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Introduction
The sixteenth and 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 Indian Ocean round the Cape of Good Hope and Christopher Columbus’s (1451–1506) discovery of the New World, four years later, in 1492,2 which opened up direct long-distance sea trade routes between Europe, the New World, Africa, and Asia both via 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.3 By the beginning of the sixteenth 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.4 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.5 This doctoral dissertation attempts to give a better insight and to provide 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 inexorably linked through an overspill flow of a variety of luxuriously manufactured goods and currency (silver) during this period and moreover, of how this intercontinental maritime trade, which created enormous opportunities for profits for all, impacted the local line 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 silk and porcelain, and Japanese lacquer.6 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 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 importance and cultural influence of these goods in 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 consumers’ 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 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 study how and in what way these Asian goods transformed the everyday life and social customs of the nobility, 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 viceroyalties 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 viceroyalties capitals, Mexico City and Lima. By the early seventeenth century these Asian goods had also permeated to the northern frontier province of Spain New Mexico (present-day southwestern United States). Despite the existence of summary 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 breadth and width of the Iberian empire’s influence 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 Crown was 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 empires, 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, it thought important to pay special attention to an aspect of this material culture that still has some unanswered questions. This is the historical trade of Chinese, Japanese and missionary themselves exportation and 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, influence the goods made to order for them in techniques, colour palettes and decorative styles?
2] Did the Chinese weavers, embroiderers and potters, or 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 Portugal, 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 junkes, and terrestrial finds from kiln sites in south China. The analysis and comparison of these archaeological finds, together with...
scattered information gathered from a wide variety of textual sources, 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 century 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 Chinese and Japanese lacquers, housed in public and private collections around the world, and still preserved in monasteries and convents in the Iberian Peninsula, provide evidence of 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...
to identify the name of the ship and the exact date of wreckage in textural sources, the ship has been given a site name and its wreckage date has been ascertained from the archaeological evidence. This methodology and sources employed, and the scope and limitations of this dissertation. The rest of the dissertation is composed of five Chapters, including a final Chapter with conclusions, and three Appendices. 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 seventeenth centuries. This 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.

Chapter II reviews the methodology and sources employed, and the scope and limitations of this dissertation. The rest of the dissertation is composed of five Chapters, including a final Chapter with conclusions, and three Appendices. 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 seventeenth centuries. This 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 temporal and contemporary sites and maps, 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 Asian trade route to Western Europe, as well as the beginning of competition with the Dutch and English after the establishment of 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 posts emerged in the Indian Ocean in the seventeenth century and were increasingly colonized and partially gained control of the Asian maritime trade in the early seventeenth century.

Chapter 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 conclusion and private sections.

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 court. In this section, the first trading companies, it is difficult to make the Iberian judgments about the influence of demand on the price of these goods. Although it is not possible to accurately quantify the demand of each, whenever possible documentary and archaeological evidence has been used to evaluate the consumer demands and supply structures. New and important information has been found during the multidisciplinary research for this doctoral dissertation. The significance of this information is often what has been discussed throughout the dissertation text. For this reason, as well as for space considerations, we have chosen to highlight more important insights and impressions as they have been included, one for silk, one for porcelain and one for lacquer. These three examples can be regarded as part est pro sim.

Chinese words and names have been spelled according to the Fynum 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.
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 Appendices. 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.