

Urte Krass/Miguel Metelo de Seixas (eds.)

# Heraldry in Contact.

Perspectives and Challenges of a  
Connective Image Form



**THORBECKE**

This publication was funded by the Max und Elsa Beer-Brawand Fonds, by the Swiss National Science Foundation, by the University of Bern, and by Portuguese national funds through the FCT – Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia, I.P., under the Norma Transitória – DL 57/2016/CP1453/CT0041 and strategic projects UIDB/00749/2020 and UIDP/00749/2020, and the Portuguese Heraldry Institute.



Die Verlagsgruppe Patmos ist sich ihrer Verantwortung gegenüber unserer Umwelt bewusst. Wir folgen dem Prinzip der Nachhaltigkeit und streben den Einklang von wirtschaftlicher Entwicklung, sozialer Sicherheit und Erhaltung unserer natürlichen Lebensgrundlagen an. Näheres zur Nachhaltigkeitsstrategie der Verlagsgruppe Patmos auf unserer Website [www.verlagsgruppe-patmos.de/nachhaltig-gut-leben](http://www.verlagsgruppe-patmos.de/nachhaltig-gut-leben)

Bibliografische Information der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek

Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der Deutschen Nationalbibliografie; detaillierte bibliografische Daten sind im Internet über <http://dnb.d-nb.de> abrufbar.

Alle Rechte vorbehalten

© 2023 Jan Thorbecke Verlag

Verlagsgruppe Patmos in der Schwabenverlag AG, Ostfildern

[www.thorbecke.de](http://www.thorbecke.de)

Umschlaggestaltung: Finken & Bumiller, Stuttgart

Umschlagabbildung: Detail of Martin Waldseemüller's map, *Universalis cosmographia secundum Ptholomaei traditionem et Americi Vespucii aliorumque lustrationes*, Strasbourg 1507 (Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2003626426/>).

Gestaltung, Satz und Repro: Schwabenverlag AG, Ostfildern

Druck: CPI books GmbH, Leck

Hergestellt in Deutschland

ISBN 978-3-7995-1594-8

# Content

## Introduction

- Connecting Heraldry ..... 11  
*Urte Krass and Miguel Metelo de Seixas*

## Colonial and Post-Colonial Identities

- The Fifteenth-Century Heraldic Columns of Diogo Cão and their Colonial Legacies ..... 25  
*Jessica Barker*
- The Beheaded Enemy. A Long Walk Across Iberian Heraldry ..... 31  
*Carlos López-Fanjul de Argüelles*
- The Cross of Gaspé: Between Territorial Appropriation and Colonial Emancipation. .... 38  
*Antoine Robin*
- The Virgin, the Eagle and the Cactus: (Re)Tracing the Origins of a *Criollo* Patriotic Symbol in Colonial Mexico ..... 43  
*Raphaële Preisinger*
- The Old and New Continent in Contact at Miramare Castle in Trieste ..... 49  
*Leonor Calvão Borges*
- Jaguars, Maidens Issuant, Counter-Ermined: Heraldry in Contact in 20th Century Brazil ..... 53  
*Miguel Metelo de Seixas*

## Diplomacy and Gift-Giving

- The Coat of Arms of D. Afonso I, Catholic King of Congo and Lord of the Ambudos .... 59  
*Pedro Sameiro*
- Heraldic Splendor in Contact: Ambassador Alexandre Metelo's Chinese Embroidered Coat of Arms ..... 64  
*Maria João Ferreira and Miguel Metelo de Seixas*
- Intercultural Contact between Japan and the Netherlands in a Heraldic Context ..... 70  
*Julia E. Hartmann*

## Marriage and Union

- A Group of Four African Oliphants Proclaiming an Iberian Royal Union . . . . . 81  
*Luis Urbano Afonso and Miguel Metelo de Seixas*
- Erotic, Exotic, Antique: The Cup of Constantino de Braganza and its Coat of Arms . . . . . 87  
*Francesco Gusella*
- Power Play at New Hardwick Hall: On Marriage and Heraldic Joins in an Early Modern English Table (c. 1568) . . . . . 92  
*Sasha Rossman*

