

# THE JOURNEY OF ARTIFACTS:

THE STUDY AND CHARACTERIZATION OF A NUCLEUS OF LACQUERED LUSO-ASIAN OBJECTS FROM THE 16TH AND 17TH CENTURIES

# Volume I

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## **Abstract**

This thesis examines a group of objects produced for Catholic Europeans in the scope of the Portuguese maritime explorations and Catholic missions in Asia in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. Embellished with Asian lacquer coatings, their heterogeneous character and complex mix of decorative elements, artistic and craft traditions has led to various attributions regarding their production, including classification as Indo-Portuguese, Sino-Portuguese, Japanese *nanban* or Ryūkyūan. This study arose over discrepancies between these presumed identifications and their actual physical features. Taking a multi-disciplinary approach, it combined formal and esthetic examination with material analysis, while also considering the cultural and geo-political context, contemporary Asian lacquer traditions, and similar decorative techniques. In addition to refining the fundamentals of lacquer conservation it also led to a reconsideration of the accepted attributions of these objects. As a result, the study sheds new light on our understanding of European and Asian relations in a period critical to the shaping of our modern world.

**Keywords:** Asian lacquer, technical study, Portuguese expansion, Luso-Asian art, early modern material culture

## Resumo

A Viagem dos Artefactos: O Estudo e a Caracterização de um Núcleo de Objetos Lacados Luso-Asiáticos dos Séculos XVI e XVII

Esta tese examina um conjunto de objetos produzidos para europeus católicos no âmbito das explorações marítimas portuguesas e missões católicas na Ásia nos séculos XVI e XVII. Embelezados com revestimentos de laca asiática, o seu carácter heterogéneo e a mistura complexa de elementos decorativos, tradições artísticas e artesanais levaram a várias atribuições em relação à sua produção, incluindo classificações como indoportuguês, sino-português, japonês *nanban* ou Ryūkyū. Este estudo surgiu devido a discrepâncias entre essas presumidas identificações e as suas características físicas reais. Ao adoptar uma abordagem multidisciplinar, esta investigação combinou o exame formal e estético com a análise dos materiais, considerando também o contexto cultural e geopolítico, as tradições contemporâneas de laca asiática e as suas técnicas decorativas similares. Além de refinar os fundamentos da conservação da laca, também levou a uma reconsideração das atribuições aceites relativamente a esses objetos. Como resultado, esse estudo lança nova luz sobre a nossa compreensão das relações europeias e asiáticas num período crítico para a formação de nosso mundo moderno.

**Palavras-chave:** laca asiática, estudo técnico, expansão portuguesa, arte luso-asiática, cultura material na idade moderna inicial

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## **Formal Criteria and Transcriptions**

#### **Dimensions and Measurements:**

If not otherwise indicated the dimensions of the individual pieces are given, according to current practice, in the following way: Height x Width x Depth.

## **Transcription:**

The official system of romanization of the Peoples Republic of China - *Pinyin* - is used for the spelling of Chinese words and names. Depending on the sources used, romanized Chinese terms are displayed with or without tone accents. To offer a uniform presentation in this thesis the tone accents were eliminated, except in Appendix II.

Japanese terms are written in Latin script in the romanized version (*Rōmaji*). Depending on the literature consulted different spellings or versions of single terms can be found. In this work, the most common variants encountered in the sources were used, for example *makie* instead of *maki-e*. Japanese personal names are written in the Japanese way, with the surname first, followed by the given name.

# Abbreviations, Acronyms and Symbols

AM Amsterdam Museum, Amsterdam, Netherlands

AR-PAB Alvaro Roquette & Pedro Aguiar Branco Lda., Lisbon, Portugal

ASM Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, United Kingdom

BL Blue light (I3 filter cube)

ff. "following", "subsequent"

Fig. Figure

fl. Folio

Fr. Father

FRESS Fundação Ricardo Espirito Santo Silva, Lisbon, Portugal

GCI Getty Conservation Institute, Los Angeles, CA, USA

H Hight

KHM Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Austria

KNM Kyūshū National Museum, Fukuoka, Japan

LJF-DGPC Laboratório José de Figueiredo – Direção-Geral do Patrimônio

Cultural, Lisbon, Portugal

JPGM J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, CA, USA

MAK Museum für Angewandte Kunst, Vienna, Austria

MET Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA

MNAA Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga, Lisbon, Portugal

MNFMdC Museu Nacional Frei Manuel do Cenáculo (Museu de Évora), Évora, Portugal

MNGV Museu Nacional Grão Vasco, Viseu, Portugal

MNSR Museu Nacional de Soares dos Reis, Porto, Portugal

PDVV Paço Ducal de Vila Viçosa, Portugal

# THE JOURNEY OF ARTIFACTS: THE STUDY AND CHARACTERIZATION OF A NUCLEUS OF LACQUERED LUSO-ASIAN OBJECTS FROM THE $16^{\rm TH}$ AND $17^{\rm TH}$ CENTURIES

P/S Palmitic acid/ stearic acid

RDK Royal Danish Kunstkammer, Copenhagen, Denmark

Tab. Table

UV Ultraviolet light

V&A Victoria & Albert Museum, London, United Kingdom

VIS Visible light

WC Wallace Collection, London, United Kingdom

 $\emptyset$  Diameter

## I. Introduction

#### I.I. Contextualization

This thesis focuses on a group of heterogeneously composed Luso-Asian<sup>1</sup> artifacts embellished with an Asian lacquer coating – parade shields and portable furniture of diverse typologies with complex decorations. They were created at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> and throughout the 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, the era of domination through decline of the Habsburg dynasty over the southern European presence in maritime Asia (1580-1640).

Asian lacquer is the sap of several tree species native to Southeast and East Asia, where its use as glue, and as a protective or decorative coating material has a millennia-old history. A complex material, lacquer coatings are composed of multiple layers that have distinct compositions depending on their purposes. Application as decorative finishing requires specific conditions and skills. Various cultures developed traditions and techniques that over time mutually influenced each other. Identification of a certain lacquering tradition thus requires an extensive material identification, possible only through scientific analysis.

Lacquer decorated not only everyday objects, but also was for thousands of years closely associated with religious ritual. With the expansion of trading activities in Asia as a consequence of Portuguese voyages and commercial ventures, Europeans spotted these artifacts in the different markets, and were profoundly fascinated by this previously unknown

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The term *Luso* refers to Portugal and the Portuguese language, and is derived from the former Roman province Lusitania on the Iberian Peninsula, Trumple & Stevenson (2002, p. 1653), which in fact also included parts of today's Spain. The term Luso-Asian is generally applied to people of mixed ethnicities from the miscegenation of native Portuguese with multi-ethnic indigenous Asian cultures and their descendants, who still retain cultural aspects of their Portuguese ancestors such as the Portuguese language, the Roman Catholic faith, including distinctive elements of domestic, civic and religious Luso-Asian architecture, as well as Luso-Asian cuisine, and finally also Luso-Asian art. This term has already been used by various scholars to designate artifacts of heterogeneous character that emerged from the Portuguese presence in Asia, with sometimes still obscure origins. It also functions as a preamble for the diversely distinctive artistic and craft creations fruit of the Catholic European presence in Asia; see for example Moreira (1998), Moreira & Curvelo (1998). Bernardo Ferrão compiled the most varied furniture types and decorations of multiple, sometimes unknown, origins under the similar Portuguese term "luso-oriental", Ferrão (1990b, p. 24), while oriental means East from Europe and does not necessarily point to the Asian origins of manufacture. One could say also that the concept "Luso-Asian" is European centered, but it is from Europe that we are looking at these objects, they resulted from the European presence in Asia, and yet no other more appropriate term exists to summarize all these heterogeneous artifacts.

exotic material, with its mirror-like red, brown or black surfaces ornamented with gold. Growing interest led to a flow into Europe that intensified from the 16<sup>th</sup> century onward, first and foremost among the ruling classes. Marked by trade and the missions, the Catholic European presence in Asia particularly relied upon the close interrelationship of merchants and missionaries. Luso-Asian settlements, diverse trade centers, as well as religious institutions, provided many platforms for the interaction of European and different Asian societies. This included the exchange of goods and artifacts, raw materials, cultural and scientific knowledge, ideas, spiritual beliefs, and social conventions; it extended to diverse individuals, artisans, forms, vogues, styles, and techniques from market to market. This circulation led to a variety of artworks of a hybrid character in all areas under Iberian patronage or linked to the broad trading network. It resulted in fundamental changes in European and Asian material culture and artistic production.

Numerous extant pieces of furniture and other items materially manifest this demand for portable objects that grew along with the presence of Europeans along the Asian shoreline. Regardless of where they were made, and apart from the fact that many are modeled on European prototypes, those created for Europeans were designed to appeal to the tastes of foreign buyers not according to local esthetics or function. They include everyday objects, luxury pieces and religious artifacts, and are characterized by the confluence of artistic traditions, styles<sup>2</sup> and imagery. In different parts of the *Portuguese State of India*<sup>3</sup> they were commissioned by representatives of the Portuguese crown, officials, noblemen, merchants, the Jesuits and members of religious orders.

In decorative arts convention, these hybrid creations are generally categorized according to certain geographical origins and cross-cultural phenomena, for instance Indo-Portuguese, Singhalese-Portuguese, Sino-Portuguese or Japanese *nanban* productions, among others. Nevertheless, the particular group of heterogeneous artifacts under scrutiny in this thesis reflects influences of multiple origins, either in view of construction methods and

<sup>-</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> When referring to artistic styles, the German connotation of the word *Stil* (Latin *stilus*) is used here, which combines a "characteristically pronounced manifestation" and a "certain way of execution", specific for instance for a certain time period, culture, workshop or artist, Wahrig-Burgfeind (1997, p. 1181).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> The term *estado* (state) to describe the vast network of trading bases and fortifications emerged already in the early phase of its foundation during the reign of King D. Manuel I. (1495-1521), being well established in the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Saldanha (2016, p. 369).

materials, or carved wood and lacquer ornamentation. Closely observed, individual examples are neither easy to assign nor fit any of the established concepts of fusion arts and hybrid artistic creations. Some show Chinese motifs in their gold decorations, while other items specifically destined for religious use present resemblances with Japanese *nanban* lacquerware. As manifold as the individual objects, as different were their clients or consumers and circumstances that led to their creation and circulation. Given their combination of artistic contributions and influences from multiple cultural and geographically different locations in Asia, the examined specimens were grouped under the term "Luso-Asian". In recent years these lacquered pieces have raised many questions concerning their origins.

As a conservator, in the scope of my diploma thesis<sup>4</sup> I had the opportunity to study intensively at the furniture section of the conservation department of the Laboratório José de Figueiredo - Direção Geral do Patrimônio Cultural (LJF-DGPC) in Lisbon. My focus was a previously unpublished lacquered parade shield belonging to the Museu Nacional de Soares dos Reis (MNSR) in Porto. The investigation sought to develop a conservation project that would stop its decay process and consolidate its partially lifted and photo-degraded layers, and the cracked lacquer floes<sup>5</sup>.

