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Silk, porcelain and lacquer : China and Japan and their trade with Western Europe and the New World, 1500-1644. A survey of documentary and material evidence

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The sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries saw the rise of powerful merchant empires on the Iberian Peninsula and northwest Europe, all with small populations and limited natural resources but with access to the Atlantic Ocean and strong naval power, which marked the emergence of a global long-distance trade system in the early modern period.¹ The great maritime voyages of exploration launched by the Iberian kingdoms of Portugal and Spain at the end of the fifteenth century in search of a route to the Spice Islands, known as the Molucas or Moluccan Islands (present-day Indonesia), culminated in Bartolomeu Dias's (c.1450–1500) discovery² of a route to the Indian Ocean round the Cape of Good Hope in 1488,³ and Christopher Columbus's (1451–1506) discovery of the New World, four years later, in 1492,⁴ which opened up direct long-distance sea trade routes between Europe, the New World, Africa, and Asia via both the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. The newly discovered sea trade routes also reinvigorated the missionary goal of bringing Christianity to the peoples of these distant and previously unknown regions of the world.⁵ By the beginning of the seventeenth century, trading companies from the Northern Netherlands/Dutch Republic and England began to take part in the trade to Asia via the route round the Cape of Good Hope and partly gained control of the Asian maritime trade.⁶ The European-Asian encounters and the historically unprecedented growth of direct intercontinental maritime trade between Europe, the New World and Asia prompted an economic interdependence between these distant regions of the world, and ultimately led to a continuous flow of cultural and artistic influences in all directions and a more precise knowledge of foreign cultures.

In the past decades, a number of exhibitions and their respective publications have been devoted to these global mercantile connections, and cultural and artistic influences.⁷ This doctoral dissertation attempts to give a better insight and to provide

1 Debin Ma, 'The Great Silk Exchange: How the World was Connected and Developed', in Debin Ma (ed.), *Textiles in the Pacific 1500–1900, The Pacific World. Lands, Peoples and History of the Pacific, 1500–1900*, Vol. 12, Burlington, VT, 2005, pp. 58 and 60.

2 The term 'discovery' is used here to refer to the process of European penetration into previously unknown regions of the world, which consequently resulted in the contact and unprecedented cultural exchanges with other cultures in Africa, Asia and the New World.

3 Portugal's voyages of exploration brought its merchants first to the islands of Madeira and Azores in the eastern Atlantic and to the kingdom of Benin in 1484 in the west coast of Africa. These voyages soon led the Portuguese further eastward, to Asia. The Portuguese explorer and navigator Vasco da Gama (1469–1524) reached India in 1497–1498 in pursuit of spices, bypassing the powerful Ottoman Empire and rounding Africa. Two years later, in 1500, they went across the Atlantic Ocean and reached Brazil in the New World. For more information on the Portuguese expansion, see C. R. Boxer, *The Portuguese Seaborne Empire 1415–1825*, Carcanet, reprint 1991; Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *The Portuguese Empire in Asia 1500–1700*, New York, 1993; Francisco Bethencourt and Diogo Ramada Curto (eds.), *Portuguese Oceanic Expansion, 1400–1800*, New York, 2007; and A. R. Disney, *A History of Portugal and the Portuguese Empire. From Beginnings to 1807*, Vol. 2: *The Portuguese Empire*, New York, 2009.

4 The dispute between the Spanish (the Castilians recently unified with the kingdoms of Aragon, Catalonia and Valencia) and the Portuguese Crowns for the possession of the newly discovered lands was partly solved with the Bull *Inter caetera* issued by Pope Alexander VI (1431–1503) in 1493 and the treaty of Tordesillas in 1494, which established an imaginary line that divided the lands yet undiscovered outside Europe between Spain and Portugal. Spain was granted exclusive rights to acquire territorial

possessions and to trade in all lands lying to the west of the meridian situated 100 leagues west of Cape Verde Archipelago and the Azores Islands. The dispute over the Spice Islands was significant because their possession and consequent access to the spice trade would bring vast wealth to whoever owned them. In 1529, with the treaty of Zaragoza, an agreement was finally reached. King Charles V of Spain (r. 1516–1556) sold the Spanish rights to the Spice Islands to the Portuguese Crown. For more information, see Henry Kamen, *Spain's Road to Empire: The Making of a World Power, 1492–1763*, London, 2002, p. 42 and 199; and Lourdes Diaz-Trecuelo, 'El tratado de Tordesillas y su proyección en el Pacífico', *Revista Española del Pacífico*, no. 4, Madrid, 1994, pp. 11–21.

5 For the spreading of the Christian faith in the New World, see J. H. Parry, *The Spanish Seaborne Empire*, London, 1990, pp. 152–172. For the Jesuit missions to Japan and China, see Gauvin Alexander Bailey, *Art of the Jesuit Missions in Asia and Latin America. 1442–1773*, Toronto, 1999, pp. 52–104.

6 Maarten Prak, 'The Dutch Golden Age: growth, innovation and consumption', in Jan van Campen and Titus Eliëns (eds.), *Chinese and Japanese porcelain for the Dutch Golden Age*, Zwolle, 2014, p. 9.

