

**AFRO-PORTUGUESE OLIFANTS WITH HUNTING SCENES
(c. 1490- c. 1540)***

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This article studies Sapi-Portuguese ivory olifants carved with scenes derived from European visual models. Produced in Serra Leoa ca. 1490-1530, they are important historical evidence of artistic and cultural interaction between Portugal and the societies of the Guinea Coast at a moment when those relations were relatively symmetrical. The composition and decoration of the olifants are analyzed from the European side. The circulation of visual models for the works is discussed, emphasizing similarities to some engravings and to some Manueline silver. Finally, the paper discusses the role of these ivories in establishing the identity of European aristocracy of the period.

Most likely the Afro-Portuguese ivories that we know constitute only a small part of the objects produced during the period under consideration. These pieces, almost all of which were clearly intended for export, must have been less numerous than those destined for local consumption.¹ Bearing in mind that our principal concern in this study lies in the interaction between African and European art, especially in the use and adaptation of European visual models by African artists, we here limit our analysis of a group of works clearly, by their appearance, produced for export from Serra Leoa, and we refer to these works as Sapi-Portuguese.² These pieces make use of iconographic elements pertaining to European visual culture, which they combine with typologies and forms that are typically African. These works ingeniously resolve certain complex problems, such as adapting two-dimensional rectangular compositions to cylindrical

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surfaces worked in low relief, as well as the integration of heraldic symbols into compositions for which they were not originally intended.

These pieces even refer to compositions that themselves are more characteristic of late Gothic art, in which the scrolls are used as frames for rectangular, flat surfaces. Above all, these images represent hunting scenes, whose fauna derives from Europe, namely stags with long antlers, deer, wild boars, and rabbits, as well as hunting dogs and horses with riders. The clothes and the physiognomy of the hunters as well as their weapons are also clearly European, though worked with a plastic sense and associated conventions of the African artists.

Frequently, these works³ incorporate heraldry and other insignia of the Portuguese crown, with emphasis on the reign of D. Manuel (1495-1521). The royal Portuguese coat of arms is especially salient, along with the cross of the Order of Christ, and the armillary sphere. A few pieces include short inscriptions in Portuguese, such as an oliphant inscribed “Infante dom Luis” (1506-1555) son of King Manuel⁴ [figure 1]. Besides hunting scenes, some of the works incorporate fantastical figures derived from a European imaginary, such as wild men, dragons, harpies, unicorns and centaurs, as well as exotic African animals: elephants, lions, rhinoceri. The many pieces with Portuguese royal emblems likely reflect specific orders/commands on the part of the Crown, initiated by merchants or representatives of the Court. The aim was to enoble the monarch and, in this way, to ensure favorable opportunities for commerce.

This type of decoration, especially the themes, forms and compositions, is present on late medieval gilt silver salvers as well as in book engravings. The Sapi-Portuguese horns with hunting scenes also correspond with the taste of the Portuguese elite, as they present a combination of themes and attributes that were dear to the culture of the nobility and the upper bourgeoisie.

Documents attest to the export of African ivories directly to Portugal as early as the second half of the fifteenth century, while the exploration of the West African coast was still underway.⁵ Ivory exports began as soon as contact was established with Serra Leoa, a territory whose boundaries were quite different from today’s Sierra Leone.⁶ Indeed, from the beginning of the sixteenth century, the Sapes peoples comprised the populations between the Rio Grande [present-day Guiné-Bissau] and Cape Verga, but

carved ivories also came from Sierra Leone. Later, ivories would arrive in Portugal from further east, including Benin in Nigeria⁷ and further south, from the Kingdom of Kongo, with which the Portuguese Crown established diplomatic alliances and managed to introduce Christianity on a wide scale.

