon to Portugal was the first Asian embassy to visit Europe. His ambassador and Brahmin chaplain, Śrī Rāmaraksa Paṇḍita, brought in his baggage a large selection of imperial ivories that fired the imaginations of the Portuguese royals who received them. The Portuguese Queen, Catarina of Austria, was most fascinated by these unique ivories, and she quickly began to disperse them amongst her family and favourite relatives. Bhuvanekabāhu’s rare and exceptional ivory fans represent globalization and cross-cultural transfers between Asia and Europe after 1542. These ivories bridged Ceylon and Portugal in a unique way, illustrating the extraordinary diversity, ingenuity, and quality of Sinhalese craftsmanship. As exotic showcase pieces, these fans came to represent the extent and power of the Lisbon court in the mid-sixteenth century and qualify as some of the most important *Kunstammer* pieces ever collected by the Avis, Habsburg, and Farnese courts in the Renaissance. The “Pangolin Fan” is the only one, of nine imperial fans, to remain in a private collection. The others, originating from distinguished princely collections, are proudly exhibited in museums in Munich, Naples, Vienna, and Braunschweig, while one, previously unknown to scholarship, was stolen in 1920.

I thank Hugo Miguel Crespo and Annemarie Jordan Gschwend for their dedication in shaping this story of the “Pangolin Fan”, and in contextualizing its creation in sixteenth-century Ceylon, manufactured alongside other imperial carved ivory fans – those surviving today in prestigious museums or others, now lost, but known from contemporary documentary sources. Their long introduction in this book, packed with new information on the circulation of these superb Ceylonese ivories from the Lisbon court to closely allied royal courts across Europe, provides us with an in-depth and more complete background for the “Pangolin Fan”. Based on decades of painstaking archival research in many different European cities, combing through hundreds of documents belonging to different royal houses, Annemarie Jordan Gschwend, presents in her essay a detailed account of the circulation of these priceless ivories, while focusing on the collecting activities of Catarina of Austria. This Portuguese Queen, the subject of Jordan’s doctoral dissertation, with the queen’s far-reaching family ties and networks on one hand, and her access to wondrous, rare objects from across the Portuguese trade empire, on the other, has provided Jordan with multiple avenues of research on the circulation and enjoyment of exotica and the formation of princely art collections or *Kunstammern*. In his essay, in which a detailed material, stylistic, and iconographic analysis of the “Pangolin Fan” is presented, Hugo Miguel Crespo, contextualizes its manufacture within the tradition of ivory carving at Ceylonese royal workshops under the direct patronage of the ruling elite. New comparative analyses of these ivories are drawn from both earlier and later examples of Sri Lankan ivory carvings, but also comparisons are made with coeval architecture, stone sculpture, and mural painting. Crespo’s novel approach to the study of these surviving fans enabled him not only to distinguish two styles of carving, one more architectural, and the other more sculptural, but also allowed him to pair some of the surviving fans which have been dispersed between different European museums.

The "Pangolin Fan"
Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), Kōṭṭē
c. 1540-1551
Carved ivory, silver, and carnelian
57.0 x Ø 29.0 cm
Provenance: Portuguese royal collection, 16th century















Introduction: Contextualizing the “Pangolin Fan”

Annemarie Jordan Gschwend and Hugo Miguel Crespo

The “Pangolin Fan” [fig. 1], the subject of this book, was given this moniker by Hugo Miguel Crespo because of the unusual representation of an Indian pangolin (*Manis crassicaudata*), which he identified in the lower section of an inverted “coat of arms” carved on both sides of its upper handle [fig. 2]. Thick-tailed, scaly Indian pangolins are not only native to the Indian subcontinent but also to Sri Lanka as well, however, its appearance on this fan is rather surprising, as pangolins are not usually represented in Sri Lankan sculpture or painting, nor is it a mammal commonly depicted in South Indian art. Equally mysterious is this fan’s history and provenance. We posit that it originated from the Portuguese royal treasury and wardrobe, having arrived at the Lisbon court before 1551, subsequently stolen by Philip II of Spain and taken to Madrid in 1583, where all subsequent traces of its existence were lost, until today. The essay in this volume by Crespo centres on this recently rediscovered “Pangolin Fan”, now in a private collection, carved in Kōṭṭē at the court of Bhuvanekabāhu VII (r. 1521–1551), at the height of his reign [fig. 3].

Imperial Ivory Fans from Renaissance Ceylon

A group of Ceylonese ivory fans carved in mid-sixteenth century Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), are studied together here as a corpus for the first time. Five fans were exhibited in 2010 at the international exhibition, *Elfenbeine aus Ceylon (Ivories from Ceylon)*, guest curated by Jordan Gschwend for the Museum Rietberg in Zurich. This exhibition highlighted the unique Ceylonese ivories (caskets, combs and fans) and rock crystals (jewellery, spoons and forks) the Portuguese royal family received as diplomatic gifts from the King of Kōṭṭē Bhuvanekabāhu VII, between 1542 and 1551.¹ The Zurich exhibition gave a scholarly and general public a unique opportunity to study five fans in the round, and to examine and compare – up close – their carving, execution, and stylistic characteristics [figs. 4–6]. This is the first time an exhibition dedicated to showcasing these spectacular Ceylonese ivories was ever undertaken, with significant loans (almost all ivories) from museums and private collections across Europe.

The fans in this volume were commissioned by Bhuvanekabāhu, beginning in 1540–1541. By the year of his unexpected death in 1551, nine, if not more, imperial ivory fans had reached the Lisbon court. As *cakravartin*, symbolic and imperial overlord of the island of Ceylon, Bhuvanekabāhu had ordered these fans carved in his royal workshops by exceptional ivory carvers who worked almost exclusively for him. Commissioned as political gifts for high-ranking members of the Portuguese royal family, five intricately carved Kōṭṭē fans were earmarked for the Portuguese Queen, Catarina of Austria (r. 1525–1578), which were later recorded and described in her surviving inventories. The queen’s fans are the subject of the essay by Jordan Gschwend in this book, who takes a closer look at their subsequent trajectories as royal gifts presented by the queen to close relatives, as she equally traces their afterlives in *Kunstkamern* and elite, princely collections outside of Portugal.

¹ Translations below are by Jordan Gschwend.

Jordan Gschwend and Beltz, 2010.

Fig. 1 - The “Pangolin Fan” (recto, open)



Fig. 2 - The "Pangolin Fan" (recto; detail of the Indian pangolin)

Fig. 3 - Map of Ceylon © Hugo Miguel Crespo



Other Kōṭṭē fans (as well as caskets) were targeted by Bhuvanekabāhu for the Portuguese King, João III (r. 1521–1557), his powerful, influential brother, Infante Luís (1506–1555),² the Duke of Beja, and their half-sister, Infanta Maria of Portugal (1521–1577), the Duchess of Viseu, a rich, cultivated princess, known for collecting luxury objects, exclusive exotica from Portuguese Asia and the Far East. Documents about these gifts of Ceylonese ivories, in particular imperial fans from Kōṭṭē, have not survived, nor have the inventories of the collections and wardrobes (*guarda-roupas*) of these three royals. It can, however, be surmised from the nine, surviving fans today in public and private collections, that not only Queen Catarina, but also her direct family, João III and his siblings, profited from Bhuvanekabāhu’s generosity. The gifting of these priceless imperial fans to specific members of the Lisbon court was part of Bhuvanekabāhu’s complex political strategies he deployed to secure his rule and throne in Kōṭṭē for himself, and for his grandson and heir, João Dharmapāla (r. 1551–1597).³ At the Lisbon court, these ivories, despite their exotic carvings and curious melding of Hindu and Buddhist iconography, were greatly appreciated and admired.⁴

New Methodologies and Research

The nine, surviving imperial Kōṭṭē fans gifted to the Portuguese royal family form two stylistic groups, all made by highly specialized Sinhalese craftsmen. Past scholarship has always raised the question as to where precisely in Ceylon these fans, and related ivories such as caskets and combs, were produced, but scholars, due to a complete lack of documentation, have inevitably come up with inconclusive findings. Crespo’s research and new classifications of these fans provide us with a blueprint for better understanding the chronology of these ivory fans (and the other ivories), the workshops where they were carved, and the different centres of manufacture. The imperial ivories Bhuvanekabāhu presented the Lisbon court in 1542 as diplomatic gifts, and those later sent to Portugal until his death in 1551, were, in all probability, carved in the imperial capital of Kōṭṭē. Crespo, however, has determined that accomplished royal carvers, working in the Gampola–Kōṭṭē style, moved around between courts, employed by other kings in Ceylon, such as Māyādunnē, the ruler (*rāja*) of Sitāvaka (r. 1521–1578), Sēna-sammata Vikramabāhu (r. 1469–1511), who founded the city of Kandy,⁵ and his son, Jayavīra Bandāra (r. 1511–1552). All three rulers were related to Bhuvanekabāhu and belonged to the same ruling family, the House of Siri Sanga Bo.

Crespo divides Bhuvanekabāhu’s nine fans into two groups, both of which belong to the Kōṭṭē style, as he labels this royal ivory workshop, in order to distinguish them from ivories carved in Kandy in the seventeenth century onwards. He additionally pairs the surviving Kōṭṭē fans according to their size (in diameter) when the fan blades are opened. The first group is in

² Bhuvanekabāhu gifted Infante Luís a large casket which he, in turn, gave his sister-in-law, Queen Catarina. By 1555, it was recorded in her collection. See Lisbon, Torre do Tombo (hereafter TT), *Núcleo Antigo* (hereafter NA), 794, fol. 74: *huu cofre meão de marfin labrado de Jmagenerya Rico con toda sua goarnjção labrado de ouro de obra de Çeylão con fechadura e chauce do dito ouro con Rubeyçinhos e çafiras o qual deu o ynfante don Luis A S. Alteza / esta meido En huu cofre cuberto de coyro e forrado de pano verde quebrada a tampa / “A middle-sized ivory casket richly carved with images with its gold mounts worked in the style of Ceylon with a gold lock and key set with small rubies and sapphires which the Infante Luís gave her Highness / stored in a leather casket lined with green cloth, of which the lid is broken.”*

³ Biedermann, 2018, p. 97.

⁴ Biedermann, 2007, pp. 151–152, for a discussion of the mixed cultures or *mischkultur* in Ceylon (Buddhist and Hindu) with an explanation of the state religion, Theravāda Buddhism.

⁵ For a history of Kandy, see Gananath Obeyesekere, “Between the Portuguese and the Nāyakas: the many faces of the Kandyan Kingdom, 1591–1765,” in *Sri Lanka at the Crossroads of History*, eds. Alan Strathern and Zoltán Biedermann (London: UCI Press, 2017), pp. 161–177.

Figs. 4–6 (pp. 24–25) – Views of the exhibition *Elfenbeine aus Ceylon Luxusgüter für Katharina von Habsburg 1507–1578*, Museum Rietberg, Zurich, 28th November 2010 to 13th March 2011 © Museum Rietberg, Zürich; photo: Rainer Wolfsberger

the “architectural” style because these do not display any European visual elements and the opulent, ruby-studded gold appliqués on these fans suggest they formed part of Bhuvanekabāhu’s priceless gifts. Most evident here, are the carved architectural elements modelled on those of contemporary Sri Lankan temples and related structures (perhaps referencing royal palaces) such as niches, columns, and pediments.



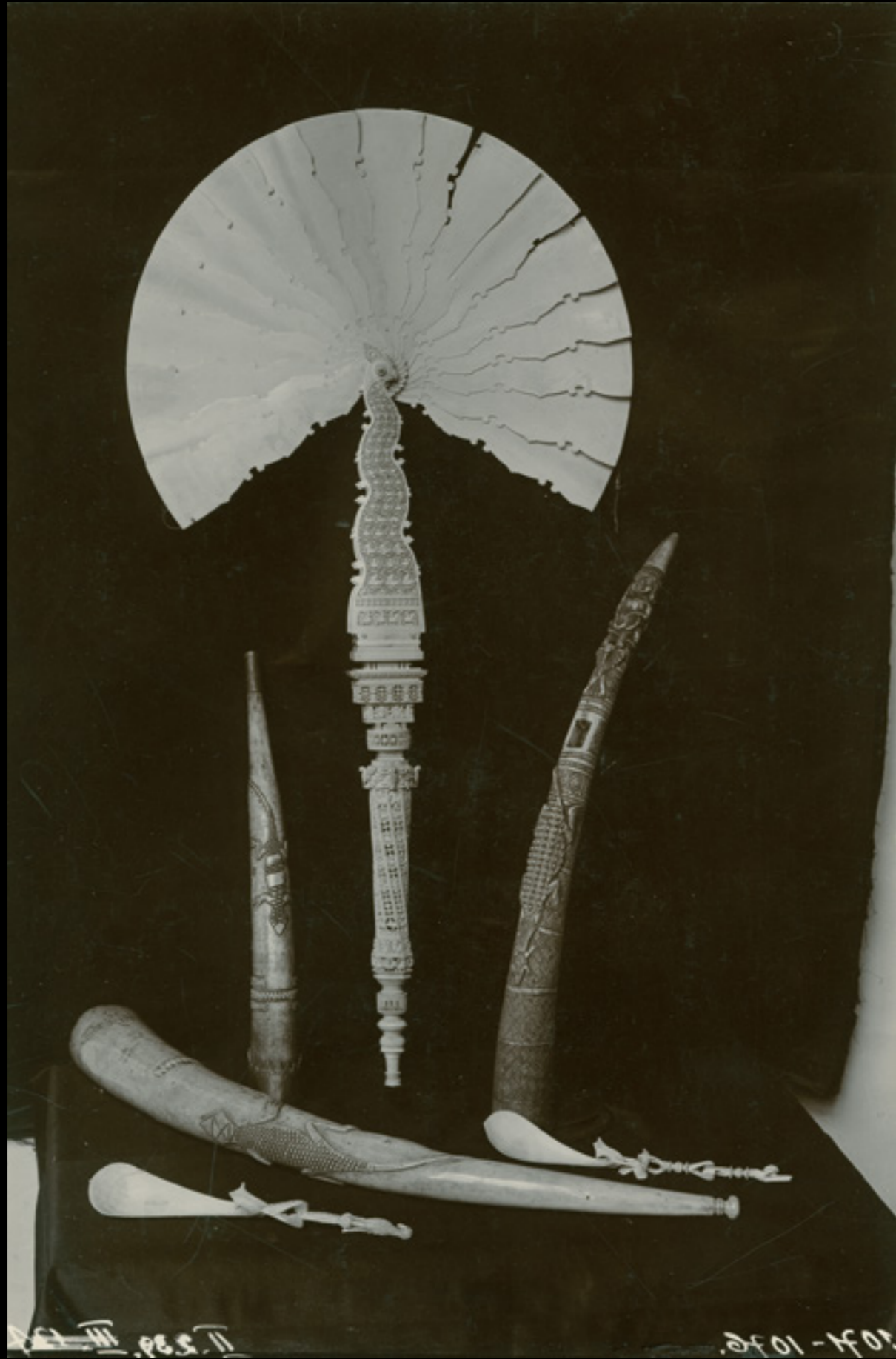
Figs. 7–8 – Fan (recto, and verso; details), Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), Kōṭṭē, c. 1540–1551; carved ivory, gold, rubies, and cotton thread (57.0 x 0.31.5 cm). Munich, Museum Fünf Kontinente, inv. 2826 © Marianne Franke

The Kōṭṭē “architectural” style Bhuvanekabāhu VII’s stolen fan: new facts and evidence

Two fans in Munich (Museum Fünf Kontinente, inv. 2826 and inv. 2827) and one in Vienna (Kunsthistorisches Museum, hereafter KHM, inv. 4692) are in this style. Munich, inv. 2826 actually portrays Bhuvanekabāhu on both sides of the handle, superbly and realistically carved in the round, with an *añkuṣa* (an elephant goad) in one hand, riding an auspicious bull – a state elephant (*maṅgala-hatthī*) – sumptuously decorated with royal trappings [figs. 7–8].⁶ KHM, inv. 4692, recently rediscovered by Crespo, is now missing [fig. 9]. This splendid fan once belonged to Archduke Ferdinand II of Tyrol, where he exhibited it at his principal residence, Schloss Ambras, near Innsbruck. It was recorded there after his death in 1596, described in the *post-mortem* inventory by the court scribe, Andreas Unterperger, as an “artfully carved wind maker, with a beautiful, deeply carved long handle”.⁷ Twenty cabinets or vitrines showcased the best and most exclusive objects and exotica in the Archduke’s collection, located in a long rectangular hall,

⁶ Saviello, 2018, p. 331.

⁷ Boenheim, 1888, Reg. 5556, p. CCXCIV, fol. 405v: *Mer in ainem langen schwarzen fueteral, mit leder uberzogen, ain schener helfepainer gar khunstlicher windmacher mit aim schön durchgraben langen still / “Moreover, in a long black case covered in leather, a lovely ivory fan, quite artfully made, with a beautiful, deeply carved long handle”* [authors’ italics]. Jordan Gschwend, “Ivory Folding Fan,” 2018b, pp. 154–155, cat. 4.17 (with previous bibliography), mistakenly identified this 1596 inventory entry as KHM, inv. KK 4751, instead of KHM, inv. KK 4692, which should now be corrected in future scholarship about this Ceylonese fan. The current KHM museum file on inv. KK 4751 needs to be amended and updated.





designated as the *Ambras Kunstkammer*.⁸ Opposite an entrance door of this large room, this door not identified by Unterperger, was a small cabinet positioned sideways, with the inside painted black, named the "Zwergkasten" (*Zwerchkasten bei der thur*). Here, expertly carved and turned items, made from ivory and bone, were kept on various shelves, the white colour of these objects elegantly contrasting with the black background. On the first shelf, three oliphants (hunting horns) from West Africa were put on display,⁹ on the second, Queen Catarina's "Rāmāyana Casket",¹⁰ [figs. 10–12] and on the third, KHM, inv. 4692, stored in its long, black leather case [fig. 13].¹¹

The unpublished 1621 inventory of the Schloss Ambras collections confirms that the "Rāmāyana Casket" and KHM, inv. 4692 remained part of the display in the "Zwergkasten"

8 Boenheim, 1888, Reg. 5556, p. CCLXXIX: *In der grossen kunstcamer [...]*.

9 These oliphants were studied at length in Heger, 1899, pp. 101–109, Plates III–V; *Exotica*, 2000, pp. 126–141, cats. 46, 47 and 50; and Jordan Gschwend, "West African Horn," 2018a, pp. 141–142, cat. 4.6. The latter horn, today in Vienna, KHM, Collection of Historical Music Instruments, inv. SAM 273, originated from Calabar (modern Nigeria). It was identified by Jordan Gschwend as having once belonged to King Manuel I, recorded in his *post-mortem* inventory in 1522, and entering his wardrobe before 1495 as a gift from King João II (r. 1481–1495) who in turn had perhaps received it from an ambassador sent from the kingdom of Kongo to the Lisbon court in 1488. It originally had silver mounts etched with Manuel I's coat of arms. Cf. Boenheim, 1888, Reg. 5556, p. CCXCIV, fol. 403r: *Ain helfenbaines horn, so in der mite, oben und unten mit silber beschlagen, darauf die impresa Portugal and Tercera gestochen ist, hangt an drei silbern keten mit 2 silbern ringen* / "a horn with silver mounts at both ends, incised with the impresa of Tercera [Terceira] island and Portugal, with 2 silver loops, hanging from 3 silver chains."

10 Boenheim, 1888, Reg. 5556, p. CCXCIV, fol. 404: *Ain schönes helfenbaines trihl mit ain gewelbten lueckh, von figuren und läubwerch geschnitten, mit silber beschlagen und ain silbern schlössl* / "A lovely small ivory casket with an arched [pitched] lid, carved with figures and foliage, with silver mounts and a silver lock." Jordan Gschwend, "Ivory Casket," 2018b, pp. 150–151, cat. 4.13 (with previous bibliography).

11 For a reconstruction of Ferdinand II's *Kunstkammer* and these twenty cabinets see Sandbichler, 2021, pp. 399–414, at p. 404. For earlier studies, see Elisabeth Scheicher, *Die Kunstkammer. Schlosssammlung Ambras* (Innsbruck: Kunsthistorisches Museum, 1977) and Elisabeth Scheicher, *Die Kunst- und Wunderkammern der Habsburger* (Vienna: Molden Verlag, 1979).

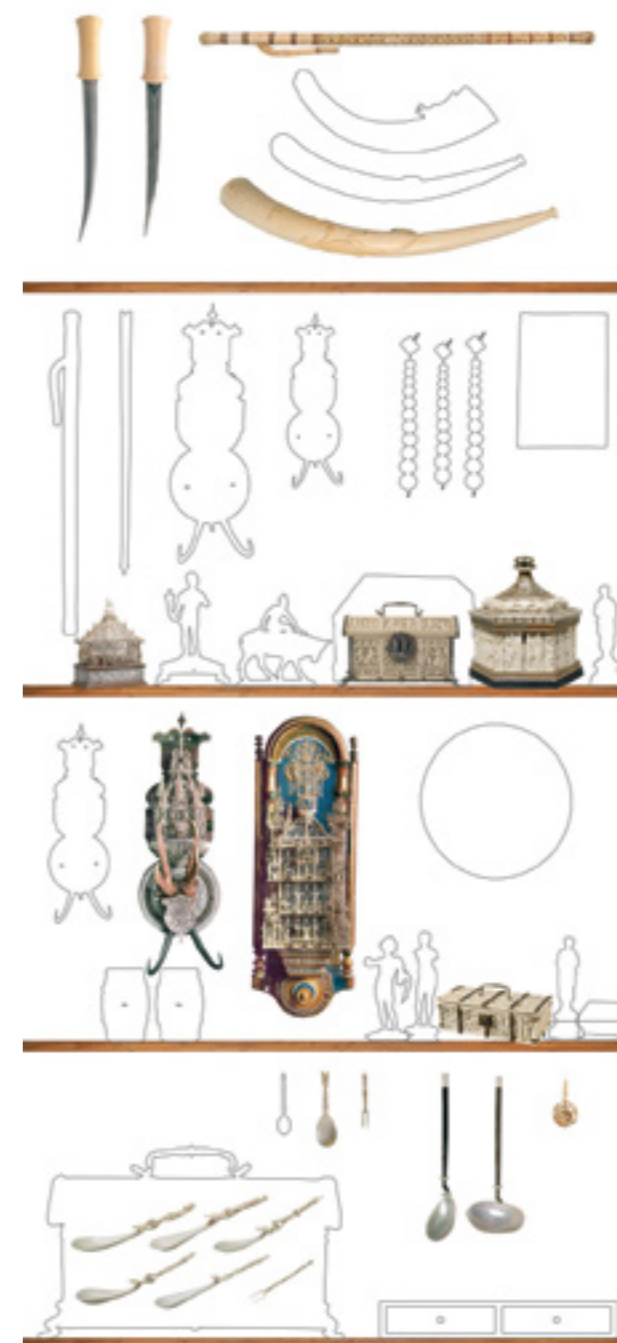


Fig. 13 – Reconstitution of the "Zwergkasten" with ivory objects in the *Kunstkammer* of Archduke Ferdinand II © KHM-Museumsverband

Fig. 9 (p. 28) – Fan (recto, open), Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), Kōttē, c. 1540–1551; carved ivory, and cotton thread (87.0 x Ø 45.0 cm). Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, *Kunstkammer*, inv. KK 4692 (stolen in 1920; historical photograph SW II 239) © KHM-Museumsverband
Figs. 10–11 (p. 29) – *The "Rāmāyana Casket"*, Austria, c. 1868; albumen print (17.2 x 23.6 cm; 16.7 x 20.4 cm). Vienna, MAK – Museum für angewandte Kunst, invs. KI 509-1, and KI 509-3 © MAK

Fig. 12 – *The "Rāmāyana Casket"*, Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), possibly Sitāvaka, c. 1546–1547 (later mounts); carved ivory, and silver (14.9 x 25.0 x 16.0 cm). Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, *Kunstkammer*, inv. KK 4743 © KHM-Museumsverband

in Ferdinand II’s former *Kunstkammer*, still on the second and third shelves respectively, as they originally had been twenty–five years earlier.¹² The scribe, Melchior Gewer, who redacted this inventory in the presence of the Schloss Ambras warden and caretaker, Berchtold zu Wolkenstein, repeated, almost verbatim, the entries in the 1596 *post-mortem* inventory.¹³ In 1621, the “Zwergkasten” was now described by Gewer to be situated opposite the entrance door of the *Turkenkammerl* (“little Turkish Chamber”), the last room of Ferdinand’s arms and armour collection,¹⁴ the Archduke’s renowned *Rüstkammer*.¹⁵ When the Nuremberg geographer, Franz Nigrinus (active 1672–1703), visited Schloss Ambras on a grand tour of the Tyrol, he marvelled at the ivory pieces he could observe there, including the “Rāmāyana Casket” and KHM, inv. 4692, both of which were in the cabinet Nigrinus now labelled as no. 20 (the former “Zwergkasten”):

“In the twentieth [cabinet] everything is made of turned ivory / [such] as all sorts of beautiful dishes / and other comparable things. Small casket of bone [*sic*; ivory]. A fan and parasol of bone [*sic*; ivory] [...] And in this 20th case there are so many beautiful / marvellous and amazing things / that one would have to spend a lot of time / to look at everything properly.”¹⁶

His lengthy travelogue corroborates that these two Ceylonese ivories – casket and fan – were still *in situ* in the Ambras *Kunstkammer* in 1703.

In January of 1772, the Tyrolean librarian and archaeologist, Johann Baptist Primisser (1739–1815), was appointed the first official curator and custodian (*Schlosshauptmann*) of Schloss Ambras. As a trained academic and scholar, Primisser took it upon himself to conduct a systematic inventory of Archduke Ferdinand II’s former collection. This unpublished inventory he compiled in three volumes, took six years to complete. The volume listing objects Johann Baptist identified and labelled as the *Schatzkammer* (treasury), is located today at Schloss Ambras in Innsbruck (inv. KK 6661). The ivories were grouped and catalogued together, and on page 380, under item no. 86, Johann Baptist cited KHM, inv. 4692 as:

“An ivory sunshade with deeply carved Indian work worth looking at. Although some of the blades of the sunshade have broken away.”¹⁷

¹² We are grateful to Alfred Auer, former director of Schloss Ambras, for sharing his unpublished transcription of this inventory.

¹³ Ambras inventory, 1621, fol. 205v (second shelf): *Ain ganz helffenpaines Trichl, mit silberen Schloss und Panndt, mit schener geschnitner Arbeit* / “A small casket entirely [made] of ivory, a silver lock and silver bands, with beautifully carved work”; Ambras inventory, 1621, fols. 206v–207 (third shelf): *Mer in ainem Langen schwarzen Fuetral, mit leder uberzogen, Ain schener Helffenpainener gar Khunstlicher Windmacher, mit Ainem schenen Durchgrabenen langen Stil* / “More in a long black case covered with leather, a beautiful ivory and artful windmaker, with a lovely, long, deeply carved handle.”

¹⁴ Ambras inventory, 1621, fol. 203: *Zwerch Casten bey der Thür von der Rüst Camer Hinein, Darinnen Allerlay Painwerch und geschnitzte sachen vorhanden* / “Zwergkasten near the entrance of the Rüstkammer in which all sorts of objects carved and turned from bone [and ivory] are shown.”

¹⁵ In the 2017 digital reconstruction of the twenty cabinets of Ferdinand II’s *Kunstkammer*, presently on view at Schloss Ambras, the “Zwergkasten” has been erroneously located on the opposite side of this hall, facing an incorrect door.

¹⁶ Nigrinus, 1703, p. 531–532: *Im zwanzigsten ist alles von Helffenbein/als allerley schöne Geschirre gedreht/und andere vergleichen Sachen. Trühelein von Bein. Ventulin und Umbrel von Bein* [...] *Und ist in diesen 20. Kästen so viel schönes/köstlichen und verwunderlichen Zeuges/das einer viel Zeit zu schaffen hätte/alles recht zu besichtigen*. We are grateful to Adriana Concin for bringing Nigrinus’ travelogue to our attention.

¹⁷ Ambras inventory, 1788, p. 380: *Ein elfenbeinerner Sonnenschirm von durchbrochener und sehenswürdiger indianischer Arbeit. Doch sind einige von den Schirm-plättchen davon weggebrochen*. We are grateful to Thomas Kuster, Schloss Ambras, Innsbruck, for this transcription, and also for providing a study image of page 380 in Primisser’s unpublished inventory. Primisser curiously did not catalogue the “Rāmāyana Casket” at this date. His omission cannot be explained.

Thirty years later, in 1819, Johann Baptist’s son, Alois Primisser (1796–1827), later second custodian of Schloss Ambras, described KHM, inv. 4692 at length, in the first printed catalogue of Archduke Ferdinand II’s collection:

“[...] we must also mention a large parasol or fan made of ivory, no. 42, on which all sorts of animals, fruits and dwarfs have been cut with admirable diligence, so small, that they can hardly be seen with the naked eye. In the 1596 inventory [of Archduke Ferdinand II]: a lovely ivory fan, quite artfully made, with a beautiful, deeply carved long handle.”¹⁸

After this publication, Alois Primisser went on to redact a new inventory of the Ambras collections in 1821, which too remains unpublished, relying upon the erudite, three–volume inventory his father had compiled in 1788, and which Jordan Gschwend discusses in her essay.¹⁹

During the Napoleonic wars (1805–1814), the entire collection at Schloss Ambras was declared private property of Emperor Franz II (1768–1835), and in 1806 a large part of the collection was transferred to Vienna for safekeeping.²⁰ In 1813, these objects were exhibited in the Lower Belvedere residence, the Viennese Baroque garden palace of Prince Eugene of Savoy. The display of this new “Ambras Museum”, opened to the public, was curated by Alois Primisser, together with his father, where they exhibited KHM, inv. 4692 and the “Rāmāyana Casket” in Vitrine X, reserved for artworks made of ivory and Vitrine XI for items turned from horn and wood (*Kunstwerke aus Elfenbein, Horn und Holz: Im X. und XI Schränke*) [fig. 14].²¹ The Viennese art historian, Eduard von Sacken (1825–1883), was appointed to reorganize, between 1849 and 1852, the earlier Primisser exhibition in the Belvedere. To complement his assignment, he published a scholarly book in 1855 about Schloss Ambras, in two volumes, for which von Sacken received a gold medal. Volume two centres on Archduke Ferdinand II’s former library and *Kunstkammer*, and includes a short discussion of the ivories once located there. Von Sacken made a point of adding a few sentences about the “Indian” ivories, still in their original Primisser Vitrine X:

“[...] several Indian objects, three caskets (37, 44, 44a) all covered with fine carving (richly decorated [with] figures, Gods, animals and arabesques), and two fans (42, 43), the long stems [handles] of the most dainty, openwork work, in the splendid and ornate manner peculiar to the Indians. The technology and diligence are admirable.”²²

¹⁸ Primisser, 1819, p. 185: [...] *müssen wir noch eines grossen Sonnenschirmes oder Fächers von Elfenbein, Nr. 42, erwähnen, worauf mit bewunderungswürdigem Fleisse allerley Thiere, Früchte und Zwerge geschnitten sind, so klein, das sie kaum mit freiem Auge wahrgenommen werden. (im Inventar von 1596: ain schener helffenpainer gar khunstlicher Windmacher mit ainem schenen durchgraben langen stil [sic: still]).* Primisser’s visual reading of this fan, where he identified tiny dwarfs carved in an architectural niche, in the upper section of the handle, helps to prove this fan is identical with the missing fan, KHM, inv. KK 4692. For Primisser’s citation of Ferdinand II’s 1596 *post-mortem* inventory cf. note 7 above.

¹⁹ Alois Primisser, *Inventar der k. k. Ambraser Sammlung*, 1821, located in the *Kunstkammer* archive of the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, inv. no. KK 6675.

²⁰ Julius von Schlosser, *Art and Curiosity Cabinets of the Late Renaissance. A Contribution to the History of Collecting*, ed. Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2021), p. 20.

²¹ Primisser, 1819, p. 185.

²² Von Sacken, 1855, vol. 2, p. 109: [...] *mehrere indische Gegenstände, drei Kästchen (37, 44, 44a) ganz bedeckt mit feinem Schnitzwerk (reich geschmückte Figuren, Göttergestalten, Thiere und Arabesken), und zwei Fächer (42, 43), die langen Stiele von der zierlichsten, durchbrochenen Arbeit in der den Indiern eigenthümlichen, prunkhaften und überladenen Weise. Die Technik und der Fleiss sind bewunderungswürdig.* Von Sacken identified five Ceylonese ivories in his book: three caskets and two fans. Casket no. 44: KHM, KK inv. 4743, fan no. 42: KHM, KK inv. 4692 (now missing), and fan no. 43: KHM, KK inv. 4751. (cf. Jordan Gschwend and Beltz, 2010, pp. 72–74, cat. 19. The latter casket entered the KHM *Kunstkammer* as a gift after 1761, and was cited in an 1875 inventory of the Lower Belvedere “Ambras Museum”, in Vitrine IX, no. 46).



Von Sacken admired most their craftsmanship and delicate, openwork carving, but moreover, he was quite impressed by what he defined as, their dense “Indian style”, and ornate decoration filled with figures, animals, foliage, arabesques and deities. These are extraordinary art historical insights at such an early date, right when Asian artworks were beginning to be seriously appreciated and collected by Viennese and European private collectors in the nineteenth century.²³ The unusual Japanese objects exhibited by the Meiji government in Vienna’s International Exposition in 1873, further fuelled the interest in Asian art and the museological formation of Asian collections, such as those in the MAK – Museum für angewandte Kunst in Vienna.

In 1875, KHM, inv. 4692 and the “Rāmāyana Casket” were placed in a new case, *Vitrine IX*, identified as nos. 47 and 44, respectively.²⁴ After Schloss Ambras underwent restoration in 1880, some but not all of its former, superlative objects were returned to Innsbruck. KHM, inv. 4692 and the “Rāmāyana Casket” remained in Vienna, and were relocated to the Kunsthistorisches Museum, known then as the “K. K. Kunsthistorisches Hofmuseum” designed by the German architect Gottfried Semper. In 1891, the art historian Albert Ilg (1847–1896) displayed them in *Vitrine XIII*, located in Room XXII of the “Sammlung von Waffen und kunstindustriellen Gegenstände”,²⁵ which arms and decorative arts collection was under his personal direction.²⁶ He positioned them near one another in this display case, as they once had been in the sixteenth century, in the “Zwergkasten”, of the Schloss Ambras *Kunstammer* (see fig. 13).²⁷ At the same time, the Ceylonese fan, KHM, inv. KK 4751 (hereafter KHM, inv. 4751), which too had belonged to Archduke Ferdinand II, and whose provenance and history in the Schloss Ambras collections is reconsidered by Jordan Gschwend, was transferred from Innsbruck to Vienna in 1806. By 1875, it was exhibited as no. 48, alongside KHM, inv. 4692 and the “Rāmāyana Casket”, in *Vitrine IX* in the Lower Belvedere. KHM, inv. 4751 was definitively transferred by Albert Ilg in 1891 to the “K. K. Kunsthistorisches Hofmuseum”. Ilg subsequently drew up a final inventory of the collection in 1896, cataloguing the “Rāmāyana Casket”,²⁸ KHM, inv. 4692,²⁹ and KHM inv. 4751,³⁰ in their new *Vitrine XIII* in Room XXII. He identified these

23 Consult Ting Chang, *Travel, Collecting, and Museums of Asian Art in Nineteenth-Century Paris* (Ashgate: Aldershot, 2013).

24 For casket no. 44, see also note 22 above.

25 The predecessor of the present-day KHM *Kunstammer*.

26 Emperor Franz Joseph appointed Ilg in 1876 to be director (*Kustos*) of the Habsburg imperial collections, and in 1884, Ilg was placed in charge of the *Sammlung von Waffen und kunstindustriellen Gegenständen*.

27 Ilg, 1891, p. 230: 26. *Fächer mit reicher ornamentaler Decoration in durchbrochener Arbeit. Indisch. 33–35. Indische Cassetten mit reicher Decoration / “26. Openwork fan with rich ornamental decoration. Indian. 33–35. Indian cassette [casket] with rich decoration.”*

28 Ilg, 1896, p. 281 (KHM, *Kunstammer* museum file card): [*Vitrine XIII*, no. 33. 4743. *Cassette aus Elfenbein, die sehr feinen Schnitzereien stellen Scenen aus der indischen Mythologie dar; die sibernen Beschläge und Henkel und dass Schloss europäisch in Renaissance. XVI. Jahrh[undert]. H. 149 mm., L. 250 mm., Br. 160 mm / “[Vitrine] XIII, no. 33. 4743. An ivory casket depicting very finely carved scenes of Indian mythology; the silver mounts, handle and lock are European, Renaissance. 16th century. H. 149 mm, l. 160 mm, W. 160 mm.”*

29 Ilg, 1896, p. 281 (KHM, *Kunstammer* museum file card): [*Vitrine XIII*, no. 26. 4692. *Fächer von 18 Blättern, mit reicher ornamentaler Decoration, in durchbrochen Arbeit; gebrochen. Indisch, XVI. Jahrh[undert]. L. 685 mm / “[Vitrine] XIII, no. 26. 4692. A fan with 18 blades, with rich ornamental decoration, deeply worked; broken. Indian, 16th century. L. 685 mm.”* Alfred Ilg remarked here for the first time that the handle of this fan was damaged at the far bottom. The missing ivory blades also observed by Johann Baptist Primisser in 1788.

30 Ilg, 1896, p. 282, (KHM, *Kunstammer* museum file card): [*Vitrine XIII*, no. 41. 4751. *Fächer aus Elfenbein, aus Indien, bestehend aus 21 Blättern, Stiel Geschweif, mit Pflanzenornamenten, Schwänen und Götterfiguren, den Knopf unten bildet ein Löwe. XVI. Jahrh[undert]. L. 430 mm / “[Vitrine] XIII, no. 41. 4751. Ivory Fan from India with 21 blades, twisted handle with vegetal ornamentations, swans [sic; sacred geese] and deities, the knob below in the shape of a lion. 16th century. L. 430 mm.”*

Fig. 14 (pp. 34–35) – Carl Goebel the Younger, *Die Marmorgalerie (The Marble Gallery)*, Austria, Vienna, 1876; watercolour on paper (46.5 x 68.3 cm). Vienna, Österreichische Galerie Belvedere, inv. 2806 © Belvedere, Wien



Fig. 15 – Wien I, Kunsthistorisches Museum. Saal 22: Plastiksammlung, Holz- und Elfenbeinschnitzereien. Durchblick (Vienna I, Kunsthistorisches Museum. Room 22: Plastic Arts. Wood and ivory carvings. View), Austria, Vienna, c. 1910; albumen print. Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, inv. PCH 2.161 – STE C POR MAG © Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Wien

three ivories by the nos. 33, 26 and 41, respectively [fig. 15]. On 22 January 1920, KHM, inv. 4692 was stolen, and has since not been recovered.³¹

Lastly, a now lost Ceylonese ivory fan with gold applications, probably inserted with cabochon rubies, which was documented in Emperor Rudolf II’s 1607–1611 inventory of his *Kunstammer*, located in the Prague palace (Hradčany), may have belonged to this group of *Kōttē* “architectural” fans. It was described as “Indian” – a “deeply carved ivory *ventali* or wind catcher”, which certainly had once belonged to the Portuguese royal collections, a gift given by Bhuvanekabāhu to the Lisbon court, the transfer of which to Prague in the late sixteenth century is speculated upon by Jordan Gschwend.³²

31 We should like to thank Mio Wakita-Elis, curator of Asian Art, MAK – Museum für angewandte Kunst, Christian Schicklgruber, deputy director of the Weltmuseum, and Konrad Schlegel, curator, *Kunstammer*, Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, for their invaluable help in helping us trace this lost fan. We are indebted to Florian Kugel and Ilse Jung at KHM Reproduktionsabteilung with their assistance with photographs and scans, and equally grateful to Konrad Schlegel for sharing the KHM museum file cards of the “Rāmāyana Casket” and the two Ceylonese fans, which facilitated our research.

32 Haupt and Bauer, p. 33, fol. 55: No. 583. *I indianisch von helffenbein durchbrochen und mit gold gezierd ventali oder windfang / “No. 583, one Indian ivory fan [ventali] or wind catcher, deeply carved and decorated with gold.”* Cf. Tudela and Jordan Gschwend, 2001, p. 43, n. 121. *Ventali* from the Italian, *ventola* or *ventaglio*.



The Kōṭṭē “sculptural” style

The second group is labelled by Crespo as being in the “sculptural” style, which comprises six fans he also pairs together. The “Pangolin Fan” belongs to this group, as does a fan in Munich (Museum Fünf Kontinente, inv. 2827), one in Vienna (KHM, inv. 4751; see above), and the fan in Braunschweig. As discussed in Crespo’s essay, KHM, inv. 4751 and Munich, inv. 2827 are identical in style, execution, and construction, each measuring 33.0 cm in diameter when opened. The same can be said of the two fans in Naples (Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte, inv. 10397 and inv. 10398), which measure around 27 cm each, in diameter, when opened. Among this group of six “sculptural” style fans, four are deeply carved with pierced, openwork decoration, a demanding and very time-consuming process which only master carvers could execute. These four include the pair in Naples, the Braunschweig fan, and our “Pangolin Fan”. Crespo dates all nine Kōṭṭē fans between 1540 and 1551.

Catalogued here as well is an ornately carved handle (missing all the blades and one of the guards), formerly in the Royal Danish *Kunstammer*, founded c. 1650 by King Frederik III of Denmark (1609–1670), and now in the National Museum in Copenhagen. This museum’s ethnographic collection boasts of many artefacts from Tranquebar (Tharangambadi) on the Coromandel Coast and other parts of India, sent by Thanjavur kings to Denmark, during Danish rule there, between 1620 and 1845. The Copenhagen fan was first documented in the Danish royal collections in the 1690 *Kunstammer* inventory, but its precise history and provenance are not known [fig. 16].³³ In his essay, Crespo takes a closer look at this unknown, little-studied fan.

Some trajectories of Bhuvanekabāhu VII’s lost imperial ivories

As early as 1542, Bhuvanekabāhu’s imperial ivories began to circulate as royal gifts. The delegation he sent from Kōṭṭē to visit King João III in Portugal was the first Asian embassy to ever visit Europe. His ambassador and Brahmin chaplain, Śrī Rāmaraksa Paṇḍita, brought in his baggage a large selection of imperial ivories which fired the imaginations of the Portuguese royals who received them as diplomatic gifts. Queen Catarina was most fascinated by these unique ivories and she quickly began to disperse them amongst her family and favourite relatives – exclusive gifts from Kōṭṭē which made a visual, political, and global impact at various Habsburg courts in Spain and the Netherlands, and the Farnese court in Parma. The ivories and their royal owners briefly outlined below are those which Jordan Gschwend has been able to trace in published and unpublished inventories, but are considered lost today. Nevertheless, their histories provide a backdrop for contextualizing the dispersal of the Kōṭṭē ivory fans, including the “Pangolin Fan”, during Queen Catarina’s reign and after her death, when her nephew, Philip II of Spain, took over the Portuguese crown and its overseas trade empire in 1580.