## Performative Objects and Transcultural Actors

- Nasrid Emblems on a *jineta* Sword of the Fifteenth Century . . . . . 101  
*Simon Rousselot*
- Taoist Self-Transformation and Christian Redemption: A Chinese Heraldic Rhinoceros Cup for Antão Vaz Freire . . . . . 106  
*Hugo Miguel Crespo*
- A Fleeting Heraldic Collaboration: The Huguenot Tapestry in Bern . . . . . 112  
*Tamara Kobel*
- The Magic of the Flag: A Colonial Story (East Timor, 1894) . . . . . 118  
*Ricardo Roque*
- Inventing Tradition: Coats of Arms in Swiss Schools in the Early 20th Century . . . . . 123  
*Julia Strobel*

## Cross-Cultural Layerings and Fusions

- Imagining the Arms of the Ottoman Empire in Early Modern Europe . . . . . 131  
*Emir O. Filipović*
- Cultural Mobility on the Bottom. An Ewer and its Coats of Arms Between Early Modern Germany, Venice, and Syria . . . . . 137  
*Nicolai Kölmel*
- Hybrid Identity. A Sinhalese-Portuguese Coat of Arms on a Sixteenth-Century Ivory Casket from Sri Lanka . . . . . 143  
*Alberto Saviello*
- Indian Textiles and Portuguese Heraldry . . . . . 149  
*Barbara Karl*
- The Portuguese Coat of Arms as a Site of Mediation in a Manuscript from Goa (c. 1659) . . 156  
*Urte Krass*

## Connecting Earth and Heaven

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| On Earth as in Heaven: The Coat of Arms, Emblem of Men, Language of Angels,<br>and Sign of God. ....  | 165 |
| <i>Laurent Hablot</i>   |     |
| Black and White: Heraldry in a Depiction of St. Maurice in Namur .....  | 171 |
| <i>Gregor von Kerssenbrock-Krosigk</i>  |     |
| A Hidden Deer and a Crowned Lion: Rabbinical Reaction to the Usage of Heraldry<br>among Jews in the 16th Century. ....  | 178 |
| <i>Olga Karaskova-Hesry</i>   |     |
| Heraldry and the Discourse on Spiritual Nobility. The Trinity Adored by Saints Justa and<br>Rufina, Philip IV, the Queen, and the Count and Countess of Olivares (1627) ..... | 184 |
| <i>José Antonio Guillén Berrendero</i>  |     |
| Authors' Information .....  | 190 |
| List of Figures .....   | 198 |
| Index .....   | 208 |

# Erotic, Exotic, Antique: The Cup of Constantino de Braganza and its Coat of Arms

Francesco Gusella

The present essay addresses the coat of arms carved on the so-called *Cup of Constantino de Braganza* (fig. 1), now at the National Museum of Capodimonte in Naples, with special regard to the erotic, exotic, and antiquarian elements that characterize the work. The object consists of a rhinoceros horn cup decorated with low-relief carvings that is mounted into a gilded silverwork with enamel medallions culminating in the shape of a sea-monster's head. Scholars have suggested that the object was likely commissioned in the early 1560s by Constantino de Braganza, Viceroy of Portuguese India (1558–1561), as a gift for the wedding of his niece Maria of Portugal with Alessandro Farnese in 1565.