7 It would not be possible to cite all the bibliography about the cultural exchanges between Europe and Asia. Publications dealing with China and Japan and their cultural exchange with Europe, especially Portugal, include Musée Cernuschi, *Namban ou de l'Européisme Japonais XVIe–XVIIe Siècles*, exhibition catalogue, Paris, 1980; Europália 91 Portugal, *Via Orientalis*, exhibition catalogue, Brussels, 1991; Simonetta Luz Alfonso and Vicente Borges de Sousa (eds.), *Do Tejo aos Mares da China. Uma epopeia Portuguesa*, exhibition catalogue, Palácio Nacional de Queluz and Musée National des Arts Asiatiques-Guimet, Queluz and Paris, 1992; Sezon Museum of Art, and Shizuoka Prefecture Museum of Art (eds.) *Via Orientalis - Portugalu to Namban Bunka ten*, (Via Orientalis – exhibition of Portuguese and Namban Culture), Tokyo, 1993; José Jordão Felgueiras, *Exotica. The Portuguese Discoveries and the Renaissance Kunstskammer*, exhibition catalogue, Lisbon, 2001; Marina Alfonso Mola and Carlos Martínez Shaw (eds.), *Oriente en Palacio: tesoros asiáticos en las colecciones reales españolas*, exhibition catalogue, Palacio Real de Madrid, Madrid, 2003; Anna Jackson and Amin Jaffer (eds.), *Encounters, The Meeting of Asia and Europe 1500–1800*, exhibition catalogue, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 2004; Luísa Vinhais and Jorge Welsh (eds.), *The Art of the Expansion and Beyond*, exhibition catalogue, London and Lisbon, 2009; and Jay A. Levenson, (ed.), *Encompassing the Globe. Portugal and the World in the 16th and 17th Centuries*, exhibition catalogue, Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga, Lisbon, 2009. This latter exhibition was also held at the Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Washington D.C., in 2007.

8 The term 'luxury' is used throughout this study to refer to Asian manufactured goods that were considered highly desirable in Europe from the late fifteenth to early seventeenth centuries. For a discussion on the use of the term 'luxury' in the context of early modern Europe, see Anne E. C. McCants, 'Exotic Goods, Popular Consumption, and the Standard of Living: Thinking about Globalization in the Early Modern World', *Journal of World History* 18, No. 4 (2007), pp. 433–462.

9 A crucial factor of the tremendous surge in global trade in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was that silver was the dominant export from Europe and the New World, and for a time out of Japan. Tens of thousands of tons of silver were transported to China, where it was worth up to twice as much relative to the rest of the world. For information on the economic aspects of the trade involving silver, see Dennis O. Flynn, *World Silver and Monetary History in the 16th and 17th Centuries*, Adelshort, 1996.

more detailed data on three Asian trade manufactured goods that triggered such influences, i.e. Chinese silk and porcelain, and Japanese lacquer.

Main objectives and research questions [1.1]

This dissertation therefore explores new perspectives on the complex and fascinating trade encounters and cross-cultural interactions that occurred between the East and West in the early modern period. It shows how the material culture of late Ming China and Momoyama/early Edo Japan, and Western Europe and the New World became inextricably linked through an overseas flow of a variety of luxury⁸ Asian manufactured goods and currency (silver) during this period;⁹ and moreover, of how this intercontinental maritime trade, which created enormous opportunities for profits for all, impacted the local fine and applied arts. This dissertation is based on past and current academic studies and publications, combining them with new research, to provide an overview of these long-distance commercial networks and how they resulted in an unprecedented creation of material culture that reflected influences of both the East and West.

As mentioned already, this study focuses on the prolific trade, overseas transport and consumption of three Asian manufactured goods: Chinese silk¹⁰ and porcelain,¹¹ and Japanese lacquer,¹² which began to reach Renaissance Europe with more regularity and in larger quantities in the mid-sixteenth century. The selection of these traditional Asian manufactured goods was not random. The trade in Chinese silk, including raw silk, woven silk cloths and finished silk products, was very lucrative for the Iberians at the time. Raw silk, together with Japanese and New World silver, became the main commodity traded by the Portuguese in Macao, though mainly used for their inter-Asian trade. The Spanish traded large quantities of silks for New World silver in Manila. Raw silk and woven silk cloths were the most important goods imported into New Spain in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, which were destined for both the local market within the viceroyalty and re-export to the viceroyalty of Peru, and a small quantity to Spain. Moreover, this trade is still largely unknown. Although Chinese porcelain and Japanese lacquer were only a small part of the Asian cargoes imported into Western Europe and the New World, surviving objects provide important material evidence of the increasing demand for them in Europe and the New World colonies. These Asian goods were closely linked. They were all traded by the Europeans in search for potential profits, and were transported together in the holds or decks of their ships to Western Europe and the New World, with the desire to satisfy the consumer demands of their respective societies.

This dissertation examines the important role played by the Portuguese – the first Europeans to arrive in Asia – and the Spanish merchants, as well as missionaries of the Society of Jesus and Mendicant Orders, followed by the Dutch and English merchants in spreading a taste for this novel Asian material culture, as well as creating a demand for it. It also discusses the commercial networks through which these Asian manufactured goods circulated, the different ways in which they were acquired, used and appreciated within the respective Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch and English societies in Western Europe, as well as within the multi-ethnic colonial societies of the Spanish, Dutch and English in the New World. The intention is to determine to what extent these Asian goods transformed the everyday life and social customs of the royalty, high-ranking nobility, clergy and affluent merchant class of Renaissance Europe, who in accordance with their high social and economic status, desired the most exclusive,

