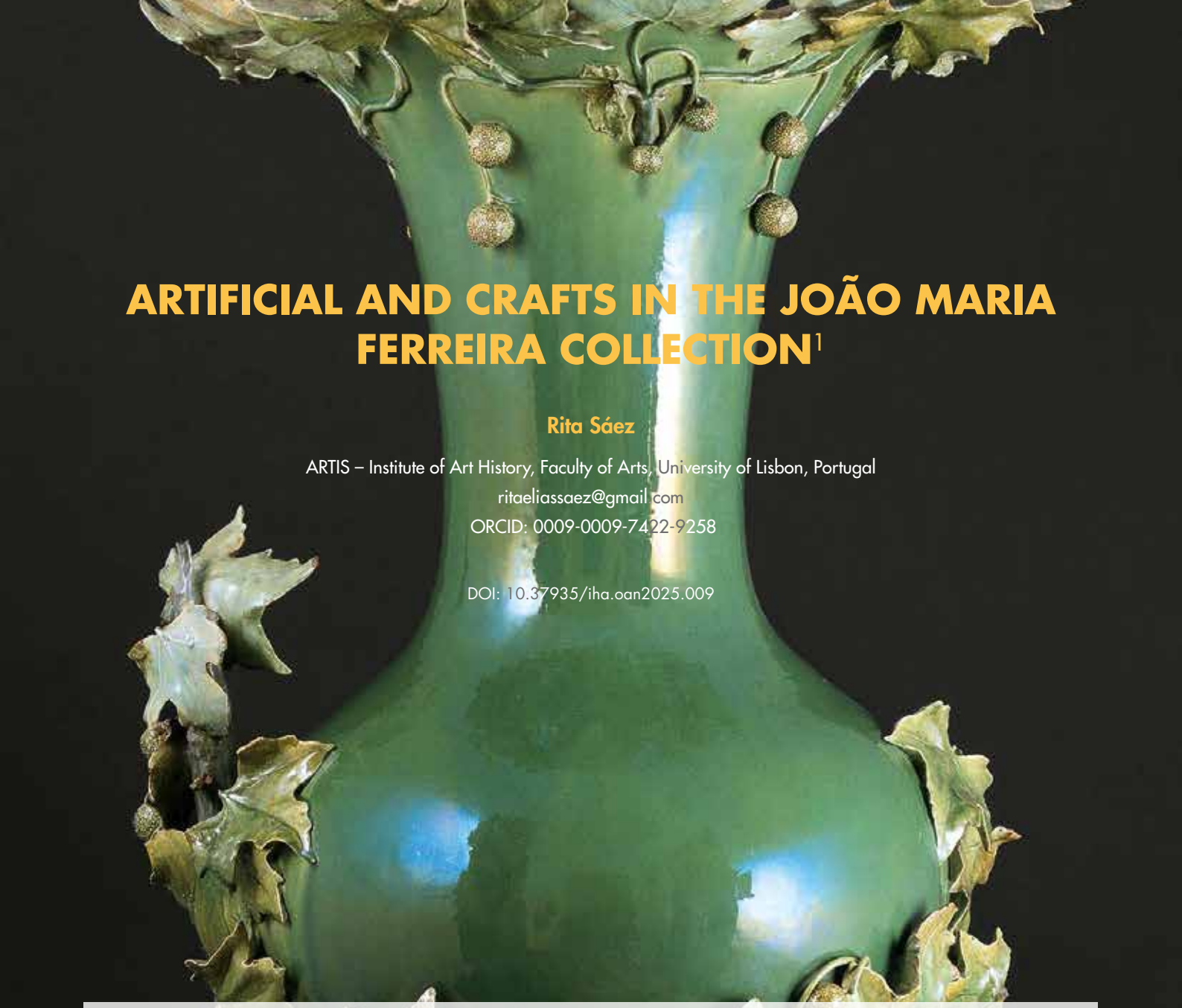


ARTIFICIAL AND CRAFTS IN THE JOÃO MARIA FERREIRA COLLECTION[1]

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the history of Portuguese ceramics and private collecting during the first half of the 20th century. It analyses the trajectory of João Maria Ferreira as a collector, and how his assemblage became one of the largest collections of Caldas pottery – comprising over 2,000 pieces – and his subsequent desire for public engagement. The methodology includes interviews with the collector (conducted in 2019), the analysis of documentary sources, and a collection inventory initiated in 2013. The collection is notable for Francisco Elias' miniatures, as well as works by Manuel Mafra and Rafael Bordalo Pinheiro, demonstrating how Ferreira's acquisition practices helped document the history of the factories and ceramic workshops of Caldas da Rainha. Furthermore, the case studies of three other collectors – Alfredo Lucas Cabral, Artur Maldonado Freitas, and António Capucho – illustrate how these entrepreneurs transformed their private collections into collective heritage. The study concludes that the shared ambition for public fruition validates the importance of bridging the gap between private collecting of the public sphere to enhance the valorization of national art history.

KEYWORDS

Collecting | Private collection | 20th century | Ceramics | Caldas da Rainha

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THE "PASSION" OF JOÃO MARIA FERREIRA

Collector João Maria Ferreira (Caldas da Rainha, 1932-2002) was a prominent figure in the Caldas da Rainha: a goldsmith and optician by profession, apolitical yet with strong convictions regarding the heritage and culture of his hometown. He became one of the largest collectors of Caldas' ceramics, gathering more than two thousand pieces. His passion for collecting began in childhood, as he himself recalled with a twinkle in his eye and a broad smile: "*I wanted to collect everything*".[2] Collecting was for him an innate, deeply personal act, and he considered himself a compulsive collector. He began with stamps, then moved on to Portuguese faience at the age of 15, and coins at 18. Later, he collected tie pins, inkwells, paddles, silver jugs and toothpick holders, share certificates, old banknotes, and Art Nouveau postcards.

The only child of Ernesto Ferreira de Sousa (1911-2000) and Sofia Maria de Sousa (1911-1999), João Maria was born on 24th June 1932 in Caldas da Rainha. He studied at the Rafael Bordalo Pinheiro Commercial and Industrial School (1942-1945). After completing his studies, he joined his father and godfather in the family business, *Ourivesaria Ferreira & Santos, Lda.* [fig.01], a jewellery, and one of the oldest limited liability companies in Caldas da Rainha (C.C., 2010: 22).

The second half of the 1950s was a period of intense artistic and cultural activity for the city, with events such as the centenary of José Malhoa (1955), and a renewed impetus for the ceramics industry. Under the artistic direction of SECLA by Hansi Staël (1913-1961), a studio for non-resident artists was created. The Rafael Bordalo Pinheiro Faience Factory and SECLA were awarded silver medals at the 1958 Brussels World's Fair (Xavier, Oliveira, & Cândido, 2016: 35). The Silver Jubilee of the José Malhoa Museum (1959) was marked by its expansion and by a pioneering Open-Air Sculpture Exhibition.