Generally, in the field of art conservation and restoration, the understanding of material compositions, possible interactions and aging behavior are prerequisite to an adequate conservation project. Whereas the material study mainly relies on collaboration with analytical scientists, this necessitates thorough investigation of the materials and techniques used, as well as the damage patterns and their causes. Moreover, an object is never considered detached from its cultural background, so extensive research and material studies aim to better classify objects in terms of time, geography, and culture.

The study and treatment of the shield, part of a research fellowship<sup>6</sup> conducted between 2009-2012 at the LJF-DGPC in collaboration with the analytical chemist José Carlos Frade, brought to light several comparable portable furniture and other shields from museum

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Körber (2008).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Körber (2011/2012).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia, FCT (SFRH/BTI/33602/2009).

and private collections. All originated from the same context – the Portuguese expansion in Asia. Twenty-seven objects were micro-sampled and analyzed, all characterized by the identical divergence between the actual wood structure and construction on the one hand, and the lacquer coating and decoration on the other. All raised the same questions regarding their origins, the circumstances of their creation, and journeys. Investigation revealed that previous categorizations of individual items had relied upon vague assumption, not solid evidence. This study employed a multi-technical approach that identified the lacquer type, organic and inorganic materials such as binders and fillers, and the decorative techniques of each piece. The data uncovered two lacquering traditions – a Southeast Asian (today's Myanmar and Thailand) and an East Asian (China and the Ryūkyū Kingdom, today's Okinawa, Japan)<sup>7</sup>. With each subsequent example yielding the above-mentioned characteristics, my curiosity sparked. This formed the basis for the further investigations of this current thesis.

Comparing similar characteristics of distinct objects, and their modern art historiographic classification, quickly indicates that the circumstances of their creation and respective origin are far from certain, and that these artifacts still raise many questions among the scholars studying them. The diverse classifications that have been suggested sometimes contradict each other, but all share the search for a single location of manufacture. Yet closer observation showed that several items, rather than coherently conceived, appeared to be compiled of disparate artistic contributions. Moreover, the objects with an East Asian lacquer decoration left unanswered some questions regarding exact compositions, as well as those of where and under which circumstances the lacquer was applied, and whether it involved artisans of the Ryūkyū Kingdom (today's Okinawa, Japan). As some items have been ascribed a Ryūkyūan origin and others a Japanese *nanban*, or Chinese manufacture, this subgroup of Luso-Asian artifacts with East Asian lacquer coating deserved a closer look and substantial examination.

The present study selected a nuclear group of nineteen specimens. It comprised similar wood and leather parade shields and portable furniture such as chests, writing-chests, tabletops, trays or oratories, with few exceptions all typical Iberian prototypes. It included four pieces once part of central European Renaissance collections, with *terminus ante quem* 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Körber et al. (2011), Frade& Körber (2011), Frade (2011), Körber (2012a), Körber (2012b).

thanks to listing in inventories of 1596 and 1607-11. Most striking, most of the items display auspicious flora and fauna motifs of purely Chinese origin adapted to foreign taste, esthetic and religious convention, decorations that seem unrelated to their rather coarse wood structures and intricate symmetrical carvings. At some point these artifacts were coated with either black or red East Asian lacquer and adorned with gold leaf decoration or combined with mother-of-pearl inlay in case of liturgical furniture, or even with lacquered and polished rayskin. Formal characterization is further complicated by their complex and individually unique ornamentations that mingle Portuguese, Catholic, Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist, Chinese and even Japanese elements or influences, whether carved or in lacquer.

Some of these items were doubtlessly manufactured in India and others somewhere in the vast territory under Portuguese patronage. No doubt their owners, purchasers and addressees belonged to the powerful and wealthy strata circulating within the *Portuguese Estate of India*, as evidenced by their provenances, as well as their typologies or the presence of noblemen's coat-of-arms or Christian symbolism. The existence of distinctive morphologies that are more an aspect of personal commission than of merchandise, and historical and artistic uniqueness, reflects the complexity of the system of the manufacture and circulation of goods that resulted from the impact of the Portuguese expansion, also manifest in contemporary taste developed in Europe, as well as in consumption habits and collecting practices.

#### I.II. State of Current Research

To date, scholarship has attributed these pieces to production centers ranging from different places in Europe, the Indian subcontinent, China, the Kingdom of Ryūkyū and Japan, and generally suggested the latter three with respect to religious artifacts. From the 1980s onward much research on the decorative art slinked to European overseas ventures appeared in the context of catalogues published in connection with national and international exhibitions devoted to the themes of Portuguese, Iberian or European presence and crosscultural exchange. Several previously unknown examples of these artifacts of multi-cultural influence have come to light in recent years, followed by a growing interest in them, reflected in individual articles featuring single items or object groups. Although in the most cases the studied items' connection to the Portuguese presence in Asia was unquestioned, several were unrecognized as material manifestations of the complex circulation that characterized the

Luso-sphere. The inclusion of material analysis (lacquer type), was performed only occasionally on individual pieces, and did not provide a basis for the comparison of a larger group of artifacts.

This thesis relies on the works of many scholars, historians, art historians, curators, collectors, conservators and analytical scientists. Briefly, the most important for this present investigation whose work focused on better understanding and classifying these artifacts, include Maria Helena Mendes Pinto and Bernardo Ferrão (Tavares e Távora), both forerunners in the study of decorative arts and various furniture types stemming from the Portuguese expansion, including several of the investigated lacquered Luso-Asian pieces. Pinto devoted her interest to different cross-cultural phenomena, to manufacture originating in the Indian subcontinent and Japan. She presented the first Portuguese study on the relationship between Portugal and Japan, and the resulting artworks summarized as *nanban* art. Many other geographical regions marked by the Portuguese presence also got her attention, especially emphasizing hybrid furniture creations. Noting the Asian provenance of the embellishments of several lacquered items, she discussed Japanese, Chinese, Ryūkyūan or Southeast Asian origins and coined the term "Jesuit lacquers", due to the role of the Jesuit order for the production and circulation of these objects.

Architect Bernardo Ferrão pursued a deeply researched study on carved religious ivory figures – Luso-Asian imagery – observing and describing different creations that present a confluence of Christian and indigenous elements<sup>9</sup>. He then published in 1990 a monumental four volume history and evolution of Portuguese furniture. It included two volumes dedicated to overseas creations resulting from the contact with different Asian cultures, including pieces adorned with lacquer<sup>10</sup>. With a myriad of photographs, he documented a vast group of items nowadays unlikely to be found in Portugal (most were in private collections; some were altered during "restoration"; and several pieces were sold abroad). This was the first extensive compilation assorted by typologies. In particular, and according to then-accepted knowledge, it assigned the different types of furniture to an Indo-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Pinto (1979; 1983a; 1983b; 1983c; 1985-1987; 1990; 1991a; 1991b; 1994; 2003a; 2003b; 2011a; 2011b; 2011c; 2011d; 2012), Canavarro & Pinto (1989; 1990), Pinto & Garcia (1998).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Távora (1983).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Ferrão (1990b; 1990c).

Portuguese origin (including ivory items of Singhalese manufacture) or a Nippon-Portuguese (nanban) manufacture. Included are historical and geo-political contextualizations, as well as references in contemporary documents, inventories, and travelogues. In the case of lacquered chests and writing-boxes, he pointed out the difficulty of precise identification and classification. This compilation provides a fundamental starting point for the exploration of objects of Luso-Asian art, which he includes under the broader concept of Luso-Oriental (Arte luso-oriental). In relation to the group under consideration, he assigns some comparative examples to a Japanese nanban manufacture, such as a tray and an oratory, while several chests and writing-boxes are assigned to the Indo-Portuguese art.

In a study of 1994, the architect João Jordão Felgueiras investigated a group of large travelling trunks made of wild jack wood. Based on historical documents and the fact that in the surrounding area existed large plantations of this tree species, he attributed their manufacture to Cochin on the Malabar Coast. In the same article he links a group of carved and lacquered wooden travs to this port city, dating them to the 16<sup>th</sup> century. He supports this assumption through "decorative similarities", the long commercial exchange with the Middle Kingdom, and the strong Chinese influences along this region<sup>11</sup>. However, apart from being likely made of teak not wild jack wood, the trays have carved and lacquer decoration rather than the plain surfaces of the travelling trunks. In 1999, in another text, he repeats these assumptions and extends them to a group of other objects and furniture typologies with East Asian lacquer ornamentation that he likewise attributes to Cochin. Noting that due to the absence of documentation or detailed descriptions, the classification of a diverse group of objects is difficult. To him it seemed completely implausible that carpentry work would be completed in Cochin and the lacquer work on Chinese soil. He further attributes the so-called "Cardinal's table" to Cochin, based solely on formal comparison with other pieces previously linked to this city. He validates this assumption based on a Chinese merchant community from Macau in Cochin, which would have been responsible for the lacquer decoration<sup>12</sup>.

In 1996 and 1999 the antiquarians Fernando Moncada and Manuel Castilho proposed a Southeast Asian origin for certain lacquered objects with low-relief carvings, including two

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Felgueiras (1994).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Felgueiras (1999; 2000; 2001).

pieces, studied in this thesis, that are clearly decorated with East Asian lacquer<sup>13</sup>. Both consider the possibility of different origins and time frames for individual objects within the group of lacquered boxes and chests with low-relief carvings that had been broadly assigned to Indo-Portuguese art by Ferrão. They suggest that only a broader investigation comparing material study results of a broader group of objects (wood type, lacquer decoration) would bring new conclusions.

Art historian Pedro de Moura Carvalho contributed a different perspective. In 2000 and 2001 he focused upon a selection of diverse furniture typologies – mainly portable Iberian-style furniture coated in black lacquer with gold ornamentation, red lacquered interiors and with or without woodcarvings, whose attributions are complicated. He highlighted the diverse influences of Hindu, Muslim, and European Renaissance elements in the exterior carved ornaments, and Burmese or Chinese influences in the gold lacquer decorations. Based on esthetic comparison, the historical evidence of contemporary documents and depictions, and thanks to lacquer analysis on a few specimens (which were identified as Southeast Asian), he establishes four different groups. Within them were carved writing-boxes, larger chests and other typologies with ornamentations combining Muslim or Hindu elements and European Renaissance motifs, including similar specimens previously studied by Felgueiras<sup>14</sup>. For all these creations he suggests manufacture on the Indian subcontinent, proposing in addition to Cochin, mainly regions close to Portuguese settlements and factories along the Coromandel Coast and the coast of the Gulf of Bengal. Though, sometimes uncertain about the exact nature of the applied coating, and due to the unusual appearance of the decoration of some examples, he suggested that Indian artisans mimicking Chinese style executed those works of a Chinese character ("chinoiserie")<sup>15</sup>. For those pieces presenting a Southeast Asian lacquer coating and gold decoration, he questions if this technique perhaps had been introduced or "exported" to India 16.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Moncada (1996), Castilho (1999, pp. 51-59).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Carvalho (2001a; 2001b).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Carvalho (2001a, pp. 260, footnote 53; 2001b, pp. 139,147,152,153).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Carvalho (2001b, p. 148).