Infanta Maria of Portugal and Philip II, Prince of Asturias, 1542–1545

During Śrī Rāmaraksa’s sojourn at the Lisbon court, the Sinhalese diplomat witnessed the marriage of Queen Catarina’s daughter, Infanta Maria (1528–1545), at the royal palaces of Almeirim and Lisbon. Before her departure to Spain, he gifted this princess a Kōṭṭē casket recorded in the inventory of her estate when she unexpectedly died in 1545. Listed in this same inventory, were other Ceylonese objects brought in her trousseau: an ivory casket decorated with various figures, a gold lock, handle and mounts set with rubies and jasper; two

³³ See Gundestrup, vol. 1, 1991, pp. 280–281, cat. 762/284.

Fig. 16 – Fan handle (recto), Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), 1st half of the 17th century; carved ivory (53.0 cm in length). Copenhagen, Nationalmuseet, inv. EDb67 © Nationalmuseet, Copenhagen

ivory combs; two crystal elephants and one crystal horse.³⁴ Some of these Ceylonese objects were kept by Maria’s widower, Philip II (1527–1598), while others, like Bhuvanekabāhu’s casket, were sold at auction to pay debts. It was purchased in 1546 on behalf of Mencia de Mendoza (1508–1554), the Marchioness of Zenete, but later sold in Venice in 1573 when Mencia’s collection was dismantled. Maria’s casket cannot be identified today among the surviving Kōttē caskets.³⁵ Nevertheless, it is important to note here that since his first marriage to this Portuguese princess, Philip II of Spain had acquired a taste for things Ceylonese, as seen further below.

A formidable ruler, patron and collector: Mary of Hungary, regent of the Netherlands

Queen Catarina cultivated close artistic and personal ties with her elder sister, Mary of Hungary (1505–1558), and the Portuguese queen indulged her with numerous royal gifts sent from Lisbon, even a sub-Saharan black female slave named Maria. Mary of Hungary’s 1558 *post-mortem* inventory reveals her fascination for exotica from Portuguese Asia. Mary’s *Kunstammer* contained a wide assortment of objects: a piece of unicorn horn, a nautilus shell, a coconut, a wooden casket filled with ground unicorn horn, coral branches and coral carvings. Many of the Indian, Ceylonese and Asian objects were gifted by Catarina between 1542 and 1555: medicinal, healing stones, a Ceylonese ivory casket which contained, small items of exotica, including a piece of jasper to staunch the flow of blood,³⁶ a tortoiseshell fan from India, an incised silver incense burner from India, a mother-of-pearl casket³⁷ and table from Gujarat, two Chinese or Japanese lacquer caskets, a painted ivory gaming board, and a Ming-dynasty horn vessel, the first carved Chinese rhinoceros cup recorded in a Renaissance collection.³⁸

Mary’s own prestige and status at the imperial Habsburg court in Brussels was enhanced by her close ties with the Lisbon court, and, through Catarina, her power also extended globally to the Kingdom of Kōttē in Ceylon, and other points in Asia and the Far East. The regent brought a large portion of her outstanding collection to Spain when she retired there in 1556. After her death in 1558, a part of her estate was sold and the remainder divided up between her

34 Valladolid, Archivo General de Simancas (hereafter AGS), Estado, leg. 73, unfoliated.

35 The casket was purchased by Estefania de Requesens on behalf of Mencia de Mendoza, later valued in Venice for eighty pounds. See Noelia García Pérez, “Legados, Obsequios y Adquisiciones de Mencia de Mendoza: Tres cauces para atesorar piezas de platería,” *Estudios de platería* (2003), p. 217: *mas un cofrecillo de marfil labrado de diversas figuras con la cerradura, asas y esquinas de oro con muchos rubinicos que fue estimado en ochenta libras* / “another small ivory casket carved with diverse figures with the lock, handle and sides made of gold with many small rubies, valued at 80 pounds.” Also, Noelia García Pérez, *Arte, poder y género en el Renacimiento español: El patronazgo artístico de Mencia de Mendoza* (Murcia: Nausicaä, 2006), pp. 176–177: *un cofre de marfil con guarnicion de oro y rubies y jaspes* / “another ivory casket with mounts made of gold, rubies and jaspers.” Vassallo e Silva, 2007, p. 289, n. 33, confused Infanta Maria, wife of Philip II, with another Spanish princess, and misinterpreted who the subsequent owner of this casket was in 1546.

36 It can perhaps be identified with a small Ceylonese casket that entered Catarina’s *Kunstammer* in 1542. Cf. Lisbon, TT, NA, 794, fol. 74v: *E outro cofre de marfin feyçam de boeta todo labrado de figuras e elifantes e pavões e bacas [vacas] e pacos [pássaros] e outras figuras de alimarias* / “Another ivory casket fashioned like a small box, all worked with figures, elephants, peacocks, cows, birds and other sorts of animals.” The description of this ivory casket in Mary’s *post-mortem* inventory is quite cursory. See Checa, 2010, p. 2846: *Yten se abrio um cofre de marfil de ataraça de um geme de largo y um mano de alto, aforrado de dentro de bocaçin colorado, em que se hallo lo siguiente* / “Item, an ivory casket with inlays measuring a hand in height [c. 21–27 cm], lined with red buckskin, which contained the following [items].” Among the valuables stored in this casket, was a small gold box filled with amber and a grey stone, “like jasper”, to protect against poison.

37 Checa, 2010, vol. 3, p. 2845. Cf. Lisbon, TT, NA 792, fol. 161: *10,800 reais em compra de huum cofre de madreperla guarneçido de prata forrada de çetim cremesim que foy entregue em mãos da Rainha nosa senhora*, and fol. 169: [...] *uma oitava de prata fina que pos no cofre e nos moldes e agulhas que sua Alteza mandou a Framdes a Rainha sua Jrmãa por mandado em 26 d’Agosto de 1542* / “fol. 161: 10,800 reais for the purchase of a mother-of-pearl casket with silver mounts, lined with crimson satin, which was personally delivered to the Queen [Catarina],” and fol. 169: “[for] one *oitava* of pure silver, moulds and needles which her Highness sent to Flanders to her sister by mandate on 26 of August 1542.” The latter document first published in Annemarie Jordan Gschwend, “*Verdadero padre y senior*: Catherine of Austria, Queen of Portugal (1507–1578),” in Checa, 2010, vol. 3, pp. 2983–3166, at p. 3030.

38 Bertini and Jordan, 1999, pp. 57–65; Annemarie Jordan Gschwend, “A Masterpiece of Indo-Portuguese Art: the Mounted Rhinoceros Cup of Maria of Portugal, Princess of Parma,” *Oriental Art*, 46.3 (2000), pp. 48–58.

nephew, Philip II, and her niece, Juana of Austria. The present whereabouts of Mary’s Ceylonese casket, which Bhuvanekabāhu gifted Catarina in 1542, remains unknown.

Juana of Austria, Princess of Portugal: Asian Splendour at the Descalzas Reales Convent

When Catarina’s niece, Juana of Austria, Princess of Portugal, married her son Prince João in 1552, the queen showered her with rare and unique gifts from her *Kunstammer*, which Juana subsequently took back to Spain, after her young husband died in 1554. These included, heirloom gems, Indian and Ceylonese jewellery, a chalcedony rosary enamelled with devotional scenes, a gilded writing desk, mounted Chinese porcelain, and a rock-crystal elephant salt cellar with mounts added in Lisbon.³⁹

The most prestigious object Catarina gave Juana, as the future queen of Portugal, was a small ivory casket Ambassador Śrī Rāmaraksa Paṇḍita brought with him in 1542, stored in a black leather case lined with green cloth.

“Another casket fashioned in the same manner, slightly larger than the one cited above, of ivory with much imagery and decorated with separate mounts of gold with rubies, Ceylon work [*obra de Ceilão*], with a gold lock and key [encrusted] with rubies, stored in another [leather] casket like the one above, lined with green cloth. [Right margin] Given to the princess [Juana] 5 October 1553 by mandate [authors’ italics].”⁴⁰

This casket would later form part of an impressive *Kunstammer* collection Juana had assembled in her private quarters in the apartment she built and richly decorated inside the Clarissan convent she founded in Madrid, the Descalzas Reales.⁴¹ After her death in September of 1573, this casket, listed in her estate auction inventory and valued at 75,000 *maravedís*, was presented by Philip II, as a gift to one of Juana’s former courtiers, Pedro de Portocarrero.⁴² Its subsequent history is not known, and it is impossible to identify this casket amongst the extant corpus.

1580–1583: Plundering the Portuguese Royal Collections

Philip II illegally invaded Portugal in June of 1580, with an army under the command of Fernando Álvarez de Toledo (1507–1582), the Duke of Alba, taking the Portuguese throne by force. With this military coup, Philip was able to unite the Spanish and Portuguese global trade empires under one Spanish Habsburg ruler for sixty years. He resided in Lisbon for

39 Jordan Gschwend, 2019, pp. 42–43, figs. 7–8 (with previous bibliography).

40 Lisbon, TT, NA, 794, fol. 74: *E outro cofre do mesmo theor hun pouco mayor que o sobredito de marfim de ymageneria e laços goarneçido a partes de ouro con Rubijs de obra de Çeilão con fechadura e chave de oro com Rubijs / metido em outro cofre e como o sobredito e forrado de pano verde*. Right margin: *por mandado aa princesa A çinco d’outubro de 1553*. This casket later documented in 1574 in Juana’s collection. See Pérez Pastor, 1941, p. 355, no. 3: *Un cofre de marfil, labrado de imageria y laços guarneçido de oro con rubies de obra de Ceylan, que es en la India de Portugal; con cerradura y llave de oro, que tiene el anillo lleno de dichos rubinicos que en siete partes tiene saltados los rubinicos y en otras el esmalte y el pestillo esta quebrada* / “An ivory chest, carved with imagery and lattice work [tendrils] with rubies, Ceylon work, which is in Portuguese India; with a gold lock and key, which key ring was set with the said small rubies, in seven sections there are rubies missing, and in others the enamel is missing and the latch is broken.”

41 Annemarie Jordan Gschwend, “The monastery I have built in this city of Madrid: mapping Juana of Austria’s royal spaces in the Descalzas Reales convent,” in *Representing Women’s Political Identity in the Early Modern Iberian World*, eds. Jeremy Roe and Jean Andrews (New York: Routledge, 2020), pp. 127–145.

42 In 1574, seven small rubies were missing from the lock. Cf. Madrid, Archivo General de Palacio, Monasterio de las Descalzas Reales, Descalzas Reales 4/11, fol. 28v, no. 3: *Un cofre de marfil labrado de mazoneria y laços guarneçido en partes de oro con rrubies cerradura y llave de oro y en siete partes tiene saltado rrubinicos tasado en setenta y çinco mill mrs [maravedís] / diose a Don Pedro Portocarrero por acuerdo de los señores testamentarios de su Alteza*. Cf. note 40 above for an identical inventory entry and English translation.

three years, where he was crowned King of Portugal, and during his residency he personally assessed Portuguese palaces, their rich interiors, and the royal wardrobes contained therein. The Portuguese royal collections became Philip’s crown property, which he proceeded to appropriate for his principal residence and treasury in the Alcázar palace in Madrid. It is documented that he returned to Spain in 1583 with cartloads filled with priceless Flemish tapestries, such as the Spheres tapestry cycle (today in Madrid, Patrimonio Nacional), court portraits by leading painters, luxury Asian goods, Ming–dynasty blue and white porcelain, Chinese and Japanese lacquerware, European and Asian arms and armour, Indian gems, jewels and precious gemstones.

While in Portugal, Philip II stole from the Portuguese crown treasury a Ceylonese folding fan from Kōṭṭē, presented decades before by Bhuvanekabāhu, studded with gold applications encrusted with small rubies, which can no longer be traced.⁴³ Equally, two Ceylonese ivory caskets are documented in Philip’s collection in the Alcázar treasury in Madrid before 1598.⁴⁴ One of them was a rare, princely gift received from his cousin, Catarina of Portugal, Duchess of Bragança (1540–1614), when he visited her in Vila Boim, while residing at the town of Elvas in February of 1581.⁴⁵ On 26 February the Duchess of Bragança formally received the Spanish king with his nephew, Archduke Albrecht of Austria (1559–1621), at her ducal residence, where she served them a meal in the intimacy of her richly appointed quarters decorated with tapestries and brocade chairs.⁴⁶ This politically charged encounter was recorded by an eyewitness, as Catarina of Bragança too had been a serious contender for the Portuguese throne in 1580, having legal and hereditary precedence over Philip II.⁴⁷ It was at this meeting of peace, surrender, and truce, that she diplomatically presented her Spanish royal cousin, who had illegitimately taken over Portugal, with a precious Kōṭṭē casket. Her first cousin once removed, Archduke Albrecht, was gifted a large *coco de mer* (double

coconut) from the Maldives (*Lodoicea maldivica*) encrusted with pearls and precious stones, superb bezoar stones, leather gloves perfumed with ambergris and handkerchiefs, all which had an estimated worth of 60,000 *cruzados*.⁴⁸

In 1598, Catarina of Bragança’s superlative Kōṭṭē ivory casket was valued at one hundred and fifty ducats, minutely described by the royal scribe in the inventory taken at the time of Philip’s death in 1598. Its description perfectly matches an extant casket, today in a private collection [figs. 17–20].⁴⁹

“No. 718. Another small ivory casket with an arched lid, completely carved on the outside, of the said ivory, with diverse animals, branches and leaves in half–relief, with a lock, key, latch and hinges of gold; on the lid are four bands, [as well as] on the edges, and all around the bottom. All of the said gold bands [shaped] like mouldings are entirely and densely garnished with small rubies, and on the lock are four small sapphires in between the rubies. Delivered by his Majesty [Philip II] in Elvas. Valued at 150 ducats.”⁵⁰

It is a unique Ceylonese casket to have survived, and, most likely, was an heirloom Catarina inherited from her mother, Isabel of Bragança (1514–1576), Duchess of Guimarães, who counted amongst Queen Catarina’s closest female relations at the Lisbon court. In 1542 Isabel witnessed the Kōṭṭē embassy headed by Śrī Rāmaraksa Paṇḍita, who doubtless gifted her this superlative ivory. It is masterfully carved with exceptional Sinhalese goldsmith work, produced at the height of Bhuvanekabāhu’s reign in his Kōṭṭē workshops, which intricate iconography and workmanship is further discussed by Crespo.

During his three–year Lisbon sojourn, Philip equally took advantage of his access to the royal collections and wardrobes of his late uncle, King João III, his aunt, Dowager Queen Catarina, his cousin, Infanta Maria of Portugal (1521–1577), Duchess of Viseu and daughter of King Manuel I (r. 1498–15219, and his nephew, King Sebastião (1554–1578), killed at the battlefield of Alcácer Quibir in Morocco in early August of 1578. The inventories of these former royal owners, with the exception of Queen Catarina, are no longer extant, and were most likely destroyed by Philip to cover up his trail of appropriation. However, select objects, rarities, and exclusive exotica he distributed to immediate members of his Habsburg family, in particular his cousin, Archduke Ferdinand II of Tyrol, have survived. In return for financial support, military aid, mercenaries, and munitions deployed during the 1580 conquest of Portugal, Philip compensated Ferdinand II, as well as high–ranking Habsburg courtiers and generals, with priceless treasures from Lisbon, among them three Ceylonese fans, one today in Vienna and the other in Braunschweig, their trajectories traced by Jordan Gschwend.⁵¹

43 Lisbon, Biblioteca da Ajuda (hereafter BA), Ms. 49–X–3, fol. 287r (inventory dated 1580): *huu leque da India guarnesido d’ouro e de robis de Seylão* / “One folding fan from India decorated with gold and rubies from Ceylon.”

44 Philip II probably acquired this Ceylonese casket at the estate auction of Fernando Carrillo de Mendoza, the 7th Count of Priego, who died in 1579. Perhaps, later lost in the 1734 fire which destroyed the Alcázar palace. Cf. Beer, 1893, p. LI: No. 717. *Un cofrecillo de marphil con su tapador [...] con cerradura y llave y quatro goznes y una aldabon, que parece de oro labrado todo el dicho cofrecillo por de fuera de figuras y animales y otros lavores de medio relieoe, que fue del Conde de Pliego. No. 27 en el dicho cofre no. 5. Tasado, como esta, en docientos y cinquenta ducados* / “An ivory casket with its lid [...] with a lock, key, four hinges and a latch, which all seem to be made of worked gold. The entire casket is carved on the outside, in half–relief, with figures, animals and other work, which once belonged to the Count of Pliego [sic; Priego]. No. 27 in the said chest no. 5.”

45 Philip II and his transitional court resided there the entire month of February where he and his nephew, Archduke Albrecht of Austria, were regaled with costly gifts given by the Duke and Duchess of Bragança. Cf. Vienna, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Lusitania (Portugal), *Avisos de Elvas de 3 de Hebrero 1581*, fol. 340: *El Arçiduque Alberto embio esta semana à Christoval Briseño su Cavallero à visitar de su parte ala Señora Doña Catelina à Villa Viçiosa à donde el Duque y la Duquesa le regalaron mucho: y segun yo entiendo de lo que mas fausto y grandeza que ningun grande de Castilla [...] / “The Archduke Albert [of Austria] sent this week his Master of the Horse, Cristóbal Briseño, to visit on his behalf the Lady Doña Catelina at Vila Viçosa where the Duke and Duchess gave him so much: and according to what I understand, [gifts] more pompous and great than for any grandee of Castile [...].”*

46 Lisbon, BA, Ms. 51–II–25, fols. 140v–141 (1581): *Carta das novas da vizita que El Rey Felipe 2º de Castela fez a Senhora Dona Caterina Duquesa de Bragança*, at fol. 140v (Vila Boim): [...] *porque havia tres caças armadas de tapeçaria riquissima de ras, cheia de cadeiras de brocado e seda* / “[...] because [she had] three rooms decorated with Arras tapestries, filled with brocade and silk chairs.”

47 Florence, Archivio di Stato, Mediceo del Principato, 4255, fol. 11: *Por carta de Elvos 27 de Hebrero 1581* (27 Febraury 1581), transcribed by the Medici Archive Project: Doc. 25568: Domingo veynte y seis del presente haviendo Su Magestad [Philip II] [...] salió para Villa Buyn [Vila Boim] dos leguas de Elves donde estava por orden de su Magestad la Duquesa de Bergança [Catarina of Bragança] aguardando. Yvan con su Magestad todos los grandes y cavalleros de su corte. Y antes que su Magestad llegase ala dicha fortaleza un quarto de legua della salió a receberle el Duque de Bergança [João I, Duke of Bragança; 1543–1583] muy acompañado de muchos fidalgos [...] y como llegó a su Magestad scapeo y su Magestad mandò parar el coche y llegó el Duque a besarle la mano. Su Magestad se levantò de su asiento que hera en el estribo del coche y le quitò el sombrero y estuvo en pie mientras quel Duque le habló. [...] Tenia la cassa una escalera muy estrecha por donde se havia de subir y al cavo della estava con poco descanso la puerta de la sala donde estava la Duquesa con dos hijos suyos pequeños [...] hasta llegar a la camara de la Duquessa la qual estava adornada de terciopelo negro y damasco della mesma color y un dosel de tela de oro y negro, donde se quedò su Magestad y el cardenal [Archduke Albrecht] solos con ella sentado su Magestad en una silla devaxo del dicho dosel y la Duquessa en una almohada hazia un lado y el cardenal en otra silla sentado. [...] donde en el entretanto se le sirvió una muy sumptuosa merienda de diversas conservas y empanadas de diversos pescados y lo mesmo hizo con todos los que alli fueron.”

48 Lisbon, BA, Ms. 51–II–25, fol. 141 (1581): [...] *ontem mandou a Senhora D. Caterina hua prezente ao Principe Cardeal que dizem val mais de 60,000 mil cruzados a saber um coco de Maladiva guarneçida de perolas, e pedraria, e pedras bazares muito boas, e sem pares de luvas de ambra, e sem lenços e com isto algumas couzas doses [doces] / “Yesterday, the Lady Catarina sent a present to the Prince Cardinal [Archduke Albrecht] said to be worth 60,000 *cruzados*, namely a coconut from the Maldives garnished with pearls and precious stones, very good bezoar stones, 100 pairs of amber–scented gloves, 100 handkerchiefs, and with this, some sweets.”*

49 Cf. Jordan Gschwend and Beltz, 2010, pp. 76–77, cat. 22 (entry written by Jordan Gschwend). It is not documented how this casket later disappeared from the Spanish royal collection in Madrid. Later provenance includes the collection of Albert Rofe, Esq.

50 Beer, 1893, p. LI: No. 718. *Otro cofrecillo de marphil [marfil] con tapador tumbado, labrado todo por fuera de diversos animals, ramos y hojas de medio reliebe [relieve] en el mismo marphil, con cerradura, llave y aldavon y visagras de oro; en el tapador quatro barillas y por las esquinas y lo bajo a la redonda guarneçido toda de las dichas barillas de oro a manera de moldura, sembrado todo de rubies menudas muy espesos y en la cerradura quatro zaphires pequeños entre los ruvies [rubies]. Entregolo su Magestad [Philip II] en Helbas [Elvas]. No. 28 en cofre no. 5. Tasada en ciento y cinquenta ducados.*

51 Annemarie Jordan, *Portuguese Royal Collections (1505–1580). A Bibliographic and Documentary Survey*, MA Thesis (Washington, D. C.: George Washington University, 1984), pp. 11–15. More recently, Jordan Gschwend, 2021b, pp. 431–446 (with previous bibliography), who traces the survival of African and Asian objects from the Lisbon court today in the Schloss Ambras *Kunstammer* in Innsbruck.





After Bhuvanekabāhu VII

Bhuvanekabāhu's unexpected death in 1551 altered Queen Catarina's relationship with the island of Ceylon. His commissions of Kōṭṭē imperial fans and caskets ceased altogether, and although the queen maintained her ties with Ambassador Śrī Rāmaraksa Paṇḍita, Catarina's direct access to luxury ivories, rock-crystal objects, jewellery and precious gemstones in Kōṭṭē had all but evaporated. Master ivory carvers abandoned Kōṭṭē after its fall and destruction in 1565, moving to other court cities and centres of production across the island, where the manufacture of ivory fans underwent a transformation influenced by the Portuguese exportation of Far Eastern folding fans to Ceylon and other hotspots in Portuguese Asia, as seen below.

The Goa-Lisbon run and the circulation of Asian fans

Portugal's capture of Malacca in 1511 proved fortuitous, opening a gateway for direct trade with the Far East. Networks linked Portugal to Goa, Cochin, Malacca, Japan and China. Asian fans from different centres of production were soon exported to Lisbon in great quantities. The global trade network set up by the Portuguese created an ideal platform where luxury goods, commodities and exotica were exchanged between continents, and across vast distances. Lisbon became the commercial hub, where foreign customs and fashions were readily adopted.⁵²

Fans were considered rare accessories in Renaissance Europe, symbols of elevated social rank. In Lisbon's shops, fans made from imported silk and other textiles, African ostrich feathers, and feathers from exotic Indian and New World birds, could be purchased. Chinese and Japanese folding fans took the Lisbon court by storm after 1511, as did large paper fans with black lacquer guards, manufactured in the mysterious Ryukyu kingdom, having made their way to Portugal after 1542. At this date, the Portuguese learned of the existence of a chain of islands off the mainland coast of China, which were then known as the *Lequios* (or *Lequeos*) or *Liúqiú* in Chinese. The Ryukyu Islands, today the Okinawa Prefecture, played an influential role in the evolution and diffusion of folding fans within the Japanese archipelago and beyond to India and Portugal. The Portuguese adopted the word *leque* to designate folding fans imported from this kingdom. *Abanos lequeos* were soon in great demand at the Lisbon court and became the most prestigious global item royal and aristocratic women could possess at this date. Portuguese *infantas* began holding Japanese or Ryukyuan folding fans in their right hands in imitation of Muromachi samurai and feudal lords (*daimyō*), as in this 1552 portrait of Infanta Maria of Portugal by Anthonis Mor [fig. 21]. While, prominent Portuguese officials walked in Renaissance Goa under large parasols, carrying folding fans as part of their formal attire.

Isabella of Portugal: Portuguese Infanta, Queen of Spain, and Holy Roman Empress

Beginning with the reign of Manuel I, Chinese folding fans became exclusive dress accessories reserved for royal women. The marriages of Portuguese brides to Habsburg rulers in the first half of the sixteenth century helped spread their popularity. Manuel I's daughter, Infanta Isabella of Portugal (1503–1539), brought to Spain two types of Chinese fans in her trousseau when she married Emperor Charles V in 1526. In her *post-mortem* inventory redacted in 1539, she owned three fans: an ivory *brisé* fan, a paper, and a silk fan from China, all three of

⁵² Jordan Gschwend, 2019, pp. 34–53.

Figs. 17–20 (pp. 44–47) – Casket, Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), Kōṭṭē, c. 1540–1551; carved ivory, gold, rubies, sapphires, and rock crystal (11.0 x 18.0 x 11 cm). Private collection © photo: Guillaume Benoit

Fig. 21 – Anthonis Mor, *Infanta Maria of Portugal, Duchess of Viseu*, Portugal, 1552; oil painting on canvas (99.0 x 85.0 cm), Madrid, Patrimonio Nacional, Monasterio de las Descalzas Reales, inv. PN 822 © Patrimonio Nacional



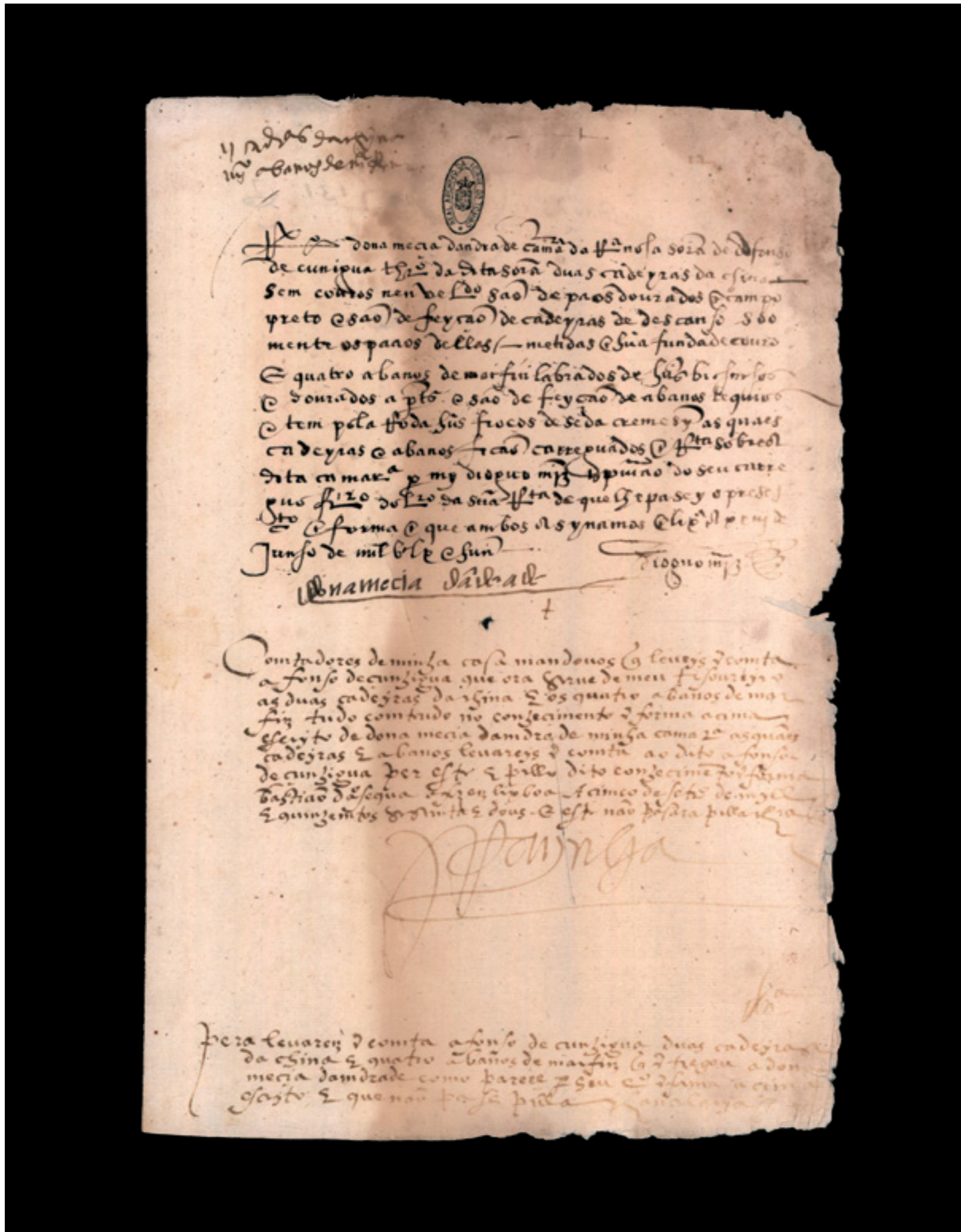


Fig. 23 - Princess Juana of Austria in Philip Hainhofer, *Philippi Hainhoferi Relatio ober seine in des Hertzogen Wilhelms in Bayern namen nach Eystett verrichte Reise*, 1611; gouache on paper (32.0 x 21.0 cm). Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, Heinemann-Nr. 2256, fol. 194 © Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel



Fig. 24 - After Jean Jacques Boissard, *Venetian Women in Habitos variarum orbis gentium*, 1581, pl. 6; engraving on paper (27.9 x 76.5 cm). London, Royal Collection, inv. RCIN 1075214 © Royal Collection Trust

which folded, and were later sold at her estate auction.⁵³ Isabella's *brisé* fan, from the French, meaning "broken", was made of decorated ivory blades held together by a ribbon, and is the earliest documented Chinese fan of this type described in a Renaissance inventory. Decades later in 1561, Queen Catarina acquired four Chinese ivory fans. The queen's mandate underscored how her *brisé* fans, "folded like fans from the Lequios" (*de feycão de abanos lequios*), with ivory blades gilded and embellished with small animals (*bichinhos*), its pierced ends tied together with crimson silk threads and decorative tassels [fig. 22].⁵⁴

Empress Isabella also owned other types of Asian, as well as European fans. This watercolour, executed by the Augsburg art dealer and diplomat, Philip Hainhofer, in 1611, and published here for the first time [fig. 23], replicates a, now lost, portrait of her daughter, Juana of Austria (1535-1573). Once located in the portrait gallery of the Wittelsbach summer residence at Dachau, this watercolour presents an early depiction of Princess Juana at the age of thirteen, the original portrayal perhaps painted in Valladolid, Spain, c. 1548, by an unknown

53 They were valued from half a ducat to three ducats each. Cf. Checa, 2010, vol. 2, p. 1856: *Un aventador de marfil labrado que se coje tasado en tres ducados. Vendiose [...] al príncipe de Oranje; Un aventador de la China de hechura de los de papel dorado e azul tasado en medio ducado. Vendiose a Diego Guiterrez; Un aventador de raso negro [...] "de hechura de los de papel" de la mesma manera que el suso [dicho] tasado en tres reales. Vendiose [...] a Diego de Pila / "one worked ivory fan which folds appraised at three ducats. Sold to the Prince of Orange [René of Châlon, 1519-1544]. One fan from China with gold and blue paper appraised half a ducat. Sold to Diego Guiterrez. One black silk fan "made like the paper fans" and just like the one above, valued at three reales. Sold to Diego de Pila.* Isabella's ivory folding fan incorrectly identified as Ceylonese by M. J. Redondo Cantera, "Las improntas lusa y oriental en la recámara de la emperatriz Isabel de Portugal," in *Las relaciones discretas entre las Monarquías Hispana y Portuguesa: Las Casas de las Reinas (Siglos XV-XIX)*. Actas del Congreso Internacional, Madrid, 2007, eds. José Martínez Millán and María Paula Marçal Lourenço (Madrid: Polifemo, 2008), vol. 3, pp. 1555-1557, at p. 1557, where Cantera compares Isabella's ivory fan, without any evidence, to KHM, KK 4751.

54 Lisbon, TT, Corpo Cronológico (hereafter CC), Parte I, maço 106, doc. 10 (Lisbon, 23 June, 1561): *quatro abanos de marfil labrados de huns bichinhos e dourados a partes e são de feycão de abanos lequios e tem pola roda huns frocos de seda carmesym.*

Fig. 22 - Lisbon, Torre do Tombo, Corpo Cronológico, Parte I, maço 106, doc. 10 © DGLAB



court painter.⁵⁵ Juana holds in her right hand a flag fan (*moscador* in Spanish), which imitates an Italian *ventuolo*, much in the same manner newly-wed Venetian brides held flag fans made from parchment or lace [fig. 24].⁵⁶ In 1539, Juana inherited from her mother’s estate, a tortoise-shell fan made in India, *un moscador de la India*, which she took with her when she moved to the Lisbon court in 1552,⁵⁷ and which may perhaps be the same one depicted in this Hainhofer watercolour.⁵⁸

Luxury folding fans made for export

After 1565, the political and diplomatic incentives to create expensive, opulently carved fans had died with Bhuvanekabāhu VII and the dispersal of his royal Kōṭṭē workshops. Ivory carvers now looked to and were inspired by trade items, especially Chinese, Japanese and Ryukyuan folding fans. A rare folding fan made after the mid-sixteenth century, today in the Bibliothèque nationale de France in Paris (hereafter BnF), which originally had eleven blades, was modelled by Sinhalese craftsmen after Far Eastern fans exported across Portuguese Asia [figs. 25–26].⁵⁹ It comprises miniature ivory plaques, many “cut out” to create decorative patterns, with tooled, gilt-leather scrollwork incised with ornamental foliage. The intricate, openwork carving of the diamond lozenges and the individual squares are made to resemble lace or embroidery, depicting stylized animals. These fans replicate the foliage, or vines (*liya vāla*), filled with birds and animals that profusely decorate contemporary Ceylonese caskets and writing desks made for export.⁶⁰ The handle is punctuated with gold accents in the form of openwork stars or flowers. The iconography carved here, the phoenix (not unlike the mythological Chinese bird, *fēng-huáng*), the double-headed solar eagle (*bhēruṇḍa pakṣiyā*),⁶¹ sacred, immortal geese (*haṁsa*), and mythological animals (lion-birds, *simha-serapendiyā*), are typical motifs. We are confronted with an extraordinary hybrid fan, an example of the dynamic, cross-cultural exchange between India, Ceylon and the Far East.

A portrait painted c. 1610, by a follower of Markus Geeraerts the Younger, captures in paint, a similar, latticework hybrid Ceylonese fan, acquired in England around 1600 [figs. 27–28].

55 Philip Hainhofer (1578–1647), *Relatio ober seine in des Hertzogen Wilhelms in Bayrn namen nacher Eystett verrichte Raise*, 1611, Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, Cod. Guelf. 23.3 Aug. 2°, gouache on paper, 32 x 21 cm, fol. 194r. Inscribed: [...] 4. Soll Joana Emanueli Portugal R. [sic; Rex] nupta, Caroli V. filia... Juana married the Portuguese heir, Prince João in 1552, but he died prematurely two years later in 1554 and never became King (Rex) of Portugal as stated in Hainhofer’s inscription. See as well, the unpublished Ph.D dissertation by Anne Langenkamp, *Philipp Hainhofers Münchner Reisebeschreibungen. Ein Kritische Ausgabe* (Berlin: Technischen Universität, 1990), p. 122, pp. 200–201, n. 97 and p. 208, n. 315.

56 After Jean Jacques Boissard, illustrator (1528–1602) and Caspar Rutz, publisher, *Habitus variarum orbis gentium, Plate with Venetian Women*, 1581, 27.9 x 76.5 x 6 cm (open), London, Royal Collection Trust, RCIN 1075214.

57 This fan listed in a 1553 inventory taken of Juana’s wardrobe in Lisbon. See Madrid, Archivo de Palacio, Monasterio de las Descalzas Reales, Descalzas Reales, F/8, fol. 41: *un moscador de la yndia de conchas de colores con manijillas de plata tasado en un ducado* / “A Indian fly swatter made from colored tortoiseshell with small silver handles valued at one ducat.”

58 Valladolid, AGS, Contaduría Mayor de Cuentas, 1ª época, leg. 953, fol. 137, cited in Checa, 2010, vol. 2, p. 2207: *un abano para amostar es de concha de Tortuga con dos asicas de plata*. This fan cited again in Juana’s 1573–1574 *post-mortem* inventory in Pérez Pastor, 1914, p. 337, entry no. 110: *Un amoscador de la India, de tortuga, con dos engastes de plata, guarnescido alrededor de seda de colores, metido en una caja de haya; tasado en 750 mrs* / “One tortoiseshell fly swatter made in India with two silver mounts trimmed with colored silk, placed in a beechwood box; valued at 750 maravedís.”

59 Diane de Poitiers (1500–1566), the mistress of King Henri II, is traditionally reputed to be the original owner. Incorporated as state property in 1790 during the French Revolution.

60 Jordan Gschwend and Beltz 2010, p. 121, cat. 52 (entry written by Jordan Gschwend).

61 The double-headed eagle was a heraldic device displayed on the Ceylonese flag of the Three Korales, as well as, in the arms of the Order of Hermit Friars of Saint Augustine. Coomaraswamy, 1956, p. 85.

Fig. 25–26 (pp. 52–53) – Folding fan (recto, and verso), Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), c. 1550–1600; carved and gilt ivory, and gilt leather (32.0 cm in length, closed). Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, département des Monnaies, médailles et antiques, inv. 55-335 © Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris



Figs. 27–28 – Circle of Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger, *Lady Mary Neville, née Sackville*, England, London, c. 1610; oil on panel (113.3 x 86 cm). London, The Weiss Gallery © The Weiss Gallery, London; and Hugo Miguel Crespo (detail)

Displaying identical stylistic characteristics and construction with gilded, tooled leather and thin ivory blades, as the BnF fan above, Sinhalese sacred geese (*haṁsa*) and lions (*simha*) are clearly visible across two different rows. The lower blades depict openwork stars and heraldic coats-of-arms as the fan discussed below. This English lady proudly holds in her right hand a global Sinhalese fan as a reflection of her wealth, privilege, and elevated social status.

A comparable, equally rare, hybrid folding fan, exhibited for the first time at the Museum Rietberg in 2010 (see fig. 6), demonstrates the ingenuity of the Sinhalese carver and the impact of Chinese *brisé* fans.⁶² European imagery and personages are melded here with Sinhalese motifs [fig. 29]. Comprising of eleven blades made from gilded leather with two end guards, intricately carved, thin ivory blades are interspersed in between. Minuscule genre scenes depict the “exotic” Portuguese men and women, seen through the lens of the Sinhalese carver, dressed in typical attire worn in Portuguese Asia. In between, are mini-vignettes of Sinhalese warriors in combat. The Portuguese sit at a table, dine, stand, or are seen hunting lions, elephants, or wild boar. The carver has cleverly cut out patterns of lozenges and stars, creating a latticework effect, imitating filigree metalwork. Immortal geese (*haṁsa*) are seen in the last row, while the blades underneath depict fantastical mermaids, upright lion-birds (*simha-serapendiyā*), and coats-of-arms with the double-headed solar eagle (*bhēruṇḍa pakṣiyā*). The imaginative, sophisticated carving was made to delight, please, and astound the owner, as she or he opened and closed this fan. Made for export to Portugal, and other targeted European markets in England and the nascent Dutch Republic, this particular fan exemplifies the Far Eastern folding fans, which along with Asian dress, Bengali textiles, and

62 Jordan Gschwend and Beltz, 2010, p. 83, cat. 28 (entry written by Jordan Gschwend).

Portuguese lace exported from Goa to Sri Lanka, impacted workshops in Ceylon after 1580, and where Luso-Asian (along with Chinese and Japanese) forms, styles and traditions merged.

In a time marked by political correctness, it may seem bizarre to devote a whole book to objects carved from elephant ivory, even if these were made several centuries ago in an altogether different ecological context alien to our own. It is known and has been sufficiently emphasised in recent decades, that the use of ivory as a carving material necessarily involves the death (not always the slaughter) of an elephant.⁶³ Even though there were many thousands of elephants across the island of Sri Lanka in earlier times, this animal was given complete protection by royal decree. As a result, without the king's permission, no elephant could be caught, killed, or injured, and the death penalty was imposed on all offenders. Sacred to Buddhism and protected by the king's law, elephants were not killed for their ivory in Sri Lanka. Only the king's prized tuskers, bulls with large tusks from the Sri Lankan subspecies (*Elephas maximus maximus*), and those granted by the monarch to important royal temples provided large ivory tusks.⁶⁴ Royal and temple treasuries were filled with raw tusks from naturally deceased elephants, from which the most important, special ritual objects and architectural decorations could be made. It is not known, although likely, if ivory from African elephants (more suitable for carving), traded via Portuguese merchants, was used for carving the objects discussed in this book. Whatever the case, recent chemical and genetic analysis has shown that sixteenth-century trade in African ivory promoted by the Portuguese was carried out with material provided by local population in Western and Eastern Africa. This locally fuelled trade is unlike the massively destructive nineteenth- and twentieth-century trade in ivory promoted by European colonial powers which, alongside present-day poaching, has contributed enormously to the decimation of countless animals, leading elephants to the brink of extinction.

⁶³ For a politically charged, rough perspective, see the recent exhibition catalogue by Grit Keller, Alberto Saviello and Daniel Tyradellis, eds., *Terrible Beauty. Elephant-Human-Ivory* (Berlin: Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss-Hirmer Verlag, 2021).

⁶⁴ In contrast to tusks, small tushes, which may be present in male and female Sri Lankan elephants, were also used as raw material for carving. See Martha Chaiklin, "Ivory in early modern Ceylon: a case study in what documents don't reveal," *International Journal of Asian Studies*, 6.1 (2009), pp. 37-63.

Fig. 29 - Folding fan (recto, detail), Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), c. 1550-1600; carved and gilt ivory, and gilt leather (25.0 cm in length, closed). Private collection © Museum Rietberg, Zürich; photo: Rainer Wolfsberger

Fig. 30 (following double page) - Sri Lankan elephant, Yala National Park, Sri Lanka
Like most of the elephants in Sri Lanka, the animal seen here is deprived of tusks. Only the king's prized tuskers, bulls with large tusks from the Sri Lankan subspecies, and those granted by Sinhalese monarchs to important royal temples provided large ivory tusks. Royal and temple treasuries were filled with raw tusks from naturally deceased elephants, from which the most important, special ritual objects and architectural decorations were fashioned.







Through the Eye of the Peacock

Imperial Ceylonese Fans for the Queen of Portugal

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Kōttē–Lisbon, 1541–1543: Diplomatic encounters and strategic alliances

The first Asian embassy to ever visit Europe arrived in Portugal after a six-month sea voyage which first began in Colombo. On 18 August 1541, the captain-major of the Portuguese fleet, Francisco de Sousa Tavares, departed from Goa on the *São Filipe* bound for Lisbon. On board was a delegation from the kingdom of Kōttē, located then in the south-western sector of the island of Ceylon, in present-day Sri Lanka.¹ In 1506, the “Island of the Lions”, was reached by the Portuguese during their greatest period of maritime expansion in the Indian Ocean, and an initial commercial alliance was signed with the King of Kōttē, Bhuvanekabāhu VII (1521–1551), in the 1520s. Ceylon would provide the Portuguese with live elephants,² aromatic woods, spices (cinnamon),³ rock crystal, jewellery, and precious gemstones.⁴ One later, anonymous account written from Ceylon on 28 November 1552, reported to the Lisbon court on the variety of precious stones available there, eagerly sought out by royals, gem traders and merchants:

“[...] there are precious stones, primarily rubies, of the finest that can be found elsewhere, there are topazes and cat’s eyes, these are the biggest stones on this island, there are many other sapphires and diamonds but not so fine.”⁵

By 1518, the island was a principal stop on the Portuguese trade routes to East Asia.⁶ In the early 1540s, Bhuvanekabāhu sought to solidify his suzerainty over Ceylon, attempting to unify all the kingdoms under one ruler, and claim for himself the much-coveted imperial title of

All translations below by the author.