Ferreira lived fully in this cultural environment to the full. He frequented the Café Central of "Velho Maldonado Freitas," joined in intellectual gatherings, and maintained close friendships with Hermínio de Oliveira (a second-hand bookseller and congressman) and his brother Joaquim José, Vítor Fiandeiro, José Lino, José de Sousa (later a music critic), Arminda Alves (a theatre friend), Joaquim Ladeira Baptista (a miniature collector), and ceramists Herculano Elias (1932-1915) and Luís Ferreira da Silva (1928-2016), with whom he shared a particularly close relationship, even commissioning them to decorate his optician's shops with tile panels. He also witnessed the rise of the Caldense cultural association movement with the creation of the *Conjunto Cénico Caldense* (CCC) (Serra, 2017). Although he was only marginally involved, what he truly enjoyed was theatre production and organization. He later married Maria Eduarda Afonso Henriques Pinheiro Ferreira (1935-2005), with whom he had two daughters, Maria João Henriques Pinheiro Ferreira (b. 1956) and Ana Margarida Henriques Pinheiro Ferreira (b. 1968). Today, they continue the family's optician business and remain custodians of their father's collection, fulfilling his wish that it one day be made accessible to the public.

2. Interview I conducted with the collector João Maria Ferreira, at Ferreira e Santos Jeweller's, in June 2019.



Fig. 01· João Maria Ferreira and his father, Ernesto Ferreira, working at Ferreira e Santos Jeweller's, 1993.



Fig. 02· João Maria Ferreira at Ferreira e Santos Jeweller's, 2010.

Among his professional interests, Ferreira always preferred goldsmithing [fig.02], although he admitted: "*I am more of a collector than a dealer*".[3] He specialized in antique jewellery, especially pieces with ivory figures, jeweled ornaments, and precious and semi-precious stone inlays.

The Ferreira & Santos family business gradually diversified into optics, goldsmithing, and antiques. In 1956, on the floor above the Ferreira & Santos jeweller's, the Ferreira family and Augusto dos Santos opened an antiques store. Ernesto Ferreira de Sousa, a skilled negotiator, would often set aside select ceramics from Viana or Miragaia, enabling his son to retain pieces from Fábrica do Rato, Estremoz, and Juncal.

Beyond business, Ferreira also held public office: he accepted an invitation to serve as councillor for fairs and markets under Mayor Luís Paiva e Sousa, taking office on 24th March 1969 (Cândido, 1993: 484) and remaining in this position until 25th April 1974.

Encouraged by his godfather Augusto dos Santos, himself a collector of miniatures by Francisco Elias (1869-1937) and Eduardo Mafra Elias (1880-1949), Ferreira inherited this collection in the 1960s. A close friend of the family, ceramist Eduardo Mafra Elias frequently visited their home and sold his miniatures through their jeweller's. Ernesto Ferreira de Sousa also acquired part of the collection from the artist's widow, which later passed on to his son, granting the miniatures a special place in his collection.

In 1961, Ernesto de Sousa donated several early 19th century ceramics to the José Malhoa Museum. These were later transferred in 1983 to the newly inaugurated Ceramics Museum, designed by António Montês, who had first presented an exhibition of Caldas' ceramics in the basement of the José Malhoa Museum in 1964 (Santos, 2005: 65). During this period, Ferreira increased his acquisitions of Caldas pottery and collaborated with faience collector Colonel Alexandre Morais, for whom he also acquired pieces. This relationship deepened his knowledge of antique Portuguese faience. Beyond book learning, Ferreira possessed practical expertise that enabled him to appraise antique furniture, faience jars, crystal decanters, or jewellery with discerningly.

3. Interview I conducted with the collector João Maria Ferreira, at Ferreira e Santos Jeweller's, in June 2019.



Fig. 03· Fish, Manuel Mafra, marked "M. MAFRA / CALDAS / PORTUGAL" (royal crown), undated (1870-1905); faience; João Maria Ferreira Collection.

The liturgical reforms of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), particularly those introduced by Pope Paul VI (Azevedo, 2000: 412), permitted the sale of church furnishings to offset the costs of adapting to the new rite. During this time, the Ferreira family acquired a number of sacred objects, including images of saints, sacristy furniture, vestments, and altar ceramics. One of João Maria's favourite pieces, an altar jar by Manuel Mafra dated 1862, was purchased in Sobral da Lagoa, Óbidos (Elias, 2016: 19). He also prized a ceramic fish [fig.03] by the same artist, his favourite ceramist.

His exclusive focus on Caldas' ceramics crystallized after *Expo Caldas 77*, when he decided to sell his Portuguese faience collection. The subsequent acquisitions of works from the collections of Alfredo Lucas Cabral (1907-1983), António Capucho (1918-2009), and Artur Maldonado Freitas (1912-2001) — all auctioned — significantly expanded his holdings.

THE JOÃO MARIA FERREIRA COLLECTION

The artifices and crafts represented in the João Maria Ferreira collection recall the mastery of the "art of fire" and its evolution in Caldas da Rainha's ceramic industry of during the 19th and 20th century. The collection brings together the work of ceramists, potters, and miniaturists, highlighting their skill in modelling, moulding, glazing, and other decorative techniques such as *verguinha, mossado*, cantilevering, and cording.

In 2002, João Maria Ferreira acquired the ground floor of the former Banco de Portugal building, n.º 85, located in Praça da Fruta, Caldas da Rainha, to house what remained of the jeweller's store and his collection. At that time, researcher Marta Pereira began registering and inventorying the collection, giving it museological significance (2013).



Fig. 04· Detail of the João Maria Ferreira Collection, housed in the former Banco de Portugal, Caldas da Rainha.



Fig. 05· Detail of pieces from the Caldas da Rainha Earthenware Factory (Fábrica de Faianças das Caldas da Rainha).



Fig. 06· Detail of the SECLA group; João Maria Ferreira Collection.

Later, in 2014, when the collection was gathered in the "Bank," as Ferreira called it [fig.04,05,06], he developed a sense of the whole, which allowed him to refine his acquisitions with greater discernment — the so-called "*spirit of selection*". He began choosing pieces that contributed new elements to the collection, either for their aesthetic or historical value.

He collected works by major ceramic artists, such as Manuel Mafra (1831-1905), Rafael Bordalo Pinheiro (1846-1905), Avelino Belo (1872-1927), the *Atelier Visconde de Sacavém* (1892-96), Francisco Gomes de Avelar (1850-1918), José Francisco de Sousa (1835-1907), Manuel Gustavo Bordalo Pinheiro (1867-1920), and Costa Motta Sobrinho (1877-1956). He also focused on to acquiring pieces from smaller workshops, such as those of António de Sousa Liso (1854-1860) and Herculano Elias Avô (1864-1939), as well as works by potters and ceramists like José Luís Saloio (1860-1912), José Joaquim Saloio, Eduardo Cipriano Moreira (1870-1942), José Francisco de Sousa Filho, and João Coelho César (1858-1905), among others, thereby aiming to portray the broader history of ceramic production in Caldas da Rainha.

