

Georg Christoph Stirn on the Tradescant collection

(1638)

(<http://www.ashmol.ox.ac.uk/ash/amulets/tradescant/tradescant03.html>)

In the museum of Mr. John Tradescant are the following things: first in the courtyard there lie two ribs of a whale, also a very ingenious little boat of bark; then in the garden all kinds of foreign plants, which are to be found in a special little book which Mr. Tradescant has had printed about them. In the museum itself we saw a salamander, a chameleon, a pelican, a remora, a lanhado from Africa, a white partridge, a goose which has grown in Scotland on a tree, a flying squirrel, another squirrel like a fish, all kinds of bright colored birds from India, a number of things changed into stone, amongst others a piece of human flesh on a bone, gourds, olives, a piece of wood, an ape's head, a cheese, etc; all kinds of shells, the hand of a mermaid, the hand of a mummy, a very natural wax hand under glass, all kinds of precious stones, coins, a picture wrought in feathers, a small piece of wood from the cross of Christ, pictures in perspective of Henry IV and Louis XIII of France, who are shown, as in nature, on a polished steel mirror when this is held against the middle of the picture, a little box in which a landscape is seen in perspective, pictures from the church of S. Sophia in Constantinople copied by a Jew into a book, two cups of rinocerode, a cup of an E. Indian alcedo which is a kind of unicorn, many Turkish and other foreign shoes and boots, a sea parrot, a toad-fish, an elk's hoof with three claws, a bat as large as a pigeon, a human bone weighing 42 lbs., Indian arrows such as are used by the executioners in the West Indies- when a man is condemned to death, they lay open his back with them and he dies of it, an instrument used by the Jews in circumcision, some very light wood from Africa, the robe of the King of Virginia, a few goblets of agate, a girdle such as the Turks wear in Jerusalem, the passion of Christ carved very daintily on a plumstone, a large magnet stone, a S. Francis in wax under glass, as also a S. Jerome, the Pater Noster of Pope Gregory XV, pipes from the East and West Indies, a stone found in the West Indies in the water, whereon are graven Jesus, Mary and Joseph, a beautiful present from the Duke of Buckingham, which was of gold and diamonds affixed to a feather by which the four elements were signified, Isidor's MS of de natura hominis, a scourge with which Charles V is said to have scourged himself, a hat band of snake bones.