- ¹ Śri Jayawardhanapura Kōttē, today the administrative capital of Sri Lanka.
- ² Lisbon, TT, NA, 876, no. 15, letter from Cristóvão Lourenço Caracão to King João III, written from Cochin, 13 January 1522, about the cinnamon and elephant contracts with Bhuvanekabāhu VII, King of Ceylon.
- ³ For the cinnamon contract signed in Ceylon on 15 October 1533 between Portuguese representatives and Bhuvanekabāhu’s court see Lisbon, TT, CC 1, maço 51, doc. 96. Also, Crespo, 2019, pp. 38–39.
- ⁴ Since 1518, during the reign of Manuel I (r. 1498–1521), Ceylonese rulers had to pay the Portuguese court a tribute of precious stones, presented once a year to the Portuguese governor in Colombo or the Portuguese Viceroy in Goa, in a sandalwood casket mounted with silver. See Lisbon, BA, Ms. 54–XIII–19, no. 93: *Caixa No. 5. Coffre em madeira de Sandalo ornamentado de prata que servio para encertar e apresentar o tributo annual de pedras preciosas ao Governador Portuguez de Ceylão pelo Rei de Colombo. Em troca de protecção que o rei D. Manuel concedeu a este Príncipe, elle tinha coventionado com o III Vice Rei das Indias Portuguezas D. Lopez Soares Alvarenga em 1518 de pagar este imposto deste genero parece ter sido recebido pelo governador de Colombo, D. João Silveira (copiado em Ceylão) / “Box No. 5. Coffre made of sandalwood with silver mounts which served to enclose and present the annual tribute of precious stones to the Portuguese Governor of Ceylon by the King of Colombo. In exchange for the protection that King Manuel [I] granted this Prince, and had agreed with the III Viceroy of the Portuguese Indies, D. Lopez Soares Alvarenga in 1518, to pay this tax of this kind, [and] it seems to have been received by the governor of Columbus, D. João Silveira (copied in Ceylon).”*
- ⁵ Lisbon, BA, Ms. 49–IV–49, fol. 159: [...] *ha pedras preciosas, primeramente Rubis, dos mais finos que se achão em outra nemhuã parte, ha topazes e olhos de gato, estas são as mayores pedras desta Ilha, ha outros muitas çafiras e diamantes mas não tão finas.*
- ⁶ See Lisbon, BA, Ms. 50–V–34, fol. 176, which describes the island of Ceylon as a source of cinnamon, gems, areca nuts (betel nuts), and elephants.

Fig. 1 – Indian peafowl, Udawalawe National Park, Sri Lanka © Russell Scott



cakravartin, symbolic and supreme overlord of the island.⁷ He seized control of Kōṭṭē in 1521 after assassinating his father, Vijayabāhu VII (c. 1445–1521). As self-proclaimed “emperor”, Bhuvanekabāhu sought to assert his superiority over his two younger brothers, Rayigam Baṇḍāra (d. 1538) and Māyādunnē, the ruler (*rājā*) of Sitāvaka (r. 1521–1578).⁸ Māyādunnē, who had helped Bhuvanekabāhu kill their father, continually challenged his older brother’s supremacy, in the hopes of taking over the crown of Kōṭṭē (see Introduction). In order to frustrate Māyādunnē’s plans, Bhuvanekabāhu chose his grandson, Dharmapāla Asthana (later known as João Dharmapāla Peria Baṇḍāra, b. 1539; r. 1551–1597) as his heir. Anxious to secure the future of his throne, Bhuvanekabāhu decided to send his Brahman chaplain, his *purōhita*,⁹ Śrī Rāmaraksa Paṇḍita, on Tavares’s vessel bound for Portugal.

Bhuvanekabāhu looked to King João III of Portugal (r. 1521–1557) [fig. 2] to intervene and act as a mediator in this contentious situation between Kōṭṭē and Sitāvaka. His objective, as a key vassal in Ceylon to the Portuguese crown, was to have João III crown an effigy of his grandson Dharmapāla. As Bhuvanekabāhu’s religious alter ego, the presence of his ambassador, Śrī Rāmaraksa, in Lisbon for this ceremonial “coronation” was essential for the successful outcome of his dynastic plans.¹⁰ In early 1542, sometime between January and June, this remarkable embassy which included Portuguese officers from Colombo, a Kōṭṭē courtier and Bhuvanekabāhu’s trusted servant, Salapuri Arachchi,¹¹ and his Portuguese interpreter, António Pereira, disembarked in Lisbon.¹²

In 1542, the Lisbon court was confronted for the first time with the presence of an élite Asian “other,” a high-ranking courtier and Brahmin priest, while at the same time witnessing the complex rituals and religious ceremonies practised by the Kōṭṭē court, within their own royal spaces in the Lisbon royal palace, the Paço da Ribeira [fig. 3]. The most representative room of this residence was the Manueline *sala grande*, later known as the Sala dos Tudescos. This expansive hall was reserved by John III and Catherine of Austria to celebrate all major state events and festivities during their reign, which room was decorated with a monumental tapestry cycle. *The Conquest of India* was the single most important commission of Manuel I’s reign. Twenty-six Flemish tapestry panels executed in Tournai in 1510, in the manner of ancient Roman *trionfi*, celebrated the Portuguese discovery of India and glorified Manuel as the new Caesar of a global trade empire. This cycle specifically ordered for the *sala grande* of the

7 Pieris, 1920, pp. 52–55; Schwabe, 1999, pp. 233–238; Strathern, 2007, pp. 25–26; Jordan Gschwend, 2010b, pp. 33–45. More recently, Biedermann, 2018, p. 90, for the definition of *cakravartin* in sixteenth-century Sri Lanka.

8 Berkwitz 2019, pp. 1–22, investigated Sri Lankan views of divine kingship, demonstrating how the figure of the Buddhist king was developed in ways that borrowed from and were shaped by the transfer of Hindu notions of kings and gods around the period of intensive Hindu interventions into the island of Ceylon from the tenth to thirteenth centuries. Berkwitz underscores that by incorporating much of the language and notions of divine kingship from the Hindu tradition, Sri Lankan Buddhism made kingship into a dynamic site for cultural borrowing. As a result, notions of divine kingship impacted the manner in which Sri Lankan kings were creatively conflated with deities.

9 Biedermann, 2005, p. 199: “a *purōhita* was part of the Hindu tradition familiar to the courts of Ceylon of having a religious *maior* ego next to the king, a personification of the sacred dimension of kingship.”

10 Biedermann, 2007, pp. 151–152, for a discussion of the mixed cultures of Ceylon (Buddhist and Hindu) with an explanation of the state religion, Theravāda Buddhism. Theravāda Buddhism (the Doctrine of the Elders) is based on the earliest recorded version of the Buddha’s doctrine, the *Tripitaka* (the Threefold Canon), and emphasizes meditation and the monastic life. Cf. Geiger, 1960, p. 128, for the importance of a *brāhmana* present at the coronation ceremony of a Sinhalese king, when Brahmanical rites were observed.

11 Or Salapuwa Araatie. Valentijn, 1978, p. 235.

12 Strathern, 2007, p. 43 and p. 50, n. 11. Pereira who resided in Colombo, had mastered Tamil, and remained at the Kōṭṭē court in Bhuvanekabāhu’s service as Portuguese interpreter. Sousa Viterbo, 1904, p. 67.

Fig. 2 – Anthonis Mor, *King João III of Portugal*, Portugal, 1552; oil painting on panel (101.0 x 81.0 cm). Madrid, Museo de la Fundación Lázaro Galdiano, inv. 8481 © Fundación Lázaro Galdiano, Madrid



Fig. 3 – António de Holanda, *Genealogical tree of the kings and queens of Portugal from Afonso Henriques to Afonso II* (detail showing Lisbon’s waterfront with the Paço da Ribeira on the centre left) in António de Holanda, and Simon Bening, *Genealogy of the Royal Houses of Spain and Portugal*, Portugal, Lisbon and Southern Netherlands, Bruges, c. 1530–1534; gouache and gold on parchment (58.0 x 43.0 cm), London, British Library, inv. Additional 12531, fol. 7 © By permission of the British Library

Lisbon palace, served as a woven panorama honouring the Portuguese discoveries and conquests. Throughout the sixteenth century, these weavings were symbolically displayed here, as a visual flagship and symbol of the illustrious Avis dynasty. The coronation of Dharmapāla held in the *sala grande*, outfitted with such spectacular and politically charged tapestries, certainly impressed the Sinhalese embassy.

Before the Portuguese monarchs and the entire Lisbon court, Dharmapala was anointed and crowned King of Kōṭṭē by the priest Śrī Rāmaraksa, according to Ceylonese religious rites, the *abhiṣeka* (or “sprinkling”) ritual [fig. 4].¹³ Portuguese kings were not crowned but anointed, then invested into their office. The symbolic presence of Queen Catarina at this event was particularly significant, as the consorts of Sinhalese kings, the *mahiṣī* (“Chief Queens”), were always present at the *abhiṣeka*.¹⁴

“They [the embassy] carried goodly presents, and in a rich coffer an image of that prince [Dharmapāla] in solid gold, with the crown studded with costly gems in his hand wherewith to be crowned [and anointed] in effigy.”¹⁵

This Sinhalese “coronation” was proclaimed a public holiday by João III, and in honour of the high-ranking Asian visitors, bull-fights were staged in the large square, the Terreiro do Paço, in front of the royal palace (see fig. 3), and other festivities were celebrated elsewhere in the city. The Lisbon court marvelled at foreign rulers from distant lands honouring and subjecting themselves to their king.¹⁶

13 Berkwitz 2019, p. 8 and p. 15: “the ritual *abhiṣeka* coronation had the specific function of transforming the king from a man into a god in the view of his subjects”. It is a consecration rite based on the classical Indian ceremony of coronation, in which the monarch is sprinkled with water or other liquid, signifying a change in status.

14 After a king in Ceylon was consecrated, he then personally anointed the queen. Geiger, 1960, p. 118.

15 Queyroz, 1930, 3, p. 234, and De Silva, 1975, p. 72 (citing Pieris, 1920, p. 52): “A beautiful image of the Prince was then prepared: the head was of ivory and gold and the body of silver; in its hand the figure carried a jewelled crown studded with the finest gems of Ceylon, and the whole was placed in a rich coffer and despatched to Portugal in the care of a Brahmin Minister named Panditer, who reached Lisbon after a tedious voyage about August 1541 [sic; 1542].”

16 Slomann, 1937, p. 358.

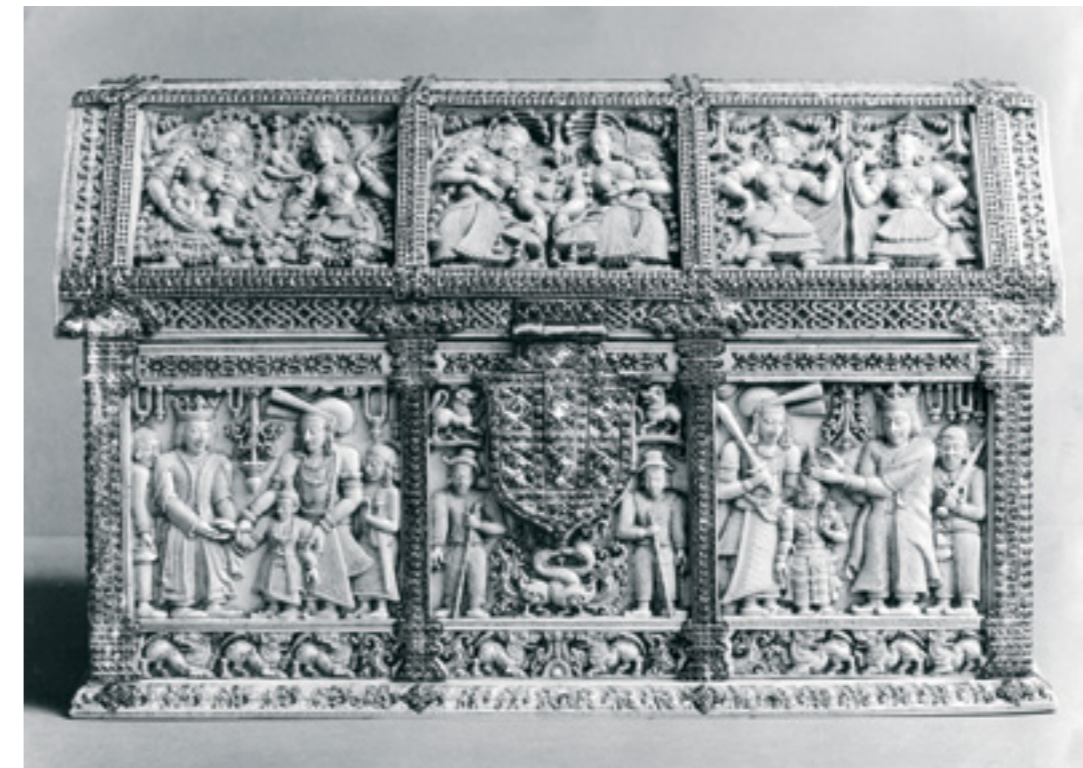


Fig. 4 – The “Coronation Casket” (front), Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), Kōṭṭē, c. 1541; carved ivory, gold, rubies, and sapphires (18.0 x 30.0 x 16.0 cm), Munich, Bayerische Verwaltung der staatlichen Schlösser, Garten und Seen, Residenz München, Schatzkammer, inv. 1241 © München, Bayerische Verwaltung der staatlichen Schlösser, Garten und Seen

The Portuguese monarchs were likewise fascinated with the exoticism of the Kōṭṭē embassy, their dress (crimson *cabayas*) [fig. 5],¹⁷ and the rare gifts of ivory, added by the young elephant bull [fig. 6] bred in captivity the ambassador brought with him.¹⁸ As the anonymous author of the seventeenth-century historical narrative of Sinhalese kings, the *Rājāvaliya*, noted, “Bhuvaneka sent many presents to the king of Portugal”.¹⁹ The presence of the Kōṭṭē ambassador Śrī Rāmaraksa was one prerequisite, the other was Bhuvanekabāhu sending spectacular ivories as “artful ambassadors”, gifts which acted as diplomatic agents on his behalf, ensuring his political agenda would be fulfilled at the Lisbon court.²⁰ These unique ivories underscored Bhuvanekabāhu’s status as “Emperor” of Ceylon, and “embodied a tangible expression” of his goodwill towards the Portuguese crown.²¹ The Kōṭṭē embassy remained in Portugal for slightly over a year, where Śrī Rāmaraksa lived in the intimacy of João III’s court and visited the royal residences outside of Lisbon (Almeirim and Sintra), learning to speak fluent Portuguese. After his return to Ceylon, Śrī Rāmaraksa became a key figure at the Kōṭṭē

17 Red, the colour of purity in India. A *cabaya* was a garment of honour not unlike the *pelote* (robe) worn in Renaissance Portugal. Pieris-Fitzler, 1927, p. 386.

18 This elephant later nicknamed, Süleyman. See Jordan Gschwend 2010a. For Asian elephants in the Lisbon royal stables during the sixteenth century, Jordan Gschwend and Beltz 2010, pp. 127–152, cats. 56–64; Jordan Gschwend, 2017b, pp. 192–203 and pp. 324–329.

19 A Sinhalese history of the island of Ceylon from its legendary beginnings to 1687.

20 Bhuvanekabāhu had written his directives on a palm leaf scroll for João III which is now lost. Pieris, 1920, p. 52.

21 Quoted from Swann, 2021, p. 141, and also pp. 138–161 for the agency of art works, diplomatic gifts and objects from Asia exchanged with the nascent Dutch Republic in the early seventeenth century.



Fig. 6 - Süleyman, the elephant, Northern Italy, Padua or Trent, c. 1552; cast copper alloy, patinated (12.0 x 20.0 x 6.5 cm). Private collection © Tomasso Brothers Fine Art, UK

court, the “foreign specialist” who could best advise Bhuvanekabāhu on Portuguese mercantile, military, and political matters. This unique, global encounter of East and West in the Lisbon royal palace was one of the highlights of João III’s reign.

Royal Artisans

The city of Kōttē, the capital of Bhuvanekabāhu’s kingdom, boasted of a royal workshop where elite ivory carvers and expert goldsmiths created unique works of art, which as a result of this embassy, became objects of great esteem for the Lisbon court. Virtually nothing is known about ivory workshops and ivory production in Kōttē in the sixteenth century, or in other kingdoms of the island, such as Sitāvaka. How many carvers collaborated together on an individual casket or fan? For the ivory combs given Queen Catarina, which were mounted in gold set with rubies, the ivory carver worked hand in hand with the royal goldsmith [fig. 7].²²

Very little information has come down to us regarding the structure and organization of the royal workshops, how commissions were carried out, who controlled their production surely supervised by master carvers, what visual sources or models were available, and lastly how images and motifs circulated. Was Hindu or Buddhist imagery applied according to specific wishes, or was the carver, certainly versant with this complex iconography, left to rely upon

²² For Catarina’s combs see Jordan Gschwend and Beltz, 2010, pp. 57–58, fig. 18a–18b and pp. 88–89, cats. 32–33 (text and entry by Jordan Gschwend), and Lisbon, TT, Fragmentos, Caixa 7, no. 4, c. 1553–1555: *dois pentes de marfim* / “two ivory combs”.

Fig. 5 - Johann Theodor de Bry, *Regis in Candy et Admiralis effigies* (The King of Ceylon and the Dutch admiral, Joris van Spilbergen) in *Indiæ Orientalis Pars Septima* [...], Frankfurt, 1606, pl. X; engraving on paper (21.0 x 31.9 cm). Private collection



Fig. 7 - Comb, Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), Kōttē, c. 1540–1551; carved ivory, gold, rubies, and sapphires (8.0 x 17.0 cm). Munich, Bayerische Verwaltung der staatlichen Schlösser, Garten und Seen, Residenz München, Schatzkammer, inv. I245 © München, Bayerische Verwaltung der staatlichen Schlösser, Garten und Seen; photo: Tanja Mayr, Rainer Hermann

his own imagination and artistic ingenuity? Could copybooks with local designs and patterns, as in artists’ and goldsmiths’ workshops in Europe, have existed?²³ There equally remains the question of Buddhist poets in medieval and early modern Ceylon, and the impact of Sinhalese poetry and inscriptions which eulogize Sri Lankan kings. As Stephen Berkwitz has provocatively underscored, “Sri Lankan kings and their bards inhabited a politico-cultural system where the aesthetic use of figurative language was central to the creation of a king’s reputation. Poets regularly praised kings for being like gods, the moon, mountains, lotuses, and other suggestive images.”²⁴ Interpreted in this way, in what manner, if at all, did panegyric Sinhalese texts impact the iconography of the Kōttē ivories. I posit Bhuvanekabāhu VII did metaphorically image himself as a divine king of Laṅkā (Sri Lanka) in the fans and caskets destined for the Lisbon court.

Other questions regarding the Kōttē ivories equally remain to be resolved. Ceylonese ivories were executed with incredible skill but with simple tools: saws, chisels and rasps, and afterwards finely polished with ivory dust and coarse leaves.²⁵ How long did it take to carve a small casket or a large folding fan? Did one skilled carver carry out a royal commission, or was it a collaborative effort divided amongst several master carvers? For instance, the transparent blades for Catarina’s five Kōttē fans seen below, including the “Pangolin Fan” studied by Crespo in this volume, represent sheer virtuosity and masterful technique, but was this work given to a craftsman who possibly only specialized in the execution of the ivory blades of all nine fans?

23 Most recently, Vassallo e Silva, 2013, p. 99, posited that Ceylonese ivories destined for the Lisbon court were made in Ceylon under directives sent from Portugal, a premise, without any evidence, with which the author does not agree with.

24 Berkwitz, 2019, p. 12.

25 Coomaraswamy, 1956, p. 69; Tilakaseri, 1974, pp. 42–43.



Fig. 8 - Plaque (from a casket), Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), c. 1550–1600; carved ivory (5.0 x 12.0 cm). Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. AK-MAK-1730 © Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum

The ivory carver occupied an important position in Ceylonese society and had the status of a master craftsman in one of the four guilds (*paṭṭal haṭara*) or workshops, to which the best painters, gold and silversmiths also belonged.²⁶ The four were divided as following: *ābharaṇa paṭṭala* or Jewellery Workshop, the *oṭṭuna paṭṭala* or Crown Workshop, the *rankaḍu paṭṭala* or Golden Sword Workshop (armoury), and the *siṃhāsana paṭṭala* or Lion Throne Workshop, to which Sinhalese painters and ivory carvers belonged. A place in the *paṭṭal haṭara* was usually hereditary, artisans coming from the most prominent families of craftsmen. It was a high position, that according to the pioneering historian Ananda Coomaraswamy (1877–1947), came with considerable reward and was thus much desired.²⁷ Craftsmen could move from one *paṭṭala* to another, and to different locations and court cities, depending on what commissions they were working on. Ivory carvers, who were also accomplished in wood carving, worked strictly for the king, securing their coveted positions through their extraordinary skills and versatility. The craft of ivory carving and ivory turning in Ceylon was however differentiated: the ivory carver or *galladdā*, was a multi-faceted craftsman of high rank, belonging to an élite social class known as, *attaḷkāṭayamkarayō*. While, the turner, of lower social rank, belonged to the *vaḍuvō*, his work restricted to the lathe and ivory turning, with his caste known as, *liyana vaḍuvō*.²⁸

The acquisition of a hitherto unknown ivory fragment in 2009, on loan to the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, which once adorned a late sixteenth-century Ceylonese casket raises a multitude of questions [fig. 8]. This plaque which depicts the Hindu god of love and desire, Kama or Kamadeva,

26 Coomaraswamy, 1956, p. 55: “The best of the higher craftsmen (gold and silversmiths, painters and ivory carvers) working immediately for the King formed a close, largely hereditary, corporation of craftsmen called the *Paṭṭal-Hatara* (Four Workshops): These men worked only for the King [...]”

27 Coomaraswamy, 1956, p. 56.

28 Chaiklin, 2009, p. 40: “Turners used lathes to produce round boxes, fan handles and the like.”

and his consort Rati, is signed above in Tamil: *cankaramurttiacari* (“master craftsman Shankaramurti”).²⁹ This is the first time such a “signature” appears on a Ceylonese ivory. But, why is Shankaramurti’s name and status as master referenced here in this particular fragment, while other expertly crafted ivories or jewelled art works manufactured in Kōṭṭē by distinctive artisans remain anonymous?

By 1563, the *fama* of the Kōṭṭē ivory carvers extended well beyond Ceylon. Their mastery was first admired by the Portuguese physician Garcia de Orta (c. 1501–1568), in his *Colóquios dos simples, e drogas e cousas medicinais da India* (*Colloquies on the Simples and Drugs of India*), the first scientific publication dedicated to Asian spices and medicinal drugs printed in Goa: “Those of Ceylon are used to make many polished things which they do in this country, caskets, combs and other things.”³⁰ Not long afterwards, an anonymous Italian chronicler, like Orta, admired the delicate workmanship of Kōṭṭē ivories he had seen Lisbon in 1578: “ivory caskets worked with figures, with gold encrusted with rubies, most delicately carved.”³¹

Sourcing ivory in the sixteenth century

African ivory was preferred by Ceylonese and Indian craftsmen because of its finer grain, and its tendency not to turn yellow.³² Asiatic ivory is whiter and denser in colour, more open in texture and pliable to work, but apt to turn yellow sooner and is not so easy to polish. The quality of African ivory, however, varies according to the regions from where it is obtained. East African ivory (Zanzibar and Mozambique) is softer than ivory from West Africa.³³ When in perfect condition, African ivory, if recently cut, should be of a warm, transparent mellow tint, with as little mottling and appearance of grain as possible.³⁴

Recent investigations undertaken by Pedro Machado have revealed surprising information regarding ivory exports from East Africa to India in the sixteenth century.³⁵ An ivory trade link from Mombasa to Goa, for re-distribution to Ceylon and other parts of India (such as Gujarat in the north-western coastal region), was organized by both Portuguese and South Asian merchants, however, this trade remains to be studied in detail. The figures compiled by Machado for ivory exports from Sofala and Mozambique are astounding: in 1520, 23,400 kilos were exported, in 1546, 121,500 kilos and in 1552, 40,000 kilos.³⁶

Hitherto unknown, is that the Portuguese equally provided Indian Ocean ports with ivory from West Africa. The oldest known shipwreck in Southern Africa was found in Namibia in 2008. Forty tons of cargo, including gold and silver coins, helped identify the ship as the *Bom*

Jesus, a Portuguese *nau* (trading vessel) lost in 1533 while *en route* to India.³⁷ The cargo included 100 elephant tusks. Recent investigations of forty-four tusks, by a scientific team headed by Alida de Flamingh and Ashley Coutu, revealed that this ivory came from African forest elephants (*Loxodonta cyclotis*) rather than their African savannah kin (*Loxodonta africana*). Such habitats surround the Guinean forests in West Africa and correspond with the locations of Portuguese trading ports along this coast, suggesting multiple communities were involved in supplying them with the ivory. Throughout the sixteenth century, ivory was central for the Portuguese maritime trading systems connecting Europe, Africa, and Asia, and this global ivory trade apparently relied as well on extensive West African networks.³⁸

The Portuguese did sell ivory from Ceylon to outposts in Bengal and Pulicat,³⁹ however, the proportion of elephants with tusks (*Elephas maximus zeylanica*), a distinct subspecies of the Asian Elephant (*Elephas maximus maximus*), was relatively small in Ceylon and therefore the export of ivory quite limited.⁴⁰ Elephants in Ceylon remained the king’s exclusive monopoly, as pachyderms were protected by royal decree, and hunting was restricted. Any person who captured, maimed or killed an elephant was given the death penalty. Elephants were used for all important ceremonial and religious occasions and processions, and the king always rode a male (tusker) which he housed in a special royal stable (*hattisala*).

Future scientific and chemical analyses of the Kōṭṭē ivories may determine the origin and provenance of the ivory used to carve the surviving caskets, fans and combs sent to Portugal over a period of twenty years.⁴¹

The art of diplomacy: global ivories, jewels and rock crystals for the Lisbon court

Upon Bhuvanekabāhu’s orders, a selection of intricate ivory caskets, combs, oversized fans with folding blades, perfume sprayers,⁴² rock crystals, and jewellery were carefully prepared in 1540 and 1541, which Śrī Rāmaraksa officially presented King João III, Queen Catarina of Austria (1507–1578) [fig. 9], and other members of the royal family, after his arrival.⁴³ Bhuvanekabāhu ordered and supervised these commissions, and surely intervened in their conception and creation. Once in Portugal, the Kōṭṭē ivories (caskets, combs, fans and rosewater sprinklers), along with his other diplomatic gifts, were housed in the Queen’s chambers and wardrobe (*guarda-roupa*) where they were admired, sometimes taken out of their protective leather cases and boxes, and showcased at

29 Collection of the Society of Friends of Asian Art, Netherlands, on permanent loan to the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam. Acquired in 2009 with support of the SNS Reaal Foundation. I should like to thank Christiaan Jörg for his expertise regarding this panel, facilitating a study image, and for allowing me to read his paper on this fragment.

30 Orta, 1563, *Coloquio 21: Do Ebur ou marfim*, fol. 84v: [...] *o de Ceilão se gasta em cousas muyto polidas, que se fazem na terra de cofres, e pemtes e outras muytas cousas.*

31 Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (hereafter BAV), Urb. Lat. 825, fols. 135–136v: *alcuni cassetini d’avorio lavorati à figure et rimesse d’oro et rubinetti con lavori delicatissimi* / “some ivory caskets worked with figures and mounted with gold and small rubies made with [the most] delicate workmanship.”

32 Kunz, 1916, p. 115: “The preference African ivory enjoys among Indian carvers over that of India or Ceylon is due to the fact that it has a finer grain and is less apt to turn yellow. These superior qualities have been attributed to the better food procurable by the African elephants.”

33 Pal, 1981, p. 73, for the techniques applied in the preparation of ivory tusks for carving.

34 Chaiklin, 2009, pp. 42–23, citing the Sri Lankan historian, Ananda Coomaraswamy: “Ceylon ivory is valued in the East above African on account of its density of texture and delicacy of tint.”

35 I am grateful to Pedro Machado for this personal communication.

36 See Garcia de Orta in Orta, 1563, fol. 84v, for his estimate of the amount of ivory imported from Sofala by the Portuguese and shipped from Goa to China (*os seis mil quintais que vem de Çofala [...] [e] que vai para a China*). 6000 quintais is approximately 352,512 kilos.

37 Werz, 2015, pp. 88–93.

38 De Flamingh, Coutu, *et. al.*, 2021, pp. 621–628. More recently, Coutu and Lane, 2021, pp. 341–374.

39 Tilakasiri, 1974, p. 42, who stated that ivory from Ceylon “excelled all other varieties in density of texture and delicacy of tint.”

40 Chaiklin, 2009, pp. 38–40, especially p. 39: “The percentage of Sri Lankan elephants bearing tusks is unusually small.”

41 A recent study of East African ivory dating to c. 1900 was undertaken by Ashley Coutu, deploying a “multi-isotope approach”, which determined the provenance of elephants. Coutu provides a framework for examining archaeological ivories found in shipwrecks, historical port sites, and museum collections. A comparable study of the Kōṭṭē ivories remains to be systematically undertaken. Coutu, Lee-Thorpe, Collins and Lane, 2016, pp. 1–23.

42 Other ivories given Catarina were ivory perfume or scent sprayers (*esguichos*) garnished with rubies. The latter were masterpieces of ivory turning, with hollow cylindrical bases carved as thin as paper, and a long neck. The thin base could be compressed by slight pressure of the hand and the scent conveyed up the neck. This method, now lost, of turning ivory this thin was a well-kept secret in Ceylon. Cf. Lisbon, TT. NA, 793, 1545–1548, fol. 84: *doss esguychos de marfil guarneçidas d’oro e de Rubizlletes de Çeillon con sus caxas de cuero forrados de dentro de velludo verde som para borrefar* / “Two scent sprayers mounted with gold and tiny rubies from Ceylon in their leather boxes lined with green velvet, to sprinkle [scented water]” transcribed in Jordan, 1994, p. 394.

43 These ivories and other gifts from Kōṭṭē studied at length by the author in Jordan Gschwend and Beltz, 2010. For previous studies of these caskets, see also Keil, 1938, pp. 39–43; Jaffer and Schwabe, 1999, pp. 3–14; Schwabe, 2000, pp. 101–104; Crespo, 2019, pp. 39–41. For newer readings, see Biedermann, 2018, pp. 88–118 (with previous bibliography) and Meegama, 2017a, pp. 113–140. Regarding the latter essay, far too little is known about royal workshops in Renaissance Ceylon, and without any documentation, it remains speculative from which sources ivory carvers actually tapped into for their dense iconography, imagery and motifs deployed in the surviving Ceylonese ivories. I am unable to agree with Meegama’s findings.



Figs. 10-12 – António de Holanda, *Quitação que a Rainha D. Catarina mandou passar a Francisco Velasquez, fidalgo da Casa d'El-Rei que foi seu guarda joias, anno de 1548*, Portugal, Lisbon, 1548; sepia ink and gold on parchment (55.0 x 83.0 cm). Lisbon, Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga, inv. 26 Man © photo: José Pessoa; Paulo Alexandrino

ceremonial and state occasions in the Lisbon royal palace. The ivories, jewels, and rock crystals were certainly esteemed by the Queen for their extraordinary Buddhist and Hindu iconography, breathtaking craftsmanship, and their artistic and political associations with Ceylon, especially with the kingdom of Kōṭṭē.⁴⁴

Śrī Rāmaraksa's embassy was particularly successful in securing that artistic, cultural and diplomatic ties between Kōṭṭē and Lisbon were solidified between Bhuvanekabāhu and Queen Catarina. A splendid illuminated parchment which documents Catarina's collection in 1548 has survived in the Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga in Lisbon [figs. 10–12], and is a unique inventory recording for the first time in a European *Kunstammer* (a chamber of art), the Sinhalese diplomatic gifts she

⁴⁴ For the most recent study on Ceylonese rock crystals and their carving see Crespo, 2015a, pp. 186–211 (with previous bibliography). For the rock crystals presented Catarina between 1542 and 1565, see Jordan Gschwend, 2010c, pp. 53–58, and pp. 57–58. For Ceylonese ivories, rock crystals, jewels, needle cases, sewing implements, and thimbles earmarked for Catarina and the Lisbon court, see Jordan Gschwend, 1996, pp. 103–110; Jordan Gschwend, 2015, pp. 140–161, at pp. 150–155; Crespo, 2015b, pp. 18–23; Jordan Gschwend, 2016, pp. 11–19; and Jordan Gschwend, 2018b, pp. 150–151, cat. 4.13, pp. 154–155, cat. 4.17, pp. 156–158, cat. 4.18, cat. 4.19 and cat. 4.20. For late sixteenth-century Ceylonese ivories made in Kandy for export to Portugal and the Netherlands, see Crespo, 2016, pp. 202–237, cats. 18–21 (with previous bibliography); and Jordan Gschwend, 2021a, pp. 5–8, cat. 2.

Fig. 9 – Anthonis Mor, *Catarina of Austria, Queen of Portugal, 1552–1553*; oil painting on panel (107.0 x 84.0 cm). Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado, inv. P 2109 © Photographic Archive Museo Nacional del Prado

received in 1542.⁴⁵ The close ties Catarina maintained since 1542 with the ambassador Śri Rāmaraksa, King Bhuvanekabāhu VII, and subsequently with his heir, João Dharmapala,⁴⁶ was exceptional, and is evidenced by their frequent, personal correspondence. In a confidential, autograph letter addressed to Catarina, Śri Rāmaraksa described himself as the Queen's "most loyal vassal" and as, "Pandita, Brahmin ambassador of the king of Ceylon" (*Pandita bramene embaixador d'el Rey de Ceilão*),⁴⁷ while Bhuvanekabāhu addressed her in another letter as his, "Queen of Kōttē".⁴⁸ The latter missive, concerning matters related to "his and her Kingdom [of Ceylon]," was sealed with his royal wax seal depicting a lion, the heraldic symbol of the island, which has survived (figs. 13–15).⁴⁹ He signed the letter in Sinhala, extending his respects and subservience to Catarina. No contemporary Queen in Renaissance Europe cultivated such relationships and an exchange of letters with an Asian ruler and a Brahmin priest. Well until the early 1550s, Catarina would continue to receive additional gifts of ivories, jewels, rock crystals, and precious stones from the Kōttē court which she, in turn, gifted her Habsburg and Portuguese relatives.

Lisbon, through Catarina's relations, was linked with the Habsburg, Wittelsbach, and Farnese courts in Brussels, Vienna, Innsbruck, Munich and Parma respectively.⁵⁰ Diplomatic and familial relations were fostered over time and distance through extensive correspondence, resident ambassadors, and, most importantly, through the exchange of rare gifts from distant countries which initially found their way to the Lisbon court. Catarina's advantageous position as Queen of Portugal and its overseas trade empire facilitated the redistribution of ivories, rock crystals, and other prestigious objects from Kōttē. These transfers within her extensive family network explain how outstanding Ceylonese objects entered other European royal collections at this date.

Bhuvanekabāhu's 1542 imperial fan, Queen Catarina, and Schloss Ruhelust in Innsbruck

The most exclusive gift Śri Rāmaraksa brought from Kōttē in 1542 was a large ivory Ceylonese fan made especially for Queen Catarina. It was subsequently described in her 1545–1548 inventory as: "an ivory fan with twenty-two blades, excluding the handle, the top of which is carved with four lions, two on either side" [fig. 16].⁵¹ The lion was one of the four sacred animals of Buddha, and the symbol of the lion race of the Śākya clan (Śākymuni) from which the Lord Buddha descended.⁵²

⁴⁵ See Jordan Gschwend and Beltz, 2010, pp. 94–95, cat. 38 (entry written by Jordan Gschwend).

⁴⁶ Catarina maintained contact with João Dharmapala until 1572, when he sent his servant, Don António, to the Lisbon court to visit the Queen, to whom she rewarded 3000 *reais*. Lisbon, TT, CC 1, maço 110, doc. 31 (August 12, 1572): *Afonso de Freitas Mando-vos que deis a dom Antonio criado de dom João de Ceillão tres mill reais de que lhe faço merce.*

⁴⁷ Lisbon, TT, CC 1, maço 86, doc. 15 (Cochin, 28 January 1551). Also, Pieris-Fitzler, 1927, pp. 228–229 and Strathern, 2007, p. 52: "In 1545 Pandita was known to have boasted of his ties with the Lisbon court and the affairs of the kingdom of Kotte were firmly in his hands."

⁴⁸ Lisbon, TT, CC 1, maço 83, doc. 51 (Kōttē, 11 December 1549).

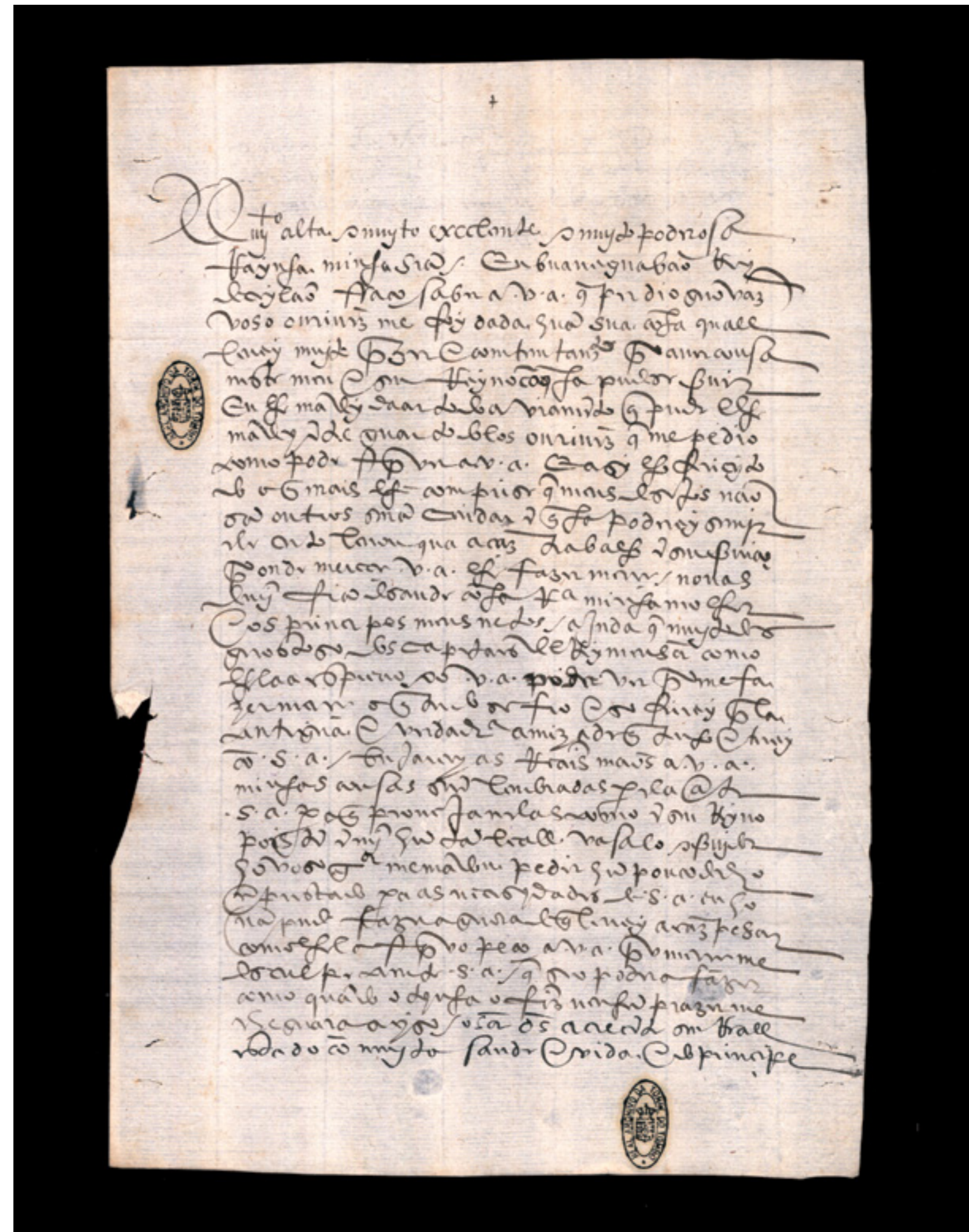
⁴⁹ Ward, 1950, p. 284: "From the Sanskrit for lion we have the origin of the name *Sinhalese*, the lion race. *Sipha* the mythical ancestor of the *Sinhalese* standing for majesty and power." Also, Schurhammer and Voretzsch, 1928, vol. 2, pp. 538–539.

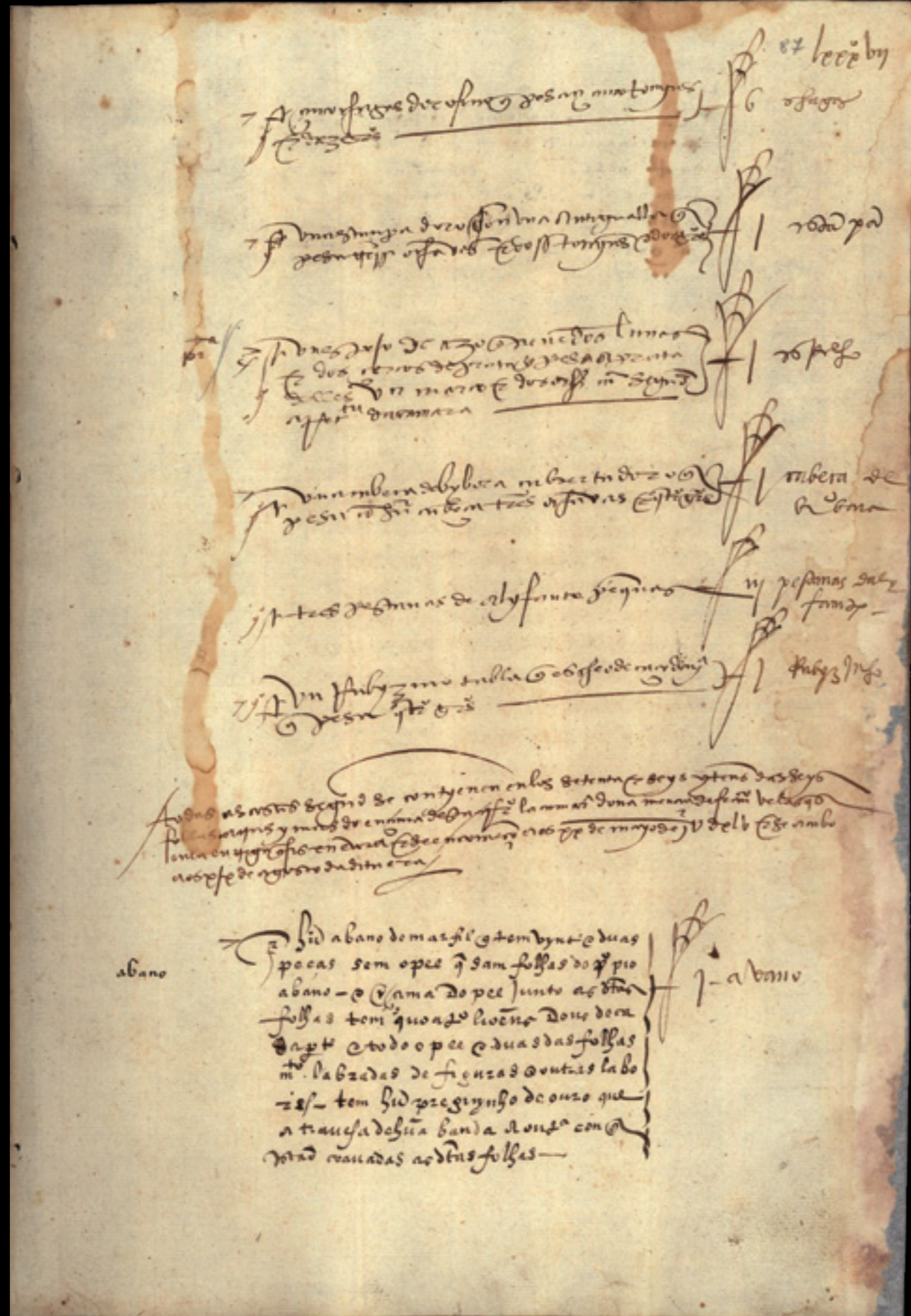
⁵⁰ For the exotica and Queen Catarina's Ceylonese fans in the Farnese collections, see the recent essay by Christian, 2022, pp. 58–67, and p. 107, fig. 38 (with previous bibliography).