As an example one may cite the chronicler Rui de Pina, in his *Relação sobre o Reino do Congo* (1492) and the later *Cronica de D. João II*, relating presents brought in 1489 to D. João II by Congolese ambassadors, which included several elephant teeth and various objects carved in ivory (Radulet 1992: 103, 138). The same writer refers as well to a Portuguese embassy sent in 1491 to the King of Kongo, by Rui de Sousa, and received at the Congo court “with many ivory trumpets and *drums*” (Radulet 1992: 145). Among the few account books of the Casa da Guiné in Lisbon that survived the earthquake of 1755, for the years 1504 and 1505, one finds customs records that refer to the arrival of spoons and ‘saleiros’ (salt cellars).⁸ In like manner there are references to ivory spoons, saleiros and olifants in the Letters of Quitation under D. Manuel, documenting the African origins of similar pieces, also from 1504 and 1505.⁹

Most extraordinary is the high praise that Valentim Fernandes offers for the artisans of Serra Leoa in his *Description of the West African coast south of the Senegal River*, a work he completed between 1507 and 1510 based on his informant Alvaro Velho do Barreiro, a Portuguese who had lived for eight years on the Guinea Coast. In this text Fernandes emphasizes the quality of work which come from Serra Leoa, which he characterizes as “works of ivory that are very marvelous to see.”¹⁰ In the same spirit, Fernandes emphasizes the skill and the ingeniousness of these artists, who are perfectly able to adapt their work to the demands of their foreign clients: “they make subtle works of ivory like spoons/ saleiros and manillas. The men of this region are highly skilled Blacks in the manual arts, which is to say, making ivory salt cellars and spoons [misspelled as ‘colhares’], and anything that you draw for them, they can carve in ivory” (Fernandes 1997: 98, 115). Thus, from an early date there is clear documentation not only of the evident African origins of these works, but also that the sculpture was highly esteemed for its artistic quality. There is another important point to underline in Fernandes’ text, namely the fact that the artists from Serra Leoa were perfectly prepared to adjust their

production to suit the typology, themes, and visual language of the works, to suit the interests of the European customers. One might speak of an early export industry.

Likewise, Duarte Pacheco Pereira, in *Esmeraldo de Situ Orbis* (c. 1505-1508) (Carvalho ed. 1991) refers mainly to the trade in raw ivory, singling out Serra Leoa, Congo, and Benin. Regarding Benin he writes, “there are many elephants in this land, and we often buy their teeth, which are called ivory [‘marfim’]” (Carvalho ed. 1991: 652). He also gives this same passage, verbatim, for Fernando Pó: “In this land there are many big elephants, and we are often in the habit to buy their teeth, which are called ivory. And for one copper manilla you can buy a tusk” (Carvalho ed. 1991: 659). In contrast, Pacheco Pereira observes that in Serra Leoa “The most refined [spoons] *cohares*¹¹ are made here [sic for *colhares*, which is to say, *colheres*] of ivory, the best work that is to be found anywhere” (Carvalho ed. 1991: 14-15, 287-88, 469). In the previous chapter this information appears in abbreviated form, with regard to the region that precedes arrival at Serra Leoa. This information is especially significant, in view of the fact that Pereira had traveled extensively on the West African coast before 1505, including by his own statement, four visits to Benin City.¹² He clearly prizes the quality of Serra Leoa carving, while for Benin he only mentions the availability of raw ivory.

The documentary references to olifants are less effusive. Nevertheless, in inventories of the possessions of Portuguese mariners who died in the sixteenth century, Alvaro Borges and André Marques, we find references to such works, called “bocynas,” assessed at relatively low value, 50 reais in the case of Borges, in 1507 (Bassani and Fagg 1988: 53). Similarly, according to Pedro Dias, in the ‘garderobe’ of D. Manuel in 1505, four pieces of ivory are mentioned, possibly olifants, given that in 1490 three olifants were specifically ordered, bearing the arms of Portugal and Castille to support the principle that D. Afonso should be heir to Castille (Dias 2008a: 25).

In any case, while the provenance of these ivories is documented upon their entry to Lisbon or other Atlantic ports, many of the ivories were subsequently exported to other European commercial hubs. There, whether from lack of familiarity or from changing value of the works, the African ivories were often sold as products of India. An interesting case in



Figure 1. Olifant. Ivory, carved. Sierra Leone, c.1506-1521. L. 48cm. St. Petersburg, The State Hermitage Museum (inv. no. F-576). Photograph © The State Hermitage Museum. Photo by Vladimir Terebenin.

this regard involves Albrecht Dürer, who in a 1520 diary entry refers to his acquisition of two saleiros “from Calecut” which he bought for three florins at the Portuguese trading factory in Antwerp (Bassani and Fagg 1988: 53). Clearly, these pieces did not come from India but from the West African coast, an error of geographical provenance which extended to the attribution of almost everything, to Asia.