The antiquarian and auctioneer Miguel Cabral de Moncada, for example, places under the term *estilo lusíada* (Lusitanian style), all artifacts and objects produced within the context of these early encounters between Portuguese and other cultures. He distinguishes eight individual currents of artistic production, such as "Indo-Portuguese", "Azores", "coastal East Africa", "Mughal influence", "Sinhalese-Portuguese", "Southeast Asia", "Sino-Portuguese" and "*nanban*". However, in his 2008 article he assigns a lectern to Japanese *nanban* production that in fact displays *nanban*-influenced Chinese lacquer ornamentation<sup>17</sup>.

Art historian Pedro Dias studied many art forms resulting from intercultural relations, in the fields of urbanism, architecture (military, civil, religious), and various decorative arts. This includes Indo-Portuguese furniture, production techniques and centers of manufacture. In his 2002 book, his analysis of a Gujarati casket covered with tortoiseshell underpainted all over with scenes of Portuguese settlers' daily life, he characterizes Indo-Portuguese furniture and its different production centers. One specimen examined in this thesis, and another similar object, were attributed by him to Cochin, mainly repeating the suggestions of Felgueiras<sup>18</sup>. These points form the basis of several subsequent publications<sup>19</sup>. In 2009 he published a multi-volume compilation dedicated to different material manifestations of Portuguese influence in the diverse regions of the former maritime empire entitled *The Art of* Portugal in the World<sup>20</sup>. In it he features decorative arts including furniture produced for Portuguese clients on the Indian subcontinent, Ceylon, the Far East (China) and Japan<sup>21</sup>. In 2013 Dias published another richly illustrated compilation of Indo-Portuguese furniture types, the majority of which belong to Portuguese private collections. He repeats his earlier descriptions of techniques and materials of the respective production centers, and the attributions of certain furniture types to Cochin, including carved and lacquered artifacts. He supports his classifications, again, on the basis of the Chinese colony that may have existed

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Moncada (2008, p. 164). In my opinion these designations still appear limiting and overly Portugal-centered, rather vague or uninformed of the actual cultural origins of the combined artistic influences, and sometimes randomly applied to objects that have not yet been closely studied.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Dias (2002, pp. 46-48).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Dias (2002; 2004).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> This notion is based on the idea that Portuguese art was the genesis of these hybrid and heterogeneous artifacts. This, given the historical facts, does not seem applicable to works other than those attributed to Portuguese artisans in the *Portuguese State of India*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Dias (2008a; 2008b; 2009a; 2009b; 2009c).

there, and his identification as wild jack wood as the material for the majority of pieces he examined. He also repeats the statement of the impossibility that one piece might involve artistic contributions from artisans of different geographical regions.

Since then, other scholars have accepted Felgueiras's, Carvalho's, and Dias's assumptions that these heterogeneous Luso-Asian furniture pieces either were lacquered by Chinese artisans in Cochin, or that Indian artisans along the Coast of Coromandel or the Bay of Bengal copied Chinese decorations<sup>22</sup>. Yet in fact, these various hypotheses reveal the poorly understood nature of the lacquer coatings (whether animal or vegetal), along with the complex nature of Asian lacquer specifically - its processing, respective compositions and the technical skills required to create glamorous decorative coatings. Only the technical study conducted at the LJF-DGPC in Lisbon proved that Asian lacquer was the raw material that produced such surfaces. It identified the tree species, the presence of drying oil in lacquer layers, the agglutinated inorganic materials and the presence of protein in foundation layers<sup>23</sup>. The two different traditions of Southeast Asia and East Asia were determined on the basis of the identified lacquer type, layer sequence and different formulations. These analyses offered a more complete picture, yet left unanswered identification of drying oils mixed with the lacquer, other organic compounds, or the source for the protein detected in ground layers (blood, glue, etc.). These are characteristic properties specific to lacquer crafts of certain Asian regions. The study concluded that none of the examined coatings were of Japanese origin, as both stratigraphies and materials employed did not correspond to those found on nanban lacquerware examined by Frade at the LJF-DGPC. The suggestion that Indian artisans copied Chinese decorations could also be ruled out as traditional Chinese lacquer compositions and decorative techniques were identified, which are not easily copied by a craftsman unfamiliar with this craft, even when using the same raw materials. It showed that classifying multi-cultural creations solely on the basis of formal and stylistic comparison is inconsistent and leads to subjective conclusions. However, with respect to the subgroup with

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Silva (2007a, p. 199; 2009b, pp. 251-252), Abreu (2008).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Cross-sections of the lacquer samples were mounted and observed under the microscope to understand the stratigraphy. Lacquer samples have been analyzed via pyrolysis-gas chromatography/mass spectrometry (Py-GC/MS) for the identification of the specific type of lacquer sap. Micro Fourier Transform Infrared Spectroscopy (Micro-FTIR) was used to detect other organic additives while inorganic materials in the lacquer and ground layers have been identified via X-ray fluorescence (XRF) or -diffraction (XRD).

coatings of East Asian lacquer, it remained open where and under what circumstances these pieces received their embellishments.

That this heterogeneous group of artifacts continues to puzzle researchers is reflected in more recent publications. Art historian Hugo Miguel Crespo studied several inventories of personal possessions of wealthy Portuguese noblemen and aristocrats, some linked to the Portuguese maritime network in Asia. These included the 1540 inventory of the household left behind by the inquisition-fleeing New Christian and humanist Duarte Gomes; the 1556 inventory of Afonso de Castelo Branco, head bailiff of King D. João III; the 1570 inventory of the division of estate left by the former captain of Malacca (1545-1548) Simão de Melo Magalhães; and the 1608 estate inventory of the third Count of Linhares, Fernando de Noronha, and his wife Filipa de Sá. Crespo published excerpts, which feature several furniture pieces listed as originating either from Pegu (Bago, todays Myanmar) or from China<sup>24</sup>. In fact, these inventories provide an interesting insight into the private possessions amassed by wealthy humanists and aristocrats. Astonishing is the number of textiles, porcelain, varied luxury objects and furniture from Asia, among many other products of diverse origins. As evidence for the origins of several Luso-Asian items, including those studied in this thesis, Crespo stresses such mentions as "a lacquered oblong box from China of two pieces [probably case and lid]", "a small writing-box from Pegu of gold and red with its drawers", "a writing-box from China of gold and white with twelve drawers", or of a "Chinese box of gold and black with its compartment" among many others. To him these references prove that the extant Luso-Asian pieces were entirely manufactured in these two regions. He underlines his assumption with the two distinct lacquer types and ornamentation techniques identified during the technical study performed in Lisbon between 2009 and 2012. In consequence, and referring to the inventories of Magalhães and Noronha, Vitor Serrão, characterized as Indo-Sino-Portuguese a writing-box of an obvious Southeast Asian lacquer and gilding technique, emphasizing the notable Chinese character of its ornamentation<sup>25</sup>.

As for the subgroup of Luso-Asian liturgical objects and utensils decorated with the combination of mother-of-pearl inlay and gold leaf decoration, some specimens have been

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Crespo (2014, pp.44,105; 2015a, p.128; 2016a; 2016b; 2016c; 2016d, pp.238-261; 2017a).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Serrão (2014b; 2015a).

assigned to the lacquer art of the Ryūkyū Kingdom, a theory that seems to have been first established by the Japanese scholars Tokugawa Yoshinobu, Arakawa Hirokazu, and the British scholar Sir Harry Garner. In the aftermath of the World War II destruction of the majority of important Ryūkyūan heritage, there has been intent to reestablish cultural identity by emphasizing the uniqueness of the lacquer, textile, music, dance, and martial arts of this ancient kingdom, annexed by mainland Japan in 1879. Also, the Austrian Professor of Japanese Studies Josef Kreiner and Miyasato Masako, curator of the Urasoe Art Museum in Okinawa, as well as several other scholars have published extensively on the lacquer art craft in the Ryūkyū Kingdom, its evolution, influences and decorative techniques. These publications feature several carved and lacquered trays from Portuguese museum and private collections, as well as the so-called "Ryūkyū bowl" from Schloss Ambras in Innsbruck, Austria, all of which they assigned a Ryūkyūan manufacture<sup>26</sup>. As proof, they make repeated references to the mentions of Ryūkyūan merchants by Portuguese traders and chroniclers in various trading ports.

In 2005, curator Oliver Impey and art historian Christiaan Jörg published an extensive compilation of Japanese lacquerware for European clients. They specified characteristics of export ware destined to various markets, including the first *nanban* creations for Catholic and Portuguese clientele, the later export wares for the Dutch VOC (*Vereenigde Oostindische Kompagnie*) market, and export pieces for Southeast Asia. The work includes a detailed survey of the different styles and techniques of these distinct productions, their evolution in the course of the centuries and the copious documentary sources of the VOC.

Recent years have seen an upswing of interest in the study of Asian lacquer craft, its history in various regions and times, regional characteristics and developments, material characterization and conservation. From a historical perspective identification of the respective saps and mixtures of saps of different origins, as well as other organic materials illuminate the possible Iberian catalytic impact upon the maritime trading routes and the exchange of raw materials. Just as important yet more targeted, better understanding of this complex material and its processes of degradation are fundamental for the preservation of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Garner (1972; 1973a; 1979), Arakawa & Tokugawa (1977), Arakawa (1978; 1989; 1996), Tokugawa (1989; 1995), Kreiner (1992; 1996), Miyasato (2000; 2017), Kopplin (2002b), Maeda (2002).

countless Asian lacquer pieces in international collections. Only towards the end of the 20th century, for example, was it possible to identify the type of lacquer by pyrolysis gas chromatography/ mass spectrometry – the only technique that identifies the lacquer type which since has undergone greater development<sup>27</sup>. Curators of the J. P. Getty Museum (JPGM) and scientists of the Getty Conservation Institute (GCI), such as Arlen Heginbotham and Michael Schilling, have especially contributed by developing and disseminating the analytical methodology used in this study. Thanks to these and other improvements in analytical methods, archaeological recovery of ancient specimens, and international exchange between scholars and analytical scientists, the history of the lacquer crafts can be completed.

## I.III. Aims and Objectives

The primary aim of this research was to answer outstanding questions regarding the various Luso-Asian lacquer decorations of the pieces under consideration: What exactly is the composition of individual lacquer layers and from which lacquering tradition do they descend? Is the Kingdom of Ryūkyū really a possible place where these objects could have been lacquered? And what conditions could lead to these heterogeneous artifacts, which combine such different artistic qualities?