According to Susan Pearce (1998: 2-3), a collection endures when the collector believes in its existence. In this sense, artistic objects are stripped of their utilitarian function and acquire instead a value tied to personal desire, memory, and contemplation. João Maria Ferreira believed his collection contained examples of archaic pottery (Narciso, 2016: 3), although some ceramographers questioned their attribution to the Caldas da Rainha ceramic centre. Consequently, he sold most of these pieces, leaving only a few examples. As for contemporary ceramics, he began collecting them only later, in the 1990s.

Among the highlights of the collection is the so-called *Ostentation Vessel* or *Pot*: a round piece with twisted handles, decorated with applied putti heads and covered in tricolour drip glaze (iron honey-brown, pewter white, and copper green), attributable to the 17th and 18th century. Other significant works include an altar jar and a pair of rustically modelled candlesticks, also attributable to the period preceding the famous 19th century potters, such as José Camilo, Galrão, and Maria dos Cacos.

Although little is known about this early Caldense production, Maria dos Cacos (1797-?), the pseudonym of Maria Póstuma, was the granddaughter and daughter of potters. By 1820, she was already producing rustic, moulded tableware and utilitarian objects such as toothpick holders, whistles, anthropomorphic bottles, brandy jars, candlesticks, vessels, stoves, and roasters, glazed in traditional colours obtained with lead oxides and sand, destined for sale in markets and fairs. Highlights from this group attributed to Maria dos Cacos are the *Guitar Woman Bottle and the Man on a Barrel*, which reveal the popular taste for rustic modelling in monochromatic glazes of brown, honey, black, and green.

Beginning in 2014, at the "Bank," João Maria hosted weekly visits from china sellers and collectors from Caldas, who often requested that his conservator-restorer examine their pieces to support restoration work. In this spirit of sharing, he frequently lent works to be featured in exhibitions at the Ceramics Museum, the José Malhoa Museum, and the Museum of Popular Art.[4]

Since the end of 2014, researcher Margarida Araújo has been inventorying the collection, following the collector's expressed wish to publish a catalogue of his holdings. His aim was to transmit his historical and artistic knowledge, particularly to collectors of Caldas' ceramics, and to highlight aspects he believed had been overlooked in publications on the ceramics of Caldas da Rainha.

By 2019, João Maria Ferreira's collection comprised more than 2,000 pieces, including a core group of miniatures by artists such as Francisco Elias, Eduardo Mafra Elias, Herculano Elias, José Elias (a SECLA worker), António Pedro (miniaturist), and António Vitorino (miniaturist), amounting to approximately 100 works. Among them, Avelino Belo (1872-1927) and Francisco Elias (1869-1937), close collaborators of master Rafael Bordalo Pinheiro, stand out for their remarkable artistic talent. Both worked on the famous *Beethoven Jar* and distinguished themselves through miniature work.

Avelino Belo[5] devoted himself to the study of clay and its potential; a master modeller, he was internationally recognized and awarded. One of his most famous works is the *Boer Jar* (1902), alluding to the Boer War in present-day South Africa, a conflict in which Britain emerged victorious. It should be remembered that refugees from this war were housed in the Pavilions of Parque D. Carlos I, in Caldas da Rainha, between 1901 and 1902.

Francisco Elias achieved a unique expressiveness in miniature painting, dedicating himself exclusively to this art. His subjects ranged from religious inspiration, such as nativity scenes, to Portuguese folk traditions, historical themes, and commemorative medals (Duarte, 1987; Couto, 1988). The Elias family went on to establish a veritable "School of Miniatures," transmitted from generation to generation. Eduardo Mafra Elias (1880-1949), also strongly represented in the collection, further cultivated this tradition, focusing on historical, allegorical, and everyday scenes.

4. João Maria Ferreira lent ceramic pieces to several exhibitions: the *Caldas da Rainha Ceramics and Pottery Exhibition. Maria dos Cacos to Costa Motta*, held at the José Malhoa Museum and the Museum of Popular Art in 1963; the Homage to Francisco Elias exhibition, marking the centenary of his birth in 1969; and the *Expo Caldas 77* Ceramics Retrospective, also at the José Malhoa Museum.
5. For further reading on this ceramist, see: LUCAS, Marta Galvão. "Avelino Soares Belo." *CAP – Public Art Journal* 4, no. 2 (2022): 2–41. In: https://journals.ap2.pt/index.php/CAP/article/view/677 (Access: 2 August 2025).

Manuel Cipriano Gomes Mafra[6] occupies a special place in the collection, embodying the transition from potter to ceramist. His career marks a decisive moment in the evolution from traditional, popular ceramics to technically and conceptually innovative forms. In the 1860s and 1870s, Mafra was the first to introduce the *neopalissade* style in Caldas da Rainha, later followed by ceramists such as José Francisco de Sousa and José Alves Cunha, who also exported tableware to Spain, France, England, Brazil, and the United States.

In 1860, Mafra founded a new workshop at Rua do Jogo da Bolla, n.º 22-23, where he worked with his wife Maria José da Conceição and his sisters Mariana da Conceição Gomes (1852-1919) and Luísa Maria da Conceição Gomes (1856-1908), daughters of his father's second marriage. They specialized in the production of verguinha (a technique influenced by English models), which was popularized in this ceramic centre by António Joaquim, nicknamed "Roubado" (Ferrão, 1963).

Of particular note is the *Basket or Cup*, undated (post-1870), made of moulded and shaped *verguinha*, with relief decoration featuring floral and plant motifs. The technical precision is evident in the *verguinha*, produced using a manual die. Mafra brought refinement to the use of clay, glazes, and compositional balance, distancing himself from rustic production. This is especially visible in the *Secret Jars*, particularly the second, in which he employed a *neopalissade* vocabulary: reptile and beetle ornamentation on the bowl, snake-shaped handles rendered with striking realism, and applied moss on the lid — a technical innovation that set him apart.

Within this collection, however, the piece that best embodies Mafra's realism is the *Lebre* [fig.07], undated (post-1870). From this date onward, Mafra reached artistic maturity, securing the status of supplier to the Royal Household and definitively distancing himself from popular ceramics. Alongside new techniques such as *verguinha* and *musgado*, he created an array of models: decorative plates, carvings, *canjirões*, platters, flowerpots, jugs, bottles, tea sets, tureens, boxes, inkwells, and fish. He exhibited in several international exhibitions, winning numerous awards, and was the first Caldas manufacturer to brand his pieces and associate the Caldas centre with export production.



Fig. 07· Hare, marked "M. Mafra / CALDAS / PORTUGAL" (royal crown), undated (1870-1905); faience; João Maria Ferreira Collection.