⁵¹ Lisbon, TT, NA 793, fol. 87: "hun abano de marfil que tem vnyte e duas peças sem o pee que sam folhas do proprio abano / e em cima do pee junto as ditas folhas tem quarto liôens dous de cada parte e tudo o pee e duas das folhas muito labradas de figuras e outras labores - tem um preguinho de ouro que a travesa de huã banda a outra com que esta cravadas as ditas folhas" / "An ivory fan which has twenty-two pieces [blades] without the leg [handle] which are the blades of the said fan / and on top of the leg, next to the said blades, are four lions, two on either side; the entire leg and two of the blades worked with many figures and other carvings - it has a gold nail which traverses from one side to the other, with which the blades are attached."

⁵² Ward, 1950, p. 280.

Figs. 13–15 (pp. 75–77) – Lisbon, Torre do Tombo, Corpo Cronológico, Parte I, maço 83, doc. 51 © DGLAB





I have identified this fan with the Ceylonese folding fan today in the Kunstkammer of the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, KK inv. 4751 (hereafter KHM, inv. 4751), measuring 57.5 cm in length [fig. 17].⁵³ In 1580, after its trajectory from Kōttē to Lisbon, it came into the possession of Catarina's nephew, Ferdinand II of Tyrol (1529–1595) [fig. 18], entering his satellite collection at his summer residence, Schloss Ruhelust in Innsbruck. It was exhibited there by the Archduke, along with a Afro-Portuguese oliphant (hunting horn) carved with the Portuguese coat of arms;⁵⁴ both the fan and horn were stolen from the Portuguese royal collections.⁵⁵ As considered in the Introduction and here below, when Philip II of Spain incorporated the Portuguese crown, he took select objects from the Dowager Queen's former collection and wardrobe, which were either incorporated into his own collections at the Alcázar palace in Madrid, or given away as gifts to Habsburg relatives and courtiers, in particular his cousin, Ferdinand II.⁵⁶

Catarina's fan was recorded in Ferdinand's 1596 *post-mortem* inventory, described by the official scribe Andreas Unterperger as an "artful Spanish [*sic*] fan [*ventil*] made from deeply carved ivory".⁵⁷ This courtier may not have known about its former prestigious history, nor of its provenance from the Kōttē and Lisbon courts, but he certainly appreciated its spectacular, "exotic" carving when he catalogued it at Schloss Ruhelust (or Ruelust).

This castle, which no longer exists, was entirely built of wood and timber and served as Archduke Ferdinand II's second residence located in the heart of Renaissance Innsbruck.⁵⁸ It was designed and built by his Ticinese court architects, Giovanni Lucchese (1510–1581) and his son, Alberto, for Ferdinand's first wife, Philippine Welsler (1527–1580). Construction began in 1562, with work terminating in 1582. Ruhelust was erected within the older garden complex (*Hofgarten*) situated behind Innsbruck's medieval Hofburg, adjacent the Inn River. A labyrinth, pergolas, six flower and herb parterres (the *Lustgarten*), and an enclosed winter garden (*orangerie*) for exotic fruits and plants were laid out by Philippine. A covered arcade in these gardens was hung with paintings, and niches lined one wall with marble and bronze busts of Roman Emperors. Ferdinand commissioned the Lucchese to add a pleasure pavilion, the *Lusthaus*, a ball court (*Ballhaus*), a bathing house, and a well-stocked *volière* filled with geese and pheasants. The lion house or *Löwenhaus* was reserved

⁵³ See as well the Introduction in this volume. Also, Jordan, 1996, pp. 108–110, fig. 18; Jordan Gschwend, 1999, p. 33, fig. 19. More recently, *Exotica*, 2000, pp. 233–234, cat. 146; Jordan Gschwend and Tudela, 2003, p. 40, fig. 1.2; *Encompassing the Globe*, 2007, p. 134, cat. 1–43; Jordan Gschwend, 2010c, pp. 56–57, fig. 17; Jordan Gschwend, "Ivory Folding Fan," 2018b, pp. 154–155, cat. 4.17.

⁵⁴ This Afro-Portuguese oliphant was located two rooms away from Catarina's Ceylonese fan, in a room reserved by Ferdinand II for diverse, exotic arms, armour and weapons. See Boenheim, 1888, Reg. 5556, p. CCXXXVIII, fol. 72: *In irer durchlaucht krüplamer ober des pads zum Ruelust an der wand gegen der theur uber!* "In his Highness' odds and ends room, above the path to Ruhelust, near the wall opposite the door," and Boenheim, 1888, Reg. 5556, p. CCXL, fol. 77v: *Fuften [...] ain alts helfenbaines geschnitens horn mit ain Portugalesischen wappen!* "[Fifth drawer] An old ivory horn carved with the Portuguese coat of arms." This oliphant has since disappeared, perhaps lost in the 1636 fire which almost completely destroyed Schloss Ruhelust. During Ferdinand II's lifetime, the horn remained in the *Krüplamer* (the "odd and ends" room), stored in the 5th drawer of a long table, along with nine other hunting horns (*Auf der andern lange tafl an der maur gegen dem garten!* "On another long table against the wall facing the garden").

⁵⁵ By 1596, five West African oliphants from the Lisbon court are documented in Ferdinand II's collection. For more on these horns and other African objects (spoons and saltcellar) in former Habsburg collections see Heger, 1899, pp. 101–109, Plates III V, and the Introduction in this volume.

⁵⁶ For the exotica from West Africa and Portuguese Asia, the Ming and Kinrande porcelain from China and Japan, and the Ceylonese ivories from the Lisbon court, which during the Portuguese rule of Philip II of Spain (1580–1583), and his Viceroy, Archduke Albert of Austria (1583–1593), were gifted Ferdinand II of Tyrol, see Jordan Gschwend and Tudela, 2003, pp. 27–44; Jordan Gschwend, 2018a, pp. 141–144, cats. 4.6, 4.7 and 4.8, and Jordan Gschwend, 2021b, pp. 431–446 (with previous bibliography).

⁵⁷ Boenheim, 1888, Reg. 5556, p. CCXXXVII, fol. 66v: *Ain kunstlich Spanisches ventil von durchgeschnitnen helfenbain!* "An artful Spanish [*sic*; Ceylonese] fan made from deeply carved ivory."

⁵⁸ On Ruhelust and its gardens, Monika Frenzel, *Gartenkunst in Tirol von der Renaissance bis heute. Historische Gärten in Nord-, Ost- und Südtirol* (Innsbruck: Tyrolia Verlag, 1998), pp. 29–30 and more recently, Muchka, 2021, pp. 225–227.

Fig. 16 - Lisbon, Torre do Tombo, Núcleo Antigo 793, fol. 87 © DGLAB





Fig. 19 – Matthäus Merian I. *Oenipons Jnsbruckh (View of Innsbruck)*, Germany. Frankfurt am Main, c. 1649; etching on paper (23.8 x 37.7 cm). London, British Museum, inv. 1898.0725.8.1657 © The Trustees of the British Museum

for the exotic felines Ferdinand II took pleasure in collecting.⁵⁹ A topographic, panoramic view of Innsbruck [fig. 19] published by Matthäus Merian the Elder in 1649 provides a view of Ruhelust’s extensive garden complex which once bordered the river, nos. 4 and 5 in this engraving, and Ferdinand’s other residence, Schloss Ambras (no. 20), is visible on the hill above. By this date, this wooden palace had been destroyed by a fire in 1636 and is therefore not depicted here.

Ruhelust was a long, rectangular residence, comprising of a principal, ground floor (*parterre*) with two stories above, and fifty spacious rooms, equipped with high, painted ceilings, and coloured (white, yellow and blue) pavement floors, distributed in its interiors. The palace was situated in the middle of Philippine’s physic and herb gardens. A chapel dedicated to St. Leopold, the Habsburg patron saint of Austria, was added to the ground floor where Ferdinand II had his apartment. Philippine’s rooms were above his, on the second floor, with quarters for their household staff on the top floor. The overflow of arms, armour, furniture, paintings, tapestries, exotica, and other *objets d’art* from Schloss Ambras decorated and filled their spaces. No plans have survived, thus making a reconstruction of its interiors difficult. However, Unterperger’s 1596 inventory of the contents of Ruhelust, redacted under the supervision of Sebastian Günzinger, the warden and caretaker of this residence, does allow one to pinpoint the room in which Catarina’s Ceylonese fan was put on display.⁶⁰

59 Thomas Kuster, “‘Zu Pracht eines Herren gehören Pferde, Hunde [...], Vögel [...], und freude Thiere.’ Die Tiergärten Erzherzog Ferdinands II. in Innsbruck,” in *Echt Tierisch! Die Menagerie des Fürsten*, ed. Sabine Haag (Innsbruck-Vienna: KHM Museumsverband, 2015), pp. 49–54.

60 For more on Ferdinand II’s 1596 inventory and the present digitalization project undertaken by KHM, under the direction of Thomas Kuster, see Kuster, 2021, pp. 415–429.

Fig. 17 (p. 80) – Fan (recto, partially open), Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka). Köttje, c. 1540–1551; carved ivory, horn, copper, and cotton thread (57.5 x 33.0 cm). Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Kunstkammer, inv. KK 4751 (historical photograph SW o Nr) © KHM-Museumsverband

Fig. 18 (p. 81) – Francesco Segala, *Archduke Ferdinand II of Tyrol*, c. 1580; wax, sapphire, emeralds, rubies, garnets, rock crystal, glass, and pearls (22.3 x 19.9 cm). Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Kunstkammer, inv. KK 3085 © KHM-Museumsverband

On the ground floor, not far from where Ferdinand II’s rooms,⁶¹ was the *Caminccamer* (the “room with a stove”) next to a staircase, which functioned as a large chamber of antiquities and a *Kunstkammer* arranged by the Archduke for his personal pleasure.⁶² Diverse objects were stored in chests, while others like Catarina’s fan were exhibited on a long table (*auf der langen tafl*), alongside a mixed array of collectables, antiquities, and New World curiosities, including ancient coins, four busts of Roman emperors painted on small panels, Turkish weapons and spoons, portraits miniatures,⁶³ red (macaw?) feathers from Mexico or Brazil, a green (hardstone) Pre-Columbian *idolum* (idol) and a Pre-Columbian mother-of-pearl container in which a green (perhaps jade or nephrite) figurine was stored.⁶⁴ Evidently, the exotic provenance and execution of Catarina’s fan were particularly appreciated by her nephew Ferdinand II, and deemed by him to be a most fitting object for this chamber of art.

After his death in 1596, Ferdinand’s elder son, Cardinal Andreas (1558–1600), the Margrave of Burgau, who inherited Schloss Ambras with its entire collection, and in compliance with his younger brother Karl (1560–1618), ordered that the contents of the *Caminccamer*, especially the antiquities and “art works” (*kunstsachen*) be removed from Ruhelust and transferred back to the Ambras *Kunstkammer* (*kunstkammer*).⁶⁵

“Note: As far as the antiquities and other art objects in this room and elsewhere are concerned, their princely graces the Margraves [Andreas and Karl] sent an emissary with an order from their princely graces [stating] that these [objects] are part of the art chamber at Ombras [Schloss Ambras], and have commanded that the contents of this room be transferred and registered there [at Ambras]. But because his imperial Majesty’s commissioners had too few administrators [for this work], they apologized and have offered to take the inventory here [at Ruhelust] instead, promising that once the inventory is completed, the contents [of this room] [would] be returned to Ambras and put in their place.”

1788: Johann Baptist Primisser and Schloss Ambras

After Archduke Ferdinand II’s *post-mortem* inventory was completed in 1596, Catarina’s fan was indeed transferred from the *Caminccamer* at Schloss Ruhelust to Schloss Ambras [fig. 20], however, it could not be traced in the unpublished 1621 inventory of the Ambras collection. Over one hundred and fifty years later, however, it does appear cited and described in an inventory redacted in 1788. The Tyrolian librarian and archaeologist, Johann Baptist Primisser (1739–1815), was

61 The Augsburg art dealer and diplomat, Philip Hainhofer (1578–1647), wrote down his impressions of Schloss Ruhelust in 1628, confirming that Archduke Ferdinand II’s former apartment was on the ground floor, Philippine Welser’s on the second floor, and the third was reserved for household staff. See Oskar Döring, *Des Augsburger Patriciers Philipp Hainhofer Reisen nach Innsbruck und Dresden* (Vienna: C. Graeser, 1901), p. 36.

62 Boeheim, 1888, Reg. 5556, pp. CCXXXVI–CCXXXVIII, fols. 62–70, at p. CCXXXVI: *Neugemaurter stockh ob dem pad: zu oberst desselben stockhs in der camer, da der camin zuegst bei der stiegen* / “A newly paved floor above the path, at the top [end] of the same floor, in the chamber with a stove, next to the staircase.”

63 Boeheim, 1888, Reg. 5556, p. CCXXXVII, fols. 66–67. One was a wax portrait of the King of Poland (Sigismund II Augustus, 1510–1572) stored in a small box and the other a miniature of Catalina Micaela of Austria, Duchess of Savoy (1567–1597).

64 Boeheim, 1888, Reg. 5556, p. CCXXXVII, fol. 68: *Ain drühl mit perlmueter Indianischer arbeit, darinnen ain klainer griens idolum* / “a small container made of mother-of-pearl, Indian [sic; Pre-Columbian] work, inside a small green idol.”

65 Boeheim, 1888, Reg. 5556, p. CCXXXVIII, fol. 70: *Nota: Was die antiquiteten und andere kunstsachen in disem zimer und sonst betrifft, das haben irer fürstlich gnaden des herrn marggraven gesandte aus irer fürstlich gnaden beuelch als ain zuegehör der kunstkammer zu Ombras, daraus weiland die fürstlich durchlaucht dieselben herein führen und registriern auch alsdann wider dahin fuern zu lassen verordnet, versprechen lassen, mit beger, die bei dieser inventur wider hinaus geen Ombras an sein ort zu stellen. Weilen aber irer kais. maj. Comissarien sich dessen aus mangl gwalts entschuldigt, haben si sich doch erbotten solches hiehier verzeichnen zu lassen.*



Fig. 20 - Matthäus Merian I. *Das fürstliche Schloß Umbras* (View of the Schloss Ambras), Germany, Frankfurt am Main, c. 1649; etching on paper (19.5 x 30.8 cm). London, British Museum, inv. 1898.0725.8.1644 © The Trustees of the British Museum

appointed the first official curator and custodian (*Schlosshauptmann*) of Schloss Ambras in January of 1772. As a trained academic and scholar, Primisser took it upon himself to conduct a systematic inventory of Archduke Ferdinand II's former collection at Schloss Ambras. This inventory compiled in three volumes, took Primisser six years to complete. The volume listing objects which Johann Baptist identified and labelled as the *Schatzkammer* (or treasury), is located today at Schloss Ambras in Innsbruck, inv. KK 6661. The ivory *objets d'art* were grouped together by Primisser.⁶⁶ On page 383, under item no. 117, Johann Baptist described Queen Catarina's fan as:

"An Indian [sun] shade made of ivory, in part deeply carved, with all sorts of ornaments, smaller, but almost the same in taste [style] as no. 86."⁶⁷

The above entry appears several pages after Primisser's entry for the now missing Ceylonese fan, KHM, inv. 4692, discussed at length in the Introduction, and which he compares to Catarina's fan, noting their similarities in carving and execution. Johann Baptist also made a point to underscore that Catarina's fan was shorter in length than KHM, inv. 4692. As seen in the Introduction, during the turbulent Napoleonic period in Tyrol, Johann Baptist was responsible for the transfer of the entire contents of Schloss Ambras to Vienna in 1806, where these objects were put on exhibition in the Lower Belvedere palace [fig. 21], in a display curated with his son, Alois Primisser.

In 1821, Alois redacted an unpublished inventory updating his father's three volumes, in which Catarina's fan is described as less ingeniously carved than the larger, lost fan, KK 4692:

⁶⁶ It must be noted that at this date Primisser did not catalogue the "Rāmāyana Casket". Its absence from his inventory cannot be explained. I am grateful to Thomas Kuster for confirming this information.

⁶⁷ Ambras Inventory, 1788, p. 383: *Ein indianischer [Sonnen] Schirm von Elfenbein zum Theil durchbrochen, und mit allerhand Zierrath versehen; kleiner, aber sonst bey nahe in dem Geschmak wie No. 86.* I am grateful to Thomas Kuster, Schloss Ambras, Innsbruck, for this transcription and also for providing a study image of page 383 in Primisser's unpublished inventory.



Fig. 21 - Johann Agust Corvinus, after Salomon Kleiner, *Prospect S.r. Hochfürstl. Durchl. Prinzens Eugeny von Savoyen pp. Garten und darzu gehörigen Gebäuden, sambt andern angränzenden Gärten und Häusser* (View of the Garden of Prince Eugene and the adjoining gardens of the Salesian Monastery and Prince Schwarzenberg), Austria, Vienna, 1731; engraving on paper (43.5 x 39.5 cm). Vienna, Österreichische Galerie Belvedere, inv. BB_1012-005 © Belvedere, Wien

"An Indian ivory parasol, partly openwork, and decorated with all sorts of ornaments, smaller and less delicately and artistically worked than the upper one".⁶⁸

By 1875, KHM, inv. 4751 was exhibited as no. 48, with the stolen fan, KHM, inv. 4692, and the "Rāmāyana Casket", in Vitrine IX in the Lower Belvedere (See Introduction). In 1891, KHM, inv. 4751 was definitively transferred by Albert Ilg to the "K. K. Kunsthistorisches Hofmuseum", and exhibited there as no. 41 in Vitrine XIII located in Room XXII,⁶⁹ in the "Sammlung von Waffen und kunstindustriellen Gegenstände", near the missing fan, KHM, inv. 4692 (in 1891, no. 26),⁷⁰ and the "Rāmāyana Casket" (in 1891, nos. 33-35).⁷¹ In 1896 it was given its definitive inventory number of KK 4751.⁷²

⁶⁸ Alois Primisser, *Inventar der k. k. Ambraser Sammlung von 1821*, located in the archive of the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, inv. KK 6675, p. 392, no. 43: *Ein indianischen Sonnenschirm von Elfenbein, zum Theile durchbrochenen Arbeit, und mit allerlei Zierarten versehen, kleiner, und weniger fein und künstlich gearbeitet als der obigen, and Primisser, 1821, p. 392, no. 42, for the lost KK 4692: Ein elfenbein Sonnenschirm von durchbrochen, sehr mühsamer Arbeit, in indianischen Stil. Einige von den Schirm-Plättchen sind weggebrochen / "An ivory sun shade with very laborious work, in Indian style. Some of the blades have broken off."*

⁶⁹ Ilg, 1891b, p. 185: 41. *Kleinerer indischer Fächer, wie Nr. 26 / "41. Smaller Indian fan, like Nr. 26 (KHM, inv. 4692).*

⁷⁰ Ilg, 1891b, p. 184: 26. *Fächer mit reicher ornamentaler Decoration in durchbrochener Arbeit. Indisch. Wird bereits in dem Inventar des Schlosses Ambras von 1596 aufgeführt / "26. A fan with rich ornamental decoration in openwork carving. Indian. Already listed in the 1596 inventory of Schloss Ambras."*

⁷¹ Ilg, 1891b, p. 184: 33-35. *Indischen Cassetten mit reicher Decoration von Göttergestalten, Thieren und Ornamenten, die Beschläge europäisch im Renaissancestil (siehe Nr. 26) / "33-35. Indian caskets richly decorated with deities, animals and ornaments, the mounts are European in Renaissance style (see Nr. 26)."*

⁷² Ilg, 1896, p. 282, (KHM, Kunstkammer museum file card): [Vitrine] XIII, no. 41. 4751. *Fächer aus Elfenbein, aus Indien, bestehend aus 21 Blättern, Stiel Geschweift, mit Pflanzenornamenten, Schwänen und Götterfiguren, den Knopf unten bildet ein Löwe. XVI. Jahrh[undert]. L. 430 mm / "[Vitrine] XIII, no. 41. 4751. Ivory Fan from India with 21 blades, twisted handle with vegetal ornamentations, swans [sic; sacred geese] and deities, the knob below in the shape of a lion. 16th century. L. 430 mm."*

KHM, inv. 4751

The Vienna fan [figs. 22–25] demonstrates the complex, symbolic motifs and extraordinary workmanship deployed by the Kōṭṭē ivory carver,⁷³ which stylistic characteristics are examined at length by Crespo in this volume. The top of this fan's handle forms a peacock's head (*monarā*), a bird native to Sri Lanka,⁷⁴ while its eye, now a horn button, replaces the lost gold nail mentioned in Catarina's 1545–1548 inventory.⁷⁵

This pin affixes twenty-one, paper-thin ivory blades (one now missing) shaped like stylized peacock feathers, which ingeniously fold together behind the upper sections of the fan, in a hollow area or niche formed by the two sides of the "body" of the peacock. When fully opened, the blades, held together by narrow threads, form a full circle behind the peacock's head, in imitation of the shimmering plumage a male peacock fans out during courtship rituals. The ultra-translucent blades contrast with the rest of the fan, jam-packed with intricate designs and ornament – a *tour de force* in carving –, in which the craftsman's fear of empty spaces (*horror vacui*) is explicit. This fan, when closed, resembles a ceremonial sceptre, 43 centimetres in length. All the nine fans in this volume, including the "Pangolin Fan", have this same construction.

The handle comprises of two, separate sections fixed in the middle with silver nails. The top half is filled with elaborate vines and scrollwork (*liya vāla*), depicting a *haṁsa* (the immortal gander),⁷⁶ a Hindu symbol associated with Vishnu, representing happiness, knowledge and intelligence. In the centre, a cut-out *apsarasā* (nymph) sits in lotus position within a stupa, a mountain personifying Buddha, the entrance of which is guarded by four paired, upright lions (*siṁha*). This female figure could also represent a seated Lakshmi, consort of Vishnu, the goddess of wealth and plenty, holding sprays of lotus flowers (*nelum mala*, her symbol). Below, two lotus blossoms (symbols of purity, universal life forces and the throne of the divine),⁷⁷ and a rosette, the solar symbol on Buddha's foot, are depicted. The lower half of the handle has densely worked scrolls which terminate in a large, three dimensional lion-dog (*rājā-siṁha*), symbol of the Kings of Ceylon.⁷⁸

By 1557, at least nine Ceylonese fans had arrived at the Lisbon court, five of them recorded in Queen Catarina's collection in an inventory dated that same year [fig. 26].⁷⁹ Other fans were earmarked for other members of the Portuguese royal family for which no inventories exist. As underscored in Crespo's essay, Catarina's fans form a succinct corpus close in execution, iconography and style. They were carved in the royal workshop at Kōṭṭē, by a small corps of master ivory carvers, in a relatively short time span, between around 1540 and 1551. For Catarina, possessing fans from Ceylon, where elephants (and their tusks) represented sovereignty,

⁷³ Codrington, 1934, pp. 239–249.

⁷⁴ Ward, 1950, pp. 290–291; Nair, 1974, pp. 93–170. The peacock is a symbol of fertility, reincarnation and also the steed of deities.

⁷⁵ See note 51 above.

⁷⁶ Ward, 1950, pp. 288–289. In Hindu mythology, the wild goose is associated with Brahmā and is a symbol of freedom attained through stainless spirituality.

⁷⁷ Ward, 1950, p. 292. For the Hindus, the lotus represents the universe.

⁷⁸ Ward, 1950, p. 284; Coomaraswamy, 1957, p. 87. *Siṁha* is the mythological ancestor of the Sinhalese standing for majesty and power. Gautama Buddha is called *Śākyasiṁha* or *Lion of the Śākyas*.

⁷⁹ Lisbon, TT, Códices e documentos de proveniência desconhecida, n.º 64, fol. 50v. Cf. Jordan, 1994, p. 194: *Cinco abanos de marfim que se recolhem dentro nos cabos com penas do mesmo marfim* / "Five ivory fans with ivory feathers [blades] which gather together at the ends" [author's italics]. For Asian folding fans, not only Ceylonese, acquired by Catarina, see Jordan, 1999, pp. 25–35; Jordan Gschwend 2003, pp. 267–271; Jordan Gschwend, 2019, pp. 78–93.

Figs. 22–25 – Fan (closed, all sides), Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), Kōṭṭē, c. 1540–1551; carved ivory, horn, copper, and cotton thread (57.5 x Ø 33.0 cm). Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Kunstammer, inv. KK 4751 © KHM-Museumsverband



Castelbos —

— N tres espeços grandes dos Cu
mes Jao —

Como roselhos grandes postos
raipas de pao preto —

Cabanos —

— N omze abanos de f3 de penas a seus
cabos de ouro —

Equatio abanos da India - dous to dous dou
ra dos de sua parte —

— Tres abanos de papel a laas de vel^{do} —

— Sete abanos de penas tintas —

— Como abanos de marfim, que se ha de
gemto nos cabos de les com penas do
mesmo marfim —

Equatio cabos de abanos —

power and wealth, and safekeeping them in her royal collection (*Kunstkammer*), epitomized her global reach and alliances with Bhuvanekabāhu's court, in particular, with the powerful Brahmin ambassador, Śri Rāmaraksa,⁸⁰ who played a central and unique artistic and political role in bridging Kōṭṭē and Lisbon.⁸¹

Sinhalese imperial regalia and the Lisbon court

In Ceylon, fans along with the white parasol were emblems of royalty given multiple layers of meaning. The phrase, “raising the white umbrella,” also meant the same as, “ascending the throne and uniting Lanka under one umbrella.”⁸² On festive and state occasions, a white umbrella was always held over the king's head by a high-ranking official (*chattagahaka*), and even in battle, when the king rode out on his war elephant (*maṅgala-hatthi*). The Portuguese author, Duarte Barbosa (c. 1480–1521), described a procession of the king he witnessed in Ceylon in 1514: “When the king goes out of his palace, one Brahmin carries a sword and shield, and another a long gold sword in his right hand and in his left hand a weapon which is like a *fleur-de-lis* (a trident).⁸³ And on each side, go two men with two fans, very long and round, and two others with two fans made of white tails (*chamara*).” Fans, or “jewel-fans” (*maṇi-tālavaṇṇa*), decorated with precious stones also were part of the royal insignia.⁸⁴

The side panel of an ivory casket gifted to the Lisbon court in 1542 [fig. 27], today in the *Schatzkammer* of the Munich Residenz, depicts Bhuvanekabāhu in the splendour of his Kōṭṭē throne room (the *Chitrakuta*).⁸⁵ The carving is superlative: Bhuvanekabāhu is imaged as a Buddhist-King with the multi-tiered crown of Lanka, wielding a sword, while sitting on his ivory “Lion Throne” covered with a golden cloth embellished with nine different sorts of gems, surrounded by his servants holding ceremonial parasols and fly whisks.⁸⁶

Catarina valued her five ivory fans on multiple levels, fully understanding their political and religious ramifications at the Kōṭṭē court, having been well informed by Śri Rāmaraksa during his 1542 visit. Large, oversized ivory fan handles (*chauri*) were the most valued possessions of Buddhist monks, an essential part of their priestly attire. In processions in Ceylon, Buddhist priests held ivory fans with red velvet screens in front of their faces [fig. 28], which were also the principal insignia of the *Sangharaja*, or senior monk and titular head of a monastic

80 Strathern, 2007, p. 39, p. 52.

81 Strathern, 2007, p. 128. Śri Rāmaraksa was described by a contemporary Jesuit as “a person very learned among these gentiles with regard to their beliefs of the *pagodes* (temples).” He later converted to Christianity in 1552.

82 Geiger, 1960, p. 126. For more regarding this throne, Slomann, 1937, vol. 1, p. 360.

83 *Vel* or trident sacred to the deity Kataragama (Murugan or Skanda). Kataragama is also a shrine in southern Sri Lanka, popular with Hindu, Buddhist and Muslim pilgrims.

84 Fly swatters were made from tails of Tibetan yaks (*Bos guinniens*), and the ceremonial fly whisk was an ancient insignia of royalty. Cf. De Fonseka, 1921, pp. 3–4; Geiger, 1960, p. 126. In Ceylon, the pearl umbrella, or white parasol of state (*dhavala chatra*) was studded with jewels and decked with streamers, garlands of flowers and strands of pearls: a symbol of supremacy over the island and a marker of princely rank, held above the king's throne.

85 Munich, Bayerische Verwaltung der staatlichen Schlösser, Gärten und Seen, Residenz München, Schatzkammer, inv. 1242.

86 Strathern, 2007, p. 152, who describes Bhuvanekabāhu in his Kōṭṭē throne room, “sitting in glory like Indra upon his throne, under the *makara torana* (a symbol of royal splendour and prosperity) and the white canopy, encircled by his ministers in the Citra Kuta Hall.” One Portuguese ambassador, Payo de Sousa, recounted his visit to this same hall in 1506: “At one end of the hall rose a massive canopy of stone shaped like the head of the fabulous Makaras and surmounted by the figures of the deities who preside over the four quarters of the universe. Above it was raised the white chatra of dominion, which overshadowed the “Lion Throne” of the Race of the Lion. On this massive seat of ivory, which rose on six stages and was covered with cloth of gold, was seated [...], the Overlord of Ceylon.” Cf. Ferguson 1907, p. 302; Pieris, 1920, p. 28; De Silva, 1975, p. 72; Jaffer and Schwabe, 1999, pp. 7–8; Karunaratne 2017, pp. 55–56 and pp. 93–94, fig. 7.



community.⁸⁷ Priests held fans (*vijani*) during sermons,⁸⁸ and Śrī Rāmaraksa certainly came to the Lisbon court in 1542 with his *chauri*.⁸⁹

During her reign, Catarina became a seasoned collector with distinctive tastes, fine-tuning her aesthetic sensibilities and cultivating her taste for Asian and Far Eastern luxury goods, such as mother-of-pearl wares from Gujarat, carved rhinoceros horns, Ming blue and white porcelain, Kinrande porcelain, and lacquers from South China, Japan and the Ryukyu Kingdom, respectively.⁹⁰ Her *Kunstammer* even housed four Buddha statuettes, most likely originating from the royal temple (Śrī Daḷadā Māḷigāva) in Kōṭṭē.⁹¹ As a connoisseur, Catarina treasured her Ceylonese fans, and despite their layered Hindu-Buddhist iconography which perhaps contradicted her Catholic sensibilities, she admired them, regardless, for their sheer beauty and superb artistry.

At the Lisbon court, the Queen transposed the symbolic significances of her Kōṭṭē fans – as emblems and insignias of Ceylonese royalty and Buddhist monks –, strictly reserving them for ceremonial events staged in the Lisbon royal palace. Her fans were displayed on her *dressoir* (buffet) during state dinners and court festivities held in the Queen’s hall, the *Sala da Rainha*, which adjoined her private quarters. After Catarina’s death in early 1578, the layered symbolism of these Kōṭṭē fans had not diminished. One of her Ceylonese fans, or one belonging to her immediate family, was considered a Portuguese crown jewel, transferred by Lisbon court officials to the royal treasury for safekeeping, but subsequently stolen by Philip II of Spain after 1580.⁹²

1565: an Avis–Habsburg–Farnese wedding at the Lisbon court

Two splendid Ceylonese fans which formed part of the Farnese collections in Parma, Rome and Naples, once belonged to Catarina of Austria and were gifts Bhuvanekabāhu sent the Queen from Kōṭṭē in 1542. As with the Vienna fan Śrī Rāmaraksa brought with his embassy, these two fans can be traced back to the Queen’s *Kunstammer* – two of the five fans recorded in 1557 in her wardrobe.⁹³ This pair was a wedding gift given by Catarina to her favourite niece, Infanta Maria of Portugal (1538–1578), who married Catarina’s great-nephew, Alessandro Farnese (1545–1592), Duke of Parma, at the Lisbon court in 1565.

87 Coomaraswamy, 1956, p. 186, pl. XXXVII; Pal, 1981, pp. 100–102.

88 Geiger, 1960, p. 45.

89 In Ceylon, fans (*chauri*) with elaborately carved ivory fan handles with wooden or palm leaf disks, were the most treasured possession of Buddhist priests, reserved for senior monks when they entered a higher office. Princely and elite Buddhist devotees often presented fans with finely carved ivory handles to revered monks. See Jordan Gschwend and Beltz, 2010, p. 79, cat. 25 (entry written by Jordan Gschwend).

90 Jordan Gschwend, 2015, pp. 140–161.

91 This temple plundered by the Portuguese in 1551. For Catherine’s 1557 inventory, see Lisbon, TT, Códices e documentos de proveniência desconhecida, n.º 64, fol. 55v: *quatro figuras de pagodes*. For the destruction of this sacred site and the plundering of Bhuvanekabāhu’s treasury, see Crespo, 2019, pp. 52–55, fig. 2.7.

92 See the Introduction in this volume.

93 Cf. Jordan Gschwend and Beltz, 2010, pp. 80–82, cats. 26–27 (entry written by Jordan Gschwend).

Fig. 27 (p. 90) – The “Coronation Casket” (left side), Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), Kōṭṭē, c. 1541; carved ivory, gold, rubies, and sapphires (18.0 x 30.0 x 16.0 cm). Munich, Bayerische Verwaltung der staatlichen Schlösser, Garten und Seen, Residenz München, Schatzkammer, inv. 1241 © München, Bayerische Verwaltung der staatlichen Schlösser, Garten und Seen; photo: Tanja Mayr, Rainer Hermann

Fig. 28 (p. 91) – W. L. H. Skeen & Co., *Two Buddhists monks*, Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), c. 1862–1903; albumen print (27.8 x 21.3 cm). Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, RP-F-F80078 © Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum

Maria was raised and educated in the Lisbon royal palace, living next to Catarina’s quarters, and as a young child she witnessed the Kōṭṭē embassy, surely meeting Śrī Rāmaraksa. She was familiar with, seen, touched, and even held, Catarina’s Kōṭṭē fans. As a prominent princess of the Portuguese royal house, Maria was high in the line of succession to the throne, and the Queen dowered her with these Ceylonese fans, to underscore Maria’s elevated rank and status at the Parma court. Her marriage to Alessandro was of great political significance, lavishly celebrated in the Paço da Ribeira, precisely in the same hall, the *sala grande*, where Dharmapāla was crowned in effigy by King João III and Śrī Rāmaraksa in 1542. Catarina presented Maria with these two Kōṭṭē fans as global and priceless souvenirs of her past life at the Lisbon court. Two years before Maria’s death in 1577, the fans were recorded in her wardrobe (*guardaroba*) inventory redacted in Parma in 1575: “two fans from Portugal” (*due ventarolle di Portogallo*). One fan is described as, “smaller than the other, and both of them were stored in individual (leather) cases.”⁹⁴ It is possible that after Maria’s death one of these fans entered the collection of her mother-in-law, Margaret of Parma, described in her 1586 wardrobe inventory as “an ivory fan, the entire handle carved (*intagliato*) with a gold rattle or bell.”⁹⁵

The Naples fans, which came to Parma in Infanta Maria’s trousseau, are comparable in quality, manufacture, and iconography to the Vienna and “Pangolin” fans, are also in the same “sculptural style”, and were made in the same Kōṭṭē royal workshop under Bhuvanekabāhu’s directives. Inv. 10398 [fig. 29], is the larger of the two, with eighteen blades that form a complete circle when opened. The upper section (verso) is a peacock’s head with a cabochon sapphire set into its eye, securing the thin blades. Like the Vienna fan, this handle comprises of two pieces of ivory joined closely and held together with silver studs. The top section of the handle is filled with animals (an antelope, birds, a lion and an elephant) surrounded by flowers and foliage. The central section is cut out, with a seated goddess, or *apsarasa*, (nymph), with a bird on her right arm, sitting in *lalitasana* position, or “posture of relaxation,” with her right leg hanging from her platform. This informal pose is typical of certain *bodhisattvas*, or metaphysical beings (second to Buddha), embodying compassion and charity. This goddess, the same as in the Vienna fan, is guarded by four paired, upright lions (*siṃha*). The lower handle is dense with foliage and an array of animals, including an almost three-dimensional elephant and monkey, representing the Hindu ape-god, Hanuman, a symbol of loyalty and devotion to duty. The bottom, as in the Vienna fan, terminates in a lion-dog (*rājā-siṃha*), the imperial symbol of the Ceylonese kings. Directly underneath, is turned carving executed by another craftsman from the lower social class (*vaduvō*). The recto of inv. 10398 depicts in the centre, a male Ceylonese dancer-musician playing the oboe. Above him, as seen through the lens of the Kōṭṭē carver, a Portuguese soldier rides a horse, hunting with a spear, while trampling an enemy.

The smaller fan [fig. 30], inv. 10397 (recto), also terminates in a peacock’s head with a cabochon sapphire in the eye, holding seventeen blades forming a complete circle when opened. The top section comprises of a large lion-dog (*rājā-siṃha*), surmounted by four medallions, surrounded by a long lotus blossom, in which an antelope, sacred goose (*hamsa*), bird and owl are visible. Underneath, Lakshmi with two lotus blossoms sits in a niche, framed by four upright lions. The lower section of the handle is rich with foliage and assorted animals. On

94 Museo Nazionale di Capodimonte, 1996, p. 192, pp. 204–205, cat. 6.141; Bertini and Jordan Gschwend, 1999, p. 32 and pp. 49–51, n. 81: *ventarolle di Portogallo, due, una grande et una piccolo con la sua cassa dove stanno dentro*.

95 Bertini and Jordan Gschwend, 1999, pp. 50–51, n. 83. Cf. Parma, Archivio di Stato, C. F. 372: *Un ventaglio di avorio tutto intagliato col su manico, con una sonaglietto d’oro*. Bhuvanekabāhu’s treasury at Kōṭṭē contained in 1551 an ivory fan with a whistle decorated with gold, not unlike the one cited in Margaret’s inventory. See Sousa Viterbo, 1904, p. 25: *hun avano com hun buzio e nove pedaços douro* / “A fan with a horn [whistle] and nine pieces of gold.” Also Crespo, 2019, pp. 35–64.





its verso, the upper section has similar medallions with animals, with a large sacred goose replacing the lion-dog. A part of the lower section has broken off and is now missing a lion-dog.

A mystery fan at Braunschweig

Closely related in execution and iconography to the Vienna and Naples fans, and from the same workshop, is a fourth fan carved in the Kōttē “sculptural style”, today in the Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum [fig. 31].⁹⁶ Exhibited for the first time in 1994, virtually nothing is known about its history and provenance. It was first recorded in the late eighteenth century in the *Kunstammer* of the Dukes of Brunswick-Lüneburg at the summer palace, Schloss Salzdahlum near Wolfenbüttel, in an inventory redacted c. 1739-1759.⁹⁷ In the ducal cabinets of art, curiosities and natural history once *in situ* in this Baroque palace, the Braunschweig fan was described as “an ivory fan or parasol, the handle neatly carved out, next to its [leather] case,” displayed in a cabinet reserved for ethnographic objects originating from diverse countries such as India, Turkey and Greenland.⁹⁸

The Braunschweig fan may actually have once belonged to Queen Catarina, or someone in her immediate family, appropriated by Philip II of Spain from the Lisbon royal wardrobe, after he took over the Portuguese throne in 1580. Eric II, Duke of Brunswick-Lüneburg and Prince of Calenberg-Göttingen (1528-1584), had served Emperor Charles V (1500-1558) and Philip II for decades as his general in numerous military campaigns in Germany and the revolt of the Netherlands, between 1576 and 1584. In 1579 Eric travelled to Madrid to personally confer with Philip about the enormous sums of money owed him for troops and munitions, residing at Philip’s court until October of 1580. Eric and his spouse remained in Madrid for over one year, living in the Alcázar royal palace, in apartments next to the king. Philip treated Eric like his own family, and the ducal couple partook of daily life at the Spanish court.⁹⁹ As with the Vienna fan seen above, Philip II took advantage of the Portuguese royal treasury and Catarina’s former collection to appropriate rare objects from the Lisbon court, obliged to gift them to family members and high-ranking officials he was indebted to. I propose Philip II did the same with this Ceylonese fan, explaining, in part, how it entered the collections of the Dukes of Brunswick-Lüneburg after 1580.

Like the other fans above, the Braunschweig fan comprises twenty thin blades which form a complete circle when opened. It consists of two sections: the top of the handle (recto) is likewise shaped like a peacock, the blades held together with a silver pin, which, most likely,

⁹⁶ The lower part of the handle is broken, and originally must have been at least 10-12 cm longer in length. Walz, 1994, p. 54, cat. 324; Jordan Gschwend and Beltz, 2010, p. 80, cats. 26-27 (entry written by Jordan Gschwend); Schmitz, 2016, pp. 375-376, cat. 542 (“Sri Lanka. Radfächer”), who synthesizes and reiterates many of the author’s findings regarding Catarina’s fans in Jordan Gschwend and Beltz, 2010, pp. 79-87, cats. 25-31.

⁹⁷ The provenance of this fan and when it entered the ducal collections before 1700 is still unclear.

⁹⁸ Schütte, 1997, p. 109, cat. 324: *Ein Fecher, oder Sonnen-Schirm von Elfenbein. Der Hand-Griff ist ganz sauber ausgeschnitten, nebst dem Futterahle.* This scribe too noted this fan’s sophisticated carving.

⁹⁹ For Philip II’s complex military and political relations with Duke Eric II, consult Kunze, 2012, pp. 235-239.

Fig. 29 (p. 94) - Fan (verso, open), Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), Kōttē, c. 1540-1551; carved ivory, silver, sapphire, and cotton thread (56.5 x 0 27.0 cm). Naples, Museo di Capodimonte, inv. 10398 © photo: Luciano Pedicini, Archivio dell’Arte

Fig. 30 (p. 95) - Fan (recto, open), Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), Kōttē, c. 1540-1551; carved ivory, silver, sapphire, and cotton thread (51.4 x 0 27.3 cm). Naples, Museo di Capodimonte, inv. 10397 © photo: Luciano Pedicini, Archivio dell’Arte

Fig. 31 - Fan (recto, open), Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), Kōttē, c. 1540-1551; carved ivory, silver, gilt silver, and cotton thread (34.5 x 0 28.5 cm). Braunschweig, Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum, inv. SA Elf 1 © Braunschweig, Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum

replaced a more valuable one made of gold, with a ruby or sapphire cabochon. Resembling the Naples fan, the upper fan has five round medallions, encircled by birds and animals: a dancer, elephant, lion (*siṃha*), antelope and dog, terminating in an ornate, stylized lion mask. Just beneath, a deeply carved, seated Lakshmi with lotus blossoms is framed by four upright antelopes and two mythical geese (*haṃsa*) underneath.