I desired to get closer to the bottom of the questions of where, or by whom, and under which circumstances these items received their lacquer embellishments and mixed decorations of Chinese and European influences. No comprehensive analytical study of the lacquer coatings and decorations had been performed on a large set of different furniture types of these exceptional artifacts, in which all examples were subject to the same methods and sequence of material analysis. This present investigation compiles a large body of data for the comparison of the lacquer compositions and decorative techniques identified with each specimen. Discerning their similarities and differences, may answer the question of whether or not these objects originated from the same manufacture, lacquer tradition, region and time frame.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Kumanotani (1995), Niimura & Miyakoshi (2000), Kamiya & Miyakoshi (2000), Lu et al. (2006), Lu et al. (2007), Wan et al. (2007), Honda et al. (2008; 2010), Heginbotham et al. (2008; 2011; 2016), Frade (2009a; 2009b; 2011), Schilling et al. (2014; 2016).

It seemed that only through consideration of historical events and multicultural dynamics; identification of artistic traditions through material and technical investigations; and the comparison of several similar objects, can these artifacts be better understood. Therefore, the current study included: documentary and art historiographic research; formal and technical examination of the nineteen artifacts and several related pieces; comparison with other related objects; and the systematic analyses of lacquer samples<sup>28</sup>. I contacted curators and owners to gather information on the provenances of individual objects and obtained permission to micro-sample the lacquer coatings for scientific analyses. With a few exceptions, I personally examined every item. This thesis considers those heterogeneous objects of questionable origin from different perspectives, taking into account the complex historical and geo-political conjuncture of merchant communities and missionaries in the vast matrix of the Portuguese State of India. Addressed are those territories that seem most relevant for the emergence, development and circulation of the pieces under scrutiny, with a particular focus on the coastal regions of the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea. For carved wooden structures it focuses on the Indian subcontinent and Ceylon. For lacquer decorations it emphasizes southern China, Japan, and also the Ryūkyū Kingdom, as well as the ancient kingdoms of Pegu and Siam (today's Myanmar and Thailand). These different regions, each with strong traditions of the lacquer craft and simultaneously marked by the presence of Catholic merchants and missionaries, are related to the artifacts under scrutiny due to material evidence in their lacquer formulations or because of shared ornamental schemes. The Luso-Asian lacquer ornamentations were compared with the motifs present on contemporary Chinese, Ryūkyūan and Japanese nanban lacquers, noting the different connotations one motif could have in indigenous and Christian cultures. Production centers of European-style furniture for the southern Europeans on the Indian subcontinent were considered. Goa, for example, developed into a market place and center where, in addition to European-style furniture, religious artifacts and devotional objects increasingly were manufactured and distributed to furnish missions further east. I compared low-relief carved Luso-Asian structures with similarly ornamented Hindustani domestic architecture and Indo-Portuguese religious artifacts and church furnishings, as well as with 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> On the one side these were carried out in Lisbon (2009-2012), and on the other side within the scope of the Getty Conservation Institute's Asian Lacquer research project (2013-2015).

furniture produced in Dutch colonial India. As extant contemporary wooden furniture is rare in India for various reasons, it was also important to consider that produced there in subsequent periods for clients other than the Catholic Europeans.

Progress in the development of analytical methods and an increase internationally of studies conducted by scientists and different researchers are advancing the understanding and characterization of Asian lacquerware. Collaboration with scientist Michael Schilling from the Getty Conservation Institute (GCI) provided a special opportunity to study these Luso-Asian lacquer coatings more deeply. Moreover, one Py-GC/MS analysis allowed not only the identification of the lacquer type but also the detection of other organic binders in individual layers. This detailed technical study aims to contribute to the understanding of these pieces, which manifest a particular artistic phenomenon resulting from the southern European presence in Asia. Its results, when integrated into historical geo-politics and cross-cultural dynamics, add to our knowledge of the processes responding to early European demand for exotic or religious items, and also illuminate inter-regional influences within this Asian craft.

### **I.IV. Selected Specimens**

For this study I selected nineteen objects: five circular parade shields; four chests, two of which writing chests with drawers; two foldable tabletops; three trays; two oratories; one low chair, and three domestic Asian lacquer cups. This group, shown in the following table, displays diverse typologies and functions, yet share the same heterogeneity based upon lacquer decorations that recall Chinese ornamental conventions in addition to typical Christian and European Renaissance themes (and south Asian wood carvings). The Asian cups, exceptions in relation to their non-European but domestic typologies, have been included for comparative purposes as they present similar characteristics and come from the same period. They include the so-called Ryūkyū bowl (2.9.1.), once part of an important Renaissance collection and listed in 1596, and two red lacquered Chinese cups with European gilt silver mounts (2.9.2.). Another Asian domestic shape, the low chair, corresponds to southern Asian models used on the Indian subcontinent (2.8.1.). I aimed particularly to include items with a known provenance. Apart from the so-called Ryūkyū bowl, the nuclear group combines three other objects from Renaissance aristocratic collections that were once listed in inventories from 1596 or 1607-11 (2.1.2., 2.2.1., 2.4.1.), have a monastic provenance, or are preserved in museum collections. However, the majority belongs to

private collections, in some cases handed down to later generations and others purchased at antiques markets. Eighth of the group, currently in private hands, reveal shared characteristics. In general, the lacquer coatings and decorations present various states of conservation, including objects the lacquer coating of which is in bad condition, has been subject to various interventions, or with lacquer decorations only fragmentarily preserved.

No.	Object	Identification	Images
2.1.1.	Shield	Museu Nacional de Soares dos Reis Porto, Portugal (Inv. no. 63 div.) ∅: 51,5 cm Date: 16 <sup>th</sup> /17 <sup>th</sup> century © Luis Piorro, LJF-DGPC	
2.1.2.	Shield	Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Austria (Inv. no. A915) Ø: 54 cm Date: before 1596 © KHM	
2.1.3.	Shield	Ashmolean Museum Oxford, United Kingdom (Inv. no. AN1685 B.13) Ø: 54 cm Date: 16 <sup>th</sup> / 17 <sup>th</sup> century ©ASM	
2.1.4.	Shield	Wallace Collection London, United Kingdom (Inv. no. A315)  Ø: 45.5 cm Date: 16 <sup>th</sup> /17 <sup>th</sup> century  ©WC	
2.1.5.	Shield	Amsterdam Museum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands (Inv. no. KA 13521) Ø: 78 cm Date: 16 <sup>th</sup> /17 <sup>th</sup> century © AM	

No.	Object	Identification	Ima	ges
2.2.1.	Chest	Mobiliendepot Franzenburg, Schloss Laxenburg, Vienna, Austria (Inv. no. MD 047590) 40 x 85.5 x 53 cm Date: before 1607-11 © Mikin (2000)		
2.2.2.	Chest	Palácio Nacional de Sintra, Portugal (Inv. PNS 2963) 38 x 79.5 x 41 cm Date: 17 <sup>th</sup> century © Sónia Costa, LJF-DGPC		
2.2.3.	Chest	Private collection Porto, Portugal 36.5 x 84 x 50 cm Date: 17 <sup>th</sup> century © Dias (2008a, p.120), Körber		W W W
2.2.4.	Chest	Private collection 43 x 78 x 50 cm Date: 17 <sup>th</sup> century © Carvalho (2001, p.147), Pedro Cancela de Abreu		
2.4.1.	Table top	Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna, Austria (Inv. no. 4958), on loan at the MAK, Vienna 121.5 x 96.7 x 3.2 cm Date: before 1596 © Jordan Gschend & Lowe (2015, p. 149), Körber		

No.	Object	Identification	Images
2.4.2.	Table top	Private collection, Porto, Portugal 64 x 51 x 2.1 cm Date: 16 <sup>th</sup> / 17 <sup>th</sup> century	
2.5.1.	Tray	Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga, Lisbon, Portugal (Inv. no. 44 band) 6 x 63 x 36.5 cm Date: 17 <sup>th</sup> century © Luis Piorro, LJF-DGPC	ALEXANDRALIS MORALIS HALLA HAL
2.5.2.	Tray	Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga, Lisbon, Portugal (Inv. no. 2 band) 6 x 71 x 45 cm Date: 17 <sup>th</sup> century © Luis Piorro, LJF-DGPC	
2.5.3.	Tray	Private collection, Porto, Portugal 3 x 38.5 x 23 cm Date: 17 <sup>th</sup> century © Pedro Lobo	

No.	Object	Identification	Images
2.6.1.	Oratory	Aguiar Branco Antiguidades Lisbon, Portugal 87 x 48 x 33 cm Width open: 126 cm Date: 17 <sup>th</sup> century © AR-PAB, José Carlos Frade	
2.6.2.	Chest	Pedro Aguiar Branco collection, Porto, Portugal 74.5 x 71 x 19 cm Date: 17 <sup>th</sup> century © in Carvalho (2001, p.152)	
2.8.1.	Low chair	Private collection, Lisbon, Portugal 66.4 x 57.3 x 48 cm Seat height: 22.5 cm Date: 16 <sup>th</sup> /17 <sup>th</sup> century © AR-PAB, Körber	
2.9.1.	Bowl	Ambras Castle collection, Innsbruck, Austria (KHM, Inv. no. PA 543) H: 8 cm, Ø: 12.6 cm Date: before 1596  © Ambras Castle, Körber	513,1
2.9.2.	Cups	Private collection, Porto, Portugal H: 7, Ø: 7.7, Width with metal mounts: 11 cm Date: Ming, 17 <sup>th</sup> century © AR-PAB, Körber	

#### I.V. Thesis Outline

To better detect and understand the convergence of cultural and artistic influences typified by Luso-Asian lacquerware, it is rewarding to look at the respective peculiarities, developments and cultural backgrounds of all the different art forms involved and the points of encounter or overlap. The six chapters of this thesis thus employ a multi-disciplinary approach to systematically investigate this heterogeneity:

Chapter 1 consists of three subchapters that contextualize the studied items. The artifacts' integration into their geographical, historical, and political context is the sine qua non of understanding. The first subchapter introduces the various geographies, economies and cultural backgrounds in the *Portuguese State of India* (1.1.1.). It especially emphasizes royal and private mercantile ventures, important individuals and groups, and the trading hubs that seem of particular importance. Length limitations confine this to those regions chiefly significant for the emergence of these Luso-Asian artifacts. This includes four highlighted port-cities; elsewhere I consider many others out of the abundance of important commercial centers. I address the cross-cultural interaction and rotation of merchandise and individuals; and the methodology, progress and difficulties of the different Catholic missions in Asia. To complete the relevant data, a detailed introduction of the Ryūkyū Kingdom's history appears in Appendix I. The following subchapter (1.1.2.) provides an overview of the possible purchasers or consumers in Europe and addresses the different Europeans whose residence or circulation in Asia made them potential owners, customers or couriers. I highlight the impact of distinct cultures on each other, and their varied artistic productions destined for the Catholic European clientele, focusing primarily on contemporary decorative arts and furniture manufactured on the Indian subcontinent, Ceylon, China and Japan. The last subchapter (1.1.3.) is dedicated to Asian lacquer material itself and its craft, distinguishing it from South and Southeast Asian animal resin shellac with which it has often been confused due to the terminology used in historical records. The complex composition, properties, processing and applications of the saps of several East Asian tree species is briefly explained, and the methods employed to differentiate them in analyzing lacquered artifacts are mentioned. Since the identification of a certain tradition or decorative technique requires knowledge of contemporaneous lacquer arts in the respective regions with southern Europeans contacts, my primary focus lies in those areas where such presence was notable,

and on relevant similar decorative techniques, to those present on the examined Luso-Asian objects. Therefore, the contemporary lacquering traditions and essential characteristics of China, Japan, the Ryūkyū Kingdom, and the Southeast Asian regions of today's Myanmar and Thailand, are introduced. The information on the different regions and comparative contemporary lacquer techniques depends on the gathered facts and available sources. Appendix II lists the auspicious motifs that feature in the ornamentation of the nineteen specimens, including brief information on their meanings in Chinese art. Appendix III contains a glossary of Chinese and Japanese terms related to the lacquer craft that are used throughout this thesis.