exotic and curious products from distant enigmatic lands. This research argues that some of these Asian goods reached a wider range of consumers much earlier than has been previously acknowledged. By the late sixteenth century the wide availability and regular supply of Asian goods in some Spanish dominated territories in both Western Europe and the New World (particularly in the Southern Netherlands and the colonial viceroalties of New Spain and Peru) had changed consumer habits and social attitudes. As will be shown, Asian goods that were initially considered a luxury, Chinese silk and porcelain in particular, became more common in the daily lives and households of the Habsburg governors, the high-ranking nobility and rich merchant class of Antwerp, as well as of the Spanish colonial elite, clergy and new middle class of the viceroalties capitals, Mexico City and Lima. By the early seventeenth century these Asian goods had also permeated into the northern frontier province of Spanish New Mexico (present-day southwestern United States). Despite the existence of sumptuary laws imposed by European governing authorities against luxurious dress and ornamentation, Chinese silks during this period became inextricably linked to an individual's identity, serving as visible social indices. For the Catholic ecclesiastical institutions they served as material testimonies of both the breath and width of the Iberian expansion into Asia and the missionary work carried out in the New World colonies. Thus Chinese silk and porcelain came to be integrated into the daily life of members of the colonial society of nearly all social classes, if even only in small quantities. This dissertation also argues that the appreciation and consumption of all silk, porcelain and lacquer in Spain was much more limited than in Portugal, despite the fact that the Crowns were united by the Spanish Habsburgs from 1580 to 1640, or in the Northern Netherlands/Dutch Republic and England. This appears to have been a consequence of the Spanish Crown's political and mercantile policies, which affected the way Asian goods were acquired by Spanish merchants in the Philippines, who became increasingly dependent upon Portuguese, Chinese and Japanese merchants for their supply. It may also have been due to the commercial networks through which they were imported into New Spain, from where small quantities subsequently were re-exported to Spain, which resulted in a considerable increase in their purchase price when it reached the customers in Spain. Thus Asian goods continued to be consumed only by the secular and religious elites in Madrid, Seville and other important cities of Spain in the early seventeenth century.

This study also aims to break new ground in its presentation of a comparative study of the impact that the Portuguese and Spanish empires, and later the Dutch and English trading companies, had on the material culture of China and Japan between 1500 and 1644. Having been trained at university as a designer and later worked professionally in this field, I thought it was important to pay special attention to an aspect of this material culture that still has some unanswered questions. This is the influence that the European merchants and missionaries themselves exerted on the goods especially made to order for them in both China and Japan, which were intended for secular and religious use in settlements in Asia, and respective mother countries in Western Europe and colonies in the New World. This aim immediately presents some concrete questions, which relate to the material and aesthetic qualities of the variety of goods made to order, but also to the way European demand and Asian production/supply was conducted at a human level. These questions, which closely relate to each other, can be summarized as follows:

- 1] How and to what extent did the direct or indirect contact of the Europeans and missionaries with the Chinese weavers, embroiderers and potters, or Japanese lacquer craftsmen, influenced the goods made to order for them in techniques, colour palettes and decorative styles?
- 2] Did the Chinese weavers, embroiderers and potters, and Japanese lacquer craftsmen, faithfully comply with the specific orders placed by the Europeans and missionaries?
- 3] Did Europeans from different countries order the same types of goods, and request the same decorative styles?
- 4] Did the types of goods and/or decorative styles ordered change overtime, following the evolving European tastes and/or fashions?
- 5] How and to what extent did the production costs, and consequently the purchase prices paid by the consumers, affect European orders?

The intention is to answer as accurately as possible these questions, and ultimately to demonstrate that the specific orders placed by the Europeans and missionaries led to the creation of a wide variety of hybrid manufactured goods in China and Japan, which combined elements from two, or sometimes even three, very different and distant cultures, reflecting the fascinating and complex cultural exchanges that occurred in the early modern period between the East and West.

Research methodology and sources [1.2]

The research methodology adopted in this dissertation is to conduct a multidisciplinary study of the trade in Chinese silk and porcelain, and Japanese lacquer, to Western Europe and the New World between 1500 and 1644. Because these Asian manufactured goods are so diverse in regards to their material qualities and ways in which they were traded, consumed and ordered by the Europeans and missionaries, it was decided to study each of them separately. This became more relevant at times when documentary and material evidence proved to be exceedingly scant or insufficient. Therefore each of these Asian goods is dealt with within an individual Chapter, which has its own structure, style and presentation.

The main objectives and concrete questions investigated in this dissertation rely on multiple sources of evidence to a degree that hasn't been explored before. These include unpublished primary sources, and published primary and secondary sources. These all contain valuable information relating to the trade as well as to the varied types and quantities of these Asian manufactured goods imported into Western Europe and the New World via the trans-Atlantic and trans-Pacific trade routes as merchandise, private consignments or gifts. In the case of porcelain, they also include a large amount of material evidence provided by both marine and terrestrial archaeological finds from Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch and English shipwrecks, survival campsites, colonial settlements in Asia, the New World and the Caribbean, as well as from the respective mother countries in Western Europe. This material is complemented by marine archaeological finds from Chinese junks, and terrestrial finds from kiln sites in south China. The analysis and comparison of these archaeological finds, together with

¹⁰ China had been producing silk from around the fourth or fifth millennium B.C. Silk, which was one of China's primary agricultural and commercial products, was traded along the Silk Road from the third to ninth century, first arriving in Europe during Roman times. The shimmering appearance of silk cloth, at that time a material produced only by China, sparked European demand. Even though the Crusades had brought silk production to the Italian city-states in the thirteenth century and silk farming started in the south of France in the sixteenth century, still most silk was imported from China. For the development of sericulture and silk textile production in China, and the expansion of silk consumption via the Silk Road, see Dieter Kuhn (ed.), *Textile Technology: Spinning and Reeling*, vol. 5, part 9 in the series *Science and Civilization in China*, Cambridge, 1988, pp. 285-417; Shelagh Vainker, *Chinese Silk. A Cultural History*, London, 2004; Philippa Scott, *The Book of Silk*, London, 1993; James C. Y. Watt and Anne E. Wardwell (eds.), *When Silk was Gold: Central Asian and Chinese Textiles*, exhibition catalogue, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1998; and Milo C. Beach, 'The Ear Commands the Story: Exploration and Imagination on the Silk Road', in Karen Manchester (ed.), *The Silk Road and Beyond. Travel, Trade and Transformation*, Museum Studies, vol. 33, no. 1, Chicago, 2007, pp. 8-19.