A large portion of the lower handle, with intensely worked scrolls and animals, including an elephant, is now missing. A silver mount decorated with a cockle shell on both sides was added later to secure this damaged end, equipped with a ring so that the fan could be worn by a lady, strung from her waist.

Queen Catarina and the Wittelsbach Kunstkammer in Munich

Three remarkable fans, formerly in the collection of the Wittelsbach Dukes, Albrecht V (1528–1579), and his son, Wilhelm V (1548–1626),¹⁰⁰ were first recorded in the inventory of Albrecht V’s *Kunstkammer* in the Munich Residenz, compiled in 1598 by Johann Baptist Fickler (1533–1610). Today, these fans are on view at the Museum Fünf Kontinente in Munich, and the Kunst- und Wunderkammer, Burg Trausnitz, in Landshut.¹⁰¹ During Albrecht V’s reign, his vast collection was scientifically organized and hierarchically arranged by his art advisor and “curator”, Samuel Quiccheberg (1529–1567), in the Munich Residenz in 1565. The *Kunstkammer* was located in a separate annexe with four long wings, the *Kunstkammerbau*, located on the second floor, above the ducal stables, the *Marstallgebäude*. Four halls, comprising 1200 square meters of space, each measuring c. 45 meters in length and 7 meters in width, were furnished with long, ornate tables and credenzas showcasing select objects (over 6,000 items), reserved for private viewing, and open to members of the Wittelsbach court, foreign visitors, dignitaries, scientists, scholars and artists. Later, special permission was required with admittance restricted, in order to curb theft and the disappearance of precious objects.

Queen Catarina’s three Ceylonese fans were regarded by Albrecht V as exceptional treasures. He displayed them in the northeast corner of one expansive room, on a table painted grey, labelled, “Table 12”, alongside three West African Sapi-Portuguese ivory horns (oliphants)¹⁰²:

“inv. 842: a large, carved ivory fan [*ventil*] with a long, deeply carved handle; inv. 843: moreover, another smaller, similar deeply carved ivory fan; inv. 844: another smaller and likewise deeply carved ivory fan with openwork and decorated with gold applications.”¹⁰³

Nearby, on a *pietra dure* table (made of polished hard stones), was one Ceylonese casket, today known as the “Coronation Casket”, which had been gifted by Bhuvanekābhū to the Lisbon court in 1542 and was the casket which had contained Dharmapāla’s effigy sent to Portugal

100 Munich, Museum Fünf Kontinente, inv. 2825; inv. 2826; and inv. 2827 (on loan to the Kunst- und Wunderkammer, Burg Trausnitz, in Landshut).

101 Seelig, 2001, pp. 147–156, figs. 4–5; Stein, 2007, pp. 122–125, figs. 3–5, who incorrectly dated these fans to the 17th century, and noted the rubies had been replaced in 1900.

102 Seelig, 2001, p. 156, fig. 7. These oliphants probably originated from Portugal, but whether they once belonged to the Lisbon royal treasury remains to be determined.

103 For the Munich *Kunstkammer* inventory, see Diemer, Bujok and Diemer, 2004, p. 90, inv. 842 [Munich, inv. 2825]: *Ein gross Ventill von helffenbein aussgeschnitten mit einer grossen aussgeschnitten handheb*; inv. 843 [Munich, inv. 2827]: *Mehr ein clainers dergleichen von helffenbain aussgeschnitten Ventill*; inv. 844 [Munich, inv. 2826]: *Ein anders clainers dergleichen von helffenbain geschnitten Ventill mit durchgebrochner arbeit, und gulden strichen underzogen*.

for the ceremonial crowning. The latter was exhibited beside its leather case lined with green cloth (Munich Residenz, Schatzkammer, inv. 1241). While on “Table 13”, made of green, blue, white and brown *pietre dure*, Ceylonese rock-crystal utensils (forks and spoons) and three ivory combs in an oblong case lined with red taffeta pillows,¹⁰⁴ were placed alongside a second, smaller Ceylonese casket (Munich Residenz, Schatzkammer, inv. 1242), all of which were Ceylonese objects having once belonged to Queen Catarina.¹⁰⁵ These splendid tables manufactured in Florence for the Medici court and gifted to Albrecht V, contrasted with the whiteness of the ivory, shimmering gemstones, and transparent rock crystal.

One distinguished, princely tourist who saw Catarina’s Ceylonese ivories *in situ* was Augustus the Younger, Duke of Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel (1579–1666), who visited Munich in October of 1598, just two days before the death of Duke Albrecht V on 24 October. While taking a guided tour of the Wittelsbach *Kunstkammer*, he recorded his impressions in his travel diary: “I have seen the famous *Kunstkammer*. Inside there are three rooms full of works of art: the finest things that I could quickly list.”¹⁰⁶ On table no. 6, he particularly admired one Gujarati tabletop entirely inlaid with mother-of-pearl, next to which were fourteen mother-of-pearl caskets, some encrusted with precious stones, shown near Gujarati small bowls and salvers.¹⁰⁷ On another table, no. 37, were thirty-three diverse tortoiseshell vessels, some with jewelled mounts added by Munich goldsmiths, Augustus was able to touch and hold in his hands, surprised at how “very light in weight”, these were. This array of tortoiseshell, among them, ewers, jugs and large salvers, with the mother-of-pearl wares, were global exotica manufactured in Gujarat in Northern India, exported to Europe via Portugal. Next, he saw “everything that was made from ivory”, among them, the Ceylonese ivories gifted by Catarina in 1573, carefully presented on a table.¹⁰⁸

Some years later, in 1611, the prominent Augsburg art dealer and diplomat, Philip Hainhofer [fig. 32] was granted special permission to visit the Munich *Kunstkammer*. Over a period of three full days, he was guided around the collections by the custodian, the *Kunstkammerer* Jakob Büchler, who provided Hainhofer with detailed information about the exhibited objects, perhaps even sharing with him the above-cited 1598 Fickler inventory to better understand the items he was studying. The art dealer compiled a written report, two versions of which have survived in Innsbruck and Wolfenbüttel,¹⁰⁹ in which curiosities which caught his eye were described with precision, such as the above mentioned Gujarati tabletop inlaid with mother-of-pearl which particularly impressed him: “[...] and this is a wonderfully lovely table, the colours in the mother-of-pearl shimmer beautifully through each other, like opals.”¹¹⁰

104 See note 22 above. These combs are in the Munich Residenz, Schatzkammer, inv. 1243–1245.

105 Diemer, Bujok and Diemer, 2004, pp. 90, 96, 100 and 109.

106 Augustus’s diary, *Ephemerides. Sive Diarium (1594–1635)*, is located in Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, Cod. Guelf. 42.19. Aug. 2°, fol. 6 (22 October 1598): *Ferner gesehen die weitberühmte Kunstkammer. Darinnen 3 Sähle voller kunstucke: die vornemhete sachen so da haben können in der eyll verzeichnet werden [...]*. A transcription is available online: <http://selbstzeugnisse.hab.de/edition/diarium/1598> (accessed 30 November 2021).

107 Seelig, 2001, p. 157.

108 Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, Cod. Guelf. 42.19. Aug. 2°, fol. 7 (22 October 1598): *Alleß waß auf eine fl. [flache] Tafell gehöret von Helffenbejn [...]*.

109 Innsbruck, Universitäts Bibliothek, Cod. 581, dated 1613, and Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, Cod. Guelf. 11.22. Aug. 2°: *Relatio uber Philippi Hainhofers, burgers zu Augspurg, raiß von Eystet nach München, anno 1611*. The latter travelogue and diary transcribed and studied at length by Anne Langenkamp, *Philipp Hainhofers Münchner Reisebeschreibungen. Ein Kritische Ausgabe* (Berlin: Technischen Universität, 1990), pp. 136–222.

110 Seelig, 2014, p. 91: *[...] und ist dises ain trefflich schöner tisch, schimmern die farben inn beerlemuetter gar schön durch ain ander, wie die opali*.



Fig. 32 - Lucas Kilian, *Philipp Hainhofer*, Germany, c. 1620-1630; black chalk on paper (16.2 x 12.3 cm). Stockholm, Nationalmuseum, inv. NMH 1900/1863 © Stockholm, Nationalmuseum

On a large table in one corner, Hainhofer admired Bhuvanekabāhu's "Coronation Cas- ket", noting in his journal, its "deep, openwork carving with mounts set with pearls and pre- cious stones".¹¹¹ Regrettably, Hainhofer failed to comment on the other Ceylonese ivories he surely appreciated but did not write about.

Queen Catarina's diplomatic gifts

Munich, inv. 2825 is the most spectac- ular of the three fans, and its extraordinary size, qualifies this fan as the most impressive of the three [fig. 33]. Twenty-two blades are held to- gether by a peacock's eye set with a cabochon ruby, while the upper handle is attached to the lower with three gold applications set with cabochon rubies on either side. The gamut of Sinhalese imagery is exploited here: elaborate scrollwork, foliage (*liya vāla*), paired lion-dogs (*rājā-sinhā*), and an assortment of mythologi- cal animals. The carving is not as open-worked, as in the other two Munich fans, executed in the Kōttē "architectural style" classified by Crespo. Its lower handle is unique for its masterful exe- cution, alternating carved with turned sections.

Munich, inv. 2826, carved in the Kōttē "ar- chitectural style", has sixteen blades held together by a parrot's head (*giravā*), with a cabochon ruby

eye [fig. 34]. In the upper section (*recto*), set within rich foliage and golden sunflowers (a symbol of Sinhalese royalty), is a naked, half-figure female growing out of the tendril, the traditional *nārilatā vāla*, or "flower in the shape of a woman",¹¹² symbolizing beauty and grace. Below her, a deer hunter (probably King Daśaratha, father of Rāma) and underneath, the plump, dwarfish king of the *yakṣas* (nature spirits) and the god of wealth and prosperity, Kubera (Kuvera) with two antelopes.¹¹³ On the reverse, the mythical bird-like creature and lesser Hindu divinity, Garuda,¹¹⁴ is accompanied by

¹¹¹ Anne Langenkamp, *Philipp Hainhofers Münchner Reisebeschreibungen. Ein Kritische Ausgabe* (Berlin: Technischen Universität, 1990), p. 169: *ain geschnittens, durchbrochene, helfebainin trühhlin mit perlen und edlgestain geziert*. Also, pp. 113-114, n. 166.

¹¹² Coomaraswamy, 1956, pp. 91-92.

¹¹³ In Hindu mythology, Kubera is a semi-divine being associated with the earth, mountains, treasures, such as minerals and jewels, which lie underground, and riches in general. According to most accounts, he first lived in Lanka (Sri Lanka), but his palace was taken away from him by his half-brother, Ravana, and he now resides in a beautiful mountain residence near the god Shiva's home on Mount Kailasa, where he is attended by all manner of demigods. See Berkwitz, 2019, p. 11, for a contemporary poem, in which the later Ceylonese king, Rājasinghe I (r. 1581-1593), is said to have had a "beautiful appearance like that of Kubera, the God of Wealth."

¹¹⁴ A half-bird, half-human creature with the legs, wings and beak of a bird which appears in both Hindu and Buddhist mythology. Garuda is Vishnu's steed and in the Indian epic, *Rāmāyana*, is regarded as the king of all birds, and an arch-enemy of the mythical serpent, Naga. In the *Mahābhārata*, Garuda is invoked as a symbol of violent force, speed, and of martial prowess.

Fig. 33 - Fan (verso, open), Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), Kōttē, c. 1540-1551; carved ivory, gold, rubies, and cotton thread (89.0 x Ø 44.5 cm). Munich, Museum Fünf Kontinente, inv. 2825 © Munich, Museum Fünf Kontinente





animals. Three gold lozenges inlaid with tiny cabochon rubies can be seen on both sides of the upper section of this intricately sculpted handle. The lower half has similar ruby appliqués added on either side, all of these were finely executed by a Kōṭṭē royal goldsmith, in the style defined by the Lisbon court in the sixteenth century as, *ao modo de Ceilão* ("in the Ceylonese style"). In the niche of the lower handle, two warriors combat one another with swords and shields. Underneath these warriors, seen in the round on both sides, is a richly caparisoned state elephant (*maṅgala-hatthi*) ridden by Bhuvanekabāhu VII, holding an *aṅkuśa* (elephant goad) in his right hand. For this particular fan, three craftsmen were involved in its production: a goldsmith, an ivory carver, and an ivory turner. Inv. 2826 is the only fan, today in Munich, to appear in the later inventory of the Wittelsbach *Kunst-kammer* in 1778, listed among other ivories as: "a large Indian fly whisk [*wederl*] set with eight rubies, executed all over with beautifully carved work."¹¹⁵

Munich, inv. 2827 is a fan which closely resembles the Vienna fan KHM, inv. 4751, in execution, choice of subject matter, and the Kōṭṭē "sculptural style" [fig. 35]. Nineteen blades are attached to a parrot's head, whose eye is set with a cabochon ruby. The upper section with the ornate lion-dog (*rājā-siṅha*), is complemented below with Lakshmi in her niche, holding lotus blossoms, symbols for birth and rebirth. The floral handle terminating in a lion-dog is identical to the lion-dog in Vienna, as are the turned ivory ends, now missing in the Vienna fan. The superior execution of these three Munich fans, and their close stylistic affinities with the "Pangolin Fan," the Vienna, Braunschweig, and the two Naples fans, as well as the Ceylonese fan, KHM, inv. 4692, stolen in Vienna in 1920, confirm the Munich fans were carved in Kōṭṭē, by accomplished royal carvers, working in the Gampola-Kōṭṭē style, as grouped together by Crespo.

Albrecht V received his fans as gifts from Queen Catarina when his ducal ambassador, Antonio Meyting, visited the Lisbon court in 1573. Meyting was sent to Portugal to broker a marriage between the Queen's grandson, Sebastião (1554-1578), King of Portugal, and the Duke's youngest daughter, Maximiliana Maria (1552-1614) [fig. 36]. Meyting returned to Munich not only with these three Ceylonese fans, but also with additional gifts Catarina had given him: two ivory caskets (one of them the "Coronation Casket"), three ivory combs, and two rock-crystal spoons and forks, which were exhibited with pride in Albrecht V's *Kunst-kammer*.¹¹⁶ Śrī Rāmaraksa had presented Catarina with the latter objects as diplomatic gifts from Kōṭṭē in 1542, but thirty-one years later, the Queen repurposed them with different, political objectives in mind. Catarina relied upon the rarity and global aura of Bhuvanekabāhu's high-level, sumptuous presents to impress Albrecht V, hoping to secure, at this date, a strategic alliance between Lisbon and Munich. This projected marriage never took place, but Bhuvanekabāhu's ivories presented to the Wittelsbach Duke by the Portuguese Queen have remarkably survived.

¹¹⁵ Seelig, 2001, p. 156, n. 87: *Elfenbein Stücke. Ein Indianisches grosses wederl mit 8. Rubinen besetzt, durchaus von schön geschnitener arbeit.*

¹¹⁶ Meyting's encounter with Catarina and his exchanges with the Queen in Jordan Gschwend, 2010d, pp. 97-104; Jordan Gschwend 2017a, pp. 187-201.

Fig. 34 (p. 102) - Fan (recto, open), Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), Kōṭṭē, c. 1540-1551; carved ivory, gold, rubies, and cotton thread (57.0 x 0 31.5 cm). Munich, Museum Fünf Kontinente, inv. 2826 © Munich, Museum Fünf Kontinente

Fig. 35 (p. 103) - Fan (recto, open), Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), Kōṭṭē, c. 1540-1551; carved ivory, gold, rubies, and cotton thread (62.0 x 0 33.0 cm). Munich, Museum Fünf Kontinente, inv. 2827, on loan to the Kunst- und Wunderkammer Burg Trausnitz, Landshut, inv. 1003/1280 © Munich, Museum Fünf Kontinente

Fig. 36 - Maximiliana Maria of Bavaria in Philip Hainhofer, *Philippi Hainhoferi Relatio über seine in des Hertzogen Wilhelms in Bayern namen nacher Eystett verrichte Raise*, 1611; gouache on paper (32.0 x 21.0 cm). Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, Heinemann-Nr. 2256, fol. 189v © Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel



Conclusion: the afterlife of Queen Catarina’s fans

The ivory fans sent from Kōṭṭē to the Lisbon court, and, in particular, those Bhuvanekabāhu personally gifted Queen Catarina, constitute a rare and significant corpus of ivories to have survived. These were diplomatic gifts which highlighted Catarina’s global rule and reach in the mid–sixteenth century, and, as exotic Asian objects, symbolized her close friendship with Bhuvanekabāhu VII and his high–ranking courtier, Śri Rāmaraksa Paṇḍita. The global dimensions attached to the Queen’s fans were noted at the splendid 1565 wedding festivities sponsored by Catarina in the Lisbon royal palace, where a number of her Kōṭṭē fans formed part of the elaborate wedding celebrations for Infanta Maria of Portugal, showcased at her sumptuous banquets on buffets or *dressoirs* (*aparadores* in Portuguese). Their symbolic importance for Catarina was underscored by the Queen when she presented two of them to her favourite niece Infanta Maria upon her departure from the Lisbon court.

Other ivory fans Bhuvanekabāhu gifted male members of the Lisbon court before 1551, for which less documentation exists, were removed from the royal treasury and dispersed after Philip II returned to Madrid in 1583 when he left the rule of Portugal in the hands of his nephew, Archduke Albrecht of Austria, appointed Viceroy from 1583 until 1593. During his ten–year residency in Lisbon, Albrecht, like Catarina once did, supplied his Habsburg family with choice pieces of Chinese and Japanese porcelain, lacquers, Samurai armour, and other luxury goods manufactured in Portuguese Asia, which he had acquired in Goa through his representative, the Fugger agent, Ferdinand Cron (1554–1637).¹¹⁷ Albrecht particularly showered his brothers, Emperor Rudolf II (1552–1612) and Archduke Ernst of Austria (1553–1595), with rarities from India, China and Japan.

An inventory of the Prague *Kunstammer*, drawn up by Daniel Fröschl (1563–1613), court painter, curator, and administrator of the imperial collections, between 1607 and 1611, records the gifts Albrecht sent Rudolf from Lisbon. This same inventory also cites a large Kōṭṭē ivory fan carved before 1551.¹¹⁸ This fan had once belonged to the Spanish Ambassador in Prague, Juan de Borja y Castro (1533–1606), who had previously been ambassador to Portugal, before Queen Catarina’s death in early 1578. The *abano de marfil* Borja took in his baggage, in March of 1577, to Rudolf II’s court can perhaps be identified with the large Ceylonese ivory folding fan, now lost, but once in Rudolf’s splendid *Kunstammer* (see Introduction).¹¹⁹ Borja may even have personally received this fan from Queen Catarina before he departed from the Lisbon court in 1576, later gifting this Kōṭṭē fan to the Emperor after his arrival in Prague.

Bhuvanekabāhu’s rare and exceptional ivory fans represent globalization and cross–cultural transfers between Asia and Europe in the sixteenth century. These ivories bridged Ceylon and Portugal in a unique way, illustrating the extraordinary diversity, ingenuity and quality of Sinhalese craftsmanship at this date. These fans visually symbolize Luso–Sinhalese relations at the height of the Portuguese maritime trade empire and underscore the special nature of Portugal’s artistic, cultural and political ties with this island. As exotic showcase pieces, these fans came to represent the extent and power of the Lisbon court in the mid–sixteenth century, and qualify as some of the most important *Kunstammer* pieces ever collected by the Avis, Habsburg, and Farnese courts in the Renaissance.

¹¹⁷ Sanjay Subrahmanyam, “An Augsburger in Asia: Further Light on the Commercial World of Ferdinand Cron,” in *Emporia, Commodities and Entrepreneurs in Asian Maritime Trade c. 1400–1750*, eds. Roderich Ptak and Dietmar Rothermund (Stuttgart: Fran Steiner Verlag, 1991), pp. 407–411. Also Jordan Gschwend and Tudela, 2003, pp. 32–34.

¹¹⁸ Haupt and Bauer, p. 33, fol. 55: No. 583, *1 indianisch von helffenbein durchbrochen und mit gold gezierd ventali oder windfang!* “No. 583, one Indian ivory fan [ventali] or wind catcher, deeply carved and decorated with gold.” *Ventali* from the Italian, *ventola* or *ventaglio*.

¹¹⁹ Tudela and Jordan Gschwend, 2001, p. 43, n. 121. Borja resided as Spanish ambassador in Portugal from 1569 to 1576.



The “Pangolin Fan” and the Ceylonese Ivory Carving Tradition

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In a Spanish private collection for at least the last eighty years, there is little information on the complete provenance of the “Pangolin Fan” – nicknamed after its rare depiction of an Indian pangolin [fig. 1]. Its original royal provenance in the Lisbon royal court where it probably arrived as a diplomatic gift, is nonetheless firmly established in the Introduction to this volume, alongside that of the surviving nine imperial fans including one which is missing since 1920.

The present essay, with a detailed material, stylistic, and iconographic analysis of the “Pangolin Fan” [fig. 2], aims to contextualize its production within the tradition of ivory carving at the Ceylonese royal workshops under the direct patronage of the ruling élite during the first decades of contact with the Portuguese. Comparison is drawn from both earlier and later examples of Sri Lankan ivory (and wood) carvings, but also coeval architecture, stone sculpture, and mural painting. This essay also seeks to illuminate which model or prototype was followed at the imperial workshops of Kōṭṭē for the production of the ivory fans, and its probable European origin. Finally, the following text aims to provide a better understanding of the production of nine surviving ivory cockade fans (one stolen), by distinguishing two carving styles, one more architectural, and the other more sculptural in design. All absolute masterpieces of ivory carving of the early modern period, they stand as powerful testimonies of a strong artistic confluence between the Portuguese court in Lisbon and the Sinhalese court in Kōṭṭē, Ceylon, present-day Sri Lanka [fig. 3].¹

Ivory carving in the island of Lanka: an overview

Prized since antiquity, elephant ivory (from the tusks, or massive, protruding upper incisor teeth), one of the finest materials of the animal kingdom, has been used for the creation of small carved sculptures. In antiquity, the unique appeal of elephant ivory, a synonym of status and luxury, stemmed from its rarity and the difficulty of acquiring the raw material. Stored in treasuries as a source of wealth, similar to precious metals in the shape of gold or silver objects, bullion, and coin, ivories were the perfect royal gift, used as one of the most highly regarded commodities and best appropriate for diplomatic gift exchange. It is thus not surprising that carved ivory objects (caskets, fans, and combs) were deemed the most suitable diplomatic gifts to be presented by King Bhuvanekabāhu VII (r. 1521–1551) of Kōṭṭē to the Lisbon royal court, many miles away from the small island of Lanka on the other side of the world.

The importance of ivory objects (small-scale sculpture and furniture) as luxury goods since antiquity, and their intrinsic value, meant that ivory carvings were also the subject of booty and tribute.² It should be emphasised that raw ivory tusks from African elephants (*Loxodonta africana*), more appropriate for carving than the smaller tusks from the Asian elephant (*Elephas*

¹ Sri Lanka is of relative recent use, since it became the official name of the island of Lanka (how it was known since time immemorial in India) only in 1972. Before that it was known in Europe as Ceylon or “Ceilão” in Portuguese. For ease of comprehension I will use Ceylon, Sri Lanka and Lanka interchangeably, Sinhalese for the people, Ceylonese and Lankan as an adjectival form, and Sinhala for the language. Sinhala diacritics follow the most widely used system in scholarly publications.

² For its use as tribute and object of booty, see Georgina Hermann, *Ancient Ivory. Masterpieces of the Assyrian Empire* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2017), pp. 11–14.

Fig. 1 – Indian pangolin, Lahugala Kitulana National Park, Sri Lanka © Riaz Cader



maximus), and with which some of the sixteenth-century Ceylonese carvings may have been produced, were sent as tribute to the Portuguese royal court by African potentates.³ Nonetheless, it is also likely that for symbolic reasons Bhuvanekabāhu VII chose ivory from his rare prized tuskers – bulls with large tusks [fig. 4] –, from the Sri Lankan subspecies (*E. m. maximus*), to be used for the production of the imperial diplomatic gifts discussed in the present essay.⁴

The unique, fine microstructure of elephant ivory, a network of dentinal tubules that radiate from the central core of the tusk, called the Schreger pattern, makes it appropriate for very detailed carving.⁵ Due to its complex, compact structure, elephant ivory may be chiselled with ease from almost any angle, the carving resulting in little weakening or splintering of the precious material. The small, limited tools used for carving changed little over time, were common across diverse regions and similar to those used by woodcarvers. These included bow-saws for sectioning the large tusks, wooden vices to hold the ivory sections, axes and adzes for levelling, shaping or trimming the surfaces, a float to further pare the surface, and a range of chisels (used with mallets and hammers) and hand-held gauges used for carving the motifs in relief. These sharpened chisels and gauges were used alongside differently shaped rasps and files, and drills.⁶ Biogenic in nature, elephant ivory is composed of mineralized collagen fibres and a small percentage of water. This chemical microstructure renders it highly reactive to sudden changes in humidity levels after extraction. The gelatinous collagen material exuded from the dentinal tubules (carbonate-hydroxylapatite) during carving eases the cutting and polishing process resulting in the characteristic lustrous sheen of ivory, with its smooth surface enticing to the touch.

The difference between freshly extracted or fully dry ivory, after removing the thin and soft outer layer of the tusk (cementum), may account for the two different terms used to name ivory in earlier Sinhalese literature. The *Vaijyantatantra*, a *śilpa śāstra* or treatise on the arts and crafts, written in Sanskrit with a word-to-word paraphrase in Sinhala which has survived solely in Sri Lanka since at least the early medieval times, records the use of ජීවදන්ත *jīvadanta*, literally “living ivory” or “living tooth” for the carving of the handle of the fly-whisk (*cāmara*), part of the regalia discussed below.⁷ As we will see, the fly-whisk was the only type of ceremonial fan used at the imperial capital of Kōṭṭē. Only one other element of regalia, the pair of sandals (*pāduka*), could be made either from ivory or sandalwood, but the first is described solely as *danta* (“ivory”, or “tooth”). Alongside the word *jīvadanta*, the treatise also records අජීවදන්ත *ajīvadanta* or “dead ivory.” In addition, the treatise tells us that pieces that could be made using either “dead” or “living ivory” included the king’s main bed, on which he sleeps every day.⁸ And when discussing the items needed for the crowning ceremonies of kings, the treatise mentions the manufacture

3 Queen Catarina benefited from the Portuguese monopoly over ivory trade and was granted a percentage of tusks from West Africa, which she sold for revenue in Lisbon. See Jordan Gschwend and Beltz, 2010, p. 20.

4 On the differences between African and Asian elephant ivory, and on the prized Sri Lankan tuskers, see Jordan Gschwend and Beltz, 2010, p. 22.

5 On the microstructure and chemical composition of elephant ivory, see Marie Albéric, Aurélien Gourrier, Wolfgang Wägermaier, Peter Fratzl and Ina Reiche, “The three-dimensional arrangement of the mineralized collagen fibers in elephant ivory and its relation to mechanical and optical properties,” *Acta Biomaterialia*, 72 (2018), pp. 342–351.

6 Dwivedi, 1976, pp. 12–15.

7 Jayasuriya, 2001, p. 212 (*Vaijyantatantra* 8.6).

8 Jayasuriya, 2001, pp. 176–177 (*Vaijyantatantra* 5.32).

Fig. 2 – The “Pangolin Fan”

Fig. 3 (pp. 112–113) – Jan Janszoon (Johannes Janssonius), *Insula Zeilan olim Taprobana nunc incolis Tenarisim* (*The island of Ceylon, once known as Taprobane and now as Tenarisim* [“the land of delight”]), The Netherlands, Amsterdam, c. 1650; engraving on paper, hand coloured (40.6 x 50.8 cm). Private collection



INAVLA
ZEILAN
olim
TAPROBANA
nunc incolis
TENARISIM.

O C E A N U S

Septentrio

Meridus

M
T
V
A
R
A
R.

O C C I D E N S





of a bed made from "living ivory" and *śirīṣa* (a type of wood) for placing crowns and ornaments to be purified.⁹ This means that *jīvadanta* was considered superior, and mostly reserved for the production of regalia.

While the *Vaijayantatantra* fail to explain both terms, further clarification is found in ancient Sri Lankan lore. According to the legend of Daḷa Rājā (*Daḷa Rājā piḷivela*), an old Sinhalese poem collected by Hugh Nevill (1847–1897), the queen Haiṁsavatī Kumāri, who had married Siṁha Kumārāyā, son of Baṇḍābat, King of Dantapura in Dambadivā, offered an image to the goddess Isivara made from the ivory of a tusk cut off a living elephant and prayed for a son. The prince Daḷa Kumāru was born following the queen's prayer, the colourful personal story of whom is the subject of the poem.¹⁰ The practice of extracting ivory from a living animal must have been incredibly painful to the elephant since a nerve runs down the length of an elephant's tusk. Considering that Bhuvanekabāhu VII was the ruler of a Buddhist kingdom, where elephants, namely the king's tuskers were highly revered, it is unlikely that carving *jīvadanta* or "living ivory" was practised at the royal workshops in Kōṭṭē. Nonetheless, it is likely that the king's master ivory carvers possessed special knowledge on how to better preserve raw ivory to be cut and chiselled.

The histories of ivory carving in India and Sri Lanka are deeply entangled since antiquity, which is not surprising given the two countries' shared a human, political, cultural, and artistic past. The first known carved ivory object produced on the island, from around the same period as the better-known and still controversial Indian ivories discovered at Begram in Afghanistan, was found in 1947 by Senarat Paranavitana inside the Ruvanvæli Mahā Sāeya.¹¹ A most-revered *stūpa* in Anurādhapura, the capital city of Lanka in antiquity, and built by King Duṭugæmuṇu (r. 161–137 BCE) around 140 BCE, it enclosed in its foundations several reliquaries in the shape of a *stūpa* or *dāgæba* in Sinhala, some made from rock crystal while others from gold. Inside a limestone reliquary in the southern *vāhalkaḍa* or frontispiece of the *stūpa* was found this small (7.6 cm) ivory statuette [fig. 5] depicting a naked



Fig. 5 - Mañimekhalā, Goddess of the Sea, Sri Lanka, c. 140 BCE; carved ivory (7.6 cm)

⁹ Jayasuriya, 2001, p. 257 (*Vaijayantatantra* 15.52).

¹⁰ Nevill, 1954, p. 42.

¹¹ See Paranavitana, 1947; Paranavitana, 1950, p. 601; and Paranavitana, 1972, pp. 42–47. From the second or third century is a small carved chariot believed to be an early chessman, recovered from Māntai, in the north of the island, an ancient harbour that functioned as the main port of the Anurādhapura Kingdom. See J. E. van Lohuiszen-De Leeuw, "A unique piece of ivory carving – the oldest known chessman," in *Proceedings of the Sixth Conference of the Association of South Asian Archaeologists in Western Europe*, ed. Bridget Allchin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 245–253.

Fig. 4 - Sri Lankan elephant, tusker © Rudy Garns

female figure. The closest parallels are not only some of the few fully three-dimensional ivory carvings found at Begram, dated broadly from the first to the third century CE, but mainly the well-known and much-discussed ivory figurine in the Gabinetto Segreto of the Museo Archeologico Nazionale in Naples, which was found at the ruins of Pompeii in 1938.¹² Much smaller, the Sri Lankan figurine exhibits some quintessential Sinhalese characteristics of the Anurādhapura period. Based on its jewelled girdle, Paranavitana identified this second-century figurine as Maṅimekhalā, the Goddess of the Sea in the Hindu–Buddhist mythology.¹³

The first documentary and literary sources on the importance of ivory carving and its appreciation on the island date from a few centuries later. The *Mahāvamsa* or *Great Chronicle*, written in Pāli in the fifth century and detailing the history of Lanka from its legendary beginnings up to the reign of Mahāsēna of Anurādhapura (r. 274–301 CE), records the special use of ivory. Ivory is mentioned in the twenty-seventh chapter which deals with the construction and consecration of the Lohapāsāda or “Brazen Palace”, the palatial chapter house in Anurādhapura, a nine-storey building roofed with copper tiles built by King Duṭṭugamuṇu. It served as the ordination hall of the Mahāvihāra monastery. Ivory is described as the material of which the throne (*dantapallaṅko*) inside the building’s central gem-studded pavilion is made, set with a rock-crystal seat with gold and silver inlays, gems and pearls. Resting over cushions on top of the seat there was a ‘beautiful fan of ivory gleaming (magnificently), and a white umbrella with a coral foot.’¹⁴ Both ivory fan (*dantavijani*) and white umbrella (*setacchattan*) must be understood as royal emblems of power and regalia, and their presence on an empty throne dedicated to the Buddha, as symbols of Buddhist rule over the island of Lanka. The Pāli word *vijani* or “fan” gives us no indication of its shape or type. Nonetheless, the most common implement used by Buddhist monks to keep insects away, also used as regalia by the Sinhalese kings since early times, is the yak-tail fly whisk or fan, known in Pāli as *vālavijani* and thus the *dantavijani* recorded in the Sinhalese chronicle was likely a fly whisk.¹⁵

Although the Pāli literature mentions ivory carving as *sippa*, an art or craft, the ivory carver being referred to as *dantasippī* (*danta*, “tooth” or “tusk;” *sippī*, “craftsman”), and as such a common occupation, a noble or a member of the royal family could learn the craft of *dantakāra* (artisan in ivory; ivory polisher) and become so competent in it that his accomplishments would merit, as we will see, mention in the chronicles.¹⁶ In later periods a pronounced distinction was made between the ivory turner (ලියන වඩුවා *liyana vaḍuvā*), who is low caste, and the ivory carver (ඇත් දත කැටයම්කරයා *æt data kætayamkārayā*) who is of the highest rank

12 Dated before 79 CE, the larger statuette (25.0 x 7.0 cm), mistakenly nicknamed the “Pompeii Lakshmi”, has been tentatively identified as one of the feet of a low table and as depicting a *yakṣiṇī*, of a class of mostly benevolent nature-spirits or *yakṣas* from Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain religious mythologies. On this piece, see Amedeo Maiuri, “Statuetta eburnea di arte indiana a Pompei,” *Le arti*, 2 (1938–1939), pp. 111–115; Mirella Levi d’Ancona, “An Indian Statuette from Pompeii,” *Artibus Asiae*, 13.3 (1950), pp. 166–180; Elisabeth C.L. During Caspers, “The Indian ivory figurine from Pompeii – a reconsideration of its functional use,” in *South Asian Archaeology 1979. Papers from the Fifth International Conference of the Association of South Asian Archaeologists in Western Europe*, ed. Herbert Härtel (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 1981), pp. 341–353; and Laura R. Weinstein, “The Indian figurine from Pompeii as an emblem of East–West trade in the Early Roman Imperial Era,” in *Globalization and Transculturality from Antiquity to the Pre-Modern World*, eds. Serena Autiero and Matthew A. Cobb (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2022), pp. 183–204. See also V. P. Dwivedi, 1976, pp. 64–66.

13 Paranavitana, 1971, p. 140, plate 103.

14 *Mahāvamsa*, 1908, p. 216; and *Mahāvamsa*, 1912, pp. 184–185 (*Mahāvamsa* 27, 32–36).

15 See Robert E. Buswell Jr and Donald S. Lopez Jr., *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), pp. 958–959.

16 In ancient India all arts were the domain of all classes, castes and both genders, and could be practised by anyone irrespective of the family’s occupation. On this topic, see Stella Kramrisch, “Traditions of the Indian Craftsman,” *The Journal of American Folklore*, 71.281 (1958), pp. 224–230.

or මලදේදා *galladdā* and used to practice painting and architecture.¹⁷ The knowledge of the arts (*śilpa* in Sanskrit) of architecture and painting, undoubtedly learned from old treatises (*śilpa śāstra*), passed from one generation to the next, explain the architectural and painterly nature of some of the most refined ivory carvings made in Kōṭṭē for the Portuguese royal court. Ivory carvers working for the king, namely in the later Kandyan period, belonged to the කොට්ටේ බද්ද *koṭṭal badda* or the royal “artificers department”, probably forming part of the සිංහසන පට්ටලය *siṅhāsana paṭṭalaya* or “throne workshop” since the throne was made from ivory and thus called “ivory throne”, as it is recorded in Portuguese sources regarding the Kōṭṭē royal court.¹⁸ The turned ivory objects which were recovered from the archaeological excavation of the foundations of the Jētavanārāmaya *stūpa* in Anurādhapura built by King Mahāsēna, including spires of *stūpa*-shaped reliquaries and what seem to be fly-whisk handles, were certainly made by *liyana vaḍuvō* or ivory carvers.¹⁹

The *Cūlavamsa*, in the later addition to the *Mahāvamsa*’s last chapter, the thirty-seventh, on Mahāsēna’s reign, written in Pāli after 1219, mentions that King Jeṭṭatissa II (r. 328–337 CE) was an expert in ivory carving: “Extraordinarily skillful, he carried out many difficult works and taught the practice of his art to many people.”²⁰ The chronicle also tells us that before ascending to the throne, Jeṭṭatissa “made a beautiful, charming figure representing the Bodhisatta, as beautiful as if it had been produced by miraculous power, as well as a chair of state with a back [a throne], an umbrella, a *maṅḍapa* [a festive pavilion] with jewels: Here and there (were) all kinds of work by him in splendid ivory.”²¹ From this passage we get to know that ivory carvings in Sri Lanka included devotional statuettes, but as we have seen when discussing “living ivory” also items of regalia such as the king’s throne, and umbrella or sunshade (*chatta* in Pāli). The *Cūlavamsa* also mentions the use of ivory for the decoration of Buddhist shrines, such as those added to the Thūpārāmaya *stūpa*, the first Buddhist building on the island, by King Aggabōdhi II (598–608 CE).²²

Unlike Sri Lankan examples, a few rare medieval and early modern carved ivories survive from India. These include eighth-century Kashmiri Buddhist statuettes, and Eastern Indian and Deccani carved ivories from the ninth century.²³ From South India, the earliest group of surviving carved ivories, identified by their shared characteristics with contemporary architecture and sculpture, is from Odisha (formerly known as Orissa). Pieces from this production centre are dated to the thirteenth (an earlier group) and the sixteenth centuries.²⁴ From the mid-thirteenth century, this throne leg in the shape of a *gajasimha* (an elephant-headed lion)

17 Coomaraswamy, 1956, p. 184.

18 On these royal workshops, see K. D. Paranavitana, “Archives of the royal artificers at Maṅgalama,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Sri Lanka*, 47 (2002), pp. 67–104.

19 On these ivories, see Hema Ratnayake, “The Jetavana Treasure,” in *Sri Lanka and the Silk Road of the Sea*, eds. Senake Bandaranayake *et al.* (Colombo: Sri Lanka Institute of International Relations, Central Cultural Fund, Sri Lanka National Commission for Unesco, 2003), pp. 37–51, especially p. 41 and p. 44, fig. 6.

20 *Cūlavamsa* 1929, vol. 1, p. 9 (*Cūlavamsa* 37, 100–101). On this later addition to the *Mahāvamsa*, see Wilhelm Geiger, *The Dipavamsa and Mahāvamsa and their Historical Development in Ceylon* (Colombo: H. C. Cottle, 1908), pp. 18–19.

21 *Cūlavamsa*, 1929, vol. 1, p. 9 (*Cūlavamsa* 37, 102–103).

22 *Cūlavamsa*, 1929, vol. 1, p. 72 (*Cūlavamsa* 42, 57–58).

23 Dwivedi, 1976, pp. 96–112.

24 See Stella Kramrisch, “Early Indian Ivory Carving,” *Philadelphia Museum of Art Bulletin*, 54.261 (1959), pp. 55–66; J. E. van Lohuizen–de Leeuw, “Indian ivories with special reference to a mediaeval throne leg from Orissa,” *Arts Asiatiques*, 6.3 (1959), pp. 195–216; and Aschwin Lippe, *The Freer Indian Sculptures* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, Freer Gallery of Art, 1970), pp. 41–46 (“Orissa Ivory Throne”); and Dwivedi, 1976, pp. 112–114 (earlier group), and 118–119 (later group).



[fig. 6] is a fine example of the high level of mastery of contemporary Odishan ivory carvers.²⁵ From a second group seemingly made in Mysore, Karnataka, is this outstanding sixteenth-century statuette of Kṛṣṇa, the Butter Thief [fig. 7].²⁶ Retaining some of its original polychromy and gilding, its naturalism, detail, and craftsmanship are similar to that of contemporary ivory carvings from Sri Lanka, namely those made at Kōṭṭē, deeply influenced by South Indian art in general, and the art from Vijayanagara in particular.²⁷ A third group, from Tamil Nadu and mostly dating from the seventeenth century and likely produced in the Madurai region, has been wrongly identified as Odishan.²⁸ Without surprise, ivories carved in Madurai share great stylistic and iconographical characteristics with those made in Sri Lanka. Some carved ivory thrones in the form of rampant lions (*yāli* or *vyāla*) attributed to Madurai are a case in point. While most surviving examples date to the seventeenth century, the Royal Asian Art Society in The Netherlands owns an earlier piece, on loan to the Rijksmuseum [fig. 8] which perfectly represents the fine craftsmanship of contemporary Tamil ivory carvers. Not surprisingly, such objects are identical in iconography and technique to those made in Sri Lanka, seemingly produced by Tamil-origin master craftsmen.²⁹

Examples of Sinhalese ivory carvings from the Kingdom of Poḷonnaruva (1055–1232) and the following kingdoms of the so-called Transitional period, including those of Daṁbadeṇiya (1220–1345), Gampōla (1341–1408), and early Kōṭṭē (1412–1597), are unknown. This Transitional, or Divided Kingdoms period, is marked by the dispersal of centralized royal authority and the shift of royal capitals from the dry northern and central areas of Lanka to the wetter southwest.³⁰ While the first meant rising political uncertainty fuelled by constant internal political chaos, famine and disease, the second promoted a shift from stone and brick sculpture and architecture to wood. Most of the architecture produced between the thirteenth and the eighteenth century was made using brick and wood (of which little survived), in contrast with earlier building practices in the Anurādhapura and Poḷonnaruva periods, when powerful kings engaged in larger, more ambitious building projects in stone. Contact with rainforests with their lush vegetation and wild life fuelled by a heavy monsoon, deeply transformed artistic practice, iconography, and decorative repertoire. Some scholars feel less attracted by this later period in art and still consider it inferior, ignoring many artistic continuities despite significant changes. The Poḷonnaruva period was marked by a growing influence of South Indian art which did

²⁵ Its companion throne leg belongs to the collection of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, inv. 1960–96–1. See Dwivedi, 1976, pp. 112–114.

²⁶ See Pratapaditya Pal, *Indian Sculpture*, vol. 2 (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1988), pp. 255–256, cat. 133; and Stephen Markel, *Mughal and Early Modern Metalware from South Asia at LACMA* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 2020), p. 38.

²⁷ On the tributary relationship between fourteenth and fifteenth-century Sri Lanka (namely Gampola and Kōṭṭē) and the Empire of Vijayanagara, see Jonathan S. Walkers, "Vibhishana and Vijanagar: An Essay on Religion and Geopolitics in Medieval Sri Lanka," *Sri Lanka Journal of the Humanities*, (1991–1992), pp. 129–142.