All of the olifants that we have selected for this study originate in Serra Leoa and can therefore be classified as Sapi-Portuguese. These ivories depict hunting scenes, combined with heraldic elements representing the royal Court. The hunting scenes depict rabbits, deer, and stags. The iconographic matrix is clearly European, as much for the type of animals hunted as by the hunting dogs and horses, the cloths, physiognomy and arms of the hunters. In a more general manner, these olifants are 30 to 50 centimeters long, divided into seven or eight cylindrical sections, from the mouthpiece to the bell.

The mouthpiece is formed of two juxtaposed, small truncated conical forms, which emerge from the mouth of a stylized animal. Only the head is depicted, with the appearance of a ferocious canine. The animal’s gaping mouth exposes rows of sharpened teeth. This animal that devours the mouthpiece resembles the mouths of certain European firearms from the



Figure 2. Olifant. Ivory, carved. Sierra Leone, c.1500-1550. L. 43cm. Rome, Museo Nazionale Preistorico Etnografico “Luigi Pigorini” (inv. no. 108828). © S-MNPE - L. Pigorini, Rome. Under license from Italian Ministero dei beni e delle attività culturali e del turismo.

same period, so that it may have been copied from ‘espingardas’ (guns) or portable canons that the Portuguese had brought to the coast (Bassani and Fagg 1988: 97). The next cylindrical section is decorative, consisting of obliquely curving raised bands outlined by pearled lines. The next section shows the hunting scene, in which the deer-like prey is chased by hunters and by dogs. Most horns have, at this point on the inside surface, a ring for attaching the ivory to a bandolier. This ring can take a rope-like form, or it may be zoomorphic, or it may be purely geometric.

The fifth section also has a ring, and incorporates a second hunting scene, bordered by vegetation, with at least a tree or other plant to imply the forested setting. The sixth section is purely geometric, to separate the adjacent scenes. Nevertheless, by its size, it almost constitutes a zone of its own, normally filled with interlacing or rope-like forms. And a seventh section then depicts another hunting scene with vegetal forms and another suspension ring. This scene is normally dominated by lancers, some of whom blow olifants, in a strange auto-referential game that is highly relevant to the symbolism of these works, leading as they do hunting dogs who chase



Figure 3. Olifant. Ivory, carved. Sierra Leone, c.1500-1550. L. 63cm. Turin, Armeria Reale (inv. no. Q10). Under license from Italian Ministero dei beni e delle attività culturali e del turismo. Photo Archive S.B.S.A.E. Turin.

small animals like rabbits. As usually this section takes up a large area of the olifant, it also sometimes includes heraldic symbols, like the royal coat of arms. Finally, the eighth section contains a vegetal motif, a linear twisting plant, seemingly unfinished reminiscent of delicate filigrane work.

In the case of shorter olifants, between 30 and 35 centimeters in length, one section is eliminated, leaving only two hunting scenes, and the other sections are somewhat truncated as well. Shorter horns also tend to have only two suspension rings. Yet there are also a few horns that are even shorter, about 20 cm. in length. These most likely represent what remains of broken olifants that were subsequently shortened, probably after an accident, long after they arrived in Europe. At the same time there are also a few olifants as long as 70 cm. Besides their size, these objects are distinguished by the addition of a fourth hunting scene. They were likely special pieces, offered as diplomatic presents on important occasions. It is also on some of these larger olifants that one finds the section with a motif of interlacing rope-like bands, used here to separate two hunting scenes. In addition, these larger olifants substitute for the final section, that with a vegetal or filigree motif, replacing it by either yet another hunting scene or an ornamental scene of animals or vegetation.