¹¹ China had been manufacturing porcelain since the late sixth century, and held the monopoly on its production over centuries. At the time of the arrival of the Europeans in Asia, Chinese porcelain, made from a mixture of kaolin and the porcelain stone *putuntse* fired at high temperature, was a valuable trade commodity being exported to Japan, Southeast Asia, Middle East and Africa. Jessica Harrison-Hall, 'Chinese porcelain from Jingdezhen', in Ian Freestone and David Gaimster, *Pottery in the Making: World Ceramic Traditions*, London, 1997, pp. 194-199; and Rose Kerr and Nigel Wood (eds.), *Ceramic Technology*, vol. 5, part 12 in the series *Science and Civilization in China*, Cambridge, 2004, pp. 234-235.

¹² Japan had been manufacturing high-quality wood lacquered everyday objects since prehistoric times. Japanese lacquer, called *urushi*, was made from the sap of the lacquer tree known as *Rhus verniciflua*, which is native to central and southern China and Japan. It was only after Portuguese traders brought the Jesuit missionaries to Japan in 1549 that organized trade of lacquer objects to Western Europe began. For the historical development of lacquer techniques in China and Japan, see James C. Y. Watt and Barbara Brennan Ford, *East Asian Lacquer: The Florence and Herbert Irving Collection*, exhibition catalogue, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1991, pp. 1-11.

¹³ Amudena Pérez de Tudela and Annemarie Jordan Gschwend, 'Luxury Goods for Royal Collectors:

scattered information gathered from a wide variety of textual sources, provide both qualitative and quantitative data.

Extant Chinese silks (woven silk cloths and finished silk products) and porcelains, and Japanese lacquers, housed in public and private collections around the world, and still preserved in monasteries and convents in the Iberian Peninsula, provide crucial tangible evidence of the types of Asian goods traded by the Europeans. More importantly, their analysis and stylistic comparison illustrates the similarities and differences with those reflecting European influence that were made as special orders for the Iberian market for both religious and secular use during the early period of European trade in Asia in the sixteenth century, with those made for the Dutch market, and in some cases also the English market, for secular use in the early seventeenth century. A number of European silk textiles, printed works and objects of a variety of materials that most probably served as models, whether directly or indirectly through others made of less expensive materials or made at their settlements in Asia combining European shapes with local manufacturing and decorative techniques, help to clarify the extent and way in which the Chinese and Japanese responded to suit the tastes and demands of their new European clientele. Whenever possible the documentary and material evidence is complemented by visual sources that help us illustrate the practical and/or ornamental uses of these Asian goods within the Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch and English societies in Western Europe, as well as the Spanish, Dutch and English colonial societies in the New World. It should be noted that this is not an attempt to list all examples of the Chinese and Japanese manufactured goods made for the European market that survive around the world, but rather to point out and discuss some with the goal of demonstrating how the shift from the Portuguese/Spanish supremacy in trade to the Dutch/English markedly led to the development of new styles, shapes and decorations, and establish whether China and Japan were both influenced in the same way or different ways.

Scope and limitations [1.3]

It is imperative to define the scope and limitations of such a multidisciplinary study focusing on the trade of three very diverse Asian manufactured goods, Chinese silk and porcelain, and Japanese lacquer, by four different European countries. Although the Iberian Crowns of Portugal and Spain were united from 1580 to 1640, their economies were kept independent. Therefore when sufficient information relating to trade in these goods was available, these two countries were studied separately. Initially, the dissertation was intended to study a hundred-year period from 1550 to 1650, when the Iberians, and the Dutch and English, traded regularly and in considerable quantities. It did not take long, however, to realise that in order to fully understand the early trade in these Asian goods and the European influence exerted on those made to order for them, it was needed to extend the beginning period of this study to the turn of the sixteenth century, when the Portuguese trading in the Indian Ocean had access for the first time to purchase and place special orders of such Asian goods. Then it became apparent that the intended end period also should be changed. The end period had to acknowledge the seclusion policy of the Tokugawa shogunate in Japan that closed the country to all Europeans and missionaries in 1639 (except for the Dutch who did not proselytize the Christian faith); and the collapse of the Ming dynasty in 1644, which resulted in the interruption of the production of silks and porcelains for export. Therefore it was decided that this research study should cover

Exotica, Princely Gifts and Rare Animals Exchanged Between the Iberian Courts and Central Europe in the Renaissance (1560–1612)', in Helmut Trnek and Sabine Haag (eds.), *Exotica. Portugals Entdeckungen im Spiegel fürstlicher Kunst- und Wunderkammern der Renaissance*, exhibition catalogue, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, 2001, Appendix A, p. 36, note 69.