Chapter 2 contains a detailed compilation of data for each of the nineteen specimens, which provides one foundation for this research. It required contacting museum curators and owners, scrutinizing provenance, chronological and geographical classification, and attribution to various artistic styles and origins. The details of record included a meticulous description of structure, construction, wood and lacquer decoration, and comparison with related artifacts. The decision prompting this exhaustive description of the richness of each object was made with the intent of overcoming the dearth of records, and to demonstrate that the concrete details provided by detailed observation illuminate an object. The objects are sorted by typology by means of subchapters that place certain furniture types and object groups into the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, and into their socio-cultural background (such as 2.1.). Then, three subchapters (such as 2.1.1.) treat the artifacts individually, assembling the data. Each entry length depends upon available information. The numbers assigned the individual items serve as identification throughout this thesis, as shown in the table of the selected specimens. The figures referred to in the text are listed at the end of the subchapters that introduce their objects group. This provides a baseline of concrete identifying information by which conservators, curators, and scholars can assess the many comparable items that still circulate on the antiques market, are hidden in private collections, or may be altered during "restoration" treatments. Although not among the analyzed specimens, two related object groups – writing-boxes (2.3.) and mass book lecterns (2.7.) – have been included in the formal and esthetic characterization because they carry fundamental information regarding the objects studied in this thesis and will be discussed in Chapter 5.

Chapter 3 explains the analytical methodology applied to the lacquer samples of the nineteen specimens, and the parameters used to identify certain substances. The first subchapter (3.1.) presents the individual conditions of the analytical methods. The second subchapter (3.2.) summarizes the results of various microscopic and spectroscopic techniques with respect to the stratigraphies, identified lacquers, and their mixtures, layer formulations, organic and inorganic materials, and the layer sequence commonly employed for certain decorative techniques. Appendix IV compiles the detailed results obtained, including the object's identification, date, people responsible for sampling, and sample locations; cross-sections, and the compositions identified for each layer of the samples.

Chapter 4 contextualizes the results of this formal characterization and material analysis. With respect to previous attributions, in subchapter 4.1., the wood types presumed, and different carving styles described are contrasted with the formal, technical and historical indications that argue for different cultural and esthetic origins with regard to wooden structures and lacquer decorations. Table 6 presents different types of wood carving present on the studied items. Additionally, I highlight the assorted origins of the manifold motifs, as well as the diverse connotations the same motif carries in different cultures, illustrating how these pieces reflect the Catholic European actively adapting to local customs and traditions in commissioning these items. Subchapter 4.2. lists the materials identified in the lacquer formulations; decorative techniques are compared with historic accounts on lacquer craft, with analyses of other lacquer objects contemporary to the Luso-Asian examples, as well as with southern Chinese export lacquer production of subsequent periods. Table 7 lists decorative bands that frequently appear in the Luso-Asian lacquer decorations.

The eight subchapters of Chapter 5 unite the formal, technical and historical data employed across this study. In view of the principle questions that led to this research, with the different results obtained from formal and material analysis in mind, it is discussed whether the Ryūkyū artisans objectively could have been employed in the lacquering of these multifaceted pieces (5.1.), shifting the focus instead to southern China, in particular to Macau and Canton. Portuguese merchants and missionaries frequented both. Canton had a long tradition of furniture making and lacquer production; it was located close to Macau, the Luso-Asian trading and missionary base, which in turn was linked to Nagasaki (5.2.). Further, I align other heterogeneous phenomena with South Asian carvings, which in this particular

case are adorned with *nanban* lacquer (5.3.), and which, in turn, reflect the circulation of objects within the Portuguese State of India. The comparison of liturgical implements similarly ornamented in a Chinese *nanban*-style, for instance portable oratories and lecterns, revealed an evolution of the methods employed and an overall increasing stylistic approximation to Japanese Christian models (5.4.). These objects, using Chinese motifs and ornamentation techniques, illustrate the influence of Japanese nanban lacquer styles on the growing demand for Christian artifacts in southern China, pointing again to interactions of people from Kyushu, Macau and Canton. I also point out the gusto for the "lacquerware of the other" in China and Japan, their mutual influences, and compare the techniques and compositions identified with later Chinese export lacquer production in Canton (5.5.). In addition are listed those pieces the lacquer coatings of which employ either mixtures of different saps, or even different traditions. These items illustrate interregional influences through the circulation of people, objects, and raw material (5.6.). Stylistic evolutions and adaptations manifest in Chinese, Japanese and Ryūkyūan lacquer crafts resulted and led to further miscegenation<sup>29</sup>. These convergences echo in Iberian-America and Europe, where their exotic influences reverberated in local decorative arts, and in particular the close connection between Southern European trade and Catholic proselytizing (5.7.). Finally, the difficulty of classifying these complex creations with appropriate nomenclature and definition is addressed. I consider why referring to them as "foreign commissions" is more accurate than "export lacquerware", a term often applied to them (5.8.).

Chapter 6 offers final considerations, including on future investigations suggested by this study of such heterogeneous artifacts, and in my view of identical importance. These for practical reasons could not be included in this work. Also, with respect to contributions to art history and historiography, I highlight the importance of cross-disciplinary collaboration among historians, art historians, conservators and scientists, among others, for better evaluation and classification of such pieces.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Commonly this term is applied to the mixture of people considered to be of different racial types, describing a concrete biological phenomenon, Trumble & Stevenson (2002, p. 1790). In American English this term historically has had a negative connotation, but in Portuguese historiography it is more neutral and applied to many cultural aspects of everyday life where a melding of influences and habits of distinct backgrounds may have occurred including food, clothing, arts in general and of course the decorative arts, Reis (2015, p. 131), Lacerda (2016a).

# 1. Contextualization – Historical Background, Cultural and

# Artistic Heterogeny, and Asian Lacquer

# 1.1. The Portuguese and European Presence in Asia – Complex Political and Cross-Cultural Realities, Commercial Ventures, and Catholic Missions

To better inquire the possible origins and journeys of the lacquered artifacts studied in this thesis it is fundamental to look into the different major aspects of its historical and geopolitical conjuncture, as well as the broader commercial network in which these pieces were produced, commissioned or circulating from the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century onward.

# 1.1.1. Portuguese Royal Embassy, Trading Networks, Routes, and Commercial Relations

Prior to European arrival, maritime Asia was already a vast, dynamic and fast transforming region of densely populated port-cities characterized by both ethnical and religious diversity. The major political-administrative-military formation, summarized with *Portuguese State of India* or *Portuguese India* (*Estado Português da Índia* or *Índia Portuguesa*<sup>30</sup>), was rather a growing network of several coastal presences in port-cities with factories, trading posts, Portuguese settlements than a uniform corporation of a state. Interlinked by various maritime trading routes and part of an extensive mercantile network, this structure assured access to multiple different regions and a wide exchange with a myriad of local cultures.

This network of Luso-Asian commerce evolved in consequence to the maritime voyages<sup>31</sup> conducted by the Portuguese crown from the early 15<sup>th</sup> century onward in a territory stretching between the African East Coast and the China Sea, including the Japanese archipelago, comprising coastal regions of the Indian and Pacific Ocean. In 1530, Goa, at that time under Muslim rule of the Bijapur Sultanate, became the administrative center of this

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> The term *estado* (state) to describe the vast network of trading bases and fortifications emerged already in the early phase of its foundation during the reign of King D. Manuel I. (1495-1521), being well established in the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Saldanha (2016, p.369).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> These voyages included the Atlantic Ocean along the West-African coast and around the Cape of Good Hope; the African east-coast; the Persian Gulf; the Indian subcontinent, and finally ports in Southeast and East Asia.

complex with the seat of the viceroy. It turned into the strategic center for the royal trading enterprise connected to and controlling the principal international mercantile sea-routes<sup>32</sup>.

The principal goal of this large expansion and progress into maritime Asia was the direct access to the trade of spices and other lucrative merchandise, along two other main intrinsic circumstantial concomitants: the extension of the Crusades against the Muslims and the spreading of the Catholic faith. The domination over the Indian Ocean and the *Cape Route*, rounding the Cape of Good Hope to India and which was since 1504<sup>33</sup> declared a royal monopoly, gave the Portuguese finally an end to the dependency on Italian merchants to acquire spices for higher costs, while restricting the Muslim monopoly over the trade of Asian goods<sup>34</sup>. Commercial ventures occurred basically on two levels, the royal enterprise of the Portuguese crown and increasingly in the private sector, employing numerous distinct participants on varied levels acting on different stages in the multiple spheres, from individuals to corporations<sup>35</sup>.