²⁸ Stephen Markel, "From Orissa to Madurai: Reattributions for a Group of Indian Ivory Sculptures in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art," in *Vanamālā. Festschrift A. J. Gail*, eds. Adalbert J. Gail, Gerd J. R. Mevissen and Klaus Bruhn (Berlin: Weidler Buchverlag, 2006), pp. 108–117.

²⁹ Other major centres of ivory production in the subcontinent included Gujarat, Murshidabad in Bangla, Vishakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh, Travancore in Kerala, and Portuguese-ruled Goa. On carved ivories made from mid-seventeenth century onwards in Portuguese-ruled Goa, see Távora, 1982; Nuno Vassallo e Silva, "A missionary Industry. Ivories in Goa," in *Ivories in the Portuguese Empire*, eds. Gauvin Alexander Bailey, Jean Michel Massing and Nuno Vassallo e Silva (Lisboa: Scribe, 2013), pp. 142–229; Sousa, 2016; and Hugo Miguel Crespo, *India in Portugal. A Time of Artistic Confluence* (Porto: Bluebook, 2021), pp. 127–129.

³⁰ For an excellent synthesis on this artistic period, see Gamage 2018.

Fig. 6 – Throne leg in the shape of an elephant-headed lion (*gajasiṅha*), India, Odisha; carved ivory (34.9 x 15.7 x 13.2 cm). Washington, Freer Gallery of Art, inv. F1907.8 © Washington, Freer Gallery of Art



not diminish in later periods. The best of what has survived in terms of architecture and sculpture from the Gampola period, which immediately preceded and deeply influenced the art of Kōṭṭē, at the Buddhist temples of Gaḍalādeṇiya and Laṅkātilaka, was made by South Indian artists.³¹ The last monumental temples of the island, they demonstrate the religious syncretism of the Gampola period also prevalent in Kōṭṭē before the Kandyan revival of Buddhism in the eighteenth century.³²

The best known carved ivories from the Divided Kingdoms period are those made for the Portuguese royal house while intended as diplomatic gifts (see Introduction) and under the influence of crown officials and missionaries. To these we may add those produced later outside the Sinhalese court and made for export for the Portuguese, Dutch and English markets. This production, particularly the earlier under direct Portuguese influence and patronage, has been better studied, most notably in the last decades. Jaffer and Schwabe's 1999 contribution, albeit providing a useful list, now outdated and incomplete, of surviving ivory caskets, mirrors their limited knowledge of the socio-political and religious context, namely the complex relationship between the Sinhalese rulers and the Portuguese. Their hurried dating of some caskets, namely those which integrate European-derived religious (and secular) iconography in their design, have done more harm than good, as their conclusions have been repeated since by historians and art historians who took them at face value. Following the *Exotica* exhibition in Vienna and Lisbon (2000–2001), Nuno Vassallo e Silva's 2007 book chapter on Sinhalese export art from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, focusing on ivory and rock crystal carvings, is a useful compilation of what was known about these objects and provides an attempt at their classification.³³

Based on decades of archival and art-historical research by Jordan, the exhibition and catalogue *Elfenbeine aus Ceylon* (2010–2011) is a significant milestone for the study of these ivories (see Introduction). Some of the more recent contributions merit discussion. Meegama's two latest essays on the historical value and artistic meaning of the imperial ivory caskets, while advocating a more nuanced and better informed art-historical perspective, add little to their

³¹ Mudyanse, 1963, p. 81.

³² See Strathern, 2007, pp. 126–132.

³³ Vassallo e Silva 2007, pp. 281–289.

Fig. 7 - *Kṛṣṇa, the Butter Thief*, India, Karnataka, Mysore, 16th century; carved ivory with traces of polychromy and gilding (19.05 x 10.48 x 7.3 cm). Los Angeles, Los Angeles County Museum, inv. M.84.34 © Museum Associates/LACMA



Fig. 8 - Throne support in the form of a rampant lion (*yāli* or *vyāla*), India, Madurai, 16th century; carved ivory with traces of polychromy (23.0 x 7.7 x 8.0 cm). Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. AK-MAK-190 © Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum



Fig. 9 - Fragment with scrolling (*liya pata*), Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), 15th–16th century; carved and stained ivory (18.4 x 6.3 cm). London, Victoria and Albert Museum, inv. IS.404–1897 © London, Victoria and Albert Museum

knowledge.³⁴ It is also unfair to say that previous scholarship had been less attentive to their local artistic features and symbolism. And while Biedermann’s recent book chapter is based on his profound knowledge of the historical dynamics that were at play when these ivory caskets were made, he too fails to add anything substantially new apart from centring their production in the specific local context of South Asian gift giving.³⁵ On the contrary, Saviello’s recent essay on the Berlin casket (Museum für Asiatische Kunst, inv. I 9928; see below fig. 16) adds considerably more on this highly important object, namely his careful analysis of its iconography and the visual sources that informed it.³⁶ Nonetheless, Saviello’s reasoning fails to convince its readers on the casket’s date, as he also pushes it towards the end of the sixteenth century when both visual sources and likely historical context of production were outdated by more than forty years. Difficulties in dating some of the objects made between the time of the first Portuguese contacts with Kōṭṭē and differentiating them with later examples from the Kandyan period (1597–1815), either for private consumption or made for export, calls for a stylistic and material (techniques) analysis of these productions.

Ivory carvings made previously to the arrival of the Portuguese on the island in 1505 are difficult to identify, although some important objects may be preserved in closely guarded temple treasuries. While earlier free-standing objects seem not to have survived, some carved ivory elements once part of temple decorations, most notably doorjamb elements, may be identified. One, possibly from the fifteenth or sixteenth century, is this [fig. 9] fragment in the Victoria and Albert Museum. Applied as architectural decoration, probably of a door or shrine, it features highly elaborate scrolling based on complex variations of the typical Ceylonese leaf motif called ලිය පත

34 Meegama, 2017a; and Meegama, 2017b.

35 Biedermann, 2018.

36 Saviello, 2018.

liya pata, combined with lotus petals. Minutely carved in high relief, its quality and sophistication, when compared to other known examples, account for its earlier date.

Albeit not mentioned in previous bibliography on the ivories carved in Kōṭṭē for the Portuguese court, this superb plaque [fig. 10], once one of the sides of a now lost casket, stands as testimony to the unsurpassed level of craftsmanship attained at the imperial workshops in the reign of Bhuvanekabāhu VII.³⁷ It also helps us to characterize the style and carving techniques prevalent in Kōṭṭē during this period. With 12.0 cm in height, the original casket was just slightly smaller than the “Rāmāyana Casket” in Vienna (see Introduction, figs. 10–12; and below fig. 57). It similarly documents the pre-eminence of Hindu iconography at the royal court, as it depicts *Indrajit firing arrows at Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa and their monkey allies*. Taken from the *Rāmāyana*, the brilliantly designed scene adapts perfectly to the arched shape of the casket’s end panel. Full of movement, it shows the invisible demon and sorcerer Indrajit in the clouds firing an arrow at Rāma on the right, dangerously balancing on the shoulders of a monkey, while Lakṣmaṇa in the centre is falling in mid-air, trespassed by Indrajit’s arrow; on the left, a monkey ally of Rāma flips his demon opponent in the air. The curling design of the clouds is reminiscent of the rock formations seen on the mid thirteenth-century Odishan *gajasiṃha*. Like the “Rāmāyana Casket”, it likely predates those which combine European visual printed sources, namely religious.

Masterfully carved in high-relief on a thick (1.9 cm) and large ivory plank, it shows the highest level of ivory carving quality attained at the imperial workshop. Contrary to some of the other contemporary caskets, the genius of the master carver is not hindered by the partition of the scenes in small narrative scenes (emulating the partitioned European model with its metal bars), exploring in full the total area available for carving.³⁸ The striking naturalism is mirrored by the precision and level of detail, the carved surfaces being carefully smoothed and polished to perfection. The carving quality of this plaque outshines many of the surviving caskets in London, Boston and Berlin, and is most comparable to the end panels of the “Coronation Casket” (see Jordan’s essay, figs. 4 and 27; and below fig. 41), the smaller casket also in Munich, and the “Rāmāyana Casket”. These are however less dynamic, more formal, and decorative. Also comparable in carving quality, style and iconography is this [figs. 11–12] little-studied casket in Peradeniya, which is seemingly the only of such caskets to survive in Sri Lanka.³⁹ While showing Portuguese influence in the figures (royal porters) flanking the later lock plate, its iconography is also based on the *Rāmāyana*. This casket, albeit more packed with imagery, and the plaque in Virginia may have been carved by the same master carver considering their similar rendition of clouds and figures.

The Kōṭṭē carving style⁴⁰ is thus characterized by a marked naturalism taking full advantage of the different depths of carving by the use of thicker ivory plaques while playing with the contrast between scenes fully in high-relief and shallow-carved ornamental borders. The

37 Published in “Art of Asia Acquired by North American Museums, 2003–2004,” *Archives of Asian Art*, 56 (2006), pp. 109–132, ref. p. 129, fig. 46; and *The Rama Epic*, 2016, pp. 184–185, cat. 95.

38 Although emulating the shape (with the reinforcing iron bars) of European caskets, the division of space in small units is reminiscent of contemporary and earlier sculpted decoration in Sinhala architecture.

39 The casket belongs to the Senarath Paranavitana Teaching Museum of the University of Peradeniya. It seems that either it lost its original gem-studded mounts, replaced by the ebony inlays (similar to those on the smaller casket in Vienna, KHM, inv. KK 4745) or that these were never added by the goldsmiths working at the imperial workshop, as may be the case with the casket in Vienna. On the casket in Peradeniya, see Meegama 2017b, pp. 84–85, figs. 7–8, who apart from its illustration, adds little more to its knowledge or provenance.

40 See also below the lengthy analysis of the nine fans.



naturalism in the depiction of human figures is reminiscent of earlier periods, namely from the Poḷonnaruva and Gampola periods – such as the twelfth to thirteenth-century murals of the Tivaṅka temple at Poḷonnaruva.⁴¹ One eloquent example from the Gampola period is the fourteenth-century carved wooden doorframe in the Aḷudeniya Vihāraya which is likely the earliest preserved of its type anywhere on the island.⁴² Its depictions of lively dancers, musicians and drummers, with their pleated, billowing costumes, alongside those carved on stone on other Gampola-period temples (Gaḷalādeṇiya, Niyāṅgampāya, and Alavatura), are similar to those found on the caskets made in Kōṭṭē under the patronage of Bhuvanekabāhu VII. Quintessential to the Kōṭṭē style is also the marked playfulness, humour, and the mischief nature of some of the animal imagery, depicted in sexual intercourse, sometimes most prominently on the front near the lock plate, while other times mostly inconspicuously. The superior ability of the carvers is evident from the use of openwork motifs and the undercutting of protruding design elements, which are the most demanding techniques of ivory carving – time-consuming techniques also deployed on the ivory fans. With much artistic ingenuity, this production combines Buddhist animal and floral motifs and imagery with Hindu iconography and South Indian style, integrating both contemporary and earlier Sinhalese architectural and sculptural designs – friezes of dancers and musicians, wrestlers, and rows of animals, domestic and wild.

Among these, the most important is the vegetal scrolling or “creepers of life” which form roundels enclosing figures, animals and birds or flowers (see Introduction, figs. 17–20). Known in Sanskrit as *kalpalatā*, and in medieval Odisham architectural treatises as *vartulā* (with mustard leaves foliage, or *āgamā*), “creepers of life” were used in Lanka since early times influenced by Gupta decorative designs.⁴³ Those from Kōṭṭē are based on *kalpalatā* designs used in Poḷonnaruva which in turn derive from South Indian, Cōḷa (Chola) art and architecture. The finest examples are found on the pillars [fig. 13] of the Aṭadāgē in Poḷonnaruva, the temple built by King Vijayabāhu (r. 1055–1110) where the tooth relic of the Buddha was enshrined.⁴⁴ “Creepers of life” are used on the Kōṭṭē ivory carvings either as friezes or as multi-row patterns, usually deployed to great effect on the upper sides of the prismatic lids of the caskets. These, on the sides [fig. 14] of the smaller casket in Vienna⁴⁵, show some of the best, deep high-relief carving and undercutting found on the Kōṭṭē ivories. Other design elements borrowed by the Kōṭṭē ivory carvers include the typical architectural mouldings of pedestals or temple bases (*adhiṣṭhāna*) and entablatures, including those with lotus petal friezes (known

41 On these murals, see Bandaranayake, 1986, pp. 79–104.

42 On this doorframe, see Mudiyanse, 1963, pp. 104–109, and figs. 35–44.

43 Parānavitana, 1971, p. 127, plate 2.

44 Parānavitana, 1971, p. 132, plate 49.

45 On this casket, see *Exotica*, 2000, pp. 238–239, cat. 150; Jordan Gschwend and Beltz, 2010, pp. 72–73, cat. 19 (entry written by Jordan Gschwend).

Fig. 10 (p. 124) – End panel from a casket (*Indrajit firing arrows at Rama, Lakshmana and their monkey allies*), Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), c. 1540–1551; carved ivory (12.0 x 13.6 x 1.9 cm). Virginia, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, inv. 2004.16 © Virginia Museum of Fine Arts; photo: Katherine Wetzel

Fig. 11 (p. 125, above) – Casket (top front), Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), Kōṭṭē, c. 1540–1551; carved ivory, ebony, and metal. Peradeniya, Senarath Parānavitana Teaching Museum of the University of Peradeniya

Fig. 12 (p. 125, below) – Casket (left side), Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), Kōṭṭē, c. 1540–1551; carved ivory, ebony, and metal. Peradeniya, Senarath Parānavitana Teaching Museum of the University of Peradeniya

in Sinhala as පලාපෙති *palāpeti*), and the design of pillars and pilasters.⁴⁶ Following earlier local metal examples, the Kōṭṭē ivory caskets, in their shape and design, emulate Sinhalese religious and secular buildings. Their gem-studded gold mounts highlight their nature as miniature architecture.⁴⁷

These traditional designs were soon infused with new visual imagery brought by Portuguese crown officials and Franciscan missionaries resulting in new designs – good examples are the “Robinson Casket”⁴⁸ [fig. 15], the Berlin casket⁴⁹ [fig. 16], and the larger casket in a private collection⁵⁰ [fig. 17]. Although master carvers could travel from one royal court to the other, it is likely that most of these techniques and carving styles were gradually lost after the death of Bhuvanekabāhu VII in 1551 and the conversion of João Dharmapāla, the grandson of the king and his successor, in 1557. Without artistic patronage due to political uncertainty and widespread war, which culminated with the abandonment of Kōṭṭē in 1565, the conditions were surely not favourable for the traditional transmission system of craftsmanship that had prevailed until then. Yet, some of these techniques and carving styles seem to have survived in religious statuettes and plaques produced for the newly converted Christian population and made for export to Portugal. Sinhalese craftsmen, likely working in Portuguese-ruled Colombo, produced these masterworks from the mid-sixteenth century until around 1658.

Alongside fine fully three-dimensional carved religious images including calvaries, a number of devotional plaques survive, modelled after European prototypes in metal or based on contemporary prints. Two plaques, one in the Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga in Lisbon (inv. 625 Esc) and the other in the Museu de Artes Decorativas of Viana do Castelo [fig. 18] merit special mention. They perfectly exemplify the two chronological extremities of this ivory carving production. The earliest, in Lisbon, depicts a Nativity Scene and is based on an early



Fig. 13 – Pillars (detail of the “creepers of life”) of the Aṭadāgē Daḷadā Maḷigāva in Poḷonnaruva (Polonnaruwa District, Sri Lanka), 11th–12th century © Ann Collier

46 Meegama 2017a makes useful comparisons between the socles and other design elements on the caskets with earlier and contemporary Sinhalese and South Indian architecture.

47 For earlier metal examples, see De Silva and Wickramasinghe, 2015, pp. 8–11, plate 1, cat. 2, where a eighth to ninth-century rectangular bronze casket is presented (14.0 x 12.4 x 12.4 cm). Excavated at Anurādhapura, this jewel box (casket no. 325) was found at the Veheragala Vihāraya. The vertical edges of the casket have a raised decoration in the shape of temple pilasters, while pilasters are placed in the middle of all of the sides of the casket, partitioning the space.

48 On this casket, see Ferrão, 1990, p. 87; Jaffer and Schwabe, 1999, pp. 8–10; *Exotica*, 2000, pp. 238, 240–241, cat. 151; and Amin Jaffer, *Luxury Goods from India. The Art of the Cabinet-Maker* (London: V&A Publications, 2002), pp. 14–16, cat. 1.

49 On this casket, see Ferrão, 1990, pp. 84–87; Jaffer and Schwabe, 1999, pp. 10–12; *Exotica*, 2000, pp. 240 and 242, cat. 152; Jordan Gschwend and Beltz, 2010, p. 75, cat. 21 (entry written by Jordan Gschwend); and Saviello, 2018.

50 On this casket, see *Exotica*, 2001, pp. 195–197, cat. 81; and Jordan Gschwend and Beltz, 2010, pp. 60–64, cat. 12 (entry written by Jordan Gschwend).







sixteenth-century printed source.⁵¹ In contrast, the second, made in the early decades of the seventeenth century, is based on a c. 1610 engraving by Hieronymus Wierix on *The Triumph of Divine over Profane Love*.⁵² Set on an ebony frame and similarly shaped, this remarkable ivory plaque in Los Angeles [fig. 19], has been incongruously dated to the eighteenth century by its museum curators.⁵³ It depicts *Buddha and his Attendants*. Reminiscent of typically Iberian portable devotional plaques, alien to Buddhist practice, its carving style and quality point to a much earlier date in the second half of the sixteenth century. The naturalism and softness of the finely carved figures are very close to the Kōṭṭē style, while the depiction of the figure of the standing Buddha conforms with the style prevalent during the Divided Kingdoms period, in contrast with the Kandyan style.

The Kandyan style, which would become hegemonic on the island from the seventeenth century onwards, is characterized by a growing stylization and idealism, formalism, and decorative excess which pervades all areas of artistic creation including ivory carving.⁵⁴ The style is perfectly illustrated in the lavish and much-celebrated ivory carvings which adorn a doorway in an outer corridor of the Ridi Vihāraya or “Silver Temple”.⁵⁵ An ancient Buddhist temple from the early Anurādhapura period, it was fully renovated during the Kandyan Buddhist revival under the patronage of King Kīrti Śrī Rājasīṁha (1747–1782). It is believed that the king was responsible for its commission. Bordering the doorway and comprising an array of pierced, openwork ivory plaques, it features a pot-shaped motif known as පන්වනාරිඝටය *pancanārighaṭaya*, or “five women pot” crowning the arch, depicting five entwined women forming a pot. Flanking this motif there are two rampant heraldic lions (*siṁha*). Below, on either side of the doorway, two large rectangular plaques used to be near the wooden step [figs. 20–21]. Stolen in 1998, they depict female temple dancers.⁵⁶

51 Maria da Conceição Borges de Sousa “A Mensagem na Imagem,” in *Vita Christi. Marfins Luso-Orientais*, ed. Maria da Conceição Borges de Sousa (Lisbon: Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga, 2013), pp. 40–41, and p. 89, cat. 15; and *Christianity in Asia*, 2016, pp. 114–115 (entry written by Maria da Conceição Borges de Sousa). The author identifies the visual source with two engravings, one from c. 1510 by Albrecht Dürer, and the other, much later in the sixteenth century, by Hieronymus Wierix. The visual source seems more likely to have been something similar to a 1508 engraving by Hans Wechtlin, of which a copy exists in the British Museum, London (inv. E.9.45).

52 See Távora, 1971; and Távora, 1982, pp. 141–142, cat. 188. At least four other plaques similar to the plaque in Viana do Castelo, in iconography and technique, are known: one belongs to the Seminário Maior in Porto, and three are in private collections.

53 *The Jeweled Isle*, 2018, pp. 34–35.

54 On the main stylistic features of Kandyan style mural paintings (stylization, and formalism), see Bandaranayake, 1986, pp. 105–109.

55 See Tammita-Delgoda, 2006, pp. 133–147.

56 Tammita-Delgoda, 2006, pp. 139–142.

Fig. 14 (p. 128) – Casket (left side), Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), Kōṭṭē, c. 1540–1551 (later mounts); carved ivory, ebony, and gilt silver (11.0 x 16.3 x 9.6 cm). Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, inv. KK 4745 © KHM-Museumsverband

Fig. 15 (p. 129) – The “Robinson Casket” (front, three-quarter), Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), Kōṭṭē, c. 1540–1551; carved ivory, gold, and sapphires (13.7 x 22.8 x 12.7 cm). London, Victoria and Albert Museum, inv. IS.41-1980 © London, Victoria and Albert Museum

Fig. 16 (p. 130) – Casket (front), Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), Kōṭṭē, c. 1540–1551; carved ivory, silver, and gilt silver (13.5 x 25.5 x 11.3 cm). Berlin, Museum für Asiatische Kunst, inv. I 9928 © Berlin, Museum für Asiatische Kunst

Fig. 17 (p. 131) – Casket (front, three-quarter), Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), c. 1540–1551; carved ivory, gold, gilt silver, rubies, and sapphires (11.5 x 23.5 x 13.0 cm). Private collection

Fig. 18 (p. 132) – Devotional plaque (*The Triumph of Divine over Profane Love*), Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), probably Colombo, early 17th century; carved ivory, and red mastic (22.8 x 17.7 x 1.8 cm). Viana do Castelo, Museu de Artes Decorativas, inv. 812 © Viana do Castelo, Museu de Artes Decorativas; photo: Rui Carvalho

Fig. 19 (p. 133) – Devotional plaque (*Buddha and his Attendants*), Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), 2nd half of the 16th century; carved ivory with traces of polychromy, carved ebony frame (14.9 x 10.6 x 1.6 cm; with frame: 18.7 x 14.0 x 3.2 cm). Los Angeles, Los Angeles County Museum, inv. M.86.183 © Museum Associates/LACMA



Figs. 20–21 – Plaques (*Temple Dancers*) on the left and right sides of the doorway at the Ridi Vihāraya (Kurunegala District, Sri Lanka), 18th century © Howard Wilson

Albeit less complex in their design, two similar plaques, once forming a pair and applied on a comparable, unidentified temple doorway, survive – one at the Victoria and Albert Museum [fig. 22] and the other in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (inv. 2019.199).⁵⁷ Probably earlier than the two stolen plaques from the Ridi Vihāraya, these are somewhat softer, more graceful and less excessively decorative. The highly stylized shapes, more geometric and simplified, and the grooved carving technique used, typical of the Kandyan style, may be seen on all four plaques. The same style, quintessential of Kandyan art, is deployed on the wood carvings of the much-celebrated Āmbækkē Dēvalaya [fig. 23].⁵⁸ While the temple was built during the reign of Vikramabāhu III of Gampola (r. 1357–1374), its carved wooden pillars date to the eighteenth century and, similar to the Ridi Vihāraya ivory doorjamb decoration, belong to an extensive renovation program dating to the seventeenth or eighteenth century.⁵⁹ A fine example of earlier ivory carvings in the Kandyan style is this large wooden casket of local shape set with pierced, openwork carved plaques [figs. 24–25] which may be dated to the reign of Vimaladharmasūriya of Kandy (r. 1592–1604) or one of his immediate successors. The figures are much more stylised than those seen in Kōṭṭē and framed by a diamond border or කුන්දිරික්කන් *kundirikkan* which is typical of Kandyan carvings as seen from the plaques depicting temple dancers and the Āmbækkē wood carvings.

57 The plaque in New York, which has an English provenance, was recently acquired by the museum, while the one in London was given to the former India Museum by the Royal Asiatic Society in 1879, and entered the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1924.

58 On this temple, see Mudiyanse, 1963, pp. 23–24; Seneviratna and Polk, 1992, pp. 84–88; and Manukulasooriya, 2003.

59 It is a common misconception that the wood carvings date to the Gampola period, despite their marked Kandyan style. A complete analysis of the wood carvings, its iconography and decorative motifs, is provided by Manukulasooriya, 2003.



Alongside the Kōttē-Colombo examples and the Kandyan ivory carvings with their distinctive styles, a marked South Indian-derived production can also be identified.⁶⁰ Made for export, it comprises objects produced in the second half of the sixteenth century modelled after European prototypes, including caskets with prismatic lids, flat-lidded boxes, fall-front writing boxes, and table cabinets. Their Tamil-style decoration consists of vine scrolls enclosing mythical creatures (*makarā*-headed *siṅha*, elephant-headed *siṅha* known as *gajasīṅha*, double-headed eagles, etc.) and real animals (lions, geese, deer, pelicans, elephants, etc.), and friezes with animal fights (deer, leopards, etc.). Unlike those from Kōttē, these are made from thinner plaques of ivory, usually joined together in planks and dovetailed, while their low-relief carving is more schematic and the decoration based on larger modular motifs. The decorative friezes or carpet-like compositions have narrow borders of a typical wavy pattern. Other examples are made from thin pierced, openwork plaques pinned to a wooden core, and may deploy similar figurative imagery or simple vegetal scrolls.

Two caskets with prismatic lids are in Portuguese private collections; one originally in the Archbishop's Palace of Palencia.⁶¹ At least five flat-lidded boxes are known: a larger one in the Victoria and Albert Museum (inv. 205-1879); three similar-sized boxes, such as one in a Portuguese private collection, another in the Asian

⁶⁰ Examples of similar ivory carvings made in seventeenth-century Tamil Nadu, include four pierced, openwork plaques once forming a box, dispersed in several North American museums: Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (inv. 1980.352); Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (inv. 80.171); and Metropolitan Museum of Art (2013.981a,b). See Joseph M. Dye III, *The Arts of India*, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (Richmond, VA-London: Virginia Museum of Fine Arts-Philip Wilson Publishers, 2011), p. 441, cat. 212.

⁶¹ The casket from Palencia has recently resurfaced in a Portuguese private collection - see Hugo Miguel Crespo, ed., *The Art of Collecting. Lisbon, Europe and the Early Modern World (1500-1800)* (Lisbon: AR-PAB, 2019), pp. 202-209, cat. 23 (entry written by Hugo Miguel Crespo). The other belongs to the Távora Sequeira Pinto collection, Porto - see Ferrão, 1990, p. 88; and Jordan Gschwend and Beltz, 2010, p. 119, cat. 50 (entry written by Jordan Gschwend).



Fig. 23 (above) - Temple Dancer on a wooden column of the Āmbakkē Dēvalaya (Kandy District, Sri Lanka), 17th-18th century

Figs. 24-25 (below) - Casket (details), Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), probably Kandy, c. 1600; wood, carved ivory, and copper (32.4 x 59.9 x 30.9 cm). London, British Museum, inv. 1892.0216.25 © The Trustees of the British Museum

Fig. 22 - Plaque (Temple Dancer), Ceylon (Sri Lanka), Kandy, 18th century, or earlier; carved ivory (23.0 x 15 cm). London, Victoria and Albert Museum, inv. IM.370-1924 © London, Victoria and Albert Museum



Civilizations Museum, Singapore, and this [figs. 26–27] example in the MAK - Museum für angewandte Kunst (hereafter MAK)⁶², Vienna; and another, featuring pierced plaques at the Museo de Artes Decorativas, Madrid. The Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga (hereafter MNAA) has two fall-front writing cabinets of this production and decorative repertoire, one of which is further enriched with depictions of Portuguese similar to those on the folding fans discussed in the Introduction (see fig. 25–26, and 29), which also belongs to this Tamil-style production.⁶³ Another fall-front writing cabinet is in the Kunsthistorisches Museum (hereafter KHM), inv. KK 4744.⁶⁴ Three architectural-style oratories of this production, made from pierced, openwork plaques, are known; one in the Royal Monastery of the Descalzas Reales⁶⁵, a second one at the MNAA, and the third in a Portuguese private collection.⁶⁶ While some loose plaques are known (from dismantled objects), one, in particular, is inscribed in Tamil (see Jordan's essay, fig. 8). Although this production has previously been identified as Kandyan, it is more likely, considering the

62 It entered the museum in 1880. I wish to thank Mio Wakita-Elis, curator of Asian Art at the MAK for allowing access to this casket in deposit. Published in Peter Noever (ed.), *Global Lab. Art as a Message. Asia and Europe, 1500–1700* (Vienna: MAK - Museum für angewandte Kunst-Hatje Cantz, 2009), p. 247, cat. 187.

63 On the cabinet depicting Portuguese, see Jordan Gschwend and Beltz, 2010, p. 121, cat. 52 (entry written by Jordan Gschwend). I wish to thank Joaquim Oliveira Caetano and Patrícia Milhanas Machado for granting me access to the collection of Ceylonese ivory objects in the museum.

64 On this cabinet, see *Exotica*, 2000, pp. 240, and 243, cat. 153.

65 See Jordan Gschwend and Beltz, 2010, p. 115, cat. 46 (entry written by Jordan Gschwend).

66 On the oratory in the MNAA, see Ferrão, 1990, pp. 174–175.

Figs. 26–27 - Casket (details; and front, three-quarter), Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), possibly Jaffna, 2nd half of the sixteenth century; carved ivory, and silver (11.1 x 23.3 x 16.9 cm). MAK - Museum für angewandte Kunst, inv. PL 370 © MAK - Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna

evolution of Kandyan art as seen above, that this was centred somewhere else with a stronger Tamil influence or made exclusively by Tamil artists in close contact with Portuguese clientele, either on the southern coastal lowlands or, more likely, in the Tamil-influenced north (Jaffna).⁶⁷ Other later productions, very unlike these objects, made for export and probably centred in Mātara or Gālla (Galle) and Jaffna, date mostly to the Dutch period, from the 1640s onwards.⁶⁸



Fig. 28 – Ceiling painting (detail) of the Virabhadra Temple in Lepākṣi (Andhra Pradesh, India), early 16th century

Fans and fan-shaped objects in Sri Lanka: an overview

Indian fans, known in Hindi as *pañkhā* (in Tamil as *viçirī*) are invariably of the rigid type.⁶⁹ Of this type are the fans depicted in sixteenth-century South Indian art, which exerted a strong influence during the Gampola–Kōṭṭē period, such as the courtly art of Vijayanagara.⁷⁰ In the ceiling paintings of the Virabhadra Temple in Lepākṣi [fig. 28] from the early sixteenth century, there are depictions of *pañkhā* with their typical axe-blade shape, alongside fly-whisks used, as we will

67 On Portuguese presence in Jaffna, see O. M. da Silva Cosme, *Fidalgos in the kingdom of Jafanapatam (Sri Lanka: 1543–1658). The Portuguese in Jaffna* (Colombo: Harwoods Publishers, 1994). During the Portuguese invasion of Jaffna in 1560 by the viceroy Constantino de Bragança (r. 1558–1561), among the spolia there was a wooden dais or platform inlaid with ivory which the viceroy ordered to be safely kept and sent for the investiture ceremony of the young Portuguese King Sebastião I (see p. 115).

68 For this Mātara or Gālla and Jaffna hypothesis, see Hartkamp-Jonxis, 2016. This author also includes objects in the full Kandyan style made for the local market following local shapes among those made in either of these two cities, which is unlikely. Nonetheless, it is clear that the production the author attributes to Mātara or Gālla is deeply influenced by Kandyan iconography and decorative motifs, similar to Kandyan-influenced mural paintings of the southern lowlands.

69 For a visual overview of the different types, see Langer 2005.

70 See Y. Nirmala Kumari, *Social Life as Reflected in Sculptures and Paintings of Later Vijayanagara Period (A.D. 1500–1650) (With Special Reference to Andhra)* (Madras: T.R. Publications, 1995), pp. 78–79. According to the author, while the fly-whisk was solely to fan the king, fans were used by common men.

see, as part of the royal implements of kings (regalia).⁷¹ Umbrellas, similarly part of regalia, are also depicted at Lēpākṣi, made from textiles, of cylindrical shape and set on high wooden poles.

In Ceylon, where one of the words for fan අවන *avāna*, comes from the Portuguese *abano* or *avano*, the fan is usually of the rigid type and in the shape of the sacred Buddhist pipal leaf (*Ficus religiosa*). It is either made from palm leaf or more rarely covered in textiles,



Fig. 29 – F. Skeen and Co., *Buddhist priests, Ceylon, Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), before 1914; real photo postcard (8.8 x 13.8 cm). Author's collection © Hugo Miguel Crespo*

yet always with a handle set perpendicularly to the rigid leaf. It was and is still used both by laymen and monks [fig. 29]. Used by high-ranking Sinhalese Buddhist monks [fig. 30], the most culturally significant palm leaf-fan in Sri Lanka is the ceremonial fan, which is known as වටපත *vaṭāpata* (also as වජ්ජපත *vijjipata*, තලපත *talatta*, and *avāna*) and is recognizable by its long handle. It was once used by both Buddhist monks and Hindu priests for protecting the face from intense sunlight, the *vaṭāpata* (literally “surrounding”, as it makes air circulate).⁷² Objects of gift-giving by Buddhist devotees to revered and high-ranking monks, these ceremonial fans, unlike the more regular *avāna* [fig. 31], typically have a turned and carved ivory handle and top finial. All of the known examples of ivory *vaṭāpata* are later in manufacture than our nine imperial fans and follow the Kandyan style of carving.⁷³ One fine earlier example

71 See Anna L. Dallapiccola, “Ceiling Paintings,” in *Lepakshi. Architecture, Sculpture, Painting*, eds. Anna L. Dallapiccola et al. (New Delhi: Niyogi Books, 2019), pp. 132–241, p. 160 and pp. 162–163 (panel A4, scene 1).

72 It is still used while preaching dharma (sacred Buddhist teachings), covering the monk’s face like a mask to prevent distraction of the audience from his preaching, while limiting his gestures and helping to maintain composure and sobriety. It was also used when travelling, for covering the head like an umbrella and repel flies and mosquitoes during summertime.

73 More rarely, such fan handles are made from turned and carved ebony (42 cm in length), such as one example in the British Museum (inv. 1898.0702.85) once in the collection of Hugh Nevill.



Fig. 30 - Buddhist Priest, Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), 1886, albumen print (14.0 x 9.7 cm). Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, Royal Commonwealth Society Library, inv. Y303P, no. 16 © Cambridge, Cambridge University Library



Fig. 31 - Vijayaratna & Co., Booksellers, Buddhist priests, Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), Colombo c. 1900; real photo postcard (13.7 x 8.7 cm). Author's collection © Hugo Miguel Crespo

of a monk's carved ivory fan [fig. 32], complete with its original top finial, with the rigid leaf covered in crimson silk velvet belongs to the musée du Louvre in Paris. From the first half of the seventeenth century, this ivory *vaṭāpata* with its original rigid leaf, once decorated with silver trimmings, belonged to the collection of Alexandre-Charles Sauvageot (1781-1860).⁷⁴

Fans were also used in Ceylon in secular environments, foremost at the royal court, of which some documentary and visual sources survive from the Kandyan period. First, there were fly-whisks like the Indian *chauri* (*caurī* or *camarī*), known in Sinhala as ආමර ජාමරා *cāmara*, and made from the bushy yak-tail or ආමර-චාලධියා *cāmara-vāladhiya* of the domestic yak (*Bos grunniens*). There were also European-derived hand-held folding fans known as *avāna*, but also palm-leaf fans with long, sinuous handles also known as *vaṭāpata*. Finally, there were large rectangular fans similar to the Indian *pankha* (පංකාච or *paṅkāva*). All of these types were used during the Kandyan period by royal attendants, for fanning the king and queen, and keeping the royal couple and those in their vicinity cool and refreshed. While smaller fly-whisks, European-derived *avāna*, and *vaṭāpata* were used almost exclusively by female high-ranking courtiers, large *paṅkāva* were operated by male attendants. Alongside fans, other implements were deployed at the royal court. One is the umbrella or ජනරා *catraya* (*chatra* in Sanskrit), raised by male attendants to shade the king, or by female attendants to protect the queen from the sun. Another was a circular fan-like flag (ධජ *dhaja*) set on a long wooden pole, known in the early days as අඵ අනු *av atu* (literally “sun twigs”) and presently as සමසන *sēsata*.

⁷⁴ Most of the surviving examples, many in public European and North American collections, consist only of the handle.

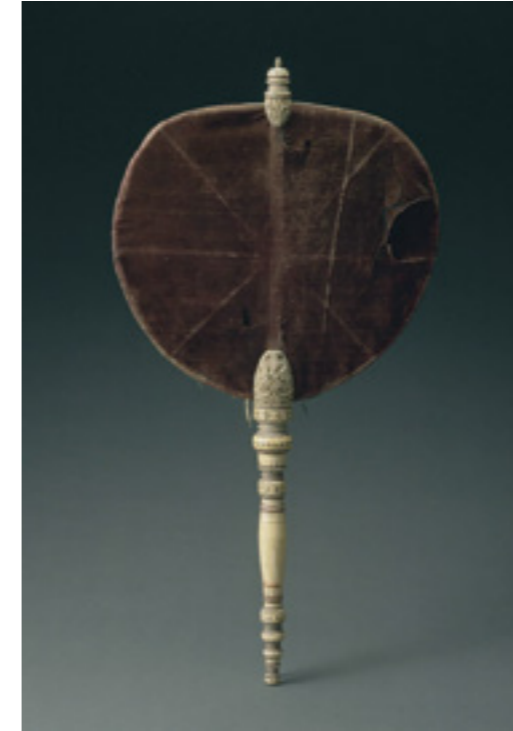


Fig. 32 - Ceremonial fan (*vaṭāpata*), Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), 1st half of the 17th century; carved ivory with traces of polychromy, crimson velvet (79.8 x 41.0 cm). Paris, musée du Louvre, inv. OA 12289 © RMN-Grand Palais (musée du Louvre); photo: Jean-Gilles Berizzi



Fig. 33 - Skeen and Co., A Wedding Portrait, Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), c. 1880; albumen print (21.4 x 27.4 cm). Private collection

The circular part, called ඇනන *ætta*, is made from carefully prepared, boiled and dried, leaves of the talipot palm (*Corypha umbraculifera*) known in Sinhala as තල *tala*, from which not only umbrellas and *sēsata* were made but most importantly manuscripts.⁷⁵ At the Kandyan court, *sēsata* were carried by royal attendants as a sign of respect, both by male and female attendants. Used in temples and monasteries throughout the island, in processions and festivals, *sēsata* were present in noble households as a sign of lineage and deployed at weddings [fig. 33] and funerals. Symbols of respect, status, and authority, they were used in major processions and festivals – such as the annual Festival of the Tooth or දළදා පරෙරන්දරා *Daḷadā Perahæra*.

In this engraving [fig. 34] published in John Davy's *An Account of the Interior of Ceylon, and of its inhabitants* (1821), depicting the last ruler of Kandy, Śrī Vikrama Rājasimha (r. 1798-1815), we see the king standing on a pedestal flanked by barefoot attendants and royal courtiers holding or raising the symbols of his rule (regalia) including command staffs, the king's sword (known as “kastane” or කස්තනා *kastānaya*), and the covered tooth relic of the Buddha of which the king is the main custodian. While one kneeled figure fans a fly-whisk at the king's feet, Rājasimha is flanked by two umbrellas (*catrā*), two *sēsata* decorated with the sun (known as sun-screens) symbolising his empire, one raised white or moon shield symbolic of the Sinhalese state (සක් පලින *sak paliha*, or “conch shield”), and two narrow and long pleated fans.

⁷⁵ Although light-coloured in earlier times, of the natural colour of the palm leaves, *sēsata* are nowadays made from differently coloured dyed palm leaves arranged in roundels in various combinations. These *sēsata* are further decorated with mica sheets and palm leaf braided trimmings.



Fig. 34 - The late King of Kandy, from a drawing by a Native in John Davy's *An Account of the Interior of Ceylon, and of its inhabitants* (London: Printed for Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1821), plate 5. Private collection

While the types mentioned above were regarded as part of the Kandyan regalia, similarly shaped objects were used by the laymen. In a company style album of watercolours, with a pronounced local influence in the depiction of the subjects, made in Sri Lanka ca. 1830 now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, we see similar types of fan or fan-shaped implements. A European-derived folding fan or *avāna* is held high by “A Cingalese Queen” (inscribed බිස උනාන්සේ *Bisa Unanānsē*) [fig. 35]. One other woman [fig. 36], identified as “The wife of a digar [sic *adigar*, *adikar*] a principal native officer” (අධිකාරමගේ ඒනානා [?] *adhikāramagē etānā*), holds in her left hand a traditional South Indian palm-leaf fan (with rigid leaf), decorated with painted flowers. A large palm-leaf *vaṭāpata*, also rigid and used to protect from the sun [fig. 37], is held by a “A Cingalese Physician” (සිංහලේ වෛද්‍යේ *siṅhalē vedek*). One other painting [fig. 38] depicts “The servant of a Native Head Man” (නිලමේකනෙකුගේ වැඩකාරයෙක් *nilamekenekugē vāḍakārayek*). He carries a large *sēsata* in honour of his master. One last type of fan, similar to the long, narrow folding fans seen in Vikrama Rajasimha’s iconography, is carried by a figure identified as “A pilgrim” [fig. 39] under his left arm while holding a cane.⁷⁶ It was used across the island by commoners as protection from the elements, namely intense heat and rain.

Similar fans and fan-shaped objects were also used in religious contexts, apart from the more usual *avāna* and *vaṭāpata* used by Buddhist monks. The present Temple of the Tooth

⁷⁶ In the collection of the Wereld Museum, Rotterdam (inv. RV-855-25), there is a nineteenth-century fan of this type made from palm leaf. Two examples (162, and 158 cm in length, respectively), identified as sunshades and dated ca. 1920, made from pleated palm leaf set with wooden covers decorated with mica, belong to the Tropen Museum, Amsterdam (inv. TM-A-9453a; and TM-A-9453b).

or Śrī Daḷadā Māligāva, next to the royal palace in Kandy, was built in the early seventeenth century by the Kandyan kings to house the sacred tooth relic of the Buddha, where the prized relic, seen as the national palladium of Sinhalese kingship has been venerated like a “king” for centuries, in a syncretistic mixture of Buddhist and Hindu ritualistic elements. It is thus not surprising that as part of the relic’s regalia there were fly-whisks and other fan-related objects. During the daily ritual (කෛලා *tēvā*), namely in the early morning service at the temple and facing the relic, after offerings of food, clothing and jewels as if a Hindu deity, the sacred tooth relic is blown three times with a fan made from gold (රන් වටපත *ran vaṭāpata*). Afterwards, the gold *vaṭāpata* and a fly-whisk are placed side by side and chants are sung. Made from gold and set with cabochon-cut sapphires (44.0 x Ø 21.0 cm), the *ran vaṭāpata* presently in use was given to the temple by Kīrti Śrī Rājasimha, a king who albeit born a South Indian prince from



Fig. 35 - A Cingalese Queen, Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), c. 1830; watercolour on paper (20.0 x 14.0 cm). London, Victoria and Albert Museum. inv. D.1820-1898 © London, Victoria and Albert Museum

Fig. 36 - The wife of a digar a principal native officer, Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), c. 1830; watercolour on paper (20.0 x 14.0 cm). London, Victoria and Albert Museum. inv. D.1823-1898 © London, Victoria and Albert Museum

Fig. 37 - A Cingalese Physician, Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), c. 1830; watercolour on paper (20.0 x 14.0 cm). London, Victoria and Albert Museum. inv. D.1852-1898 © London, Victoria and Albert Museum

Fig. 38 - The servant of a Native Head Man, Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), c. 1830; watercolour on paper (20.0 x 14.0 cm). London, Victoria and Albert Museum. inv. D.1853-1898 © London, Victoria and Albert Museum

Fig. 39 - A pilgrim, Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), c. 1830; watercolour on paper (20.0 x 14.0 cm). London, Victoria and Albert Museum. inv. D.1841-1898 © London, Victoria and Albert Museum

the Madurai Nayak Dynasty was responsible for the revival of Buddhism in the island.⁷⁷ Like the typical fan of the Buddhist monk, it has a long handle and finial, while the leaf is circular.⁷⁸ The use of yak tail fly-whisks as ceremonial objects may be seen not only from the painted iconography of the temple but also from their physical presence near the relic, namely adorning the temple tusker elephant which solemnly carries it during the well-known Festival of the

⁷⁷ See John Clifford Holt, *The Religious World of Kīrti Śrī. Buddhism, Art, and Politics in Late Medieval Sri Lanka* (Oxford-New York: Oxford University Press, 1996). The items gifted by the king to the Gaṅgārāma Rajamahā Vihāraya, a Buddhist temple in Kandy reconstructed by Kīrti Śrī, included, as recorded in the *Cūḷavaṃsa* (100, 192-194), “white umbrellas, shields, fly-whisks and fans – all these and other fair objects of sacrifice the Ruler offered, mindful of reward accruing from a sacrifice to the Buddha. Part of the regalia of kings, they were gifted by Kīrti Śrī as symbols of the Buddha’s authority.” See *Cūḷavaṃsa*, 1929, vol. 2, pp. 289-290.