Among the objects that better illustrate this typology, the pieces that show clearly European inspired hunting scenes, in the sequence of sections



Figure 4. Olifant. Ivory, carved. Sierra Leone, c.1500-1550. L. 32cm. Lisbon, Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga (inv. no. 988 Div). Photograph © Direção Geral do Património Cultural / Arquivo de Documentação Fotográfica. Photo by Luís Pavão.

described above, we note the following works, all produced in Serra Leoa:

- Russia, St. Petersburg, Hermitage; inventory number F 576; 48 cm. long [Figure 1]. This work has three sections presenting hunting scenes, distinguished by the inscription “Infante dom Luis,” which occupies the segment usually devoted to vegetal motifs. Also noteworthy is the armillary sphere in the penultimate section. This piece was described and illustrated by the Dane Olaus Worm in 1643 in his *Danicorum Monumentorum*, and belonged to the Medici collection until 1738. Ezio Bassani attributes the piece to “the Master of the Four Leafs Clovers” (Bassani 2008: 66).

-France, Ecouen, Musée National de la Renaissance, inventory number E. Cl. 1859, length 48.5. Three sections occupied by hunting scenes. Includes a depiction of the cross of the Order of

Christ. This piece, too, was illustrated and described by Worm in the same book and also attributed by Bassani to the same artist (Bassani 2008: 66).

-Italy, Rome, Museu Preistorico Etnografico Luigi Pigorini, inventory number 108828, length 43 cm [Figure 2]. This olifant is documented from 1709, both in writing and an engraving in a catalogue compiled by Filippo Bonanni for the museum of the Jesuits in Rome, founded by Father Atanásio Kircher. It has three sections with hunting scenes (Bassani 2000: 162).

-Italy, Turin, Royal Armory, inventory number Q. 10, length 63 cm [Figure 3]. This olifant is different from the others, in that after the third section, composed of oblique pearled bands, there is a scene with wild animals, with a handsome suspension ring in the form of a crocodile, based perhaps on an African model. Similarly, the section taken up by interlacing cord-like forms precedes the first hunting scene. The division between the second and third hunting scenes is taken up by a frieze of vegetal ornament with wild cats. There is also the Portuguese royal coat of arms (Bassani 2000: 167).

-Portugal, Lisbon, Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga, inventory number 988, 32 cm. in length [Figure 4]. Being much shorter, it has three hunting scenes and the cross of the Order of Christ. It is more poorly carved than any of the other horns discussed here.

-France, Paris, Musée de Quai Branly, inventory number 71.1933.6.1.D, length 77 cm. This is one of the largest horns and includes fantastical or mythical animals, including a centaur, a wild man, as well as an elephant with a man seated on his back and held with a chain of iron by another man. As suggested by Bassani, some of the scenes of confrontation between animals appear to have been taken from an anonymous engraving (Florentine, ca. 1500) such as a confrontation between a dragon and a lion (Bassani 2008: 71-73).

Other scholars have pointed out that the hunting scenes are inspired, quite obviously, by imagery of European origin. One of these sources consists of the engravings that illustrate a book of hours published in 1498 and 1499, entitled *Horae Beatae Mariae Virginis*. This is an incunabulum published in Paris in 1498 by the editor Simon Vostre, the work of typographer Philippe Pigouchet. And another book using the same engravings was edited the following year, and produced by Thielman Kerver.¹³ The borrowings are especially evident in the equipment, armament, and the physiognomy of the hunters and in the composition of the scenes. On the Ecouen olifant, the engraving copies almost perfectly the depiction of the dead stag carried on the back of a horse (Bassani 2008: 65-69). As shown by Bassani, the same work copies Thielman Kerver's depiction of two unicorns rampant on the coat of arms with the initials of the typographer himself, adapted by the African artists to frame the Portuguese royal shield, on the Turin olifant (Bassaani 2008: 66-67).

This incunabulum was highly regarded by the African artists, who seem to have studied the entire work. Not only the hunting scenes that fill the lower margins of the book, but even the central scenes with their religious motifs served as direct artistic inspiration. The book contains several engravings of Christian themes, such as the *Tree of Jesse*, *The Visitation*, and *Christ Imprisoned*, that served as models for other ivory carvings, especially some early sixteenth-century pyxes (Bassani and Fagg 1988: 111-115).