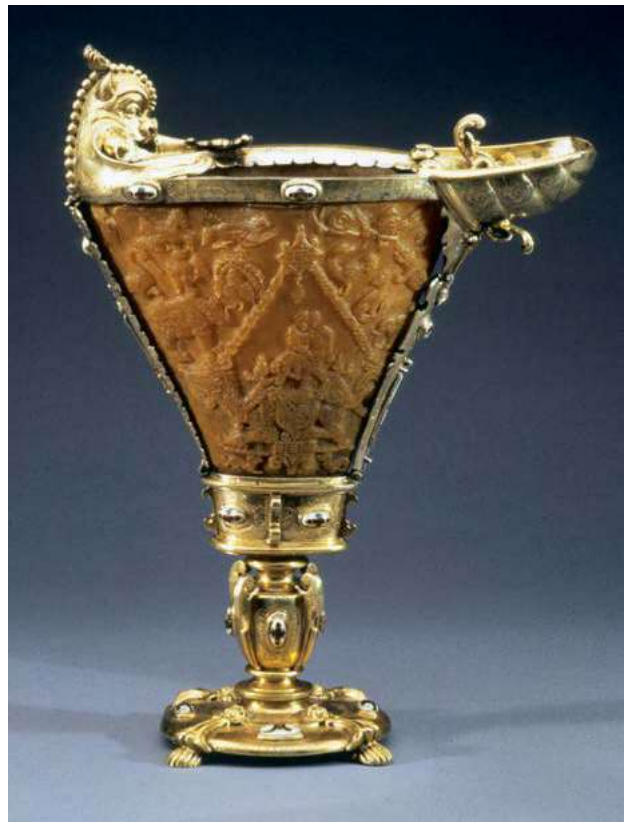


Fig. 1: The Cup of Constantino de Braganza, 1560s, Portuguese India (cup) and Europe (mounting), rhino horn with low-relief carvings, silver mounting with enamel medallions, National Museum of Capodimonte, Naples.

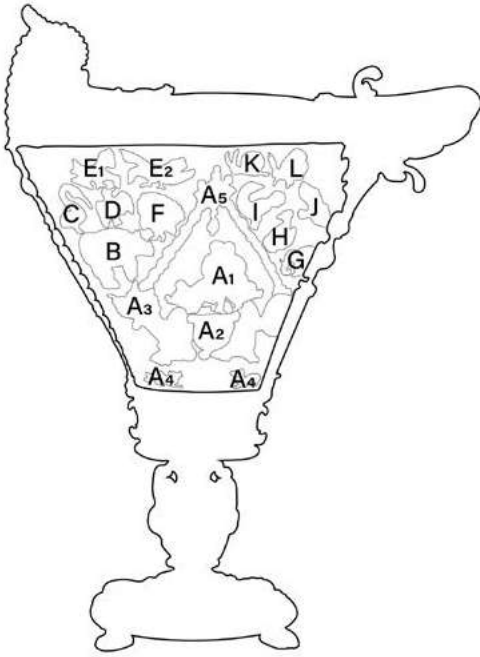


Fig 2: Neptune and Doris side, scheme of the iconographic details.

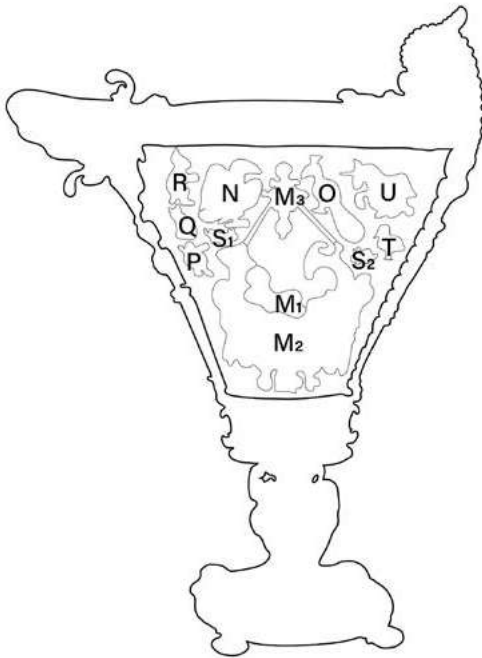


Fig 3: Venus side, scheme of the iconographic details.

Rhinoceros vessels were traditionally carved in the Jiangsu province of Eastern China during the Ming period and later embellished with precious mounts in Portuguese India or Europe. Jan Chapman and Hugo Miguel Crespo have suggested a Chinese origin for the work given its affinity with contemporary jade and shell carvings made for the European market. However, the distinct carving style of the Capodimonte's cup differs from other Ming specimens that reached Europe. According to Annemarie Jordan Gschwend, this stylistic difference indicates the mediation of an Indian carver familiar with Chinese items, or a Chinese workshop based in Goa or Cochin. Two comparable vessels (Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection, K/161B; Kunsthistorisches Museum, KK 3742) display South Asian iconographic features that reinforce the hypothesis of an Indian origin for the cup in Naples. The cup was then shipped to Europe, most likely to Lisbon, where the mounting was cast. The casting of a lizard on the back of the item recalls contemporary metalwork from Southern Germany, thus suggesting the influence of such productions on the goldsmith responsible for the mounting.