The progressive advance of the Portuguese fleets opened a vast and important mercantile network allowing the crown to develop a richly profitable commercial activity. An initial path from Europe to Asia was the *Cape Route* between Lisbon and Goa (*Carreira da Índia*), the main cargo of which were pepper and other lucrative spices. Soon, were established the eastern maritime trading routes which connected different important portcities, such as Malacca, Macau or Nagasaki (the latter two were fruit of these ventures). Here, the Portuguese found all kinds of merchandise, from the far long coveted spices and drugs, to an array of raw materials, diverse textiles (cotton and silk, brocades and embroideries), artifacts and many different luxury items (jewelry, precious stones), taking it as available for their own prospective businesses in the many European markets thriving for exotic novelties. From the very beginning the control of the spice trade was in fact so important that, in order to ensure his newly success, King D. Manuel I (r. 1495-1521) forced the main European

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> Gomes (2004), Silva (2007a, p.199), Boyajian (2008, pp.4-5), Lameira & Reis (2016).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> This included concessions granted to Portuguese noblemen serving the king throughout *Portuguese India*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> Boyajian (2008, pp.xi-xii, 29).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> These comprised of officially nominated captains and contractors, sailors and crewmembers, European trading enterprises, Royal agents, travelers and adventurers, New Christians, *casados* and their mixed race descendants, Portuguese noblemen and merchants.

distributors of spices – such as the Venetians, the Fugger and the Welser from Nürnberg and Augsburg, and the Affaitati from Antwerp – to move their main commercial warehouses from Venice to Lisbon. Thus, soon enough, Lisbon replaced Venice as the principal European spice market and attracted diverse European commercial enterprises and agents<sup>36</sup>.

Succeeding King D. Manuel I, during the reign of D. João III (r. 1521-1557) Portuguese territories both in Asia and in the New World extended even farther with the colonization of Brazil, the landing on the Japanese islands and the establishment of Macau as a Portuguese factory, religious and trading center. Moreover, D. João III policy, which reinforced Portuguese bases in India, secured the monopoly over the trade of cloves and nutmeg from the Maluku Islands, while further contacts with Ming China and Muromachi Japan were made. At the same time, his wife, the Queen D. Catarina de Áustria (1507-1578, r. 1557-1562) became a passionate collector and a true *connoisseuse* of *exotica* and *asiatica* responsible for developing a wide net of agents spread out through the territories overseas, acquiring precious merchandise not only for her own collection<sup>37</sup>. This happened especially from the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century onward following D. João III death in 1557 and during D. Catherine's regency for her infant grandson D. Sebastião (1554-1578) (See Chapter 1.2.1.).

By the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, confronted with the absence of a legitimate successor for the Portuguese crown, the Iberian Peninsula suffered a political overturn, and Portugal, including all its territories overseas, fell under the rule of the Spanish crown for a period of 60 years<sup>38</sup> (1580-1640). For the duration of the union of the Iberian crowns (till 1640) despite

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> Boyajian (2008, p.6).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> For further detailed information on D. Catarina de Áustria, please consult Jordan Gschwend (1993; 1996; 1998).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> Cf. Boxer (1959a, p.3), Dias (2000), Boyajian (2008, pp.10-11), Curvelo (2011, p.50), and Loureiro (2015). Yet, in the scope of a Personal Union granting that Portugal was not *de jure* incorporated into the Spanish Empire, an official separation of the two crowns was agreed at the Courts of Tomar in 1581 when the Spanish King Felipe II was acclaimed Filipe I of Portugal. This meaning, that even if Portugal was under the Spanish Habsburgs' crown until 1640, the Portuguese Kingdom remained a separated realm of the Spanish rule, hereby establishing the prerequisite that privileges, liberties, uses and customs of the Portuguese Monarchy were to be fully respected. So, a certain autonomy regarding the exercise of public functions should be thereto maintained for governors, viceroys and other various official positions still granted to Portuguese-born and members of the royal family. Hence, the Portuguese legislation was likewise to continue valid, and the maritime trade in India and Guinea to remain in Portuguese hands. After King Filipe II (I of Portugal) left to Madrid in 1583, his nephew Cardinal Albrecht VII Archduke of Austria (1559-1621) grandson of Carlos V, son of Maximilian II and brother of Emperor Rudolph II in Prague, became viceroy in Lisbon until 1593. This position might have enabled him to acquire, offer and exchange several collectible objects, including the so-called "Cardinal's tabletop" described (2.8.1.).

maintaining its autonomous law, currency and government, Portugal had to confront the growing interest of the Spanish Empire extending over Southeast Asia in establishing their own relations with China and Japan whilst seizing the control over the Pacific Ocean trade between the Spanish-dominated Philippines and Mexico.

Given the large expenses involved in the royal shipping enterprise, by 1570's the crown managed to find a far more cost-effective way to keep the treasury's revenue at a lower cost and risk, concentrating a high percentage of the maritime royal trade ran by contract voyages<sup>39</sup>. Plus, from the 1580's onward, this contract voyage system also gave the opportunity for *New Christians*<sup>40</sup> (who have escaped the inquisition in the Iberian Peninsula<sup>41</sup> and were now based in Goa and Cochin) to become, in one hand, major stakeholders on the *Carreira da Índia* trade, and on the other hand, also to participate on inner Asian trading networks, partly in order to enhance their own share in the Cape shipping with more diverse goods. Timely, contract voyages and these private shipments constituted an increasingly high percentage of the *Cape Route* trade in such way fruitful that the latter privately sponsored ventures secured and financed the (royal) voyages between Asia and Lisbon<sup>42</sup>.

Additionally, every individual on board of a carrack was allowed to carry freight on their own account, dependently on status and function. This freighting allowance – so-called *liberties* (or *caixas*<sup>43</sup>) – included all kinds of merchandise and *miudezas*<sup>44</sup> (odds and ends)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> This means that a contractor, usually a Portuguese nobleman, would freight a carrack or vessel at his expense, thus paying a fixed sum to the crown for the exclusive right of organizing a voyage between specific ports, Boyajian (2008, pp.58-59).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> New Christians or Crypto-Jews are descendants of Iberian Sephardic Jewish families who were forcibly converted to the Catholic faith in Spain and Portugal in the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, Boyajian (2008, p.xiii), Lowe (2015b, p.60).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> In Portugal the inquisition was introduced in 1536, cf. Lowe (2015b, p.60).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> Boyajian (2008, pp.40,71).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> Mathew (1983, pp.263,276).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup> *Miudezas* were one of four categories, besides "drugs" (or *drogas*), "fazendas" (general products), and "pedraria" (gems and stones), of merchandise on board a vessel. Since it included all kinds of little objects, an array of luxury products, as well as furniture such as writing boxes that were lacquered or gilded, inlayed with tortoiseshell or ivory from India, China and Japan; ivory carvings from Ceylon; Chinese porcelain, silk fans, azure, lapis lazuli, amber, or gold jewelry. Curiously, these smaller objects such as jewelry, drugs, fabrics or precious stones were often stored in the compartments and drawers of smaller furniture. Many of the *miudezas* were unregistered. For example, nearly 100 writing desks or boxes arrived to Lisbon per year and were evaluated around 50 *cruzados* each, though the filling of their compartments could double the value of the furniture itself. Also, large furnishings such as screens, cabinets or carved bed frames, as well as porcelain constituted this private commodity, cf. Boyajian (2008, pp.42,48-49), Loureiro (2015, p.83).

normally stored aboard the vessels in numerous trunks and travelling chests<sup>45</sup>, which occasionally could also be rented to other merchants, thus many times surpassing the limits of cargo a carrack could take leading occasionally to shipwrecks, which simultaneously resulted in large financial losses for private investors. All kind of products and raw materials, from textiles to jewelry, porcelain or spices, were transported as private luggage to Lisbon, where it could be presented or sold at the local markets<sup>46</sup>.

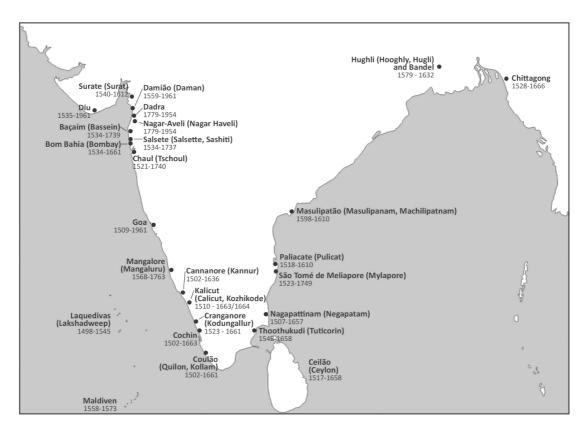
Through the last decades of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the whole commercial network was widely extended from Africa to Japan and largely led by a powerful fleet it linked diverse newly accessible intra-Asian trading routes giving direct access to rare and precious merchandise, raw materials and luxury goods. The whole network area could be divided into three main commercial spheres where trading interaction took place. The first one comprised the area between the East African and the Western Indian coasts, including the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf. The second sphere included India's eastern coast, the Burmese and Siamese kingdoms, Java and Sumatra, and stretched to the old Mekong kingdoms between the Indian Ocean and the Chinese Sea. And, the third one covered the southern Chinese coast, the Japanese archipelago and the insular and continental Southeast Asia, including Korea, Indochina, Malacca, Indonesia, the Maluku and the Philippine Islands<sup>47</sup>. Such diversity also meant that all these three great spheres were marked by instable geo-political borders forasmuch as religious and commercial rivalries.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup> Many of these large-size travelling chests or trunks, thought to be made of wild jack wood (Port. *angelim*) and other woods, might have been produced in Goa or Cochin. Several have come to constitute part of museum and private collections, cf. Ferrão (1990b, pp.66-72), Felgueiras (1994), Loureiro (2015, pp.80-81).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup> Boyajian (2008, p.39), Loureiro (2015, pp.80-81), Jordan-Gschwend (2015c, p.143).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> Dias (2000), Gomes (2004), Curvelo (2009; 2011), Loureiro (2000b; 2015).



Map 1 Portuguese presence in settlements and factories along the Indian coastline and the Bay of Bengal.

#### India and Southeast Asia

The advance of the Portuguese presence in the area initiated an epoch marked by an extensive cultural and economic exchange throughout a growing and interconnected web of various fortifications, trading posts and settlements with factories, storehouses and production facilities for equipment and supplies established along the Indian coastline with access to a constantly and fast changing network comprising both long-lasting and more ephemeral trade connections<sup>48</sup> (Map 1). Portuguese navigators encountered a heterogeneous mix of population

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup> Several factories, fortresses and settlements were established along the western Indian coastline, from Cochin (1503-1663), Cannanore (Kannur, 1502-1636) and Coulão (Quilon or Kollam, 1502-1661), followed by Goa (1509/10-1961), Calicut (1513-1663/64), Cranganore (Cranganor, 1523-1662) and Mangalore (1568-1763). Other establishments of factories and settlements occurred in the northwestern part of the sub-continent, followed by port-cities such as Chaúl (Chaul, 1521-1740), Bom Bahia (Bombay, 1534-1661), Baçaim (Bassein, 1534-1739), Salcete (Salsette, 1534-1737), Diu (1535-1961), Surate (Surat, 1540-1612) and Damão (Daman, 1559-1961). In the southeast of the subcontinent followed the establishment of Portuguese settlements in the Kingdom of Kotte, located on the island of Ceylon (Sri Lanka, 1505-1658). Along the East Coast were Nagapattinam (Negapatam, 1507-1657); São Tomé de Meliapore (St. Thomas de Meliapor, 1523-1749), Paliacate (Pulicat, today's Chennai, 1518-1610), Masulipatão (Masulipatnam, 1598-1610) along the Coromandel Coast, and Hughli (Hooghli, 1579-1632) and Chittagong (1528-1666) in the Bay of Bengal, among

from Muslim sultanates to Hindu kingdoms, while finding different port-cities forever linked to maritime sea-routes<sup>49</sup>. Some of these locations have been widely known for its manifold artistic production and prosperous markets. Unlike in the western Indian coastline, the Portuguese presence along the eastern side was more reduced, yet towards the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century its trading ports were of equal importance.