6. For more information on this ceramist, see HORTA, Cristina Ramos – *Manuel Mafra. Ceramist of the Portuguese Royal House*, Casal da Cambra: Caleidoscópio, 2016.

Mafra also devoted himself to the study of glazes, developing a wide palette of colours and imparting a remarkable intensity of glaze based on his experience (Serra, 2009: 35). The *esquadra*, created by Bernard Palissy (1510-1589), was masterfully adopted by Mafra and influenced the work of several ceramists. Among them, José Francisco de Sousa (1835-1907), who began working in his own workshop in 1860, produced ceramics inspired by Palissy and the Renaissance, experimenting with a wide variety of glazes. Also noteworthy as well are the distinctive *Cabbage Dinner Service* and small popular-style pieces such as the *Barrel* and *Rose Jar* by Herculano Elias Avô (1864-1939), decorated with enamel drops and reminiscent of traditional Caldas da Rainha sweets such as *cavacas*, biscuits, and *bolachas Maria*. Other examples were produced by Eduardo Cipriano Moreira and José Francisco de Sousa Filho, respectively.

The Caldas da Rainha Earthenware Factory (FFCR), founded in 1884 under the artistic direction of Rafael Bordalo Pinheiro (1846-1905), operated in three distinct sectors: construction materials, utilitarian tableware, and artistic tableware. This initiative was due to the dedication of the Bordalo Pinheiro brothers Feliciano, focused on the commercial aspect; and Rafael, driven by artistic ambition, envisioning great creative potential for the factory.

The company promoted professional training in ceramics, a process formalized in 1887 with the strategic goal of revitalizing the Portuguese ceramics industry. When Rafael Bordalo Pinheiro arrived in Caldas da Rainha, the groundwork had already been done: technical innovations were in place, and skilled human resources in ceramics were available. This context allowed him to open new paths for artistic ceramics.

From the vast and varied production of the FFCR, the João Maria Ferreira collection includes several highlights. Among them: the *Emídio Navarro Jar* (1886), notable for the technical mastery in the relief depiction of the "Bussaco" and its drains, by Rafael Bordalo Pinheiro (Dias & Machado, 2009: 73); the *Pineapple and Loquat Dish*, which emphasizes the rural world and captures elements of living nature; the *Basket and Fruit Dish*, remarkable for its realistic modelling of fruit and basketry using the stringing technique.

Other works from this group include references to rural life, such as the *Basket and Fruits* (crafted with the straw technique), and to the national maritime world, such as the *Basket and Swordfish*, the *Mussel* hanging planter (1893) decorated with drains and moss, the *Plate with Basket, Lobster, and Cabbage*, and the *Shellfish and Net Dish*. These last pieces stand out for their exquisite realism in the depiction of fish and shellfish, combined with technical sophistication in skewering and stringing methods.

Manuel Gustavo Bordalo Pinheiro (1867-1920), Rafael's son, remained faithful to the artistic environment in which he was raised. Also, a caricaturist and contributor to his father's humorous newspapers, he continued Rafael's work at the FFCR, combining entrepreneurial initiative with creativity, supported by the dedication of the workers who transmitted their expertise in ceramics.

On 24th February 1908, he established a new factory, *San Raphael*. During its construction, he worked with his team at the *Atelier Visconde de Sacavém*, which had been loaned to him. He later registered *Fábrica Bordallo Pinheiro, Ltda.*, continuing to produce his father's artistic tableware models for a specialized clientele (Morais, 2004: 44). At the same time, Manuel Gustavo embarked on new aesthetic approaches, embracing simplified and stylized forms inspired by Art Nouveau and Art Deco, with more erudite design and sober decoration.

This synthesis of innovation and continuity is exemplified by the pair of *Fish and Wave Jars* (1908), which feature simplified forms, polychrome glazes in shades of blue-green, and marine motifs represented by powerful waves and fish. The jars clearly reveal the influence of Japanese ceramics and Art Nouveau. Through his commitment to teaching and his visits to major ceramic centres in France (1918), Manuel Gustavo left an important legacy in the reform of ceramic education and industry in Portugal.

In May 1908, businessman Manuel Godinho Leal invited Costa Motta Sobrinho (1877-1956) to serve as technical and artistic director of the FFCR (Morais, 2001: 30). A sculptor by training, Costa Motta came to ceramics indirectly. His artistic sensibility had been shaped by academic training in Lisbon and Paris, where he studied on a state scholarship in 1904. Between 1908 and 1912, his work reflected the aesthetic innovations he encountered in Paris, a vibrant cultural hub that attracted numerous artists in search of innovation and modernity. The young sculptor also demonstrated the technical and scientific knowledge he had acquired at the Brotero Industrial School in Coimbra, under the guidance of Master António Augusto da Costa Motta, ceramics became a medium for experimenting with formalist artistic discourses. He drew on the fauna and flora motifs of Caldas' ceramics, stylizing them and combining them with technological developments, particularly through his study of glazes characterized by metallic reflections. His originality lay in a contemporary, cosmopolitan design that remained synchronous with the naturalist and vernacular tendencies of Caldas' ceramics.

The *Pod Pot* (1910), with its rural character, is decorated with leaves and pods on triangular handles. It has a rigorously geometric form, with a frieze of leaves encircling the rim, from which seven bean pods hang in a fan-shaped arrangement. The decoration employs a nuanced palette of copper green, manganese brown, and iron yellow on clay glazed in metallic black. The *Olive Vase* (1912) explores the same typology of geometrically precise form. The *Fruit Bowl* (1908-1916) rests on turnip-shaped feet, while the *Cabbage Plate*, with bouquets of flowers, features stems arranged in symmetrical lines reminiscent of cabbage stalks. Its trunk-shaped base is topped with a frieze of alternating pinecones and pine needles.

These pieces embody the essence of Caldas' ceramics as cosmopolitan expressions of Art Nouveau, concluding a cycle of influences: the neo-Palissian experimentation of Manuel Mafra; the naturalist and playful innovation of Rafael Bordalo Pinheiro, and the formalist cosmopolitanism of Costa Motta Sobrinho.

From the 1920s until the outbreak of World War II, Caldas' ceramics entered a period of stagnation, marked by a lack of technical innovation and new models. Renewal finally came with the foundation of SECLA – *Sociedade de Exportação e Cerâmica, Lda.*, established by Alberto Pinto Ribeiro (1921-1989) on 19th December 1946 (Pinto, 1999: 11). Already in the 1950s, SECLA introduced an innovative concept of industrial-scale production of traditional Caldas' ceramics. The factory produced extensive lines of tableware in intense colours that attracted considerable admiration at international exhibitions.

Leadership was shared with Fernando Ponte e Sousa (1902-1990), the majority partner, whose background in design contributed significantly to SECLA's production. His influence extended to the stylization of objects, the refinement of utilitarian ceramics, and the introduction of matte glazes in a vibrant palette of yellow, celadon green, cherry, white, and champagne. The João Maria Ferreira collection preserves two SECLA roosters, noted for their expressive colour and movement, which were widely reproduced and sold in the factory's own shop.