Most scholars believe that these images arrived in African artistic workshops by means of either drawings or engravings perhaps taken out of books. Indeed they consider that illustrated books or metal ritual vessels cups, salves, must not have been excessively expensive to be accessible to ivory carvers (Bassani and Fagg 1988: 111). We consider it likely that there were two means whereby these workshops had access to their own copies of the illustrated printed books. Aside from the presence of a very small number of missionaries in the Rivers of Guinea at this time, it is possible that prosperous Portuguese or Cape Verdean merchants possessed these books in their private libraries. There is in fact documentary evidence of this for the early seventeenth century (Horta 2011: 274-75). In addition, there exists clear information about how liturgical books as well as liturgical

vestments were an integral part of Portuguese diplomatic gifts, in the same manner that liturgical implements in silver or copper were sent to Africa.

This practice of diplomatic gifts is well documented, e.g. for the embassy that D. Manuel sent to the King of Congo in 1504, which included an organ, silk brocade, crosses, silver calices and censers (Dias 2008a: 19). Similar gifts accompanied another mission to Congo in 1512, as well as a 1517 mission sent to “Prester John” in East Africa, that included hagiographies, manuals of confession, and grammars (Dias 2008b: 97; Guimarães Sá 2009: 598). But most studies devoted to this theme have not given sufficient attention to the customs involved in Luso-African diplomatic interaction, nor have they considered the reciprocity that was necessary, and that involved consumer goods and prestige items as part of commercial exchanges. This was certainly true in the best organized African markets and in the stronger political states. In these cases, in order to carry out trade and to be able to acquire “gold, ivory, and slaves,” it was often necessary to offer far more elaborate items than simply cloth, glass beads, barbers bowls and manilas of copper and brass.

In instances where gilt silver services were sent to Africa as diplomatic gifts or to “open” trade, or as tribute to high officials, the visual motifs that were part of the decoration of these items could very well have also served as models for local artists. In this regard, one should cite a Manueline silver service, today in the Museu de San Isidoro de León, which has a depiction of Judith and Holofernes on the exterior. On the interior surface of this piece, as observed by Nuno Vassalo e Silva, there is a complete and faithful reproduction of the same hunting scenes that decorate the margins of *Horae Beatae Mariae Virginis*, from 1498, described above (Silva 2012: 199). The popularity of these engravings was so great that Vassalo e Silva has been able to identify them as the model for the images on a coffer created in Ceylon around 1540 (Silva 2001: 195-97). It should be emphasized that this type of printed book of hours would have been commonly found among the small Portuguese commercial and administrative elite, either in transit or settled in Africa and Asia, including of course missionaries, as Rafael Moreira ironically observes (Moreira 2010: 3).

The degree to which the olifants are dependent upon late medieval European sources is also evident in the case of certain themes and figures.

In fact, the mythological animals such as centaurs, dragons, harpies, and wild men, are essentially citations and reproductions of European visual sources, for these animals, at least in the particular morphology in which they appear on the ivories, are not part of any African bestiary.

Olifants were an important instrument in the culture and to the identity of Europe's aristocracy. They were used in warfare to communicate, the most notable and heroic instance being in the "Chanson de Roland" where the hero blows his olifant so as not to endanger the military retreat of Charlemagne in the face of the Saracen attack.¹⁴ In West Africa too, these instruments were closely associated with a culture of warfare, where they also played a role in important rituals. Sixteenth-century sources mention the use of ivory trumpets and 'buzinas' in battle between the Cassangas¹⁵ of Casamance and also in Serra Leoa.¹⁶