Carved into the center of one side, we find an elaborate coat of arms (fig. 2, A2). The escutcheon is divided into four fields that alternate between two sets of five spheres (or shields) in diagonal disposition and two patterns of horizontal bands. A drawing created in the occasion of the wedding of Maria of Portugal, also records a combined form of the Farnese-Avis coat of arms (Bertini 1997, 72). The left half is occupied by six lilies of the House of Farnese and two patterns of vertical bands standing for the Habsburg. The right half contains the Avis component of the blazon: one set of five shields in vertical cross disposition with five diagonally arranged bezants in each shield. This composition differs from the example in our cup where the diagonal dis-

position of the spheres/shields is more closely related to the Braganza coat of arms. Jordan Gschwend (2000, 54) has proposed the identification of the blazon as a combined form of the Braganza-Farnese coat of arms based on the probable role of Constantino in the commission of the cup and his kinship ties to the bride. The shield leans against a dragon (A3) standing on a pedestal supported by two dogs (A4). The dragon, which is modelled after Chinese examples, might be associated with the wyvern, one of the emblems of the House of Braganza, although it was only officially incorporated into their heraldic shield in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

The hypothesis about the combined form of two blazons, and its nuptial purpose, is also suggested by the presence of a naked couple (A1) above the heraldic shield. The couple's pose recalls that of *Neptune and Doris* from the popular engraved series *Loves of the Gods* (1527) by Gian Giacomo Caraglio (Rijksmuseum, inv. no. RP-P-OB-35.621); the difference here is that the figures on the cup are facing forward instead of kissing. The sensual embrace of the male figure and the slung leg of the goddess exemplify erotic conventions of the high Renaissance (Bayer 2008, 205–209). Doris, daughter of Oceanus and Tethys, and mother to the Nereids, was associated with chastity, abundance, and fertility; attributes that made this model particularly appropriate for a wedding gift. The uncertain identification of the couple does not exclude the possibility of other mythological subjects including Jordan Gschwend's suggestion about Neptune and Amphitrite.

The erotic lore of the heraldic set is stressed by a jewel-like decoration featuring a pearl hanging over the couple (A5). The chain and the pearl stand as allegories of profane love and procreation; the precious tie bonding the newlyweds. The opposite side of the cup displays the same kind of composition with a naked female figure (fig. 3, M1) reclining on a boat (M2) in the shape of a sea-creature pendant and a mermaid emerging from behind. The jewel motif resembles a crystal rock whistle in the shape of a *makara* from Portuguese Sri Lanka (Rijksmuseum, AK-RBK-17524). Historical records attest to the collection of jewels assembled by Constantino de Braganza during his stay in India (Bertini 1997, 33), thus indicating a possible pattern of iconographic transmission.

The motif is flanked by an eagle (N) and a peacock (O), a likely reference to Jupiter and Juno. These two birds may symbolize Maria's family heritage as guardians watching over the bride here depicted as Venus. An allegorical portrait of John III and Catherine of Austria in the shape of these mythological subjects had already appeared in earlier Portuguese royal commissions as evidenced by the *Earth under the protection of Jupiter and Juno* tapestry (1520–1530 c.) by Georg Wezeler. The identification of Venus as a symbol of Maria's imperial lineage is supported by the *Os Lusíadas* (1572) by Luís Vaz de Camões, who was under the protection of Constantino during his stay in Goa. In the epic poem, Venus is the protective patron of the Portuguese endeavor in Asia. This imperial declination of Venus reverberates in the marine nature of the embracing couple and the upper part of the mounting, both of which probably refer to the maritime dimension of the Portuguese empire. Here, the association of mythological figures with historical characters reiterates the cyclical narrative in which the Graeco-Roman tradition revives itself in the Portuguese colonial experience. The interpretation of these elements as royal attributes reminds us of the performative function of rhinoceros horn vessels. European elites used to display exotic objects such as these to perform their status during court ceremonies, and this was probably the case of the Capodimonte's cup during the celebration of the Infanta's wedding in 1565.