Hansi Staël (Budapest, 1913 – London, 1961) arrived in Portugal in 1946 and began working at Viúva Lamego, where she participated in the renewal of Portuguese ceramic aesthetics. She became acquainted with Jorge Barradas (1894-1971), a pioneer of this transformation (Ferrão R. G., 2014: 20). Integrated into Lisbon's artistic scene, Staël was invited to teach painting at the Ceramics Studio-School (*Escola-Estúdio de Cerâmica*, EEC), directed by sculptor João Fragoso (1913–2000) and Maria Luísa Fragoso (1917-1985), in Campo de Ourique. There she was able to experiment freely.

In the 1950s, she began collaborating with SECLA and was later invited by Alberto Pinto Ribeiro to work there permanently (Ribeiro, 1989: 55). From this fertile period of creativity, one of the most emblematic pieces *Fruit Bowl*, 1950, in the form of a stylized chicken — a recurrent local motif — which combines modern graphic language with polychrome decoration on glazed Swedish clay.

Pinto Ribeiro and Staël envisioned a new artistic direction for SECLA and created the *SECLA Studio*, inspired by William Morris's (1834-1896) model of design workshops. This initiative made it possible to produce signature pieces, serialized by the factory and marketed both in Portugal and abroad. In 1954, Staël assumed leadership of the artistic department. With the arrival of ceramists such as Ferreira da Silva, Maria Antónia Parâmos, and Herculano Elias, Portuguese ceramics experienced a moment of unprecedented innovation in both industrial and artistic domains.

Staël, in line with international industrial design trends, simplified the forms of utilitarian tableware. However, her decorations drew on scenes of fishing, rural life, and market customs. Notable examples include two platters, *Marine Scene* and *Country Scene*, and plates depicting everyday figures in dense, at times abstract, synthetic volumes. These works employed a dynamic interplay of translucent and opaque glazes, schematic figuration, and clearly revealed the influence of Picasso.

She was succeeded by José Aurélio (b. Alcobaça, 1938), trained in sculpture at ESBAL. He began producing ceramics in Alcobaça in 1957 and joined SECLA in 1958 to oversee production quality control. While still a student at ESBAL, he was even allocated a room at the factory. During his eight years at SECLA, José Aurélio produced several works. The only example preserved in the João Maria Ferreira collection is a decorative plate entitled *Bird* (1965-66), a complete composition with an unmistakably geometric design. The bird's body is decorated with *sgraffito*, in a style of erudite primitivism with Picasso's clear influence. He was undoubtedly an artist who elevated ceramics, both in terms of artistic creation and aesthetic individuality.

At the request of Pinto Ribeiro, Aurélio invited more artists to collaborate with SECLA. Among them was António Quadros (1933-1994), who designed a line of tableware he called "black and green," a highly successful series represented in Ferreira's collection by pieces dated 1958-59. Quadros also revived figures from popular imagination, including animal motifs such as a goat and a rabbit (undated), rendered against a honey-brown background, decorated with *sgraffito* engobes and transparent enamel.

Another invited artist was Alice Jorge (1924-2008), who worked at SECLA with her husband, Júlio Pomar (1926-2008), between 1955 and 1956. A painter, engraver, and ceramist, Jorge experimented with ceramics in a neo-realist approach to abstraction. A unique example of her work is a decorative plate, *Horse* (1956), depicting a stylized horse in flat perspective with a slightly curved edge, the surface decorated with engobes in a refined and expressive manner.

Within this small industrial and artistic stronghold in Caldas da Rainha, the figure of Luís Ferreira da Silva stands out, contributing decisively to the renewal of the image envisioned by Alberto Pinto Ribeiro for SECLA. Born in Porto, Ferreira da Silva grew up in an artistic family (Serra, 2019: 19). He studied at the Avelar Brotero Industrial and Commercial School in Coimbra, where he was taught by José Contente (1907-1957), a ceramist and watercolourist from Caldas da Rainha who gave a course in ceramic painting.

As a teenager, Ferreira da Silva worked as a ceramic painter at the Coimbra Frutuoso Faience Factory. At 16, he joined *Cerâmica Bombarralense, Lda.*, a factory producing utilitarian and artistic tableware. There he became part of an artistic circle around Jorge Almeida Monteiro, including Álvaro Perdigão (1910-1994), Vasco Pereira da Conceição (1914-1992), Maria Barreira (1914-2002), José Dias Coelho (1923-1961), Alice Jorge and Júlio Pomar (Serra, 2019: 23). This group shared political ideals and artistic knowledge rooted in modernist and neo-realist aesthetics.

One of Ferreira da Silva's last projects at *Cerâmica Bombarralense* was painting the tiles designed by João Fragoso (1913-2000) for the barracks of the 5th Infantry Regiment, inaugurated in Caldas da Rainha in 1953. The sculptor praised the young painter's gestural language, particularly his ability to give volume and movement to military uniforms, creating a memory that has left a lasting impression.[7]

7. Interview I conducted with the ceramist Luiz Ferreira da Silva, at the Arts Centre, in Caldas da Rainha, on 9th December 2015.

In 1954, Ferreira da Silva became head of the painting section at SECLA. At first, he reproduced Staël's decorative motifs, but soon began to develop his own, marked by gestural freedom and bold brushstrokes. One example is the *Nazarenas Plate*, which reveals his distinctive style. He became a full-time ceramist, focusing on the material qualities of pastes, the composition of glazes, the volumetry of forms, and the chromatic richness of his palette. His integration of wheel-thrown elements into industrial ceramics distinguished his work in the broader context of Portuguese ceramic art.

His collaboration with other artists, such as painter Hernâni Lopes (1928-1997) and Júlio Pomar, also left their mark. The influence of Pomar is particularly, is evident in the *Lamp Base*, which follows similar lines of form and colour as Pomar's *D. Quixote Platter* (1956).

In 1959, due to disagreements with Alberto Pinto Ribeiro, Ferreira da Silva left SECLA to work at the factory of Afonso Duarte Angélico (1912-1977). There he was supported by a craftsman from Barcelos, known as "O Cervejinha" (Serra, 2019: 39). He continued to experiment with engobes and glazes, breaking conventions and developing metallized engobes.

Pinto Ribeiro later admitted that Ferreira da Silva had been central to the innovative image of SECLA. Between 1960 and 1966, the artist — fiercely individualistic — worked in the factory's basement, in an independent workshop known as the "Curral." He was assisted by skilled collaborators: rod maker Guilherme Barroso, modeller Alberto Reis (for series of plates and tiles), and paste and slab preparer Henrique Galo (Henriques,1999: 31). Works from this phase include the *Diamond-Point Tile Panel* (c. 1960), in which the edges of the diamond motifs are highlighted in light green, decorated with veins over an aqua and dark green background, evoking aquatic references. The *Plate* (1970) presents an informal approach, with attached olaric forms in which the material and multiform volume dominate over the painting. The work conveys a telluric sense, characterized by the freedom of a strongly expressionist gesture. Ferreira da Silva distinguished himself through his use of refractory pastes, construction clay, highly chamotte clays, and irregular textures enriched with earthy granularity, metallic patinas from engobes, transparent glazes, and opaque enamels.