⁷⁸ It was published by Coomaraswamy, 1956, plate XLII, item 2, p. 338. Such rituals are performed secretly which explains the little knowledge we have of them, while the objects are only handled by a few chosen monks after being ritually purified before each use.



Fig. 40 - The Diyavaḍana Nilamē, Pradeep Nilanga Dela, carries the Tooth Relic of Lord Buddha during the Āsala Perahāra in Kandy, Sri Lanka © Dexter Cruz

Tooth (Seṅkaḍagala Perahāra).⁷⁹ One other object used during the procession, for protecting the tooth relic while leaving its sacred premises and carried by the chief lay custodian of the temple (the Diyavaḍana Nilamē), is a long fan with a pleated textile leaf [fig. 40] which mimics in cloth the long talipot palm fan mentioned above.

Fans at the imperial city of Kōṭṭē

In earlier royal iconography, namely the extraordinary carvings of the "Coronation Casket" in the Munich Schatzkammer, on the side of the casket depicting Bhuvanekabāhu VII sitting in all his majesty on a throne below the මකර තොරණ *makara toraṇa* and adorned with the sixty-four jewelled ornaments (see Jordan's essay, fig. 27), we see yak-tail fly-whisks being fanned and umbrellas raised high, by all male attendants. On the opposite side of the casket [fig. 41], depicting the king riding his bull elephant (holding an elephant goad or *aṅkuṣa*), we see an excess of five fluttering yak-tail whisks set on poles, some with hanging tassels, and a courtier behind the king holding high a round shield, while other male attendants on foot brandish their swords. The ceremonial sword is also depicted on the three-panelled front, in the scene where the young prince Dharmapāla (r. 1551-1597), dressed with the sixty-four jewels which are required for the crowning ceremony (*maulibhūṣita*), is being crowned (with a typical tiered diadem) by the Portuguese king João III, while Bhuvanekabāhu VII, who is

⁷⁹ On the Perahāra, see H. L. Seneviratne, "The Āsala Perahāra in Kandy," *Ceylon Journal of Historical and Social Studies*, 6 (1963), pp. 169-180; and Anuradha Seneviratna, *The Kandy Esala Perahera* (Colombo: Vijitha Yapa Publications, 2008).

Fig. 41 - The "Coronation Casket" (right side), Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), Kōṭṭē, c. 1541; carved ivory, gold, rubies, and sapphires (18.0 x 30.0 x 16.0 cm). Munich, Bayerische Verwaltung der staatlichen Schlösser, Garten und Seen, Residenz München, Schatzkammer, inv. 1241 © München, Bayerische Verwaltung der staatlichen Schlösser, Garten und Seen; photo: Tanja Mayr, Rainer Hermann



presenting the young prince, raises his sword high. The other casket in Munich (inv. 1242) has similar imagery deployed on the sides. On that with Bhuvanekabāhu VII in majesty we see the king flanked by two standing male attendants in symmetry, one next to the throne fanning fly-whisks, and the other two holding umbrellas. The king raises the ceremonial sword with his right hand while holding a lotus bud in his left. On the opposite side, depicting the king riding his elephant, we see six yak-tail whisks set on poles, alongside bows, being carried by attendants which we cannot see, and a made figure behind the king brandishing a circular shield. Behind the elephant, we see also two rigid fans, shaped like the Indian *pañkhā* set on poles.

Considerably different from the later iconography of the Kandyan kings, at the imperial court of Kōṭṭē, and as prescribed by the *Vaijyantatantra*, the regalia included only the fivefold royal insignia (*pañkarājakakudhabhāṇḍa* in Sanskrit): pair of sandals (*pāduka*), fly-whisk (*cā-mara*), sword (*khaḍga*), the white umbrella (*chatra*) and the diadem (*uṣṇīṣa*). Further evidence is given in the local chronistic literature of the period, namely the late seventeenth-century *Rājāvaliya* (රජවලිය), where other types of fans except for the fly-whisk, part of regalia, are absent.⁸⁰ It is thus clear that no fan, nor the *sēsata* or other circular-shaped implement aside from shields, was part of the ceremonial implements at the royal court of Kōṭṭē. It means that, as the caskets, the prototype used as a model for our ivory fans must be European in origin. It should also be underscored how different, when compared to that of the Kandyan period, the royal ceremonial as practised at Kōṭṭē had become, probably more attached to the older South Indian-derived ceremonial described in the *Vaijyantatantra*.

Between East and West: the Ceylonese cockade fans and the medieval flabella

As outlined in the Introduction, nine imperial ivory fans from Kōṭṭē survive as testimonies to an unparalleled early modern diplomatic gift exchange between the Ceylonese and the Portuguese courts. Another, of which only the handle survives, probably made in the first half of the seventeenth century, belonged to the Danish royal Kunstkammer. All of them are cockade fans, the blades opening into a complete circle around a pivot or rivet. Contrary to more usual cockade fans set with folded leaves (pleated paper, vellum, or textile), our fans being fashioned from a rigid material like ivory, are brisé fans (French *brisé*, literally, “broken”) where the leaf comprises several similarly shaped blades. Our ten examples are thus cockade brisé fans which are, as far as we know, unique in early-modern South Asia. One of the most important questions, which has eluded previous scholars, regards the prototype upon which these fans were modelled.

All of the fans share the same basic layout. They comprise of a long handle divided into two sections. A lower section or grip and a top section or case comprising two blade guards which hold the fan blades while closed through a rivet. The thin, translucent ivory blades have the same outline as the thicker blade guards protecting them, and when closed the fans almost resemble a sceptre. A long cotton thread passes through tiny holes on the lower margin of the blades connecting each one to the overlapping next blade; the thread is secured to the nearest blade guard. When fully open and if complete, the blades form a complete circle. The threading is present on the verso of the fans. This ingenious layout has been less preserved in some examples, namely the cotton threads, due to breakages of the fragile, thin ivory blades, or to the disappearance of several of the blades in some of the fans.

80 *Rājāvaliya, or a Historical Narrative of Sinhalese Kings* [...], ed. B. Gunasekara (Colombo: George J. A. Skeen, Government Printer, Ceylon, 1900), p. 9, with a unique reference to the royal fly-whisk.

This type of layout, elements, and construction are reminiscent of the early medieval European flabellum. Flabella (or ριπίδια, *ripidia*, in the East), or church fans, were used at least since the fourth century by deacons both in the Eastern rites as well as in the Latin liturgy, to ward off annoying flies from altar offerings preventing them from falling into the Eucharistic chalice, and refreshing the air.⁸¹ Carried as a sign of dignity, they were occasionally part of the altar decoration. As few examples survive, and we lack information on their use related to the liturgy and church ceremonial, there is little knowledge on their frequency, distribution, and the variety of the materials used in their production. Alongside disc-shaped, rigid flabella, made from precious metals or even wood, and those made from feathers (namely peacock feathers), the majority of the surviving late medieval examples, made from vellum or paper, are of the folding type known as cockade (*cocarde* in French). Mounted on the handle, this type of flabella has a hinged box-like compartment or case known as *repositorium* which houses the fan leaf when folded. Similarly to our ivory fans, opening the brightly painted fan evoked a peacock displaying its tail, while the movement activated a rich set of allusions to fans and fanning and to the colourful feathers of cherubs.

From the late ninth century, the best-known example of such flabella [figs. 42–43] known as the “Flabellum of Tournus”, was once kept in the treasure of the Benedictine Abbey of Saint-Philibert in Tournus, Burgundy, and is now in the Museo Nazionale del Bargello in Florence.⁸² Painted on both sides, the pleated parchment leaf is fastened with strings to the *repositorium*, a wooden container covered with carved ivory plaques. Another flabellum (Ø 25.4 cm) with a pleated parchment leaf, probably dating to the ninth century, the “Flabellum di Teodolinda” from the treasury of the Cathedral of Monza, folds into a silver-covered wooden *repositorium*, while it is missing its lower section of the handle. Given the absence of any religious imagery on both leaf and handle, and its Latin inscription on its purple-dyed vellum leaf, it is secular in origin. It should be underscored that such liturgical folding flabella may be modelled after contemporary Carolingian or even earlier secular prototypes.

Probably from the thirteenth century, the flabellum from the treasure of the Cathedral of Canosa di Puglia, the so-called “Ventaglio di San Sabino”, is similarly made in vellum and has a carved wooden (ebony or rosewood) handle. It features a “Pseudo-Kufic” palindrome decorating the pleated vellum leaf and is 93.0 cm high when open. Written sources from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century mention the use of similar folded paper and vellum flabella in England, France, and Italy, some with gilded leaves and stored in gilded travelling cases. Similarly recorded are folding flabella made from pleated silk (velvet, taffeta, and other rich, figured textiles). Two later examples [fig. 44] once belonging to the well-known Albert Figdor (1843–1927) collection are now at the MAK.⁸³ One, from the fourteenth century and made in Florence [fig. 45], has a

81 See Renate Kross and Karl-August Wirth, “Flabellum (und Scheibenkreuz)”, in *Reallexikon zur Deutschen Kunstgeschichte* 9 (2003), pp. 428–507; and Marie Pasquine Subes, “Art et liturgie. Le flabellum et l’ostension de la patène dans le cé rémonial de la messe,” *Bibliothèque de l’École des chartes*, 162 (2004), pp. 97–118.

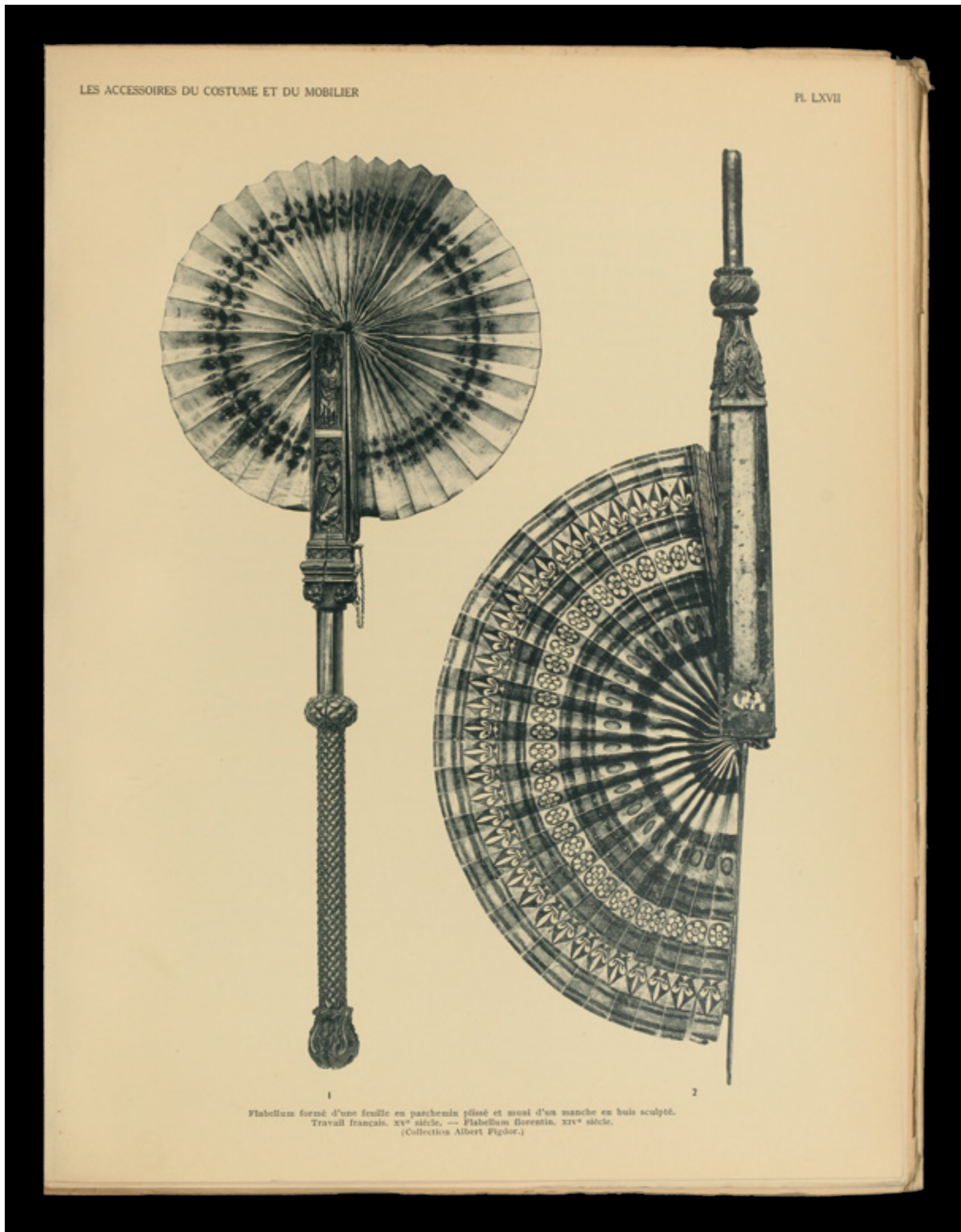
82 On this *flabellum*, see Lorenz E. A. Eitner, *The Flabellum of Tournus* (New York: The College Art Association of America, 1944); Danielle Gaborit-Chopin, *Flabellum di Tournus* (Florence: Museo Nazionale del Bargello, 1988); Isabelle Cartron, “Le flabellum liturgique carolingien de Saint-Philibert: du don d’un souffle à la geste des moines,” *Revue belge de philologie et d’histoire*, 88.2 (2010) pp. 153–176; and Herbert L. Kessler, “Images Borne on a Breeze: the Function of the Flabellum of Tournus as Meaning,” in *Charlemagne et les objets. Des théaurisations carolingiennes aux constructions mémorielles*, ed. Philippe Cordez (Berne: Peter Lang, 2012), pp. 57–85.

83 See Henry René d’Allemagne, *Les Accessoires dus Costume et du Mobilier depuis de treizième jusqu’au milieu du dixneuvième siècle*, vol. 1 (Paris: Chez Schemit, Libraire, 1928), pp. 83–84, and plate LXVII. I wish to thank Barbara Karl, who in 2011–2012 curated an exhibition on fans at the MAK, entitled *Allerhand! Fächer und Handschuhe aus der MAK - Sammlung where these two examples were on show*; and Martina Dax at the MAK, for providing me information on these two flabella.



(Ed. Alinari) P. I. N. 2784. FIRENZE - R. Museo Nazionale. *Collezione Carrand*. Flabello liturgico di Tournus. (IX secolo.)





carved wooden handle (missing its lower section) and a brightly painted vellum leaf. The other, originally in the Spitzer collection [fig. 46], was probably made in France in the fifteenth century (inv. F 333). Its carved wooden handle depicts figures of male and female saints, while its pleated vellum leaf is simply decorated in blue and gold.

Like in earlier times, the use of such objects, in religious or secular contexts alike, was to keep flies out of drink and food. The inventory of King Charles V of France (r. 1364–1380) is eloquent on the use of these fans in late medieval times. There are two banner-shaped fans recorded under no. 1813 which, decorated with pearl-embroidered fleurs-de-lis (the heraldic flower of the French royal house), were used to keep away flies from the king's dining table: "deux bannières de France pour esmoucher le Roy quant il est à table, semez de fleurs de lys bordées de perles".⁸⁴ One other, under no. 2279, is described as a collapsible round ivory fan decorated with the heraldry of France and Navarre and fitted with an ebony handle: Item, ung esmouchouer ront, qui se ployé, en yvire, aux armes de France et de Navarre, à ung manche d'ybénus.⁸⁵ A cockade brisé fan made from ivory and ebony, this French royal fan must have been very similar in design to our nine imperial fans. The fragility of the materials used, and the precious nature of its decoration, make it likely that such objects were only intended for ceremonial purposes, displayed vertically and while open. The same type of display must have been the case for the nine imperial fans from Kōttē.

Inventories, loose documents and contemporary literature, record the use of similar folding fans at the royal table in fifteenth and sixteenth-century Portugal.⁸⁶ Those made for King Manuel I (r. 1495–1521) in 1515–1516 were fitted with a pleated silk taffeta leaf, had two handles and opened like cockade fans.⁸⁷ Similar in shape were those made in 1533 and 1538 for



Fig. 45 – Flabellum (recto, open), Italy, Florence, 14th century; wood, painted parchment, and leather (65.0 x Ø 42.7 cm). Vienna, inv. F 331, Vienna, MAK – Museum für angewandte Kunst



Fig. 46 – Flabellum (recto, open, detail), probably France, 15th century; wood, painted parchment with gold decoration, and leather (67.0 x Ø 28.0 cm). Vienna, MAK – Museum für angewandte Kunst, inv. F 333

84 Labarte, 1879, p. 210.

85 Labarte, 1879, p. 247.

86 See Crespo, 2011, pp. 616–624.

87 Crespo, 2011, pp. 616–618.

Figs. 42–43 (pp. 150–151) – The "Flabellum of Tournus" (recto, open; and detail), France, second half of the 9th century; wood, ivory, bone, painted parchment, thread, and metal (88.0 x Ø 43.0 cm). Florence, Museo Nazionale del Bargello, inv. 31/C

Fig. 44 – Henry René d'Allemagne, *Les Accessoires du Costume et du Mobilier depuis de treizième jusqu'au milieu du dixneuvième siècle*, vol. I (Paris: Chez Schemit, Libraire, 1928), plate LXVII. Private collection

Queen Catarina of Austria (1507–1578).⁸⁸ Nonetheless, the type of fan used as a prototype for creating the nine imperial *Kōttē* fans was likely similar to the cockade fan owned by Charles V of France and the two late medieval flabella from the old Figdor collection.

Nine imperial ivory fans from *Kōttē*: groupings and pairings

In contrast to the ivory caskets produced in the same art-historical context, the nine imperial fans under analysis here have received much

less scholarly attention. Their existence is even missing from the comprehensive P. H. D. H. de Silva's *A Catalogue of Antiquities and Other Cultural Objects from Sri Lanka (Ceylon) Abroad* published in 1975 by the National Museums of Sri Lanka.⁸⁹ Once in the Portuguese royal collection, they are now dispersed. Reuniting five of them together since their time at the Lisbon court, the exhibition *Elfenbeine aus Ceylon* (2010–2011) was an important milestone for deepening our knowledge of their context of production and provenance. Ten years later, the present analysis seeks to illuminate aspects of their nature, carving style and iconography which have remained unanswered or unnoticed until now.

Knowledge of an important fan previously unknown to scholarship has enabled new avenues of research and enquiry on significant material aspects of the manufacture of these fans. While researching on the collection of nineteenth-century photographs belonging to the MAK, I identified a previously unknown ivory fan among images of other objects once at Schloss Ambras, the main residence of Archduke Ferdinand II of Tyrol (1529–1595) in Innsbruck. Alongside several photos of the "Rāmāyana Casket" and a smaller ivory fan (KHM, inv. KK 4751), there were two copies of the same photograph showing a second ivory fan. Pasted on cardboard, one [fig. 47] has the following caption: "89. Ivory fan, richly carved. Ancient Indian work. (Ambras Collection)."⁹⁰ However, the photographs [fig. 48], unlike those of the smaller Vienna fan, only portray the top half of the object, showing a small section of the fan's lower handle. Not unlike the casket and the smaller fan (see Introduction



Fig. 47 – 89. Fächer von Elfenbein, reich geschnitzt. Alte indische Arbeit. (Ambraser Sammlung) (89. Ivory fan, richly carved. Ancient Indian work. (Ambras Collection)), Vienna, Austria, c. 1868; albumen print pasted on cardboard (photograph: 16.3 x 27.8 cm). Vienna, MAK – Museum für angewandte Kunst, inv. KI 510-1 © MAK – Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna

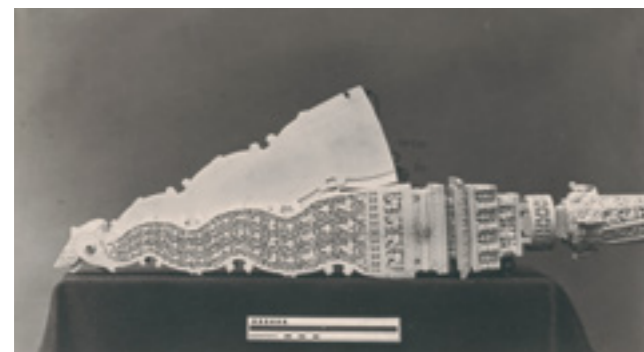


Fig. 48 – 89. Fächer von Elfenbein, reich geschnitzt. Alte indische Arbeit. (Ambraser Sammlung) (89. Ivory fan, richly carved. Ancient Indian work. (Ambras Collection)), Vienna, Austria, c. 1868; albumen print pasted on cardboard (16.2 x 28.5 cm). Vienna, MAK – Museum für angewandte Kunst, inv. KI 510-2 © MAK – Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna

⁸⁸ Annemarie Jordan Gschwend, "Queen of the Seas and Overseas. Dining at Catherine of Austria's Table at the Lisbon Court," in *At the Prince's Table. Dining at the Lisbon Court (1500–1700): silver, mother-of-pearl and porcelain*, ed. Hugo Miguel Crespo (Lisbon: AR-PAB, 2018), pp. 10–49, ref. p. 42.

⁸⁹ This book fails to mention the existence of any of the ivory fans under discussion.

⁹⁰ In the original German: "89. Fächer von Elfenbein, reich geschnitzt. Alte indische Arbeit. (Ambraser Sammlung)".

figs. 10–11), this larger fan rests on top of a small table covered in dark cloth against a slightly lighter background. Below the fan on the front, stuck to the cloth, is a scale in the *Wiener* and *Pariser Maaß*. While the Parisian unit of measurement (*maass*) is identified with the centimetre, part of the metric system which was defined in France in 1795, the Viennese corresponds to the older system used in Austria until 1876.⁹¹ Taken by an anonymous photographer, according to the museum, this photograph was made before 1868.

Knowing that the entire Ambras collection had been taken to Vienna in the nineteenth century, and was mostly now divided between the *Kunstammer* of the KHM and that of the *Schloss Ambras* (also part of the KHM), enquiries were made to the museum on its whereabouts. Its original file was retrieved alongside two historical photos from the museum's archive [figs. 49–50]. Unfortunately, the fan (KHM, inv. KK 4692) was stolen in 1920 alongside other objects and its current location is unknown. After more than one hundred years it is presumably lost. This may explain its absence from previous scholarship, including that produced by the own museum. The two historical photos from the museum's archive, alongside the first scaled photo are, however, invaluable and when put together enable a systematic analysis of its style, iconography and superior craftsmanship. From the scaled photo and using special software and applying known measurements to the two archival photos, it was possible to precisely determine the dimensions of the stolen fan: 87.0 x Ø 45.0 cm.⁹²

Realizing that the diameter of this fan, alongside its general aspect, carving style and iconography, matches that of the larger, most important fan in Munich, inv. 2825 (89.0 x Ø 44.5 cm), it became clear that these, and the other imperial fans were originally made in pairs [fig. 51]. Moreover, while the peacock on the lost fan faces the right side, that on the Munich fan faces the opposite direction. In their ceremonial use, similarly to the *sēsata* discussed above, these fans would be placed upright facing one another in a most striking display. The height difference (2.0 cm) is accounted for the loss of the lower turned finial on the stolen fan. Their construction, better known from the fan in Munich which was fortunately disassembled during conservation in 2007, also sets them apart from the other surviving fans.⁹³ Unlike most of the other fans, the joining system used to attach the upper to the lower handle of these two fans follow local wood joinery techniques.⁹⁴ These consist of slotted sections with rectangular mortise and tenon joints on one side, and dowel joints with multiple dowels set in rows on the opposite side. In contrast, the upper and lower sections of the other fans are usually dovetailed on one side (reinforced with ivory pegs or metal nails) and joined with dowel joints on the opposite side, following the same type of joinery seen on the European-derived ivory caskets of this same production. This aspect points to them being slightly earlier in execution. These two extraordinary fans, which must have reached Lisbon with the 1542 embassy (see Introduction and Jordan's essay), were part of the collection of the Portuguese king. Housed in King João III's *guarda-roupa* until his death in 1557, the fan in Munich was gifted along with the "Coronation

⁹¹ On the photographs of the "Rāmāyana Casket" and the smaller ivory fan (KHM, inv. KK 4751), the scale is solely in the *Wiener Zoll*, which corresponds to 2.63401 cm. The metric system became compulsory in Austria in 1876, replacing the older system.

⁹² The only measurement in the museum file was its length given as 68.5 cm. From the measurements on the surviving photos this corresponds to the length of the fan while closed.

⁹³ I wish to thank Annemarie Jordan for sharing with me the eight-page long conservation report on this fan (inv. 2825) by J. Lang dated 07/2007. The conservation of this fan in early 2007 was made in preparation for the exhibition *Exotische Welten* (2007–2008).

⁹⁴ On these techniques, mostly seen in surviving timber buildings, see Gamini Wijesuriya, "Documentation of Timber Buildings in Sri Lanka – A Case Study," in *Wood* (Colombo: ICOMOS, 1993), pp. 57–133. The diagrams depicting the type of joinery used on wooden beams (p. 124, pp. 126–127, and pp. 129–130) are particularly enlightening on these traditional techniques.

0944
 8544
 7699
 8504
 4504
 7401
 2691

1920
 entwendet

-4042
 -4057
 -4058
 4692
 4753
 4760

4692



4057
4058

4058

4753

4753

4042
 4057
 II 239

1920 entwendet

2691



II 804





Casket" in 1573, by Catarina of Austria to Duke Albrecht V. Conversely, the lost fan, was probably gifted by Philip II to Archduke Ferdinand II after he took over the Portuguese crown and the entire contents of its treasure in 1581. They are here virtually reunited and analysed together.

The architectural character of the design of these two larger fans stands out from the more sculptural nature of some of the other fans. Also architectural in style, albeit somewhat combining the two, is the second fan in Munich, inv. 2826. While its lower handle follows an architectural design, the upper section is more sculptural in its decoration like the other fans in this second group – the pair in Naples (inv. 10397 and 10398); the two in Vienna (inv. KK 4751) and Munich (inv. 2825); the Braunschweig fan; the "Pangolin Fan"; and the Copenhagen fan (inv. Db 67). What defines this architectural style is not so much a marked difference in the carving quality, but the borrowing of elements from earlier and contemporary Ceylonese architecture. Most prominently in both fans (KHM, inv. KK 4692; and Munich, inv. 2825) is the design of the handle which is reminiscent of complex columns or pillars (*stambha* in Sanskrit) deployed in well-known examples of surviving temples from the Gampola period. Even the "sculptural" carved decoration on these two fans is reminiscent of sculptural designs applied to contemporary architecture, namely friezes with dwarfs, and rows of vegetal scrolls or "creepers of life" (*kalpalatā* in Sanskrit) set in roundels with figures.

The long lower handle of the stolen fan [fig. 52], was seemingly carved from different sections of ivory joined together using traditional joinery techniques reinforced with ivory pegs and glued with animal or fish adhesives. From the tip upwards we may see the turned finial with carved disc-shaped elements and a cylindrical roundel carved in openwork. Above, there is a hexagonal section decorated with two superimposed carved friezes, one with peacocks displaying their open feathers, and on top another with heraldic lions (*siṃha*). Above this roundel there is the long twisted faceted (octagonal) shaft of a type known in architectural treatises or *vāstu śāstra*, such as the *Mānasāra*, as *viṣṇukānta stambha* (literally "octagonal pillar"). Minutely decorated in openwork with incredible detail, this twisted shaft features vertical friezes of animals, including hares, elephants, lions, etc., interspersed with geometrical motifs (diamond-shaped and pearls). Above the shaft, functioning as a *pālikā*, there is a dome-shaped roundel with an overlapping scale pattern with four perched parrots in the round. Following a traditional arrangement taken from contemporary architecture, the capital crowning the twisted faceted column comprises several stacked elements of different shapes and sizes. On top of an oval roundel carved in openwork with geometric motifs (functioning as a recess, or *gala*, meaning "neck" in Sanskrit), there is a rectangular-shaped dado decorated with kneeling dwarfs (*gaṇas*) with outstretched arms as if sustaining the weight of the structure above. And on top, another slightly larger rectangular dado decorated with an openwork frieze of *kīrtimukhas*. This element is crowned by another section with lotus-petal moulded friezes (known

Fig. 49 (p. 156) – Fan (recto, open), Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), Kōttē, c. 1540–1551; carved ivory, and cotton thread (87.0 x Ø 45.0 cm). Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Kunstammer, inv. KK 4692 (stolen in 1920; historical photograph SW II 239) © KHM-Museumsverband

Fig. 50 (p. 157) – Fan (recto, partially open), Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), Kōttē, c. 1540–1551; carved ivory, and cotton thread (87.0 x Ø 45.0 cm). Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Kunstammer, inv. KK 4692 (stolen in 1920; historical photograph SW II 804) © KHM-Museumsverband

Fig. 51 (pp. 158–159) – The nine imperial fans. From left to right: Vienna 4692 + Munich 2825; Munich 2827 + Vienna 4751; Munich 2826; The "Pangolin Fan"; Braunschweig; Naples 10398 + Naples 10397

Fig. 52 – Fan (recto, open; detail of the handle), Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), Kōttē, c. 1540–1551; carved ivory, and cotton thread (87.0 x Ø 45.0 cm). Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Kunstammer, inv. KK 4692 (stolen in 1920; historical photograph SW II 239) © KHM-Museumsverband



Fig. 53 - Ganēgoda Vihāré Pillars (restored) in H. C. P. Bell, *Report on the Kēgalla district of the Province of Sabaragamuwa* (Colombo: Printed by George J. A. Skeen, Government Printer, Ceylon, 1904), un-numbered plate between pp. 34 and 35. Private collection



Fig. 54 - The porch (*ardha-maṇḍapa*) of the Gaḍalādeṇiya Vihāraya (Kandy District, Sri Lanka)



Fig. 55 - A frieze of dwarfs (*gaṇas*) in the Tivaṅka Pilima Geya in Poḷonnaruva (Polonnaruwa District, Sri Lanka)

in Sinhala as පලාපෙට්ටි *palāpeti*) onto which the blade guards are pinned with ivory pegs. These two stacked dados function as *kumbha*, or the capital proper, while the projecting lotus-frieze moulding (*palāpeti*) and recessed element above function as the *phalaka* supporting the entablature or, in this case, the blade guards.

The extraordinary design of this complex column or *stambha* finds parallels in earlier Ceylonese temple architecture. One case in point is the complex pillars [fig. 53] from the Alavatura Gaṇēgoda Vihāraya (in Kegalle District) which were reconstructed in the nineteenth century by Bell.⁹⁵ A Buddhist cave temple in the Dravidian style (South Indian Hindu tradition), it was built in the first half of the fourteenth century.⁹⁶ A similar type of faceted column [fig. 54] may be seen in the Gaḍalādeṇiya Vihāraya, supporting the porch (*ardha-maṇḍapa*). A Buddhist temple built in 1344-1345 under the supervision of a South Indian architect, Gaṇeśvarācāri, it is the earliest and better-preserved temple from the Gampola period.⁹⁷ Such

95 See H. C. P. Bell, *Report on the Kēgalla district of the Province of Sabaragamuwa* (Colombo: Printed by George J. A. Skeen, Government Printer, Ceylon, 1904), pp. 33-35.

96 On this temple, see Mudiyanse, 1963, pp. 16-19, and pp. 57-58; and De Silva 1990, pp. 86-87.

97 On this temple, see Mudiyanse, 1963, pp. 24-26, and pp. 46-54; and De Silva 1990, pp.

complex pillars with polygonal shafts and fully sculptural elements are typical of South Indian architecture of the Vijayanagara period.⁹⁸ Columns with polygonal twisted shafts may have existed in temples and royal palaces at Kōṭṭē, yet almost nothing has survived from those troubled times.

The frieze of dwarfs (*gaṇas*) playfully supporting the weight above depicted on the upper section of the "capital" are a staple of Sri Lankan architecture from very early times. A fine example of such friezes of *gaṇas* may be found decorating the *kumbha* (capital) of the ornamental pillars of the Vaṭadāgē in Mēdirigiriya from the seventh century.⁹⁹ Rows of *gaṇas* are also deployed in the fragile stucco decoration of the Tivaṅka Pilima Geya [fig. 55], an important Buddhist image house from the second half of the twelfth century in Poḷonnaruva.¹⁰⁰ A similar frieze of dwarfs is deployed above the entablature of the porch of the Gaḍalādeṇiya Vihāraya. Dwarfs or *gaṇas* (literally "troop") are the attendants of Śiva and are headed by Gaṇapati, a Hindu deity better known as Gaṇeśa, the elephant-headed Hindu god. Depicted as playful dwarfs, *gaṇas* are most devoted to their lord, perpetually close to God. Happy dancing

98 On their evolution, see Anila Verghese, "Temple Pillars: Their Evolution and Style Under Vijayanagara and its Successor," in *Sangama. A Confluence of Art and Culture During the Vijayanagara Period*, ed. Nalini Rao (New Delhi: Originals, 2006), pp. 29-61.

99 See Paranavitana, 1971, p. 132, plate 44.

100 On this building, see Seneviratna, 1998, pp. 189-193.



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and singing, they are seen lost in devotion to their lord, unaware of petty mundane and earthly concerns, and the agitations of the material world. As keepers of the treasures of the earth, in Sri Lankan architecture *gaṇas* fulfil the role of protectors and producers of good luck, wealth, and abundance.¹⁰¹ In a similar way, the frieze of *kīrtimukhas* above that of the *gaṇas* and equally part of the capital proper of the ivory handle is deployed with apotropaic intent. *Kīrtimukhas* (literally “face of glory”) or *kūḍus* as they are called in Dravidian architecture, in the shape of a swallowing fierce monster face are deployed for their protective nature. Like friezes of *gaṇas*, rows of *kīrtimukhas* are a staple of Dravidian-style Ceylonese architecture and *kūḍus* are similarly present in the decoration of the aforementioned Gaḍalādeṇiya Vihāraya.¹⁰²

The exquisite decoration of the blade guards of the stolen ivory fan is better seen from the photo at the MAK [fig. 56]. Using image software powered by artificial intelligence, it was possible to extrapolate more of its intricate iconography doubling the size of the original photograph. Of sinuous shape not unlike that of the other fans, and terminating in a peacock head in profile, the decoration of the guards is arranged in three registers – only the front guard is seen, yet the back should have been similarly decorated. The first register, below, is a row of fac-



Fig. 57 – The “Rāmāyana Casket” (detail of the lid), Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), possibly Sītāvaka, c. 1546–1547 (later mounts); carved ivory, and silver (14.9 x 25.0 x 16.0 cm). Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Kunstammer, inv. KK 4743 © KHM-Museumsverband

ing sacred geese (*haṁsa*), while the one in the middle is simply a quatrefoil frieze. The body of the guards is decorated with a complex pattern of vegetal scrolls or “creepers of life” (*kalpalatā* in Sanskrit) featuring three vertical rows of roundels. These encircle figures and animals alternating with flowers set in horizontal rows: crowned *kiṅḍurā* bedeck with jewels (earrings and necklace), monkey warriors or *vānara* in Sanskrit, recumbent male and female deer, monkeys, chickens, hares, birds, sacred geese, and small birds. A mythical creature usually playing an instrument combining a bird-like body with a human, mostly female torso and head, *liya kiṅḍurā* or *kinnari* in Sanskrit are integral to Ceylonese lore.¹⁰³ Divine artists that play music for the gods, *kiṅḍurā* attend the Buddha and the Bodhisattvas. Although not so frequently depicted on contemporary ivory carvings (namely inside these small scrolls), two pairs of *kiṅḍurā* with their musical instruments (the stick-zither *veena*) are prominently depicted on the lid of the “Rāmāyana Casket” [fig. 57]. *Kiṅḍurā* are also carved on the lower section of the handle of the two Naples fans near the finial and feature prominently on the curved finial of the

101 See *The Jeweled Isle*, 2018, pp. 72–73.

102 Mudiyanse, 1963, p. 51.

103 On the Sri Lankan *kiṅḍurā*, see Coomaraswamy, 1956, pp. 81–83.

Fig. 56 (pp. 164–165) – 89. *Fächer von Elfenbein, reich geschnitzt. Alte indische Arbeit. (Ambraser Sammlung)* (89. *Ivory fan, richly carved. Ancient Indian work. (Ambras Collection)*), Vienna, Austria, c. 1868; albumen print pasted on cardboard (16.2 x 28.5 cm). Vienna, MAK – Museum für angewandte Kunst, inv. K1510-2 © MAK – Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna



Fig. 58 – Plaque, from a casket (*kiṅḍurā*, dancers and musicians), Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), 16th–17th century; carved ivory. Kandy, Kandy Museum, inv. 41-9.241 © Susantha Goonatilake

Copenhagen fan.¹⁰⁴ And on this plaque in the Kandy Museum [fig. 58], possibly a fragment of a casket, we may see on top a row of *kiṅḍurā* and below three female dancers and musicians with their instruments (*veena* and *cymbals*). Even less usually deployed are the curious monkey warriors, known from the *Rāmāyana* as *vānara* (literally “forest-dwellers”). A race of forest-dwelling people generally depicted as humanoid apes or monkeys which according to the Indian epic helped Rāma defeat Rāvaṇa, the king of the island of Lanka and the chief antagonist in the *Rāmāyana*. I could only find one, carved on the central middle panel of the back of the smaller casket in Vienna [fig. 59], although it may also be identified as the monkey-god Hanumān, a devotee of Rāma.¹⁰⁵

The lower handle of the larger Munich fan [figs. 60–61] is similarly shaped as a Dravidian *stambha* featuring an octagonal straight shaft as minutely decorated as the stolen fan. On top of the lower turned and carved finial emerges the octagonal shaft (*viṣṇukānta stambha*). The shape of the shaft swells slightly towards its upper section while its lower section is stepped and decorated with horizontal friezes alternating *gaṇas* and animals (sacred geese, peacocks, heral-

104 *Kiṅḍurā* heads are depicted on the small ivory casket in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (inv. 1993.29), on four roundels of “creepers of life” on the back. On this casket, see Jaffer and Schwabe, 1999, pp. 12–13; and Pedro Moura Carvalho, *Luxury for Export. Artistic Exchange Between India and Portugal around 1600* (Boston: Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, 2008), pp. 24–27, cat. 1.

105 See Jordan Gschwend and Beltz, 2010, pp. 72–73, cat. 19 (entry written by Jordan Gschwend).



dic lions, etc.). Its upper section is decorated with vertical bands alternating animals (peacocks, hare and deer) in openwork and “creepers of life” of which the roundels feature animals and flowers. Above the shaft, functioning as a *pālikā*, there is a cube-shaped element decorated with foliage, which is topped (*gala*) by a dome-shaped element carved with an overlapping scale pattern. On top, and as the capital proper (*kumbha*), there is a central octagonal element enclosed below and above by lotus-petal mouldings (*palāpeti*). It is decorated with alternating *gaṇas* and foliage roundels with animals, *kiṇḍurā* heads, etc. Unlike the stolen Vienna fan, the joining of the lower handle to the thick blade guards is further decorated with gold studs set with cabochon-cut rubies. The decoration of the guards features a lower register with a frieze of two facing heraldic lions while the body of the guards has two vertical sinuous rows of “creepers of life”. Not unlike those of the stolen fan, the interiors of the roundels are minutely carved with flowers, and mythic and real animals (full-bodied *kiṇḍurā* and *kiṇḍurā* heads, heraldic lions, sacred geese, deer, and birds).

While the Vienna fan had eighteen blades, the Munich fan has twenty, and when fully open would make a complete circle. It seems that the Munich fan is thus complete, and that four blades were missing from the Vienna fan. From the archival photos, we may see that its paper-thin blades had suffered small breaks and losses, as has the smaller fan still in the Kunstkammer of the KHM (see below).

Mixing both styles, with an “architectural” lower handle and a “sculptural” top handle (the guards), this ivory fan in Munich, inv. 2826 [figs. 62–63], is unique in other regards. Unlike all of the other fans, it seems not to depict a peacock but a parrot (with ruby-studded eyes). Known in Sinhala as ගිරව් *giravā*, it may be identified with the Layard’s parakeet (*Psittacula calthrapae*) which is endemic to the island. This fan is also embellished with more lavish ruby-studded decorative nails – six (five, since one is lost) quatrefoil-shaped studs which help to fix the blade guards to the lower handle, and four lozenge-shaped studs decorating the middle section of the shaft. Like the two fans of the “architectural” style, the blade guards are joined to the lower handle by ivory dowels. The highly elaborate finial features a blue lotus (*Nymphaea nouchali*), on the tip. Known as මානෙල් මල *mānel mal*, the pale blue lotus is the symbol of royal authority and the national flower of Sri Lanka. The upper section of the finial, in openwork, features a crouching *gaṇa* with outstretched arms carved in the round and thus seen on the recto and verso of the fan. The eight-sided shaft swells near the base in a bulbous manner and is divided in half by a four-sided double lotus-petal moulding (*palāpeti*) decorated with four ruby-studded nails.

While the bulbous section of the shaft is decorated in openwork with a minutely carved depiction of King Bhuvanekabāhu VII riding his prized tusker elephant (see Introduction, figs. 7–8), the sides of the shaft alternate between openwork vertical bands of animals with “creepers of life” on the lower section and sinuous stalks of blue lotus on the upper section. Enclosed below and above by lotus-petal mouldings (*palāpeti*) is the figurative openwork capital [figs. 64–65]. With raised cobras set on the corners, this rectangular cobblestone-shaped capital depicts rare fighting scenes.¹⁰⁶ The guards are decorated with large panels. The panel of the recto features a bird on the central roundel, a deer hunter below (probably King Daśaratha, father of Rāma), and on top a නාරිලතා වැළ *nārilatā vāla*, a vegetal scroll in the shape of a woman, holding, like Lakṣmī, lotus flowers. The panel on the verso has vegetal scrolls with a spotted deer on

106 On similar fighting scenes, see Deraniyagala, 1936; Deraniyagala, 1937; and Deraniyagala 1941.

Fig. 59 – Casket (back), Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), Kōṭṭē, c. 1540–1551 (later mounts); carved ivory, ebony, and gilt silver (11.0 x 16.3 x 9.6 cm). Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, inv. KK 4745 © KHM-Museumsverband







Figs. 64–65 – Fan (recto, and verso, detail), Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka). Kōṭṭē, c. 1540–1551; carved ivory, gold, rubies, and cotton thread (57.0 x 0 31.5 cm). Munich, Museum Fünf Kontinente, inv. 2826 © Munich, Museum Fünf Kontinente

a central roundel, and the prominent figures of Garuḍa (the Hindu god and mount of Viṣṇu) on the lower section, and on top Lakṣmī, the wife of Viṣṇu and goddess of wealth, fortune, power and beauty. This fan has currently only sixteen blades, and so as to form a complete circle must have had originally around twenty.