In Europe the horns were also used in organized hunts, both to scare the prey and make them flee their den or warren, and to announce their capture, to the rest of the hunting party (Bassani and Fagg 1988: 98). The tomb of Duke D. Pedro de Barcelos, illegitimate son of King D. Dinis, is one of the rare Gothic funerary monuments in Portugal to contain hunting scenes. Completed in the second half of the fourteenth century, at the Cistercian monastery of Tarouca, the front of this enormous sarcophagus depicts the chase of a wild boar, with dogs biting the wild boar in company with three lancers, all of them blowing olifants as a signal of successful capture. It is particularly interesting to look at this theme via the funeral monument, since D. Pedro was himself responsible for some of the most significant literary creations relating to the Portuguese aristocracy of the fourteenth century. Both the *Livro de Linhagens* and the *Crónica Geral de Espanha de 1344*, were enormously important to the nobility, with later versions, including a fifteenth-century copy, richly illuminated, of the *Crónica Geral*, and which is to be found today in the Biblioteca da Academia das Ciências in Lisbon. The olifants were thus clearly associated with war and that favorite pastime of the aristocracy, the hunt, a symbol of virility, honor, and heroic behavior.

Even the material of which these works were carved signified that they were prestige objects. The fascination with ivory has biblical undertones, being associated with the magnificence of King Solomon and with some of his most famous works, including his ivory throne embellished with gold (I

Kings 10, 18-19). The riches that entered the kingdom by sea, via the fleet of Hiram, King of Tyre, included “gold, silver, ivory, monkeys and peacocks” (I Kings 10, 22), and therefore Solomon “surpassed all the kings of the earth in wealth and wisdom” (I Kings 10,23). Elephant ivory, like coral and amber, is one of the very rare materials of organic origin that was highly enough valued to rival the most precious minerals, like gems and noble metals, even if at various times the organic provenance of these three items was not widely known. Furthermore, ivory’s origin in distant lands, its durability and stability, as well as its plasticity, whiteness and smooth texture made of this material a trade good that was highly valued throughout history.

In western Europe during the medieval period and the Renaissance, elephant ivory was the equivalent, symbolically, of the most valuable minerals, all the more so once its true origin...as part of one of nature’s most extraordinary beasts, was known. The impact of the elephant on European society is well documented in medieval bestiaries and, later, in encyclopedias. The elephant is frequently represented with a battle fortress on its back.¹⁷ On the rare occasions when one of these pachyderms arrived on the continent, the impact was tremendous, as indicated by both literary and artistic praise directed at these animals.

Early sixteenth century Portuguese sources testify to the increased quantity of artists who were working ivory in Serra Leoa. Apparently, the smallest ivory carvings, dagger handles, must have been relatively accessible for the merchants, sailors, adventurers and ‘lançados’ who left for Africa looking for good trading opportunities. Given the quantity of these pieces, it is likely that they were being produced more or less continuously, rather than being limited to specific orders, especially in view of the short time that most traders spent at any given commercial trading post. And the Euro-Africans must have served as intermediaries, especially the Luso-Africans and ‘lançados’ who, in terms of their local identity, constituted a single group in Guiné do Cabo Verde. These groups, many of whom were descendents of Jews or of “New Christians,” together with local elites, sought to control commerce between Europeans and Africans, as is well-documented for the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.¹⁸

It was likely through these intermediaries that the late medieval iconographic models with hunting scenes and fantastical figures would have

come into the hands of local artists, with the added help of private devotional books used by Portuguese and Afro-Portuguese merchants and through diplomatic presents with Portuguese heraldry, such as silver salvers known as 'bacios de prata.' With this assertion, clearly, we do not exclude the possibility that there may have been a workshop producing Luso-African ivories in Lisbon. But it seems to us far more likely that the production occurred in Africa, because the carved ivories were one product that fed into both European-African commerce and inter-African trade. Fundamentally, we are in the presence of the same factors that led to the production of hybrid works in Ceylon, India, and China, in ivory and porcelain. In all of these works local traditions are combined with themes and motifs from Europe, giving birth to works that embody a unique fusion of artistic languages and traditions, each of them in cultural contexts that were extremely different.

NOTES

¹ The literature on Afro-Portuguese ivories is extensive and much of it is cited throughout this study, including the studies of Ezio Bassani. However, given the impossibility of presenting an exhaustive survey, we would like to highlight some works, namely the seminal study by William Fagg, the doctoral dissertation by Kathy Curnow and two relatively recent studies on the subject, one from Peter Mark and the other from Eugenia Martínez. We refer, respectively, to the following studies: Fagg 1959; Curnow 1983; Mark 2007; and Soledad Martinez 2007.