Awarded a scholarship from the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (1966-67), Ferreira da Silva studied in Paris before returning to SECLA in June 1967. At this point, he pursued a different path, reusing ceramic fragments for decoration or reconstructing plates from round forms. In these works, the cavity of the plate was filled with a slab, thickened to the rim, into which he incised designs in relief. A representative example is the *Bird Plate* (*Prato Pássaro*, 1967). Another is the *Flower Plate* (1970), stylized in a simple geometric form, with embossed grooves filled with transparent green glazes and applied metallic engobes. This was one of the last works created during his time at the "Curral."

Maria Antónia Parâmos (1922-1976), a ceramist and painter from Caldas da Rainha, also deserves mention. She studied at the Industrial and Commercial School in Caldas and briefly collaborated with SECLA (1954-55), painting ceramics under the artistic direction of Hansi Staël (Pinto, 1999: 17). She was a pioneer in the use of engobes for decoration, favouring strong colours. The Ferreira collection includes two bottles and two lamps of highly refined and geometric shapes, aligned with international design trends, characterised by bright colours and dripping effects typical of her style.

Another key figure is Armando Correia (1936-2008), son of the traditional ceramist Avelino Correia. He completed the Technical Course in Ceramics in Caldas da Rainha in 1955 (Perdigão, 2018: 30). As a teacher and ceramist in Portugal and Spain, he worked almost exclusively in ceramics, developing an artistic language infused with modernist aesthetics. His work embraced diverse themes: Christian iconography, theatre, music, poetry, reconstructions of archaeological objects, social critique, animals, femininity, and mythology.

One of his most notable works is the statuette *Unicorn* (1956), a subject he also explored in painting. The reclining equine figure, modelled in white clay, features a spiralling horn and recalls the unicorn as an ancient bestiary symbol of strength and purity — associated in mythology with virginity, since only a pure maiden could tame it.

From the 1980s onward, nativity scenes and mythological themes became central to his ceramic production. Greatly influenced by his second wife, Marina Ximenes, who studied universal mythology (Perdigão, 2018: 35), Correia created works of strong aesthetic impact. Pieces such as *Centaur* (1983) exemplify his combination of delicacy and strangeness: a hybrid creature of both human and bestial nature, with a small head, a human torso with amputated arms, graffitied over a voluminous equine body, in symbiosis with the mythical representation of a kidnapped princess.

Within Ferreira's collection, one of Correia's highlights is *Ave* (c. 1980-85). Glazed in white over black engobe, the piece is striking for the curved hollow ellipse of its handle, ending in a spiral, and for its bulging jug-shaped body resting on a circular base. Incised graffiti ending in a double spiral accentuates the projecting side handles. The formal refinement, combined with the sinuous curvature of the line, marks this piece as an unmistakable expression of Armando Correia's authorial style.

It is worth noting that in the 1940s and early 1950s, Portuguese faience was widely collected nationwide. Curiously, Caldas' ceramics did not yet attract the same interest. According to João Maria Ferreira, there were at most three outstanding collectors of Caldas' ceramics who stood out: Alfredo Lucas Cabral, Artur Maldonado Freitas, and António Capucho.[8]

Alfredo Lucas Cabral [fig.08] (Lisbon, 5th November 1907 – 18th February 1983) was an industrialist and businessman active in various sectors. He owned a taxi fleet in Lisbon and a glass factory in Marinha Grande, though his main focus was on the construction industry. Influenced by his father, João Cabral, who had purchased a canjirão by Rafael Bordalo Pinheiro at auction Lucas Cabral developed an interest in the artist's work. The first piece he acquired was a *Varina on a Shell*.

He began his collection in the late 1930s, building it over a span of forty years. One of his greatest passions was collecting figurines in traditional costumes by José Joaquim Teixeira Lopes.[9] Through the auction houses and antique dealers he frequented, Cabral acquired paintings, sculptures, ceramics, weapons, and locks, objects that appealed to his taste and sensibility, though not always with the specific intention of forming a collection.

He persuaded his friend José Manuel Pinto de Sacavém (b. 1941), 4th Viscount of Sacavém, to sell the Quinta Visconde de Sacavém in Caldas da Rainha to the Portuguese State for the creation of the long-awaited Museum of Ceramics [fig.09]. Cabral argued that he would only sell his own ceramics collection if it were incorporated into a museum.

On 31st December 1979, the Alfredo Lucas Cabral collection was acquired by the State.[10] It comprised 307 ceramic works from the late 19th and early 20th century. Although the emphasis lies on Rafael Bordalo Pinheiro, it also includes works by Manuel Mafra, José Francisco de Sousa, José Francisco de Sousa & Filho, José Alves Cunha Sucessor, António Alves Cunha, Atelier Cerâmico, Avelino Belo and José Pedro Sacavém, as well as anonymous pieces produced in Caldas da Rainha[11].

8. Interview I conducted with the collector João Maria Ferreira, at Ferreira e Santos Jeweller's, in June 2019.
9. The biographical information on the collector is the result of research shared by Marta Pereira given at the Caldas Ceramic Collections Course, held at the Rafael Bordalo Pinheiro School, on 24th May 2016.
10. Quinta Visconde de Sacavém was acquired by the Ministry of Finance on 19th November 1981, for the Portuguese Institute of Cultural Heritage. Its acquisition cost 20 thousand contos (Gazetas das Caldas, 303, Caldas da Rainha, 1981.12.24).
11. Regarding the Alfredo Lucas Cabral collection, the only existing record of its 307 pieces is found in the catalogue produced by the Museum of Ceramics in 1986 (*Catálogo da Exposição A Cerâmica das Caldas. Colecção A. Lucas Cabral*, 1986).



Fig. 08· Alfredo Lucas Cabral.



Fig. 09· Palacete Visconde de Sacavém.



Fig. 10· Adamastor, 1897 (with signature) and 1898 (with mark on reverse); bas-relief, faience; Inv. MC 5; Museum of Ceramics, Caldas da Rainha, Museums and Monuments of Portugal, E.P.E / Photographic Documentation Archive (Photographer: José Pessoa).

The collection features unique works that, in addition to being signed and dated, also bear Bordalo Pinheiro's distinctive manufacturing marks most notably *The Adamastor*, a bas-relief inspired by the episode in *The Lusiads* [fig.10].