All of the other fans, including the “Pangolin Fan”, are carved in the “sculptural” style. Two of them [figs. 66–67], conceived as a pair, are divided between Munich (inv. 2827) and Vienna (KHM, inv. KK 4751). Not only their overall design is very similar, but their sizes match up perfectly. They share the same diameter when open (33.0 cm), and their height difference derives from the fan in Vienna (57.5 cm) missing its turned finial, while the Munich fan is complete (62.0 cm).¹⁰⁷ Like the other fans in the “sculptural” style, both feature dovetail joints securing the blade guards to the lower handle, further reinforced by metal studs. Their lower handles are carved from a long single piece of ivory (“rectangular” in section), while the turned finial, which is missing from the fan in Vienna, is pinned to the staff with an ivory peg.

The elegant shaft of both fans [fig. 68], identical in design, comprise a large heraldic lion (*simha*) below onto which emerges a sinuous stalk of blue lotus or *mānel mal* [fig. 69]. The stalks, decorated with complex variations of the typical Ceylonese vegetal motif called *ḶḶ* *liya pata*, are beautifully carved in the round with some openwork elements. Although classified as “sculptural” in style, the use of heraldic lions may be prominently seen in earlier and contemporary architecture as the base onto which stone pillars emerge. One fine exam-

¹⁰⁷ In the literature, even the most recent, the height of the fan in Vienna (KHM, inv. 4751) is always given while closed (43.0 cm). See Haag, Eichberger and Jordan Gschwend, 2018, pp. 154–155, cat. 4.17 (entry written by Jordan Gschwend).

Figs. 60–61 (pp. 170–171) – Fan (recto, open; and verso, open), Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka). Kōṭṭē, c. 1540–1551; carved ivory, gold, rubies, and cotton thread (89.0 x 0 44.5 cm). Munich, Museum Fünf Kontinente, inv. 2825 © Munich, Museum Fünf Kontinente

Figs. 62–63 (pp. 172–173) – Fan (recto, open; and verso, open), Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka). Kōṭṭē, c. 1540–1551; carved ivory, gold, rubies, and cotton thread (57.0 x 0 31.5 cm). Munich, Museum Fünf Kontinente, inv. 2826 © Munich, Museum Fünf Kontinente







Fig. 69 – Blue lotuses at the Gaḍalādeṇiya Vihāraya (Kandy District, Sri Lanka) © Anoushka Perera

ple is this pillar [fig. 70] published by Bell which belonged to the Mædagoḍa Dēvālaya in the Kegalle district. According to tradition this temple was built to fulfil a vow by Rājasinhha I of Sītāvaka (r. 1581–1593), the son of Māyādunnē, the ruler of Sītāvaka (r. 1521–1578), nephew of King Bhuvanekabāhu VII of Kōṭṭē (see Introduction). It was built before 1577 and in the early twentieth century, some of the offerings bestowed by Rājasinhha I to this temple still existed and included arms, metal accoutrements and textiles. According to Bell, this pillar, unlike those on the Mædagoḍa Dēvālaya, must have come originally from the Bæraṇḍi Kōvila, a Hindu temple (*kōvil* in Tamil) of which only the foundations survive (possibly never completed) in the ruined capital city of Sītāvaka near present-day Avissāvella, after the city being destroyed by Portuguese forces.¹⁰⁸ Earlier uses of large fully-sculptural *siṅha* as part of the design of pillars may be found in the porch [figs. 71] of the aforementioned Gaḍalādeṇiya Vihāraya (see fig. 54).

Also somewhat architectural is the sinuous lotus stalk of the shafts. Carved in the round, they are reminiscent of the famous lotus stalk pillars deployed in the “Flower Scroll Hall” [fig. 72] of the capital city of Poḷonnaruva, the Niśsaṅka Latā Maṇḍapaya. This pavilion, or *maṇḍapa*, was used by King Nissamka Nalla (r. 1187–1196) for listening to Buddhist texts being chanted. Measuring around two and a half metres, the stone pillars are fashioned as lotus stalks while the capital depicts a stylised blooming lotus flower.¹⁰⁹ The “capitals” of the fans crowning their shafts are slightly different between the two. Whereas the “cap-

¹⁰⁸ Bell, 1904, p. 58.

¹⁰⁹ On this structure, see Paranavitana, 1971, p. 133, plate 51; Prematilleke, 1990, p. 52; and Seneviratna, 1998, pp. 133–134.

Fig. 66 (p. 175) – Fan (recto, open), Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), Kōṭṭē, c. 1540–1551; carved ivory, gold, rubies, and cotton thread (62.0 x 0 33.0 cm). Munich, Museum Fünf Kontinente, inv. 2827, on loan to the Kunst- und Wunderkammer Burg Trausnitz, Landshut, inv. 1003/1280 © Munich, Museum Fünf Kontinente

Figs. 67–68 (pp. 176–177) – Fan (recto, open; and detail, lower handle), Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), Kōṭṭē, c. 1540–1551; carved ivory, horn, copper, and cotton thread (57.5 x 0 33.0 cm). Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Kunstammer, inv. KK 4751 © KHM-Museumsverband

ital” of the Munich fan [fig. 73] depicts a seated Lakṣmī holding lotus flowers (on both the recto and verso) flanked by straight narrow columns, that of the Vienna fan depicts the goddess flanked by rampant lions (*siṅha*). The carved decoration of the blade guards, albeit of a similar nature, is different between the two fans. The recto and verso of the Munich fan depict a heraldic lion (*siṅha*) with similar exuberant foliage (*liya pata*) whereas the recto and verso [fig. 74] of the Vienna fan features a sacred goose (*haṁsa*) with foliage. The Munich fan, with only nineteen blades surviving, is thus missing four of its original twenty-three blades. The Vienna fan comprises twenty-one blades and the fragments, still attached to the rivet, of another two, which would make a complete circle when open.

The two fans in Naples [figs. 75–78], which are somewhat the best documented of all the surviving fans, compare the best with the “Pangolin Fan” in their overall design and their full openwork carved decoration. Both have the same diameter (27.3 cm and 27.0) while the longer fan (inv. 10398) is complete with its turned and carved finial (with a carved *siṅha*, and *padma* mouldings), while the finial of the smaller (inv. 10397) is missing. While the larger faces the right, the smaller fan faces the left, and were thus seemingly conceived as a pair and as such given as wedding gifts by Queen Catarina of Austria to her favourite niece Infanta Maria of Portugal (see Jordan’s essay). The lower handles of both fans are in the shape of scrolling foliage which emerges on one side from a *kiṅḍurā*, and on the other from an elephant. The complex openwork stalks, like lace, house minute animals carved to perfection (deer, monkeys, leopards, large squirrels, owls, and other birds). The “capital” of the shorter fan, like the previous pair, depicts Lakṣmī holding lotus flowers flanked by rampant *siṅha*, while the “capital” of the longer fan depicts a man playing the flute on the recto, and a seated lady sitting on a stool with a parrot – both also flanked by rampant *siṅha*.

The recto of the blade guard of the shorter fan is decorated with “creepers of life” emerging from a *siṅha*, of which the roundels enclose a male spotted deer, a *haṁsa*, a pair of birds, and an owl. Conversely, the verso depicts a *haṁsa* of which emerges a similar creeper with roundels encircling a *siṅha*, a leopard, a female spotted deer, a hare, and a bird. Borrowing from European prints or models, the decoration of the recto of the blade guard of the longer fan includes a Portuguese soldier on horseback armed with a lance trampling over his enemy, of whom emerge a similar creeper with roundels encircling a pair of deer, a leopard, and a pair of birds. On the verso, emerging from the tail foliage of a horse flanked by a unicorn (copied from European prints), inside the roundels of a creeper, there is a leopard, a female deer, an owl, and a *haṁsa*, while a large squirrel approaches a blooming flower on top, next to the peacock’s sapphire-studded eye. The longer fan is complete with its original eighteen paper-thin ivory blades, while the shorter fan is missing one of the blades – with less overlapping of the blades, it still manages to form a complete circle.



Fig. 70 – Stone Pillar at Mædagoḍa Dēvālaye Dehigampal Kōralē in H. C. P. Bell, *Report on the Kégalla district of the Province of Sabaragamuwa* (Colombo: Printed by George J. A. Skeen, Government Printer, Ceylon, 1904), unnumbered plate between pp. 58 and 59. Private collection



Fig. 71 – Detail (*siṅha*) of the column of the porch (*ar-dha-maṇḍapa*) of the Gaḍalādeṇiya Vihāraya (Kandy District, Sri Lanka)









The Braunschweig fan [figs. 79–80], from the collection of the Dukes of Brunswick–Lüneburg and now in the Herzog Anton Ulrich–Museum, which was deemed a “mystery fan” (see Jordan’s essay), is also carved in the “sculptural” style. Similar in motifs and decoration when compared to the two pairs discussed above, its handle is less thick and the openwork decoration more fragile. Undoubtedly, this resulted in its poor state of conservation, missing more than half of its lower handle which broke off. The carving quality is also somewhat less refined when compared with the previously discussed examples. Like lace, the openwork decoration comprises scrolls of foliage housing animals, of which some of the details have been rubbed away. The “capital” similarly depicts Lakṣmī holding lotus flowers flanked by female spotted deer. The blade guards are joined to the lower handle with a dovetail joint on the verso and with silver nails on the recto. On both sides, their decoration consists of “creepers of life”. On the recto, the roundels encircle a leopard killing a deer, a female dancer (a courtier of the Ceylonese royal household), a *gajasiṅha* (an elephant-headed lion), a pair of spotted deer and an owl. On the verso, the roundels encircle an elephant, a female dancer, a *siṅha*, a cow, and a monkey, while other animals perch over the creeper (parrots, squirrels, birds, hare, deer, and a mon-goose). The fan is complete with its original twenty blades forming a complete circle.

Of the Copenhagen fan (see Introduction, fig. 16) only the incomplete handle survives with a missing blade guard on the verso [figs. 81–82]. Unlike the nine imperial fans under discussion, the handle of the Copenhagen fan is not straight but seemingly shaped as a dagger hilt complete with its elaborate, eccentric pommel and boat-shaped cross-guard. The curved shape of the handle is also reminiscent of the design of traditional Sinhalese ladles or rice bowls [fig. 83]. The grip of this dagger-shaped handle is carved from a single piece of ivory which attaches to the boat-shaped cross-guard (seemingly of solid ivory) with ivory pegs (some missing and replaced by metal nails). The same type of joinery is used to attach the cross-guard to the upper handle. Carved in the round, the finial of the grip depicts a crown *kiṅdurā* bedecked with jewels, the tail of which develops into complex foliage (with variations of the typical *liya pata*) masterfully worked in openwork. The four-sided shaft is decorated with alternating friezes of “creepers of life” of which the roundels enclose birds, *nārilatā* and *kiṅdurā*, and vine scrolls or *liya vāla*. The upper terminal of the shaft or grip, which joins the boat-shaped cross guard gracefully curls with complex foliage (*liya pata*) with openwork elements. Highlighting the joints between the lower and top finials with the polygonal shaft there are intricate mouldings of pearls and lotus petals (*palāpeti*). Also in high relief, the carving of the cross guard depicts on either side large, prominent *kīrtimukha*, their complex foliage covering the entire surface. Above the boat-shaped

Fig. 72 (pp. 180–181) – The pavilion (*maṇḍapa*) of the Niśānka Latā Maṇḍapaya in Poḷonnaruva (Polonnaruwa District, Sri Lanka)

Fig. 73 (p. 182) – Fan (recto, detail), Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), Kōṭṭē, c. 1540–1551; carved ivory, gold, rubies, and cotton thread (62.0 x Ø 33.0 cm). Munich, Museum Fünf Kontinente, inv. 2827, on loan to the Kunst- und Wunderkammer Burg Trausnitz, Landshut, inv. 1003/1280 © Munich, Museum Fünf Kontinente

Fig. 74 (183) – Fan (recto, open, detail), Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), Kōṭṭē, c. 1540–1551; carved ivory, horn, copper, and cotton thread (57.5 x Ø 33.0 cm). Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Kunstammer, inv. KK 4751 © KHM–Museumsverband

Figs. 75–76 (pp. 184–185) – Fan (recto, open; and verso, open), Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), Kōṭṭē, c. 1540–1551; carved ivory, silver, sapphire, and cotton thread (56.5 x Ø 27.0 cm). Naples, Museo di Capodimonte, inv. 10398 © photo: Luciano Pedicini, Archivio dell’Arte

Figs. 77–78 (pp. 186–187) – Fan (recto, open; and verso, open), Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), Kōṭṭē, c. 1540–1551; carved ivory, silver, sapphire, and cotton thread (51.4 x Ø 27.3 cm). Naples, Museo di Capodimonte, inv. 10397 © photo: Luciano Pedicini, Archivio dell’Arte

Fig. 79–80 (pp. 189–190) – Fan (recto, open; and verso, open), Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), Kōṭṭē, c. 1540–1551; carved ivory, silver, gilt silver, and cotton thread (34.5 x Ø 28.5 cm). Braunschweig, Herzog Anton Ulrich–Museum, inv. SA Elf 1 © Braunschweig, Herzog Anton Ulrich–Museum







③ Kandy Art. Ware Wood Rice Bowls



Fig. 84 - Ceremonial ladle, Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), 17th century; carved ivory, silver, gold, and rubies (1945.70 cm in length). London, Victoria and Albert Museum, inv. IS.19-1886 © London, Victoria and Albert Museum



Fig. 85 - Ceremonial ladle, Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), 17th century; carved ivory, silver, gilt silver and gold (19.2 x 12.5 x 44.9 cm). London, British Museum, inv. FBInd.43 © The Trustees of the British Museum

cross guard, on either side of the base of the blade guards, there are two heraldic lions (*siṃha*) carved in the round. The rectangular-shaped base of the guards is decorated with rows of birds and the only surviving blade guard is decorated with "creepers of life". While the larger of the roundels near the base encloses a *nārilatā*, all of the other encircle birds.

Nārilatā is a typical Sinhalese decorative motif which is quintessentially Kandyan, as it is the staple of Kandyan art. It is a mythical scrolling vine (කැරිලනා වැල *nārilatā vāla*) of which the flower is in the shape of a woman.¹¹⁰ Also typical of the Kandyan period and art is the type of carving, much more angular, rigid and schematic than that practised at Kōṭṭē, which is softer and more accomplished. And as we have seen, in the Kandyan period the motifs and iconography are also more schematic and stylised, similarly to what can be appreciated from the carving of this fan handle in Copenhagen. Nonetheless, its high-quality carving is comparable to other two Kandyan pieces, namely the beautiful seventeenth-century ceremonial ladles in the Victoria and Albert Museum and in the British Museum [figs. 84–85]. The Copenhagen fan is thus later than the pieces made at the imperial workshops in Kōṭṭē and can be dated to the first half of the seventeenth century. It was certainly made by someone who had knowledge of the type of cockade fan made earlier in the island for the Portuguese royal house, albeit giving it the shape of a dagger with a ladle-shaped grip. The peacock shape of the earlier fans is absent

from the Copenhagen fan, the memory of its original shape forgotten. It is thus likely that the general shape, of the upper handle with its blade guards, and the shape of the blades, survived in paper models and pattern books with which Sinhalese ivory carvers (and other artisans) learned their craft.

The "Pangolin Fan": a previously unknown masterpiece

Published here for the first time, the "Pangolin Fan" belongs to the "sculptural" style and compares better in terms of design and carving quality with the pair in Naples, being only slightly larger than the two. With the recto facing the left [fig. 86], it must have had a companion fan of

¹¹⁰ See Coomaraswamy, 1956, pp. 92–94.

Figs. 81–82 (pp. 191–192) – Fan handle (verso; and detail), Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), 1st half of the 17th century; carved ivory (53.0 cm in length). Copenhagen, Nationalmuseet, inv. EDb67 © Nationalmuseet, Copenhagen

Fig. 83 (p. 193) – *Kandy art ware, wood rice bowls*, Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), c. 1860–1899, albumen print (27.6 x 21.2 cm). Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, Royal Commonwealth Society Library, inv. Y303B, no. 86 © Cambridge, Cambridge University Library

Fig. 86 – The "Pangolin Fan" (recto, open)





which the peacock was facing right. It may be the fifth fan recorded in the 1557 inventory of Queen Catarina of Austria (see Jordan’s essay, **fig. 26**), while its lost pair remained in the king’s treasury and *guarda-roupa* alongside the two largest fans. Like the longer, better-preserved fan in Naples, the turned and carved finial of the “Pangolin Fan” survives. The finial depicts a minute Sri Lankan elephant (known locally as අලියා *aliyā*) carved in the round. Like the previously discussed examples, the finial is joined to the solid lower handle with an ivory peg.

The lower handle of the “Pangolin Fan” [**fig. 87**] is in the shape of scrolling foliage emerging from a heraldic lion (*siṃha*) underscoring its imperial provenance. The complex openwork shaft, like lace, houses minutely carved animals – better seen from micrographs [**fig. 88**]. These include squirrels, male and female spotted deer, heraldic lions (*siṃha*), birds and geese on the recto and verso. On the sides, in tiered niches or vertical rows, there are also spotted deer, birds, owls, peacocks in a frontal pose showing off their feathers, squirrels, herons, and hares. The prevalence of animal imagery is a quintessential aspect of Sinhalese art from time immemorial and underscores just how nature in all its manifestations was integrated into human daily life and activities. While some animals express well-known Buddhist symbolism (particularly *siṃha* and *haṃsa*), other creatures are depicted for their playful existence which fascinated Sinhalese craftsmen. Some animals may even be identified by their species, usually native to the island. One is the Indian palm squirrel (*Funambulus palmarum palmarum*), also known as the three-striped palm squirrel (ලෙනා *lēnā*) – a large squirrel with white stripes on this back which is believed to be Lord Rāma’s marks [**fig. 89**]. Another is the Sri Lankan axis deer (*Axis axis ceylonensis*) known in Sinhala as තිත් මුවා *tit muvā*, literally “dotted deer” [**fig. 90**]. Also recognizable is the Sri Lankan variety of the Indian hare (*Lepus nigricollis singhala*) known as වල් කොටා *val hāvā*, literally “wild rabbit” [**fig. 91**].

The “capital” (see **fig. 88**) which crowns the openwork shaft of the “Pangolin Fan” is unlike any of the other fans and seems to derive from European models and prints. The front depicts two standing *putti* flanking on either side a stylised “tree of life”, partly resembling a lotus stalk and flower. The *putti* are flanked by dragon-like snakes, one of which on the right is being killed by the *putto* with a sword down its throat. The scene on the back differs only slightly, as it is reversed and with the *putti* depicted as angels. On the sides (see **fig. 88**, and **109**) we see a *putto* sitting on a lotus flower playing a Western lute. Following the typical Renaissance shape, the lute depicted has a pear-shaped vaulted back and a pegbox angled back from the neck [**fig. 92**]. The bowl hair cut of the *putti* is also distinctive of early sixteenth-century male fashion in the Iberian peninsula. Minute in scale, the scene with two standing *putti* on either side of a stylised vertical element is similar to a larger motif found on the top side of the prismatic lid of the “Robinson Casket” [**fig. 93**]. There, two *putti*, with the same haircut, are seen standing on either side of a vertical element, a fountain of life which emerges from a grotesque mask and from which two birds on top drink from. Both *putti* are similarly struggling with snakes. Better seen from the larger version of such decorative motifs, the *putti* in the “Pangolin Fan” must be based on an ornamental print of *groteschi* of the *candelabrae* type (vertical, mirrored ornaments with figures, animals, objects etc.), such as those printed in the first decades of the sixteenth century, following the discovery of the *Domus Aurea* and its grotesque decoration, by artists such as Barthel Beham or Heinrich Aldegrever [**figs. 94–95**]. While these engravings do not match exactly with the motifs depicted on the fan’s “capital”, they show us clearly what these printed sources would look like. The carving quality, technique and design of the motifs of the “Robinson Casket” (see above **fig. 15**) are so alike in comparison with that of the “Pangolin Fan”, that is likely that these two objects originated in the same imperial workshop in Köttē.

Fig. 87 – The “Pangolin Fan” (recto, lower handle)





Fig. 89 - Jan Brandes, *Ceylons Eekhoornje, den 17 Non 1785 (Ceylon's Squirrel, The 17th November 1785)*, Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), 1785, pencil and watercolour on paper (19.5 x 15.5 cm). Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. NG-1985-7-1-37 © Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum



Fig. 90 - Sri Lankan axis deer, Thalagama Wetland Watch, Sri Lanka © Anjitha Senarath



Fig. 91 - Wild rabbit, Thalagama Wetland Watch, Sri Lanka © Anjitha Senarath

Similarly to the previously discussed pairs in the “sculptural style”, the lower and top sections of the handles are dovetailed on one side and studded with silver nails on the other. The recto and verso of the blade guards [figs. 96-97] are decorated with “creepers of life” emerging from what seems to be an inverted European heraldic shield (see fig. 88), of which the field is *party per saltire* (divided diagonally both ways), a partition which is not typical of Portuguese heraldry. Both “shields” have the same design: an Indian pangolin below, that gives the name to this fan (see discussion below); an owl with outstretched wings on top; and two female deer on the sides. With minor differences, the roundels on the recto and verso of the blade guards encircle a female deer with two fawns, one recumbent fawn feeding from its mother; a deer, a squirrel and a heron; a *siñha*; and a deer - with birds, hares, and deer perching on the creepers. With nineteen paper-thin blades [figs. 98-99], the “Pangolin Fan” is missing one of its original twenty blades.

Alongside the use of European prints or designs for its decoration, which shows an increased adaptation of the imperial workshop and its craftsmen to Portuguese influence and artistic patronage, the most interesting feature of this fan is the depiction, with pride of place, of an Indian pangolin or *Manis crassicaudata* (see fig. 88). Its presence is puzzling since

Fig. 88 (pp. 198-199) - The “Pangolin Fan” (photomicrographs) © Hugo Miguel Crespo



Fig. 92 - Hans Brosamer, *The lute-player*, Germany, 1537; engraving on paper (14.0 x 10.7 cm). London, British Museum, inv. 1853.0709.243 © The Trustees of the British Museum

Fig. 93 (above, right) - The “Robinson Casket” (lid, detail), Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), Kōttē, c. 1540-1551; carved ivory, gold, and sapphires (13.7 x 22.8 x 12.7 cm). London, Victoria and Albert Museum, inv. IS.41-1980 © London, Victoria and Albert Museum



Fig. 94 - Barthel Beham, *Two putti with a half-figure*, Germany, c. 1520-1540; engraving on paper (5.2 x 3.9 cm). Braunschweig, Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum, inv. BBeham WB 3.5 © Braunschweig, Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum



Fig. 95 - Heinrich Aldegrever, *Vase with foliage and two putti*, 1529; engraving on paper (6.7 x 4.2 cm). Braunschweig, Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum, inv. HALdegrever AB 3.194 © Braunschweig, Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum



pangolins, or “scaly anteaters”, the world’s most trafficked wild mammals today, are absent from Indian and Sri Lankan art.¹¹¹ Known in Sinhala as කබල්ලා *kaḷḷā*, literally “scorpion”, the Indian pangolin is a rare sight in Sri Lanka [fig. 100] despite its general distribution across the island, which is geographically isolated from the other populations on the Indian subcontinent.¹¹² Solitary, elusive and predominantly nocturnal, the Indian pangolin, also known as the thick-tailed pangolin, is a medium-sized mammal native to South Asia and one of the eight different species of pangolins which occur in Afro-tropical and Indo-Malayan regions of the world. With an elongated tapering body, it is characterized by its large overlapping keratinous scales covering the body, which are shed periodically and vary from brown to yellow. The Indian pangolin can quickly curl itself into a compact ball in self-defence while hissing loudly to scare off predators. This is undoubtedly one of the most characteristic features of the pangolin and is likely the premise for its presence on the ivory fan, charged with symbolic meaning.

111 A. van der Geer, *Animals in Stone. Indian Mammals Sculptured Through Time* (Leiden-Boston, Brill, 2008), pp. 427-428.

112 On the Indian pangolin in Sri Lanka, see, Perera, Karawita and Pabasara, 2017; Karawita, Perera, Gunawardane and Dayawansa 2018; Karawita, Perera, Dayawansa and Dias, 2020; Perera and Karawita, 2020; Algewatta, Perera, Karawita, Dayawansa, Manawadu and Liyanage, 2021; and Algewatta and Perera, 2022.





Figs. 98-99 - The "Pangolin Fan" (closed, details of the blades; photomicrographs) © Hugo Miguel Crespo



Fig. 101 - Indian pangolin, Lahugala Kitulana National Park, Sri Lanka © Riaz Cader

As nocturnal creatures, pangolins prefer to stay inside their burrows, hollows and dens sleeping during the day, and this behaviour and attached symbolism may also explain its depiction on the fan.

In Sri Lanka, a higher concentration of the Indian pangolin population occurs in the North-west, North-central, South-west lowlands and South-eastern parts of the island [fig. 101]. The species is mostly found in tropical shrubland, dry forest, moist lowland forest, dry grassland, and human-modified former forest habitats. Pangolin meat is considered a delicacy among local Sinhalese hunters, while others believe it has medicinal properties for a range of ailments. Indigenous bushmen communities, namely the Vedda

(වැද්දා *væddā*) apart from consuming their meat, use powdered scales as an ingredient in medicinal ointment to cure diseases in cattle. The main threat to pangolins nowadays is the extent of poaching for its meat (greatly appreciated in the Asian markets) and scales, illegally trafficked mostly to East Asia where they are used in traditional Chinese medicine. Information on the symbolism of the pangolin in Sri Lankan literature, lore, and art is almost nonexistent. Yet, some indications of symbolic meaning include the use, in older times, of pangolin scales for the almost "transparent" chest coverings, known as අවුල් හැරයා *avul hæraya*, used by Kandyan Ves dancers. This *avul hæraya* [fig. 102] in the Wereld Museum in Rotterdam is a rare example of such ornaments in a European collection. Clearly made from recycled, older materials, including discs made from turned water buffalo horn (*Bubalus bubalis*), this *avul hæraya* features mostly large discs fashioned from Indian pangolin scales.

Figs. 96-97 (pp. 202-203) - The "Pangolin Fan" (closed, recto and verso, details of the blade guards)

Fig. 100 - Indian pangolin, Lahugala Kitulana National Park, Sri Lanka © Riaz Cader

Fig. 102 (pp. 206-207) - Dress ornament for Kandyan dance (*avul hæraya*), Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), 1st half of the 20th century; Indian pangolin scales, turned water buffalo horn, glass beads, nylon thread, and cotton thread (72.0 x 23.0 cm). Rotterdam, Wereld Museum, inv. RV-5046-1f © Rotterdam, Wereld Museum









Figs. 104–105 - Coat of scale armour (front; and detail of the back), India, 1876; Indian pangolin scales, gilt copper, velvet, gold paint, turquoises, rubies, ivory, glass beads, and pearls (90.0 x 123.0 x 6.0 cm). The Royal Collection Trust, inv. RCIN 38059 © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2022

Kandyan dance (උඩරට නැටුම් *uḍaraṭa nāṭum*) also known as Ves dance, which encompasses various dance forms popular and is native to the central highlands of the island, became the most prominent dance given the cultural supremacy of Kandy as the centre of power from the early seventeenth century until British rule.¹¹³ According to legend, the origins of this dance-drama lie in a dance ritual known as කොහොඹා කංකාරියා *kohoṃbā kaṅkāriya*, a healing dance performed in honour of the god Kohoṃbā solely within the premises of certain temples, before it became secular in the nineteenth-century.¹¹⁴ Strictly male, the dancers wear

¹¹³ On this dance, its origins, and its political role, see Reed 2010.

¹¹⁴ On the god Kohoṃbā and the associated legend, see C. E. Godakumbura, "The Cult of Kohoṃbā or the Three Sons of Sitā," *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, 2 (1946), pp. 185–191. On the ritual dance, see Reed 2010, pp. 23–73; and Amunugama 2021.

Fig. 103 (pp. 208–209) - *Singalese devil dancers*, Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), 1886, albumen print (14.0 x 9.7 cm). Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, Royal Commonwealth Society Library, inv. Y303P, no. 53 © Cambridge, Cambridge University Library



an elaborate costume comprising half of the sixty-four royal ornaments originally worn by the healer-king Malaya [fig. 103]. The ornaments are so sacred that performers in ancient times were not allowed to bring them home and were instead stored in temples in special boxes called වෙස් පෙට්ටිය *ves peṭṭiya*. The upper body is bare except for a flimsy web-like harness, the aforementioned *avul hāraya*, which extends over the dancer's shoulders and sides, adorning his back with strands of beads. The lower torso is draped with pleated white cloth creating the look of loose-fitting pants secured by an intricate belt, while the silver headgear, mango-shaped ear ornaments, necklace, bangles, and cobra-shaped armlets, complete the costume.

The circular beadwork harness or *avul hāraya* comprises discs and beads forming a star-shaped pattern. According to tradition amongst dancers, the *avul hāraya* is imbued with powers derived from the materials used in its manufacture. The central disc was traditionally made from elephant ivory, while the others could be fashioned from water buffalo horn or the

scales of a pangolin. Within the dancer’s community, the pangolin is renowned for its ability to suffocate an elephant by constricting its trunk. This almost supernatural power must have inspired great admiration considering the huge difference in size between the two animals. In addition, even the most dangerous predators are rendered ineffective when a pangolin coils its body into a sphere, becoming impervious to any kind of attack. Pangolin scales were used in the Indian subcontinent as armour elements. They are considered to be harder than steel and imbued with magical powers which repel, like the pangolin, enemy attacks. One eloquent testimony to its use is this [figs. 104–105] striking coat of scale armour which was presented to King Edward VII, when Prince of Wales, during his tour of India in 1875–1876, by Bhavani Singh, Maharaja of Datia. The pangolin’s supernatural strength must be at the centre of its poorly documented symbolism in Sri Lankan culture and lore, which is packed with references to the animal world.¹¹⁵

One aspect which merits further consideration is the “heraldic” shape where the Indian pangolin is depicted alongside an owl with outstretched wings and two female deer. Similarly shaped escutcheons, albeit not inverted, may be seen on a number of ivory caskets made in Kōṭṭē for the Portuguese royal family (see Introduction). The majority are not heraldic and simply emulate escutcheon-shaped lock plates in contemporary European caskets which provided the model for the Ceylonese examples. The gem-studded escutcheons of the “Coronation Casket”, the larger¹¹⁶ and the smaller (see Introduction, figs. 17–20) caskets, both in private collections, and the small Boston casket, are eloquent examples. The geometric, abstract decoration of the escutcheons is not heraldic and devoid of any special meaning. In contrast, the escutcheons carved on the Berlin casket, albeit not conforming to the rules of European heraldry, present us with a unique example of combined Portuguese and Sinhalese heraldic motifs (see above fig. 16).¹¹⁷ The mirrored escutcheons are featured prominently on the front of the casket flanking the escutcheon-shaped lock plate and probably symbolise Portuguese influence on the island. A smaller Portuguese royal coat of arms is superimposed on top of each escutcheon (similar to a shield *en surtout*), the field of which is *party per pale* or halved vertically: a flower vase on one side, and a rampant lion (*simha*) on the other, both deployed as heraldic charges.¹¹⁸ While the lion was the Sinhalese royal emblem, the symbolism of the flower vase is less clear. Alongside these, the inverted escutcheon on the “Pangolin Fan” is likely a heraldic fantasy.

Unfortunately, from the many hundreds of surviving heraldic banners and flags, typically used since times immemorial in Sri Lanka, none could be found depicting a pangolin.¹¹⁹ Sinhalese flags and banners, called කොඩිය *koḍiya*, are used as the heraldic devices of ruling families, kingdoms, provinces, districts and other territorial and administrative divisions, castes, temples, and groups of royal officers. Mostly used in religious processions and secular festivals, they were bestowed and presented by the king and have better survived in temples. Made from white cloth, they are usually shaped as rectangular, swallow tail, and triangular or pendant flags. Their heraldic chargers or insignia may include mythical or real animals and birds, objects, flowers or symbols arranged in well-spaced, geometrical layouts. Usually, they consist of a single insignia in the centre, although more complex designs exist (caste banners).

¹¹⁵ See Ratnapala 1991, pp. 116–124.

¹¹⁶ See Jordan Gschwend and Beltz, 2010, pp. 60–64, cat. 12 (entry written by Jordan Gschwend).

¹¹⁷ For a discussion of this composite “heraldry”, see Jaffer and Schwabe, 1999, pp. 10–11; and Saviello, 2018, pp. 343–344.

¹¹⁸ A similar composite heraldry may be seen on the coat of arms of João of Austria, Prince of Kandy (1578–1640) now in the Museu Arqueológico do Carmo, Lisbon. See Perera, 1916, pp. 8–9; and Jayasinghe, 2015.

¹¹⁹ On these banners and flags, see Perera, 1916; and De Silva 2019.

While most banners only survive from the seventeenth century onwards, their symbolism is likely centuries old.

The flag of the Kings of Kōṭṭē is known to us from the surviving red wax seal of Bhuvanekabāhu’s letter to Queen Catarina of Austria (see Jordan’s essay, figs. 13–15, frontispiece, and back cover). It depicts a roaring lion passant – a walking lion (*simha*) in profile with the left forepaw raised. In contrast with other animal motifs, both its mane and hair are highly stylised. The royal standard or banner was a red lion passant holding a sword (sometimes a whip or කසේ *kasē*, of authority) in its right paw on a white field.¹²⁰ Since early days, the lion had been the insignia of Sri Lankan monarchs, from the fabled origin of the first Sinhalese ruler, the Indian Prince Vijaya (c. 543–505 BCE). Vijaya was the son of Simhabāhu, King of Simhapura, born of the union of Princess Suppādevī with a lion (Simha). Other ancient royal flag designs are known from mural paintings and literary descriptions, and we know that combined European and Sinhalese heraldry existed on the now lost tombstone of João Dharmapāla, the grandson of Bhuvanekabāhu VII of Kōṭṭē who was baptised in 1557.¹²¹ Without much information to contextualise it, any heraldic symbolism that the pangolin on our ivory fan may have possessed is now lost and forgotten.

Conclusion: workshop practices, dominant themes, and lost fans

A carefully visual and material analysis of the ivory carvings made in Kōṭṭē during the reign of Bhuvanekabāhu VII reveals important aspects of its workshop practices. There are different levels of carving quality between the surviving objects, some more accomplished than others. Yet, there are also noticeable differences in carving quality within the same object. This is indicative of the existence of a group of differently accomplished carvers, probably under the supervision of a master carver responsible for the overall design, working on different parts of the same object. The small casket in a private collection (see Introduction, figs. 17–20) is a case in point. The panels of the front and back were made by different craftsmen, the front being superior in its carving quality. Also, the sides show marked differences in execution; the right side being made by the same carver who did the back. There are also clear differences between the sides of the lid (less accomplished) and the long panels which make up the rest of the lid. The smaller casket in Vienna (inv. KK 4745) also exhibits these marked differences, mostly between the sides of the lid (much less accomplished), and the remaining panels (see above, figs. 14, and 59).

These sections, made by different carvers, would be assembled when completed and receive the precious gem-set gold mounts from other specialized members of the imperial workshops. From certain surviving objects, we know that sometimes the collaboration between different craftsmen (ivory carvers and goldsmiths) was not effective. This seems to be the case with the smaller casket in Vienna and the one in Peradeniya (see above figs. 11–12) both of which lack their planned precious mounts, their place being occupied instead by ebony inlays. In contrast with these two, the Boston casket, and most notably the “Coronation Casket”, some other caskets received mounts which were not planned into the design. One case in point is the “Robinson Casket” (see above, figs. 15). Its design did not anticipate its gem-studded mounts, the large rectangular lock plate – a masterpiece of contemporary Sinhalese gold work – covering part of the carved decoration on the front. A similar case is the “Rāmāyana Casket” (see Intro-

¹²⁰ Perera, 1916, pp. 6–7.

¹²¹ Perera, 1916, p. 8.





duction, figs. 10–12; and above, fig. 57) which received silver mounts made either in mid–sixteenth-century Goa or, more likely, in Lisbon; the cast lock plate being probably a slightly later substitute of the lost original. Like contemporary Gujarati caskets made from tortoiseshell or overlaid with mother-of-pearl, the absence of mounts did not hinder their use as fully functional objects. The same differences in carving quality may be seen in the “Pangolin Fan”, most noticeable between the front blade guard (recto) and that on the underside (verso), which is less accomplished. While the preparation of the paper-thin blades may have fallen into the hands of an apprentice, the lower handle, expertly carved in time-consuming and highly demanding openwork, was certainly made by a single master craftsman. Although distinguishing the work of specific carvers is difficult, this master carver was likely also responsible for carving the “Robinson Casket” [figs. 106–108] given the shared similarities in carving style (see also above, fig. 88).¹²²

One aspect which merits further discussion regards the dominant themes deployed on the nine imperial fans and the likely symbolism which underlines their design. The most obvious is the peacock as their main iconographic motif (see Jordan’s essay).¹²³ Known as මොණරා *moṇarā* in Sinhala, the Indian peafowl (*pavo cristatus*) is a common resident of the dry lowlands, inhabiting mostly open country and scrublands while avoiding dense forests. Highly revered in Buddhism, with its feathers used in purification rituals, the peacock (male) symbolises purity and enlightenment. This stems from the fact that peacocks were seen eating plants poisonous to humans without showing ill effects and thus came to symbolise enduring suffering, a metaphor for human life. Conversely, in Hindu mythology, they are symbols of pride, beauty and grace. The peacock is also the vehicle (*vimāna*) of the Hindu god of war, Kārttikeya (Skanda) known in Tamil as Murugaṅ and in Sri Lanka as Kataragama Deviyō, a powerful guardian deity of the island worshipped by many Buddhists. It is likely that both Buddhist and Hindu symbolism were at play in the design of these imperial fans, conceived as diplomatic gifts to be displayed at the Portuguese royal table on state occasions. Also preponderant to many of the fans is the presence of Lakṣmī, the wife of Viṣṇu and the Hindu goddess of wealth, fortune, power and beauty. In Sinhalese art, Lakṣmī is mostly deployed as a symbol of wealth and prosperity, her cult being incorporated into the Buddhist pantheon of Sri Lanka from early times. The figure of the goddess is traditionally depicted at the entrances of Buddhist image houses, mostly carved on the lintel of doorways. The figure of Lakṣmī flanked by elephants lustrating the goddess (a motif known as ගජලක්ෂ්මී *gajalakṣmī*) is prominently carved on the aforementioned fourteenth-century wooden doorframe in the Aḷudeniya Vihāraya and on many other contemporary and later buildings on the island, either Buddhist or Hindu. Like other aspects of her iconography, it is representative of prosperity, good luck and abundance.

Alongside the conspicuous animal imagery mostly used as auspicious symbols, there are particular motifs on the fans which are deployed as symbols of royal authority: the heraldic lion or සිංහ *siṅha*, symbolising the half-leonine lineage of Prince Vijaya narrated in the *Mahāvamsa* or *Great Chronicle*; the pale blue water lily (*Nymphaea nouchali*) known as මානෙල් මල *mānel mal*; and the elephant known as අලියා *aliyā*, an animal which was afforded complete

¹²² I wish to thank Kirstin Kennedy, curator at the Victoria and Albert Museum, for granting me access to the “Robinson Casket” which allowed for an in-depth visual and material analysis of the casket and its carvings.

¹²³ See Nair, 1974.

Fig. 106 (p. 214) - The “Pangolin Fan” (detail of the lower handle)

Figs. 107–108 (pp. 215–216) - The “Robinson Casket” (right side; and photomicrographs), Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), Kōṭṭē, c. 1540–1551; carved ivory, gold, and sapphires (13.7 x 22.8 x 12.7 cm). London, Victoria and Albert Museum, inv. IS.41-1980 © London, Victoria and Albert Museum; and Hugo Miguel Crespo (photomicrographs)



protection by royal decree. Although less prominent in the decoration of the nine surviving fans, stories, characters and scenes taken from the *Rāmāyana* make up for the most interesting imagery deployed on the diplomatic ivory carvings made in Kōṭṭē during the reign of Bhuvanekabāhu VII.¹²⁴ The prominence of the Indian epic is not surprising, not only given the high level of Hinduization of sixteenth-century Kōṭṭē but also because this poetic account of the early southward expansion of Brahmanic civilization provided the perfect background for expressing Bhuvanekabāhu's royal authority and imperial aspirations. In the *Rāmāyana*, written c. 500 BCE, we find the first major legendary reference to the "resplendent land" as it narrates the conquest of Lanka by Rāma, an avatar of the Hindu god Viṣṇu, and his quest to save his abducted wife Sītā from Rāvaṇa, the demon-god of the island.¹²⁵ The epic is an encyclopaedia of ancient lore rich with stories and characters such as Vibhīṣaṇa, the younger brother of Rāvaṇa, who joined Rāma and became king of Lanka. These have infused into Sinhalese literature, art, culture and religion, and provided the backbone for much political discourse since the fourteenth century alongside increased South Indian influence on the island.

Given that the nine surviving fans were conceivably made in pairs, it is likely that there were companion fans for the smaller fan in Munich (inv. 2826), the Braunschweig fan, and the "Pangolin Fan", the original number of imperial ivory fans thus totalling twelve if not more. One of these lost fans, possibly forming a pair with the smaller fan in Munich (inv. 2826), includes the fan, set with gold mounts, recorded in Rudolf II's inventory (see Introduction). Like the recently resurfaced "Pangolin Fan", it is possible that some of these lost fans still survive waiting to be identified in some private or public collection. With the publication of the present volume, it is to be hoped that the "Pangolin Fan" joins the collection of a museum and that the stolen fan rejoins the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna.

124 See Biedermann, 2018, pp. 107–116. The importance of the *Rāmāyana* as visual source for the ivory carvings made in Kōṭṭē during the reign of Bhuvanekabāhu VII, namely regarding the surviving caskets, merits further research and an in-depth analysis.

125 See Justin W. Henry and Sree Padma, "Lankapura: The Legacy of the *Ramayana* in Sri Lanka," *South Asia. Journal of South Asian Studies*, 42.4 (2019), pp. 726–731; Justin W. Henry, "Explorations in the Transmission of the *Ramayana* in Sri Lanka," *South Asia. Journal of South Asian Studies*, 42.4 (2019), pp. 732–746; Sree Padma "Borders Crossed: Vibhishana in the *Ramayana* and Beyond," *South Asia. Journal of South Asian Studies*, 42.4 (2019), pp. 747–767; and Jonathan Young and Philip Friedrich, "Mapping Lanka's Moral Boundaries: Representations of Socio-Political Difference in the *Ravana Rajavaliya*," *South Asia. Journal of South Asian Studies*, 42.4 (2019), pp. 768–780.

Fig. 109 - The "Pangolin Fan" (detail of the side, with one of the two lute players)



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Abbreviations

AGS: Archivo General de Simancas, Valladolid

BA: Biblioteca da Ajuda, Lisbon

BAV: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vatican City

TT: Torre do Tombo, Lisbon
CC: Corpo Cronológico
NA: Núcleo Antigo

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