¹⁴ The various types of Jingdezhen porcelain traded by the Europeans will be discussed in Chapter III. There are a number of important publications that have been devoted to the trade in Jingdezhen porcelain by the Portuguese and Dutch in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. For the Portuguese trade, see Maria Antónia Pinto de Matos, *Azul e Branco da China. Porcelana ao Tempo dos Descobrimientos. Coleção Amarel Cabral*, exhibition catalogue, Coleção Amarel Cabral, Lisbon, 1997; João Rodrigues Calvão, *Caminhos da Porcelana. Dinastias Ming e Qing – The Porcelain Route. Ming and Qing Dynasties*, exhibition catalogue, Fundação Oriente, Lisbon, 1999; Maria Antónia Pinto de Matos, *The RA Collection of Chinese Ceramics: A Collector's Vision*, London, 2011, vol. 1. One of the most important publications on the Dutch trade is Tijs Volker, *Porcelain and the Dutch East India Company as recorded in the Dagh-Registers of Batavia Castle, those of Hirado and Deshima and other contemporary papers 1602–1682*, Leiden, 1954. Recent research in records of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) and on Volker's translations of those records by Viallé has shown that Volker's publication presented some errors. Cynthia Viallé, 'De bescheiden van de VOC betreffende de handel in Chinees en Japans porselein tussen 1634 en 1661 - The records of the VOC concerning the trade in Chinese and Japanese porcelain between 1634 and 1661', *Aziatische Kunst*, No. 3, September 1992, pp. 7–34. Other publications on the Dutch trade include C. J. A. Jörg, *Porcelain and the Dutch China Trade*, The Hague, 1982; Christiaan Jörg, 'Chinese Porcelain for the Dutch in the Seventeenth Century: Trading Networks and Private Enterprise', in Rosemary E. Scott (ed.), *The Porcelains of Jingdezhen. Colloquies on Art & Archaeology in Asia No. 16*, Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art and the School of Oriental and African Studies, London, 1993, pp. 183–205; Christiaan Jörg, 'Chinese Porcelain for the Dutch Market', *Oriental Art*, Vol. XLV, 1999, pp. 30–37; Christiaan J.A. Jörg, 'Treasures of the Dutch Trade in Chinese Porcelain', *Oriental Art*, Vol. XLVIII, No. 5 (2002/03), pp. 20–26; and Jan van Campen and Titus Eliëns (eds.), *Chinese and Japanese porcelain for the Dutch Golden Age*, Zwolle, 2014. Only a few publications devote to the Jingdezhen porcelain trade by the Spanish and English during this period. For the Spanish trade to Western Europe and the New World, see Etsuko Miyata Rodríguez, 'Chinese Ceramics Excavated from Northwest Spain (1)', *The Oriental Ceramic Society of the Philippines Newsletter*, June 2008, pp. 8–10; Etsuko Miyata Rodríguez, 'Chinese Ceramics Excavated from Northwest Spain (2)', *The Oriental Ceramic Society of the Philippines Newsletter*, July 2008, pp. 6–8; Etsuko Miyata Rodríguez, 'The Early Manila Galleon Trade: Merchant's Networks and Markets in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Mexico', in Donna Pierce and Ronald Otsuka (eds.), *Asia & Spanish America. Trans-Pacific & Cultural Exchange, 1500–1850. Papers from the 2006 Mayer Center Symposium at the Denver Art Museum Denver*, 2009, pp. 37–57; José Luis Gasch-Tomás, *Global Trade, Circulation and Consumption of Asia Goods in the Atlantic World: The Manila galleons and the social elites of Mexico and Seville (1580–1640)*, unpublished PhD Thesis, European University Institute, Florence, 2012; and Cinta Krahe, *Chinese Porcelain and other Orientalia and Exotica in Spain during the Habsburg Dynasty*, Madrid, 2 vols., forthcoming 2015. For the trade to England, see Susan Bracken, 'Chyna' in England before 1614', *Oriental Art*, Vol. 47, No. 2 (2001),

from 1500, a year after the Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama (1469–1524) first returned from India with Asian goods for the King and the royal court, to 1644, the year of the collapse of the Ming dynasty.

A number of issues have to be considered when analysing both the quantitative and qualitative data available on the trade of Chinese silk and porcelain, and Japanese lacquer, during this early period of intercontinental trade. Although this dissertation includes surviving documentary and material evidence of the volume, composition and value of the cargoes of Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch and English ships that arrived safely or sank or were captured while en route to Western Europe and the New World, it is very difficult to determine the exact quantities, specific types and values of the manufactured goods that were originally exported from China and Japan. Many records referring to the Portuguese maritime trade were lost during the Lisbon earthquake of 1755, which destroyed the *Casa da Índia* and its archives.

The cargoes, which tended to have numerous origins, destinations and customers, had great variations during the period covered in this study. The registers of the ships, when available, give insight into their contents. However, some Asian goods (like small lots of silk, porcelain and lacquer) are not frequently listed. Shipments of such Asian goods, as noted by Pérez de Tudela and Jordan Gschwend, were packed in bundles, packets, boxes or chests used in the trans-Atlantic route from Goa to Lisbon. The result was that many of these containers were unregistered and untaxed.¹³ While it was a time of intense European trade activity, this activity transpired both officially and clandestinely. It is clear that clandestine trade is difficult to trace. Such cargoes may have been disembarked at any of the stopover ports along the homeward journey. Asian goods may also have been brought unregistered as part of personal belongings or private consignments.