Alongside utilitarian tableware with strong decorative intent, reproducing the textures and glazes of clay, the collection includes candlesticks, olive bowls, jugs and jars, large pitchers, boxes, bowls, toothpick holders, teapots, cups and saucers, bottles, inkwells, ashtrays, and even spittoons and chamber pots. Particularly notable are the *Plane Jar* [fig.11], admired for its beauty and scale, the masterfully angled *Baskets*, and the *Lobster Jar* [fig.12].

The Alfredo Lucas Cabral collection was first exhibited in 1980 at the Palácio Galveias in Lisbon (21st April – 15th May). It was subsequently shown in Caldas da Rainha, at the José Malhoa Museum (18th July – 31st August); in Porto, at the Fernando de Castro House-Museum (1st – 31st October); and in Coimbra, at the Machado de Castro Museum (1st – 31st December). Later, it became part of the inaugural display of the Museum of Ceramics, which opened to the public on 31st March 1984.

Artur Maldonado Freitas [fig.13] (Caldas da Rainha, 23rd December 1912 – 9th March 2001) was a distinguished pharmacist, clinical analyst, businessman, politician, man of culture, and amateur collector of Portuguese faience. He studied Pharmacy at the University of Coimbra, specializing in clinical analysis.

In the 1940s, he worked at the Medicamenta Laboratory in Lisbon, where he began a stamp collection (c. 1956), later sold. In the early 1960s, he returned to his hometown and worked in the clinical analysis laboratory of the Maldonado Freitas family pharmacy. He lived on the first floor of Rua Sangreman Henriques, n.º 32, later renting the second floor to house his growing collection of Portuguese faience.

In his home, one room was dedicated to Rato and Juncal china[12], while another displayed Caldas' ware. However, due to limited space, much of the earthenware remained stacked together.

12. Interview I conducted with the collector João Maria Ferreira, at Ferreira e Santos Jeweller's, in June 2019.



Fig. 11· Plane jar, Rafael Bordalo Pinheiro, FFCR, 1901; faience; Inv. MC 79; Museum of Ceramics, Caldas da Rainha, Museums and Monuments of Portugal, E.P.E / Photographic Documentation Archive (Photographer: José Pessoa).



Fig. 12· Large Vase with Lobsters, Rafael Bordalo Pinheiro, FFCR, 1904; Inv. MC 81; Museum of Ceramics, Caldas da Rainha, Museums and Monuments of Portugal, E.P.E / Photographic Documentation Archive (Photographer: José Pessoa).



Fig. 13· Cultural gathering at Café Central, Caldas da Rainha, early 1990s. From left to right: Mapril Figueiredo, Ernesto Moreira, Artur Maldonado Freitas and António Teles.

Artur Maldonado Freitas did not come from a family of collectors; collecting was, for him, innate. Together with his adopted children, José Ribeiro Lopes and Maria Joana Ribeiro Lopes — nephews of his wife, Maria Teresa Garrelon Ribeiro Lopes Maldonado Freitas (4th October 1920 – 28th August 2008) he often spent weekends travelling in search of Portuguese faience, whether in antique shops in small towns or in Lisbon, at auction houses such as Soares e Mendonça, Leiria e Nascimento, Correio Velho, and Cabral Moncada, or at jeweller's such as that of "Sr. Silva" in Largo de Camões or in the antique shop of "Sr. Madeira" in Rua da Escola Politécnica.

According to collector João Maria Ferreira, Maldonado Freitas began to focus more exclusively on Caldas' ceramics in the late 1970s. Ferreira himself sold him both 17th century Portuguese faience and Caldas' ware. Maldonado's tastes leaned strongly towards Pombaline and post-Pombaline productions from Porto and Viana do Castelo, as well as the output of the Royal Factory of Rato (Calado, 2005: 8) and the faience of Estremoz. His interest in Caldas' ware grew when he was invited to serve on the installation committee for the Museum of Ceramics. According to Rafael Salinas Calado, particularly in the 1990s, Maldonado Freitas competed fiercely in the antiques and auction markets for Caldas' pieces (Calado, 2005: 14). He regretted having missed several opportunities to acquire works by renowned Caldas' artists, though he showed little enthusiasm for contemporary ceramists.

The Maldonado Freitas collection eventually comprised more than 3,000 pieces and stood out in the Portuguese collecting landscape for two defining characteristics: the quality of the works and the variety of their provenances. It included faience from Estremoz, the Royal Factory of Rato, Lisbon, Viana do Castelo, Juncal, Porto, and Coimbra (totalling some 2,500 pieces), along with a rare collection of apothecary jars and pots, later sold by the collector himself to the Portuguese Pharmacy Association. Particularly notable was the Caldas' faience collection, numbering 600 pieces, which encompassed a wide range of styles and qualities, representing virtually all workshops and manufacturers up to the mid-20th century.



Fig. 14· Pitcher, attributed to Manuel Mafra, 19th century; faience.



Fig. 15· Basin and Jug, Caldas da Rainha Earthenware Factory, 1888; faience.

Maldonado Freitas enjoyed sharing his collection and discussing Portuguese ceramics. In 1992, he loaned 190 Caldas' pieces to the exhibition *Ceramics: Maldonado Freitas Collection*, held at the Osíris Gallery, in Caldas da Rainha City Hall, from May to June (Calado, 1992). Given the importance of this collection and the collector's own expressed wishes, the Municipality of Caldas da Rainha initiated the process of creating a museum dedicated to Portuguese ceramics, with the aim of ensuring the study and conservation of this remarkable patrimony[13].

However, between 1998 and 1999, the rarest and most significant works from the collection were auctioned (Calado, 2005: 10), leaving only a group of 378 pieces [fig.14,15]. These are currently housed in the reserves of the Barata Feyo Museum in Caldas da Rainha, permanently truncating one of the most eclectic collections of Portuguese faience of 20th century.

António Capucho [fig.16] (São João do Estoril, 29th April 1918 – 7th January 2009) was a collector of great artistic sensibility, who created a distinctive atmosphere in his homes. These were decorated with Caldas' ceramics, *ex-votos* painted on wood, faience and tiles, religious paintings, and Portuguese sacred art in both painting and sculpture.

At the age of 18, he began working with his father, João Félix da Silva Capucho Júnior, at *Casa Capucho* — the family's commercial and industrial firm, founded in 1818 and located on Rua de São Paulo, Lisbon (Arruda, 2004: 6). Ernesto Martins, owner of Biblarte and one of the booksellers who most frequently dealt with him, described Capucho as "an old-school collector: one of the last in the country. A man who always bought according to his taste and never with a business mindset" (Arruda, 2004: 7).

