



### 88. Dresden Bottles

China, Kangxi Period (1662-1722)

H: 25 cm

A pair of underglaze blue and café au lait triple gourd (huluping) bottle vases. The neck and first bulb are covered in a brown glaze, the lower two bulbs are decorated in underglaze blue each separated by a white band. The middle section is decorated in reserve with scrolling flowers and leaves. The largest lower bulb, is decorated with a wide band of the so-called 'Hundred Antiques', symbolizing abundance of riches. Above and beneath are bands of alternating large and small plantain leaves. The underside has various collection labels, as well as the engraved and blackened inventory number N:319 of the Augustus the Strong porcelain collection in Dresden. The number is underscored by a wavy line – signifying it was categorized as blue and white East Indian porcelain.

The 'Hundred Antiques' or 'Many Ancient Things' (bai gu), is a collection of emblematic forms that include any combination of ancient and revered objects; such as items from the Four Scholarly Pursuits, Seven Buddhist Treasures, Daoist symbols and Eight Precious Things. They can include all types of three-dimensional decorative arts, which are usually rebuses for auspicious wishes as well. Any large number of these objects is to referred as Hundred Antiques, regardless whether there are actually 100 or not. The number 100 should be interpreted as 'many', in a similar vein 1,000 or 10,000 should be read as countless or unlimited.

These vases bear some interesting labels, but the earliest markings are the inventory number from Augustus the Strong (r.1696–1733) in Dresden. They were sold at the renowned Lepke's auction in 1919 and are depicted in that catalogue; similar vases are still in the collection in Dresden. The Lady Lever collection (Liverpool), has comparable vases but without the inventory marks.

#### Provenance:

- Augustus the Strong Collection, Dresden (engraved mark N:319)
- Auction House Lepke, Berlin 1919 (lot 360 III. tafel 31)
- With Bluett's & Sons, London (Label nr.10)
- With Hans Öström, Sweden (label nr.852)