It should be mentioned that the Chinese porcelain discussed in this research study relates specifically to the European trade in porcelain which was made in the late Ming dynasty at the private kilns (*minyao*) of Jingdezhen, the largest and most important kiln complex in China, situated in the northeast of Jiangxi province,¹⁴ as well as at the private kilns of Zhangzhou¹⁵ and Dehua,¹⁶ situated in the southern coastal province of Fujian. Material salvaged from maritime archaeological sites in Asia, Africa, Europe, the New World (present-day south and north America) and the Caribbean, a number that is continuously growing, provides invaluable data with regards to the extent of the porcelain trade to Western Europe and the New World, but it is always fragmentary and leaves unanswered questions. A large number of homeward bound ships, often heavily laden, poorly maintained and with leaking hulls, never reached their destinations.¹⁷ It is important to consider that porcelain, regularly used as ballast,¹⁸ together with silk and other precious cargo, may have been thrown overboard in an attempt to keep the ship afloat, or may have been entirely or partially salvaged after the shipwreck, or may have been washed by sea currents or winds to places far removed from the actual wreck site.¹⁹ Furthermore, only a small number of shipwrecks have been professionally excavated, and even fewer have been excavated completely with their finds professionally documented (including full excavation reports and photography). Several shipwrecks, particularly those found in shallow waters, have been disturbed for centuries or decades by local fishermen, and/or plundered by sports divers and treasure-hunters. Relevant shipwrecks of Chinese junks and European ships found to date, some of which have been reported in print, are listed in Appendix 3. It is worth mentioning that when it has not been possible

to identify the name of the ship and the exact date of wreckage in textual sources, the ship has been given a site name and its wreckage date has been ascertained from the archaeological finds, i.e. ship remains (hull) and/or associated cargo. The dates assigned by the marine archaeologists have been considered carefully, and in one particular case a different dating has been suggested because of material evidence found during this research study.

Another important aspect of this research study is the necessity to consider carefully the terminology used in documents written in different languages during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, particularly when the documents refer to the foreign origin of these Asian goods, and/or the types of goods described. For instance, inventories of royal collections that include objects and exotica from Asia, Africa and the New World, often mistakenly describe all Asian goods as ‘Indian’.²⁰ Objects of Asian origin are mentioned in documents from Spain and New Spain as ‘de China’ or ‘de la China’. Thus caution must be taken when interpreting them. Two examples of the use of apparently similar terms in the Iberian Peninsula serve to illustrate the difficulties in interpreting the terminology. In Spain the term ‘*buxerías*’, also known as ‘*menudencias*’, was used in the plural form to refer to things of low price or value.²¹ In Portugal, however, the term ‘*miudezas*’ was used to refer to a wide variety of small portable things, but not necessarily of little value, such as semi-precious stones, jewellery and porcelain.²²

One of the biggest limitations is that silk and lacquer, unlike porcelain, often do not survive in archaeological records.²³ Thus this research study relies on a number of ships registers, post-mortem and probate inventories, and many other contemporary documents, to give a general idea of the quantities, types and practical uses of the silks and lacquers traded. It also relies on rare and fragile extant examples of woven silks and silk finished products, as well as extant lacquer pieces housed in public and private collections, monasteries, convents and churches, and royal collections, to provide tangible evidence of their shapes, textures, decorative designs, and colour palettes, and also in some cases of how they were adapted to suit European tastes.

Given the scarcity of price data in post-mortem and probate inventories as well as in ship registers and invoices of the Portuguese and Spanish, the latter in comparison with those of the Dutch and English trading companies, it is difficult to make judgements about the influence of demand on the price of these goods. Although it is not possible to accurately quantify the demand of each of them, whenever possible documentary and archaeological evidence has been used to evaluate the consumer demand responses to changes in their supply and price.

New and important information has been found during the multidisciplinary research for this doctoral dissertation. The significance is often obvious from what has been discussed throughout the dissertation text. For this reason, as well as space constrains, only three more in-depth discussions that highlight new and/or important aspects have been included, one for silk, one for porcelain and one for lacquer. These three examples can be regarded as *pars pro toto*.

Chinese words and names have been spelled according to the Pinyin system of romanization throughout the dissertation.

Organisation [1.4]

This introduction presents the main objectives and research questions, the research methodology and sources employed, and the scope and limitations of this dissertation.

pp. 8–10; and Stacey Pierson, *Collectors, Collections and Museums: The Field of Chinese Ceramics in Britain, 1560–1960*, Oxford, 2007. There was also a small number of mid and late Ming private kilns located further south in Jiangxi province, which produced secondary quality blue-and-white porcelain for both the domestic and export markets. These kilns, including Leping, Yiyang, Guangchang, Anyuan and Ji’an (Appendix 2), are important because they provide a link between the kilns of Jingdezhen and those of Fujian. There is a serious lack of knowledge about the porcelain produced in these kilns as only a few of the archaeological finds have been published. However, a brief report of porcelain finds dating to the Jiaying reign made at the Leping kiln includes images of fragments of dishes that closely resemble examples recovered from the Portuguese shipwreck *Espadarte*, which sank in (1558) (Appendix 3). Thus future research on the porcelain production of these kilns seems imperative to establish if some of the porcelains traded by the Europeans were made at these kilns instead of at those of Jingdezhen. For the Leping finds, see Chen Boquan, ‘Jiangxi Leping Mingdai qinghua yaozhi diaocha (Investigations of Ming blue and white kilnsites in Leping, Jiangxi)’, *Wenwu* (Cultural Relics), 1973, no. 3, pp. 46–51. For more information on these kilns, see Jiangxi Provincial Museum, ‘Hengfeng guyaozhi diaocha (Investigations of old kiln sites in Hengfeng)’, *Wenwu gongzuo ziliao* (Reference Material on Cultural Relics Works), 1965, no. 4; Jiangxi Provincial Museum, ‘Yiyang guyaozhi diaocha (Investigations of old kiln site in Yiyang)’, *Wenwu gongzuo ziliao* (Reference Material on Cultural Relics Works), 1966, no. 1; Chen Boquan, ‘Wosheng chutu de Mingdai qinghua ciqi (Some Ming blue and whites unearthed in Jiangxi Province)’, *Wenwu gongzuo ziliao* (Reference Material on Cultural Relics Works), 1973, no. 6; Jiangxi Provincial Museum, ‘Anyuan Xuan faxian Mingdai qinghua ciyao (Ming blue-and-white kiln sites discovered at Anyuan Country)’, *Jiangxi lishi wenwu* (Historical and Cultural Relics in Jiangxi Province), 1984, no. 2; Jiangxi Provincial Museum, ‘Guangchang faxian de Mingdai qinghua ciyao (Ming blue-and-white porcelain kiln sites discovered at Guangchang)’, *Jiangxi lishi wensu* (Historical and Cultural Relics in Jiangxi Province), 1985, no. 2; and Peng Shifan, Peng Minghan, Peter Y.K. Lam, et. al., *Yuan and Ming Blue and White Ware from Jiangxi*, exhibition catalogue, Jiangxi Provincial Museum and the Art Museum, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2002. I am greatly indebted to Prof. Peter Y.K. Lam, Honorary Fellow, Institute of Chinese Studies, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, for bringing these kiln sites to my attention and for these bibliographical references.