As a bibliophile, Capucho owned an important library on the Portuguese Discoveries, the history of Portugal, Portuguese art, the army, travel literature, equestrian art, heraldry, and genealogies. He also collected *super-libris*, which he organised on handwritten index cards classified by factories, potteries, regions, artists, ceramists,

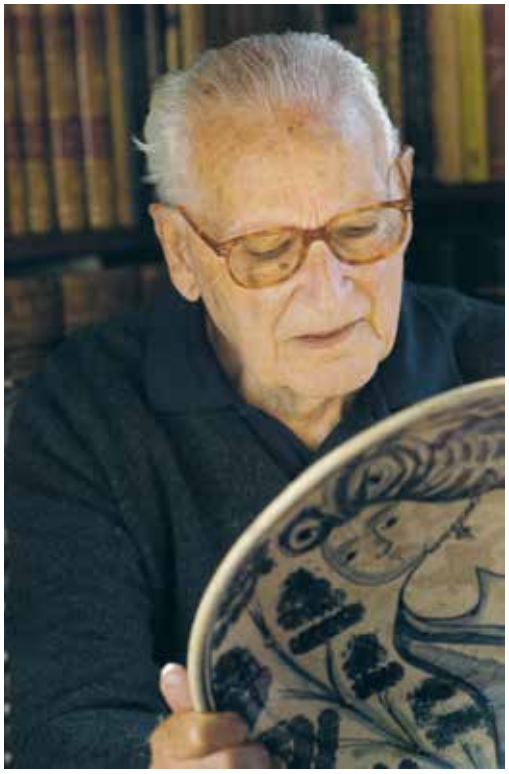


Fig. 16· António Capucho.



Fig. 17· Exhibition room of the António Capucho Collection, Estoril residence, 2004.

and Portuguese bibliographies. Following the 1974 Revolution, however, he lost *Casa Capucho*; and with three of his nine children still young, he was forced to sell a large part of his library.

He arranged the basement of his Estoril home, known as "the museum" [fig.17], was arranged thematically by the collector. On its walls hung *Ratinho* plates from Viana and tile panels from various centuries and schools. He took pride in displaying his pieces and enjoyed discussing them with specialists (Arruda, 2004: 10). He lent works to exhibitions held at the National Museum of Ancient Art, the Calouste Gulbenkian Museum, the National Tile Museum, and the José Malhoa Museum. At the National Palace of Sintra, where he volunteered, he began classifying and cataloguing its collection of faience and porcelain.

Capucho sought to acquire works that documented the activity of Portuguese factories and potters: signed and marked pieces that recorded the production's aesthetic evolution. His acquisitions were guided by personal taste, with no distinction between erudite and popular works. In Lisbon, he lived near fellow collector Commander Ernesto de Vilhena; outside Lisbon, he often visited his friend, Artur Maldonado Freitas, in Caldas da Rainha (Arruda, 2004: 11).

Owing to its size and chronological breadth, his ceramic collection reached approximately 6,000 pieces. Covering the length of the country, it encompassed Portuguese ceramics with historiographical references from the 16th to the 20th century. Capucho travelled extensively, establishing direct connections with antique dealers, traders, producers, and ceramists.

Caldas' ceramics naturally formed part of his interests, and his collection included around 600 pieces, ranging from archaic pottery to early 20th century productions of the Rafael Bordalo Pinheiro Faience Factory (Henriques, 2004: 203). Among the utilitarian earthenware of the early 19th century are works by the little-documented potter Galrão and by Maria dos Cacos. Naively modelled pieces, glazed in green, dark brown, or honey, include toothpick holders, anthropomorphic candlesticks, bottles, and standing female figures, sometimes playing the guitar.



Fig. 18· Teapot and Cup in the Shape of Cabbage Leaves, faience, Augusto Baptista de Carvalho, late 19th century.

Animal motifs appear as well: monkeys adorned with flowers, or dogs carrying baskets. Though popular in style, these works reveal the influence of erudite traditions. One striking example is a pair of candlesticks in the form of crowned lions, naively modelled yet evoking both heraldic rampant lions and the Chinese iconography of *dogs of Fo* (Henriques, 2004: 203).

The status that Manuel Mafra achieved nationally and internationally also influenced many Caldas' workshops, which produced tableware abundantly decorated with animal and vegetal motifs. An example of this vocabulary is the tea service [fig.18] by Augusto Baptista de Carvalho, where cabbage-shaped forms are combined with serpent-shaped handles and a teapot spout. This exuberant naturalism follows the path already opened by Manuel Mafra, as seen in his monkey-shaped teapot, squatting with a tall hat serving as the lid and a serpent forming the spout.

The aesthetic stance of Naturalism, combined with a modern nationalist expression, is central to the artistic and political thought of Rafael Bordalo Pinheiro. This is conveyed in his historicist Neo-Manueline pieces; in his caricatures of politicians and typical popular figures; most famously, Zé Povinho. Capucho's collection included works that reflect another facet of Bordalo's modernity, such as the *Crushed Jar*, which highlights the plasticity of the material, coated in a honey glaze and decorated with a beetle in relief, influenced by Japanese models; or the *Cherry Branch Jar*, marked by a poetic naturalism. Among Costa Motta Sobrinho's works, one notable piece is a tubular jar adorned with flowers and leaves decorated with delicate vertical branches. It is crowned with geranium motifs, and a base ornamented with broad leaves, as well as a centerpiece [fig.19] adorned with three artichoke stems, whose corollas serve as candlesticks. These Art Nouveau works represent the Caldas da Rainha ceramic cycle with the refined, formalist taste characteristic of Costa Motta Sobrinho.



Fig. 19· Centerpiece, Costa Motta Sobrinho, FFCR, 1908-1916; faience.

CONCLUSION

The study of these ceramic collections demonstrates that the four collectors were heterogeneous in their approaches to collecting, reflecting their personal tastes, intellectual and cultural backgrounds, social interactions, and motivations shaped by their professional experiences. They all shared the fact that they were entrepreneurs, albeit in different sectors. João Maria Ferreira, however, was the only one who dealt professionally in the trade of Portuguese faience and Caldas' ware. His collection is also unique in being exclusively dedicated to Caldas' production. Although it is largely the result of his acquisitions, it also includes donations imbued with subjective meanings, where the collector's emotions and memories prevail over purely aesthetic or material value.

The common thread among these private collections is their focus on Portuguese faience, including Caldas' ware, and their formation during the first half of the 20th century. António Capucho distinguished himself by assembling a collection of Portuguese ceramics — including Caldas' ware — with a clear museological purpose. The diversity of factories, ceramists, and potters represented in his holdings constitutes a kind of compendium of ceramic history, in which the collector himself became a researcher and ceramologist of his own collection.

Individually and collectively, these collectors contributed to the preservation, study, and dissemination of the works of ceramists, factories, and workshops. A shared characteristic was their willingness to lend pieces for temporary exhibitions, which fostered close ties between them and, in João Maria Ferreira's case, with museum institutions dedicated to Portuguese ceramics.

For these collectors, the act of collecting was primarily one of personal delight and lived experience. Yet, within their own reflections, they also articulated the desire for the cultural patrimonialisation of their collections – an aspiration to bring the private into dialogue with the collective, thereby contributing to greater knowledge, appreciation, and public enjoyment.

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