In fact, this eastern area remained far from the controlled official operations of the *Estado da India* in the western side where, especially in Meliapore and Nagapattinam, trading activities were run by the *casados*<sup>50</sup> communities therein redistributing and exchanging merchandise in Malacca, or at the ports of Pegu<sup>51</sup> (1512), Siam<sup>52</sup> (1511/18), or today's Malaysia. Malacca, the important southeast intra-Asian trading hub where the Portuguese had contacts with Chinese merchants from the Fujian province<sup>53</sup>, and finally access to Chinese goods, was seized in 1511 (later to be captured by the Dutch in 1641). There also Ryūkyūan merchants were sighted together with their merchandise<sup>54</sup>. Through Malacca they gained

a few others, cf. Ferrão (1990b), Thomaz (1998), Moreira & Curvelo (1998), Dias (2000; 2008a; 2009b), Boyajian (2008), Curvelo (2009; 2011).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> Whereas the north and center of the Indian subcontinent were Muslim, the western coast was divided into different kingdoms like the Gujarat and several Deccan sultanates such as Ahmednagar or Bijapur; the eastern part was ruled by the Mughal Kingdom, while the southern area belonged to the Hindu kingdom of Vijayanagar with small tributary states (such as Calicut, Cochin, or Cranganore).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup> In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, not only the population in Portugal was too small to send as numerous soldiers and families to India as needed for the foundation and consolidation of new settlements, also only a few numbers of women was sent or travelled overseas. A policy issued by Afonso de Albuquerque right after the capture of Goa encouraged inter-cultural marriages between Portuguese low rank men (such as soldiers, masons, carpenters or convicts exiled from Portugal) and local Indian women (Muslim widows or daughters from Goa), thus creating a mixed population partly with a colonial identity. This policy was then applied to other areas of *Portuguese India* in order to create an Asian based population of loyal Portuguese-speaking Christians, cf. Gracias (1996, p.32), Loureiro (2007, p.213), Boyajian (2008, pp.4, 38). Moreover, to these inter-cultural marriages accrued certain economic incentives like free housing, cattle and other financial support needed to start a new life and family overseas, cf. Boxer (1954, p.756), Gracias (1996, pp.31-35), Boyajian (2008, pp.32-33).

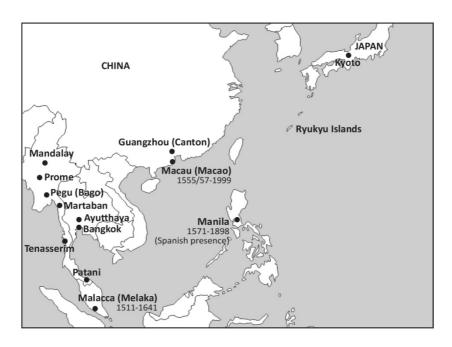
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup> The kingdom existed between 1287-1539 and 1550-1552.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>52</sup> The kingdom of Ayutthaya lasted between 1351 and 1767.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>53</sup> Cf. Silva (2000a, p.84), Loureiro (2007, p.213).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>54</sup> Afonso de Albuquerque comments on the trade of the Ryūkyūans in Malacca referred that: "(...) the general opinion of all is that their land is an island, and they navigate from it to Malacca, whence come every year two or three ships. The merchandize which they bring are silk, silk-stuffs, brocades, porcelain, a great quantity of corn, copper, rock alum, and frusseria (i.e. gold or silver dust in its native state, as obtained from washings at the river mouth, or in mines); and they bring a great deal of gold in little cakes stamped with the seal of their king (...)", in Chang (1969, p.45). Soon after the appearance of the Portuguese and Europeans in Malacca, the Ryūkyūans stopped heading to this port, cf. Boxer (1986, pp.14-15), Ptak (1991; 2003; 2007, p.163), Kreiner (2012, p.163). For more detailed reading on the former Ryūkyū Kingdom (now the Japanese prefecture of Okinawa), its trade and history, see Appendix I.

access to other promising ports and explored further East into the Indian Ocean<sup>55</sup> until reaching the southern Chinese Guangdong province' coast in 1513 (Map 2). With further progress into East Asia, the network of *Portuguese India* comprised a vast area including South Asian archipelagos, ports in the territory of today's Myanmar (Martaban, Tenasserim) and Thailand (Patani), as well as trading connections along the southern Chinese coast until finally reaching Japan in 1542 with the landing on the island of Tanegashima<sup>56</sup>. All these different locations, part of this vast network, were of totally distinct political and cultural realities.



Map 2 Southeast and East Asia.

### <u>Japan</u>

In Japan, an archipelago still divided into several territories each ruled by different rival feudal clan lords ( $daimy\bar{o}$ ) but all sharing the acute taste for the traditional textile sartorial, the demand of Chinese silk was high and, since the Chinese imperial authorities in Beijing had restricted diplomatic and trade relations (1557), the Portuguese saw an excellent commercial opportunity – along with the religious one – to prosper as trade intermediaries in

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>55</sup> Siam (today's Thailand, 1511/16-1767), the Kingdom of Pegu (today's Myanmar, 1517/19-?), the Maluku (1512-1599?) and Banda islands (1512-1599/1609?)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>56</sup> Thomaz (1998), Dias (2000), Costa (2001), Loureiro (2007), Curvelo (2007a; 2009; 2011; 2015a), Correia (2011).

the far-east area<sup>57</sup> (Maps 2 and 3). They exchanged Chinese gold and silk for Japanese silver, which was highly sought-after in China and used to acquire Chinese goods. Beside the official trade commodity, kimono, swords, spears and in later years copper were exported from Japan<sup>58</sup>. Meanwhile the expeditions to Japan increased so it did the trade with Malacca and southern Chinese merchants. Furthermore important, the establishment of a legal base in Macau in 1557 also made the circuit between Malacca, Macau and Kyūshū to become both more regular and the most lucrative mercantile route of Portuguese trade in Asia<sup>59</sup>. On the Japanese island of Kyūshū, for instance, the activities of the religious orders and their interaction with the Luso-Asian merchants from Macau were indispensable for the consolidation of the Portuguese presence in the territory<sup>60</sup>.

From the 1580s on, the *Nau do Trato*, the *Great* or the *Black Ship (kurofune)*, as called by the Japanese, finally had its fixed destiny in the port of Nagasaki, where the Portuguese enjoyed trade and residential rights thanks to the mediation of the Jesuits, to whom the city was ceded in 1580. The voyages of the *Great Ship*, travelling annually between this port, Macau, Malacca, and Goa, constituted the most important and lucrative exchange of merchandise within the history of *Portuguese India*<sup>61</sup>. Many of the goods unloaded from the *Great Ship*<sup>62</sup> in the port of Nagasaki can be seen depicted in the more than 90 extant Japanese *nanban* screens (*byōbu*) in which beside silk bales, different types of boxes and chests, Chinese lacquer furniture is also represented. Likewise, the Martaban vessels carried spices, assortment of food supplies, porcelain, and even animals such as peacocks, wild cats, and dogs. On its way to Nagasaki the *Great Ship* was primarily loaded

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>57</sup> Loureiro (2007, p.216), Kreiner (2012, pp.190-91).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>58</sup> Boxer (1948a, p.16), Pinto (1990), Moreira & Curvelo (1998, p.553), Curvelo (2016).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>59</sup> Correia (2011, p.59).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>60</sup> Correia (2011, p.61).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>61</sup> Curvelo (2001, p.24), Correia (2011, p.61), Costa (2016a).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>62</sup> Among the merchandise normally carried from China to Japan were large amounts of raw white silk, spun silk threads of all colors, printed or painted silk pieces, and unwoven silk, as well as silver, gold, musk, white ceruse, cotton thread, pieces of cotton, quicksilver, lead, tin, China-root (*smilax* species), earthenware, rhubarb, liquorish, and white sugar. From Macau to India it carried all kinds of silken textiles (raw, damask, taffetas, colored unwoven silk, coverlets, hangings, bed-curtains, short cloaks), gold, musk, brass, quicksilver, vermillion, white sugar, China root, camphor, brass bracelets, earthenware, as well as gilded beds, tables, and writing boxes. And from Goa to Macau the vessel carried silver (in coin and wrought pieces), ivory, velvet from Europe, scarlet cloth, wine, olive oil, olives and capers etc., Boxer (1959a, pp.179-83).

with Chinese silk and porcelain to be sold on Japanese markets. Other vessels from Macau carrying silk and porcelain headed to the Indian coast, where the load was transferred to vessels appropriate for the *Cape Route* back to Portugal<sup>63</sup>.

This advantageous trade functioned until Tokugawa shogun Iemitsu issued several anti-Christian edicts from 1633 onward<sup>64</sup>, with the final "closed country" edict (*sakoku*) from 1639<sup>65</sup>. This policy, which lasted throughout the Edo period until 1868, comprised the expulsion of all Christians (cleric, missionaries, converts, and southern European merchants) it barred nearly all foreigners to enter the country and kept the common Japanese from leaving it. From then onward the Dutch and Chinese were the only foreigners allowed to restricted trade with Japan. Chinese merchants (mainly from Fujian) inhabited an own quarter, whereas in 1641 the Dutch were moved from Hirado to the artificially created fanshaped Dejima island in Nagasaki's harbor, previously built for the Portuguese (1536) and destined to keep them out of the city<sup>66</sup>.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>63</sup> Cf. Boxer (1959b), Loureiro (2007, p.217), Curvelo (2015a).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>64</sup> The Tokugawa policies followed a row of edicts starting with those issued by Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537-1598) at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>65</sup> Loureiro (2007, pp.219-20), Curvelo (2007a; 2009; 2011), Kreiner (2012, pp.168, 193, 200-201), Costa (2016a, p.731).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>66</sup> Alves & Barreto (2007, p.76), Nagasaki City Board of Education (2012), Costa (2016b, p.757).