¹⁵ The various types of *Zhangzhou* porcelain traded by the Europeans will be discussed in Chapter III. *Zhangzhou* porcelain, then referred to as *Swatow*, was first described and discussed systematically in 1955, when Aga-Oglu studied the collection of the University of Michigan in the United States. In 1963, Miedema published a catalogue of the extensive collection housed at the Prinsessehof Museum in Leeuwarden, The Netherlands. Harrison published another catalogue of this collection in 1979. A classification by form and decorative styles for dishes was published by Miedema in 1984. See Kamer Aga-Oglu, ‘The So-called ‘Swatow’ wares: Types and Problems of Provenance’, *Far Eastern Ceramic Bulletin*, vol. VII, no. 2, 1955, pp. 1-37; Hessel Miedema, *Swatow. Catalogus [van het] Gemeentelijk Museum Het Prinsessehof [te] Leeuwarden*, Leeuwarden, 1963; Barbara Harrison, *Swatow in het Prinsessehof: The analysis of a museum collection of Chinese trade wares from Indonesia*, Leeuwarden, 1979; and Hessel Miedema, ‘A Typology of Swatow Dishes’, *Oriental Art*, vol. XXX, no. 1, Spring 1984, pp. 34–85. For a more recent discussion on *Zhangzhou*

porcelain and further bibliographical references, see Teresa Canepa, ‘Introduction’, in Luisa Vinhais and Jorge Welsh (eds.), *Zhangzhou Export Ceramics. The So-called Swatow Wares*, London and Lisbon, 2006, pp. 13–43.

¹⁶ The *Dehua* porcelain traded by the Europeans in the first half of the seventeenth century, which appears to have been mostly *Blanc de chine*, will be discussed in Chapter III. There have been a number of publications devoted to *Blanc de chine* porcelain. Although it has been shown that Donnelly’s book on *Blanc de chine* has some problems of dating, it can be still used as a reference book. Patrick J. Donnelly, *Blanc de Chine. The Porcelain of Téhua in Fukien*, New York, 1969. More recent publications include Rose Kerr and John Ayers, et. al., *Blanc de Chine: Porcelain from Dehua, A Catalogue of the Hickley Collection*, Singapore, 2002; and John Ayers, *Blanc de Chine: Divine Images in Porcelain*, exhibition catalogue, China Institute Gallery, New York, 2002.

¹⁷ The overwhelming majority of the European homebound ships sank due to bad weather conditions. Other losses were due to late or ill-advised departure dates, excessive ambition by the captains and officials. Filipe Vieira de Castro, *The Pepper Wreck. A Portuguese Indiaman at the Mouth of the Tagus River*, College Station, TX, 2005, p. 69.

¹⁸ Porcelain’s impermeability, easy packing and storage, and heavy weight made it a perfect ballast item, stored deep down in the hold of the ship to provide stability. Sara R. Brigadier, *The Artifact Assemblage from the Pepper Wreck: An Early Seventeenth Century Portuguese East-Indiaman that Wrecked in the Tagus River*, unpublished MA Thesis, Texas A&M University, 2002, p. 54.

¹⁹ A clear example is when the commander of the Portuguese galleon *Agua* ordered the silks and other Chinese goods to be thrown overboard after the ship was badly damaged due to a storm in 1558 or 1559, which will be discussed in Chapter II.

²⁰ For a discussion on the term *Indian* in inventories of the early modern period, see Jessica Keating and Lia Markey, ‘“Indian” objects in Medici and Austrian-Habsburg inventories. A case-study of the sixteenth-century term’, *Journal of the History of Collections*, vol. 23, no. 2 (2011), pp. 283–300.

²¹ Pérez de Tudela and Jordan Gschwend, 2001, p. 36; and Krahe, 2014, Vol. I, pp. 255–256.

²² James C. Boyajian, *Portuguese Trade in Asia under the Habsburgs, 1580–1640*, Baltimore and London, 1993, p. 324.

²³ Silk is an organic material, and only in few cases it has appeared in underwater context. Natural silk – made of fibroin (75 per cent) and sericin (25 per cent), which are fibrous proteins secreted by *Bombix mori*, aka silkworm silk, or by *Antheraea pernyi* and *Antheraea Mylitta*, wild silkworm silk. For more information, see Andreia Ribeiro Romão Veliça Macahado, *Conservação de Materiais Orgânicos Arqueológicos Subaquáticos (Conservation of Underwater Archaeological Organic Materials)*, unpublished PhD thesis, Universidad Autónoma de Lisboa Luis de Camões, 2013, p. 54.