² We have chosen these olifants because they are complex hybrid creations resulting from a fusion of cultures and artistic languages, not because of a supposed superior artistic quality in comparison to olifants produced for local consumption.

³ It is an olifant currently at the Ermitage Museum in St Petersburg, with inventory number F.576. About this piece see: Bassani 2000:149 and 2008: 61.

⁴ To some extent, these pieces continue a tradition of the fourteenth century, when thousands of ivory objects were produced in Europe, such as combs

and mirror handles decorated with profane subjects inspired in the culture of aristocracy, namely chivalric and courtly love novels. On the subject see: Afonso 2010, 2012; Randall 1989, 1997.

⁵ Avelino Teixeira da Mota was one of the first authors to search for information on these ivories in the Portuguese written sources (1975).

⁶ In the early 16th century, the Sapes (“Çapes” from late copists “Capes”) were one of the populations living between the Rio Grande (Guiné-Bissau) and Cape Verga; see Carvalho ed. 1991: 134. Cape Verga is situated in present-day Guinea-Conakry; in the late 16th century, this same Verga Cape signalled the beginning of Sierra Leone to the navigators. See Donelha 1977: 98, 178. The limits of what was mentioned as “Sierra Leone” varied in time and were not unanimous; see Horta 2011: 81 ff.

⁷ Although it is a subject of great discussion, since the oldest documentation in this regard dates from the late sixteenth century. On this subject see Mark 2007.

⁸ Arquivos Nacionais/Torre do Tombo (ANTT), Livro de Receita e Despesa do Tesoureiro da Casa da Guiné, Núcleo Antigo, n. 799, fl. 13v. Cited in Mark and da Silva Horta 2011: 140 n. 14.

⁹ ANTT, Cartas de Quitação del Rei D. Manuel, Chancelaria de D. Manuel, Doação, Livro 9 and Livro 29. Cited in Bassani and Fagg 1988: 60.

¹⁰ Fernandes 1997: 111. The full title of the “Description” that opens the volume is “A descripçam de Cepta por sua costa de Mauritania e Ethiopia pellos nomes modernos prosseguindo as vezes algüas cousas do sartão da terra firme.”

¹¹ We chose the version of the Évora manuscript. On the problem of transcription of “colheres” or “collares” in Fernandes and Pacheco Pereira see Mark and Horta 2011: 141-144.

¹² On this direct experience see Teixeira da Mota 1990.

¹³ *Idem*, pp. 65-68. In Portugal there are several incunabula printed by these printers, namely one example of this book of hours printed in 1499 by Philippe Pigouchet, in Paris, for the editor Simon Vostre. The interest of this example derives from the fact that it is in the Public Library and

Regional Archive of Angra do Heroísmo, on the island of Terceira in Azores. Other examples, from the 16th century, are at the Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, namely the 1502 edition (RES 329 V), and the one from 1512 (RES 327 V), which differs from the previous edition with regard to the engravings.

¹⁴ Versions of this epic “chanson de geste” are documented in Portugal as early as the 12th century, namely at the monastery of Alcobça where there existed a “Vita Caroli Magni et Rolandi” (BN Alc. 334).

¹⁵ According to the report of André Alvares de Almada (1964: 66).

¹⁶ According to P. E. H. Hair citing Donelha, *Descrição da Serra Leoa*, p. 224, n. 85.

¹⁷ In relation to the encyclopedic texts we would cite one illumination in Book VII of Rabanus Maurus’ *De universo*, at the library of Montecassino Abbey and dated from 1022-1035 where the elephant is represented among other wild animals (Codex Casinensis 132, fol. 189). Concerning bestiaries we would cite one example from an illumination of a 13th century manuscript, presently at the Bodleian Library in Oxford, which presents the animal with a castle on his back, configuring it as a mobile assault tower (MS Bodley 764, fol. 12r). On this issue see also Gschwend 2010.

¹⁸ That is, Jews who were formally converted to Christianity, but who in reality, namely in Africa, kept their Jewish or crypto-Jewish religious practices. On this issue see Brooks 2003; Mark 2002, Mark and Horta 2011.

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