

TOOLS FOR INTERPRETATION AND CONSERVATION OF A SHARED HERITAGE COLLECTION: THE VICEROYS PORTRAIT GALLERY

Project



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Introduction

Artistic production in *Estado da Índia*, during the long tenure of 456 years of Portuguese administration (1505-1961), reflects the incorporation of Indian and European traditions, not only in what concerns technical and decorative solutions, but also in terms of symbology. The gallery of the Viceroys and Governors was the ultimate symbol of Portuguese overseas venture, where each portrait was made respecting the ruler's physiognomy and iconography, which adds this collection a unique documental value that needs to be correctly identified and interpreted. The several overpaints added to these painting through the centuries make this task very challenging, so the development of a strategy was necessary in order to share this information with the current custodian, Archaeological Survey of India.

Main goals

The main goal of OGR project and this PhD thesis is the development of tools for interpretation of the tangible and intangible values inherent to these portraits towards a new reading of the older and most damaged paintings. Using a multidisciplinary approach which correlates scientific and archival data. The results are expected to promote discussion in what regards the conservation and restoration of the collection and the need to preserve such values.

Methodology

Our team travelled to Old Goa in January 2019 with HERCULES's MoLab and performed *in-situ* scientific examination on 8 portraits, following the methodology already used in the 3 paintings that remained in Portugal, in MNAA. Instrumental approach included surface examination by Visible, Raking light and UV Fluorescence Photography, IR Reflectography and Radiography, complemented with *in-situ* chemical elemental analysis, performed by EDXRF systems allowing punctual and mapping analysis without the need to collect micro-samples. ASI team participated in the process as our multidisciplinary team with expertise on art history, chemistry, heritage science and conservation transmitted their feedback on the preliminary results, comparing with images of early reproductions of the collection and other historical information.

Ongoing research

The team is currently processing all images and scientific data collected and correlating it with previous historical research in order to find patterns that help characterize and date the several overpaints. The results will be discussed with ASI team, thus providing documentation which will help the interpretation of the several layers, their values and the available solution for a conservation intervention and current display.

Conclusion

This is the first time a Portuguese team is cooperating with ASI towards the study of this shared heritage collection. The results of this project, which are being developed in the PhD thesis, will bring a new page to this collection's history and to the cultural relations between Portugal and India.

References

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Acknowledgments

OGR Team: Sara Valadas, Ana F. Machado, Luís Piorro, Mónica Esteves Reis, Teresa Caldeira, Ana M. Cardoso, Nuno Carriço.

Archaeological Survey of India: V. K. Saxena, K. Raghobans, S. Mishra, Rajeswari L., D. Gupta, A. Patil, A. Mahajan, C. Dinesh, Sammer CP, V. Kumar, M. Gupta, N. Mahajan, S. Wahg, K. Varma.

For follow-up on the project Old Goa Revelations

www.oldgoarevelations.wordpress.com | www.facebook.com/OldGoaRevelations/

A SHARED HERITAGE COLLECTION

First commissioned in 1547 by Viceroy D. João de Castro, the portrait gallery served as the perfect scenario of the Main Acts of Portuguese diplomacy overseas. In 1961, with the integration of *Estado da Índia* territories in the Indian Union, the custody of the collection was transferred to Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) and since 1964 it has been partially exhibited in ASI's Museum (Old Goa).



Figs. 1-2_Detail of the Vice-Roys collection in the main Acts Rooms of the Governor's Palace, around 1939 © ICT-AHU. Detail of the Vice-Roys Gallery in ASI's Museum, Old Goa © Old Goa Revelations, 2019

WORKING METHODOLOGY

The three portraits of the collection in MNAA were studied in order to collect data for comparison with the Goa paintings, using the same working methodology: surface examination, *in-situ* chemical elemental analysis and correlation with historical data



Figs. 3-5_Portrait identified as Lopo Soares de Albergaria, 1597. The overpaint removal revealed the portrait of D. Francisco Mascarenhas. One can identify at least 3 different layers. © ACR-DGPC; LJF-DGPC;HERCULES

Figs. 6-7_UV Fluorescence and IR Reflectography examination with information on original and restoration layers © LJF-DGPC;HERCULES, 2013

Fig. 8_ Reproduction by Pedro Barreto de Resende, c. 1635, matching the portraits' composition © British Library

TOWARDS INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

OGR team went to Goa and worked together with ASI team, using a multidisciplinary approach during preliminary observation of the portraits and the scientific data collected



Fig. 9-14_Some images of OGR Sessions. January, 2019 © Old Goa Revelations