The rest of the dissertation is composed of five Chapters, including a final Chapter with conclusions, and three Appendixes. It is organized as follows:

Chapter I, divided into two main sections, provides a general background to understand the historical and economic significance of the European entry into the Asian maritime trade in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Each section briefly examines the dynamic processes of exploration, diplomacy, settlement and trade first of the Iberians – Portuguese and Spanish – and later the Dutch and English. A variety of contemporary maps and city views, some of them taken from atlases, as well as paintings, are used throughout this Chapter to visualize the spatial representations of Western Europe and colonial settlements in Asia and the New World that helped to shape the geographical knowledge of these distant regions of the world during this period. The first section focuses on the building of Iberian trading-post empires in the sixteenth century. It examines the Portuguese arrival in Asia and their monopoly of the trans-Atlantic trade route to Western Europe, as well as the beginning of competition when the Spanish subsequently established a trans-Pacific and trans-Atlantic trade route between Asia, through New Spain, to Spain. The second section focuses on the shifting balance of European powers that occurred when Dutch and English trading companies of northern Europe entered and partly gained control of the Asian maritime trade in the early seventeenth century.

Chapters II, III and IV are the core of this dissertation. They discuss extant documentary and material evidence of the trade in Chinese silk and porcelain, and Japanese lacquer to Western Europe and the New World, as well as of the European influence on these Asian goods. Each Chapter, as noted above, has its own structure and presentation according to the subject and the evidence found through this research study. Textual sources and material evidence are discussed in chronologically arranged sections. A discussion that highlights a new and/or important aspect of the research is included at the end of each Chapter, just before the conclusions.

Chapter II explores the importance of Chinese silk, together with New World silver, as the primary forces behind the emergence of a global trade in Asian manufactured goods in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Its first section examines the silk trade to the Iberian Peninsula, the Southern Netherlands and the Spanish colonies in the New World. In the second section, the silk trade to the Northern Netherlands/Dutch Republic and England, carried out only in small-scale in the early seventeenth century, are examined. The third section examines the European influence on Chinese silk by discussing textual sources and a small number of extant woven and embroidered silk cloths, and finished silk products, housed in public and private collections in China and the rest of the world, and whenever possible comparing them with contemporary European silks, prints or objects that illustrate the sort of sources that may have served as models. Silks, as will be shown, were mainly made to order for the Iberian market with European motifs and/or shapes for both secular and religious use at this time, but a small number was made for private Italian individuals present in Asia for secular use, as early as the late sixteenth century.

Chapter III is the largest Chapter of this dissertation. Besides textual sources relating to the European trade in porcelain it discusses a vast quantity of material yielded from both marine and terrestrial archaeological sites in Asia, Africa, Europe, the New World (north, central and south America) and the Caribbean that provide a context in which to identify the types and quantities of porcelain exported during the period of this study, as well as visual sources, including still-life and portrait

paintings, drawings and prints, which are used throughout to illustrate the presence, ownership and/or practical and ornamental function of porcelain pieces – depicted individually or in groups – in a particular geographical area and time period. The first section of the Chapter examines the porcelain trade to the Iberian Peninsula and the Southern Netherlands. Its second section examines the porcelain trade to the Northern Netherlands/Dutch Republic and England. The third section examines the porcelain trade to the New World, discussing only Spanish, Dutch and English colonial sites in the New World and the Caribbean. It should be noted that the porcelain trade to the Portuguese colonies in the New World is not included because documentary and material evidence are exceedingly scant. The fourth section examines the European influence on Chinese porcelain by discussing a number of extant porcelain pieces made to order with European motifs or after European shapes for the Iberian market in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, and for the Dutch market from the third decade on the seventeenth century onwards, and whenever possible compare them with objects of a variety of materials, or with prints and drawings that may have served as models.

Chapter IV focuses on the development and trade of new styles of Japanese lacquer made to order for the missionaries of the Society of Jesus and Mendicant Orders, and later for the Iberians, Dutch and English for both religious and secular use in Japan, European settlements in Asia, as well as to be exported to Western Europe and the New World from c.1580 to 1644, during the Momoyama and early Edo periods. It discusses the European influence on Japanese lacquer by relying on textual sources and a number of extant lacquer objects housed in monasteries and convents, as well as in public and private collections in Japan and the rest of the world, which help us visualize the material qualities, colour schemes and decorative patterns of the various lacquer objects made as special orders for the European market during this period. It also relies on visual sources, including paintings and prints, which serve to illustrate the models of the motifs copied by the lacquer craftsmen, as well as to compare the lacquer production for the Japanese domestic market which influenced the decorative style of lacquers made to order for the missionaries and Europeans.

Chapter V presents some final conclusions regarding the documentary, material and visual evidence presented in the three previous Chapters.

Genealogical tables of the Houses of Avis-Beja – Habsburg and the House of Orange corresponding to the period covered by this study are included in an Appendix, Appendix 1. Available data related to the trade in porcelain to Western Europe and the New World yielded from terrestrial and marine archaeological excavations in China and the rest of the world is included in the form of two Appendixes. Appendix 2 provides a map of south China showing the late Ming kilns of Jingdezhen in Jiangxi province, and those of Dehua and Zhangzhou in Fujian province, discussed in Chapter III, which produced various types of porcelain for the European market, including the porcelain made to order. Appendix 3 includes all the Chinese junks and European shipwrecks that have been recorded thus far with late Ming porcelain for the export market, listed chronologically.

Finally, a bibliography and index are given.