Both jewel motifs are surrounded by animals. A rhinoceros, a swan, two flying hawks attacking a sparrow, and a peacock appear on the left side of the coat of arms (fig. 2: B, C, E1, E2, D, F). On the right side we find an elephant, a seated fox, an ostrich, a crocodile, a snail, and a butterfly (G, H, I, J, K, L). On the opposite side of the cup, the eagle is accompanied by a turtle, a cat, a rampant bear/baboon, and a rabbit (fig. 3: P, Q, R, S1). The peacock is shown in composition with a second rabbit, a duck, and a running unicorn (S2, T, U). Some animals are modelled after Chinese sources (H, K, L, P). Like the dragon mentioned above, these animals also carry auspicious meanings of fertility and regality. Other motifs are inspired by European models (e.g., the rhinoceros made after the famous engraving by Dürer). The meaning of these animals is ambiguous as they do not exactly overlap with allegorical compositions of this period, including zodiacal representations, depictions of the four continents, or attributes of mythological figures. This mismatch might indicate that zoomorphic motifs were not designed to correspond with specific references, but rather intended to convey an overall sense of exotic wealth and the exuberance of natural life that dovetails with the auspicious purposes of the nuptial gift.

Zoomorphic motifs are likely also connected to the talismanic function of this kind of objects. Following the medieval tradition, and their mistaken identification as unicorn horns, rhinoceros' horns were believed to deflect poison and purify liquids. Rhinoceros horn vessels were often collected alongside *bezoar* stones, organic gallstones that European elites used as a remedy for diseases, epilepsy, and depression. Similar beliefs and practices circulated in Ming China where such libation cups were originally used in the ritual drinking of wine, a ceremony that was believed to prolong life. Interestingly, similar zoomorphic sets decorate comparable objects with an amuletic and curative function from Portuguese India (Fricke 2018). See, for instance, the coconut shell cup decorated with animal emblems in the Kunsthistorisches Museum of Vienna (KK\_913), and the gold containers of medicinal stones made by the Jesuit mission of Goa (Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2004.244a–d). Far from being mere ornamental features, animal motifs were probably connected to the alleged power of these objects, and their materials, to prolong life. This is also reflected by the jewel-like decoration that frames the coat of arms since dragons and sea creatures were traditionally depicted in contemporary European pendants as images of protective power.

In conclusion, the debate about the classification of the coat of arms remains open to further identifications and interpretation. However, the iconographic program of the cup illustrates the way in which the heraldic element was integrated into (and interacted with) a diverse array of visual and material sources circulating within the Portuguese colonial network. In line with Subrahmanyam's theses (2012), this iconographic plurality can be understood as indicating the intellectual commensurability of courtly cultures. The canons of heraldry, emblem literature, and mannerist decoration contributed to create allegorical *contact zones* where different practices, beliefs, and artistic traditions converged. The overlapping of familiar symbols and exotic sources, ancient myths, as well as historical characters, real and fantastic creatures, suggests the role of artists and courtly elites in articulating a new iconographic idiom aimed at the celebration of wealth and regality.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bertini, G. 1997. *Le nozze di Alessandro Farnese: Feste alle corti di Lisbona e Bruxelles*. Parma: Rotary Club Parma.
- Bayer, A. 2008. *Art and Love in Renaissance Italy*. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art.
- Chapman, J. 1999. *The Art of Rhinoceros Horn Carving in China*. London: Christies Wine Pubs.
- Crespo, H.M. 2015. *Jewels from the India Run*. Lisbon: Fundação Oriente.
- Fricke, B. 2018. »Making marvels, faking matter: Mediating virtue between the bezoar and Goa stones and their containers.« In *The Nomadic Object: The Challenge of World for Early Modern Religious Art*, edited by Göttler and Mochizuki, 342–367. Leiden: Brill.
- Jordan Gschwend, A. 2000. »A masterpiece of Indo-Portuguese art: The mounted rhinoceros cup of Maria of Portugal, princess of Parma.« *Oriental Art* 46 (3): 48–58.
- Martino, L. 1996. »Dalla Galleria delle cose rare di Parma al Museo di Capodimonte. Gli oggetti d'arte di Casa Farnese.« In *La Collezione Farnese. Le Arti Decorative*. Naples: Electa.
- Subrahmanyam, S. 2012. *Courtly Encounters: Translating Courtliness and Violence in Early Modern Eurasia*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.