

# CABINET OF CURIOSITIES

## CILICE

Metal

19th century

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*Then, the Sun will pay the unplaced cilice, the Moon the untaken discipline, the Stars the unspoken pray...* (Bartolomeu do Quental, Sermão do Juízo, 1694)

Assuming, at the beginning, the shape of tunic, garment or string, at the time weaved with harsh and rough goat hair, the cilice materialized the sacrament of penitence, in a reconciliation that should be mortifying, for the atonement of sins.

Instrument of discipline, aiming to gird and tighten the body, in a way that, free from the worldly oppressions, the spirit would be allowed to breathe, it assumed also the shape of a chain or a metallic belt, placed around the muscles of the thigh, the arm or the waist, as it is the case of the exhibited specimen. It had small spikes that being more round or sharpened, would just mark the skin or rip it, causing blood drops.

Used since the first times of the Christianity by figures like S. João Baptista. S. Jerónimo de Estridão or Santo Agostinho de Hipona, their aim was to complete the suffering of Jesus Christ; it became usual in the monastic everyday life, above all among the Benedictine and the Franciscan monks. A volunteer suffering that the Middle Age's penitential and Christocentric paradigm poured out of the convents and monasteries limits and spilt through all the western European society.

Brought to the *root of the flesh* just in specific periods of the liturgical calendar or, along a whole life, emperors, bishops, kings and thinkers carried it to their graves or left it in testament.

Nowadays, the use of the cilice is still known in several religious orders as, for example, the Discalced Carmelites and the Carthusians.

From the five cilices kept in the Museu de Angra do Heroísmo, that are part of the sub-collection of Religious Accessories in the Textiles Collection, this one is the largest (7 x 77 cm); accordingly to the documents founded, it may have been incorporated through a donation, under anonymity, in the year of 1952 and may have belonged to a Clarisse nun from the extinct Convent of S. Gonçalo, in Angra do Heroísmo.