

The Horta-Osório Collection of Antique Chess Sets

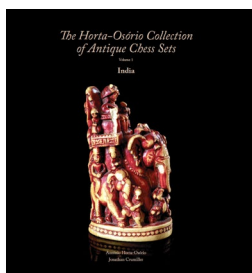
Volume 1

India



António Horta-Osório
Jonathan Crumiller

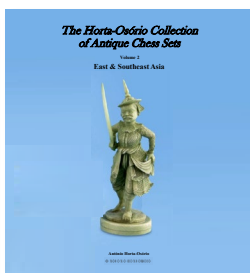
Volume 1: India is now available for purchase at tinyurl.com/HortaOsorio-1



Volume 1

India

ISBN 978-989-36758-0-9



Volume 2

East & Southeast Asia

Release Date: end-2026



Volume 3

Central & Eastern Europe

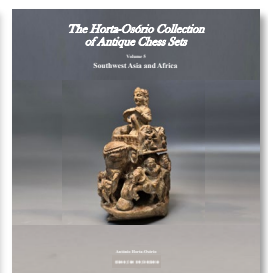
Release Date: end-2026



Volume 4

Western & Northern Europe

Release Date: 2027



Volume 5

Southwest Asia & Africa

Release Date: 2027

al styles different from the John Company
be identified as a *panai* (also spelled *pan-*
pavilion or cabin used to transport cargo
ing from the 19th century, the boats appear
and animal heads at the stern and bow (fig.



Fig. 8: Panawee (*panai*) boat. Colored etching by Frans
Balthazar Solvyns. Reproduced from Solvyns 1808-12:
III, pl. 5./ 8026.

set was likely used for actual play, contrary
ed for display.¹⁴

pavilions nor animal heads, but carry a
8). The foot-soldiers are kneeling with a
re the larger generals which take the place
ted by horses and elephants with a single
elephants side by side with a shared howdah
Hindus with turbans and curved swords,
s with *topis*, or skullcaps, and short, point-
been stained before the carving was com-
ous details which only appear fully carved

Overview of Antique Indian Chess Sets For Export, but Not Only

Ulrich Schädler

In his groundbreaking work 'Historia shahiludi' (History of Chess), the first volume of 'De ludis orientalibus' (On Oriental Games) published in 1694, Thomas Hyde, Librarian of the Bodleian Library and a Professor of Hebrew and Arabic, presented and illustrated four chess sets from India (Fig. 1 / 8014). The first one is a set made from the wood of the toothbrush tree (Salvadora persica), Hyde calls 'Indo-Persiani', while nowadays chess sets like this are usually called being of 'Muslim type'. It was his friend John Fraunce, who provided this set for him during his stay at Mumbai. Fraunce was appointed chaplain at Surat (Gujarat, north of Mumbai) or Mumbai by the British East India Company (EIC) on 23 Feb. 1672, not at least on Hyde's recommendation. Since Fraunce, as Hyde tells us, died in 1677, when he drowned in a river, the chess sets must date from before this tragic event.

The three other sets, together with an exquisite chess board (described on p. 59-60) come from the city of Surat, the important harbour of the Mughal Empire north of Mumbai. Here, the EIC had installed their second factory in 1615, while the first factory existed since 1611 at Machilipatnam on the East Coast. In 1616 the Dutch established a factory there as well as the French, who were present from 1667 until 1759. Numerous goods of different type arrived at Surat from all over South-East Asia to be shipped abroad: diamonds, pearls, cotton, silk, musk, spices, indigo, medical plants and many more. Hyde received the games as a gift from Daniel Sheldon, whom Hyde refers to as a merchant (mercator) in the East Indies. Sheldon was member of the EIC since 1658, and factor at Balasore in West-Bengal.



Fig. 1: Indian chess sets illustrated in *De Ludis Orientalibus, Historia shahiludi*; Thomas Hyde, 1694, pages 134-135./ 8014

Sample Pages



The Horta-Osório Collection of Antique Chess Sets

Volume 1: India



- Photos and descriptions of António's world-class antique chess sets, boards, and pieces from the subcontinent of India
 - An expert team of chess historians explains the intricacies of the chess sets and the geopolitical circumstances in which these historical marvels were made
 - 424 pages, 212 photos, 68 illustrations
-

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Publisher

António Horta-Osório

Printing

Norprint – a casa do livro

Graphic Design

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ISBN 978-989-36758-0-9