Map 3 South and East China Sea with the Chinese coastline and the Japanese archipelago

#### China

Over the centuries, the Middle Kingdom had always been a legendary Empire of great interest for the Europeans. As soon as Portuguese navigators reached Indian waters in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, they were tasked to collect any kind of information regarding the Chinese Empire<sup>67</sup>. Yet at that time, 30 years of Ming Chinese voyages – done between 1403 and 1433 mainly for political and diplomatic purposes – had already explored the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asia, reaching and establishing tributary relations throughout a wide geographical area<sup>68</sup>. Trading relations between the Chinese and several port-cities in India have had otherwise a long history. In the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> century, Chinese junks (especially from Quanzhou) had already approached harbors on the coasts of Coromandel, Bengal and Malabar where Chinese

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>67</sup> Loureiro (2007, p.213; 2015, p.77), Kreiner (2012, p.193).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>68</sup> Chinese voyages reached regions stretching from the Southeastern Vietnamese coast to Java, the Ryūkyū Kingdom, Borneo, Sumatra, Malaysia, Ceylon, Maldives, the Gulf of Bengal, Cochin, Calicut, as well as to Ormuz, Aden and Jeddah (in the Arabian Peninsula), and Melinde (Malindi, Kenia) and Mogadishu in the East African Coast, Cheong (1997, pp.4-5), Pan (1999, pp.48-49), Curvelo (2009, p.21), Kreiner (2012, pp.155-60).

silk, porcelain, satin, brocades, musk and damasks were the main imported merchandise<sup>69</sup>. In the course of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, however, Ming rulers imposed injunctions against maritime trade, disrupting the previous commercial and cultural exchange by demanding neighboring reigns to turn into vassal states and thus, forced them to recognize Ming's supremacy, including all trading regulations, over the whole region<sup>70</sup>. This Sino-centric tributary system assured subordination and loyalty to the emperor, and regulated who, when, what, and where could be traded, while having ensured protection by the Ming. At the same time, Chinese authorities issued a seclusion policy to their own merchants forbidding them to exchange Chinese products abroad. If in one hand, these policies guaranteed Chinese cultural influence over the tributaries and the control of maritime trade, on the other hand, it led to the escape of southern Chinese merchants (particularly from Fujian and Zhejiang provinces) increasing Chinese settlements in South and Southeast Asian ports, and on the Ryūkyū Islands – a legendary kingdom and one of the most privileged tributary kingdoms whose merchants and merchandise have been described in Portuguese and Spanish historic documents throughout the 16th century<sup>71</sup>.

Chinese protectionist mercantile policy was so strong and its culture so different that although the Portuguese had sailed the Pearl river earlier in 1513, and attempted to establish official trade relations in Canton (Guangzhou) as early as the 1520s, an imperial edict from 1522 banned all foreign trade, imports and exports, and closed the port of Canton to foreign vessels<sup>72</sup>. Silk, porcelain and other goods were exchanged with Chinese traders the Portuguese had met in Malacca from 1511 onward, oversea-Chinese communities in Southeast Asia, or by the means of clandestine trade conducted along the southern Chinese shoreline<sup>73</sup>. It took three more decades characterized by contraband and smuggling along the

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>69</sup> Mathew (1983, pp.10-11, 148), John (1998, p.297), Sen (2011, pp.46-58).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>70</sup> The importance of Chinese culture, as well as the strength of China's power was so big that Chinese was the *international* language in Asian waters at that time; cf. Takara (1996), Wade (2007), Hidaka (2011a, pp.5,7).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>71</sup> Allegedly this kingdom was rich in precious metals, ceramics and silk, though the kingdom has rather become rich through intermediate trade, Kreiner (2012, pp.161-163, 186). For a more detailed resume on the kingdom's history, its role as privileged Ming tributary, its participation in maritime commerce and the political conjuncture of its decline see Appendix I.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>72</sup> Boxer (1948a, pp.1-3), Chang (1969, pp.47-63), Cameron (1976, pp.131-48), Zeng (1997, pp.2-3), Silva (2000a, p.84), Dias (2000, p.63), Loureiro (2007, p.214), Ptak (2007, p.163).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>73</sup> Zeng (1997), Loureiro (2000b, p.61; 2007, pp.214-16), Silva (2000a, p.85), Ptak (2007), Curvelo (2011), Pinto (2014, p.86). The Portuguese apothecary Tomé Pires for example described in his *Suma Oriental* (1512-

Chinese shoreline, especially along the coast of Fujian and Zhejiang (Fuzhou, Quanzhou, and Ningbo), and Guangdong. Consequently, somehow tolerated by the local authorities, an evergrowing percentage of private trade was run by Portuguese, Luso-Asian or Chinese merchants who operated in the trading network along the coast. The Portuguese whether established several semi-permanent settlements or bases in various southern ports, such as in Wuyu, Ningbo, Zhangzhou, the island of Hainan, or were selling their goods in exchange for Fujianese merchandise on uninhabited islands (Coloane, Pinhal, Lampacau) along the coastline of Guangdong<sup>74</sup>.

Between 1555 and 1557 Portuguese merchants were finally allowed to set up a simple factory on the peninsula of Macau, opening direct access to the desired Chinese goods and promising ventures (albeit limited and strictly controlled)<sup>75</sup>. This should also break the unofficial partnerships with Chinese smugglers<sup>76</sup>. Being located not far from Canton it too evolved into the most important trading port and hub of the Portuguese trade network, connecting the three main trading routes: Macau-Malacca-Goa-Lisbon, Canton-Macau-Nagasaki and Macau-Manila-Acapulco<sup>77</sup>. From 1571 onward, the track Macau-Nagasaki was one of the fundamental pillars of Portuguese trade in Asia, providing the crown with an important income, as for example through the sale of China-Japan voyages. Simultaneously this route offered new opportunities for private trade. Indeed, after accredited trade relation, only a small percentage of the whole amount of Chinese merchandise exported by the Portuguese via Macau (consistent of a great variety of silk textiles packed in bales or in boxes, and a huge amount of minor goods including porcelain, musk, and cabinets, writing

<sup>1515)</sup> in detail the goods that were exchanged at the anchorages off Canton at that time. Foreign ships brought pepper, camphor, Indian fabrics, rosewood, brazilwood, sandalwood, cloves or nutmeg, and loaded huge quantities of raw or diverse colored silk, porcelain, seed pearls, musk, camphor, alum, saltpeter, sulphur, copper, iron, rhubarb and <u>large quantities of coffers and fans from Ryukyu</u> for their journey back to Malacca, in Loureiro (2015, p.79).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>74</sup> Boxer (1953, pp.xix-xxxvii; 1984, p.3), Zeng (1997, pp.156-57), Silva (2000a, p.84), Loureiro (2000, p.61; 2007, pp.214-15; 2015, pp.77,79), Ptak (2007, p.164), Curvelo (Curvelo, 2013c, p.19), Pinto (2014, p.86).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>75</sup> Zeng (1997, pp.155-57), Pan (1999, p.49), Silva (2000a, p.85), Ptak (2007, p.164), Curvelo (2009, p.22), Pinto (2014, pp.85-86), Loureiro (2015, pp.77,79).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>76</sup> Pinto (2014, p.86).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>77</sup> Curvelo (2011, p.46), Pinto (2014, p.86), Loureiro (2015, p. 79).

desks and boxes) has reached Lisbon via the (official) *Cape Route*, whereas the larger amount was exchanged within the inter-Asian trade network beforehand.

In this sphere, the Portuguese took advantage of the mutual foreclosure between China and Japan. As to Chinese individuals, the direct trade with Japan was prohibited in 1549; the Portuguese could act as intermediaries between China and foreign countries (Japan, Manila, Siam, Malacca, Goa and Europe)<sup>78</sup>. Mainly Chinese silk and gold has been exchanged for Japanese silver, which in turn was sold profitably in China and ensured the access to the lucrative Chinese commodities. Other merchandise carried between these two ports was porcelain, folding fans from the Ryūkyū Islands<sup>79</sup>, *nanban* lacquers, gold and guns<sup>80</sup>. The big vessel travelling annually between Macau and Nagasaki (from 1580 onward), appears depicted as a main motif in numerous *nanban* screens – testimony of the composition of people of diverse cultural origins and social status as well as the range of commodities they carried. Depicted are also Jesuits or members of other religious orders who accompany these voyages<sup>81</sup>. From the 1580s onward Macanese merchants also sailed to other ports, as for example to Cochin China (Vietnam) where they bought ivory, to Siam where they acquired shellac and incense, to the Indonesian archipelago where they bought pepper, and to Solor and Timor where they bought sandalwood. Also, Manila was a regular port where

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>78</sup> Boxer (1959b), Chang (1969, p.103), Cheong (1997, p.6), Boyajian (2008, p.13), Curvelo (2011, p.49), Sousa Pinto (2014, p.86).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>79</sup> In Portuguese called *Ilhas Léquias*, name from which the designation *leque* for fan is thought to be derived, cf. Dalgado (1982, p.522), as probably these were available at Canton and exchanged with goods in Malacca. Queen Catarina de Austria also commissioned huge amounts of "Ryūkyūan fans" which she distributed among her female relatives and court ladies, cf. Jordan-Gschwend (1996, p.111; 1998, pp.202-205, 225-227; 2003, pp.268-70; 2004, p.39). Possibly these and fans of other diverse origins, including Indian, Singhalese and Japanese that fluted the Iberian courts from the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century onward were purchased at fairs in Canton, nearby or Malacca, such as described by Tomé Pires, Loureiro (2015, p.79). Fans appear also mentioned as merchandise exchanged in huge amounts in the trade between Ryūkyū, Korea and Southeast Asian countries in the earlier centuries cf. Kobata & Matsuda (1969). Beside the mentions of fans as subject of precious and diplomatic gifts among court ladies, they also formed part of inventories of personal processions of aristocrats or among the personal goods purchased by captains and crewmembers that were shipped to Lisbon where they were destined to be sold for big profits. Afonso de Castelo Branco's post-mortem inventory from 1556 mentions one Indian fan with silver fittings. A list of the goods embarked from Goa to Lisbon in 1630 counts hundreds of fans, of which we do not know their exact design and origin, but these references indicate the kind of sought after objects they turned into in Europe, worthwhile to invest in, cf. Pinto (2008), Crespo (2015a, p.256), Jordan Gschwend (2015c, pp.263-64).

<sup>80</sup> Boxer (1959b, p.2), Loureiro (1992, p.31; 2015, p.79).

<sup>81</sup> Loureiro (2007, p.219; 2015, p.79), Curvelo (2015).

silver from the mines in Mexico and Peru was acquired<sup>82</sup>. Merchandise from Canton was transported to Macau on the Macau-Canton route and entered then into the international trade cycle. The Portuguese vessels loaded raw and woven silk, porcelain, seed pearls, camphor, musk, China ink, furniture and copper<sup>83</sup>. All these connections to the far-flung trading networks and routes contributed to the steady growth of the Portuguese outpost of Macau with a European and Luso-Asian lifestyle.

The Macanese, the only foreign merchants allowed entry to the biannual fairs in Canton, enjoyed privileged access to Chinese merchandise for many years, compared to other foreigners<sup>84</sup>. In 1684 the monopoly of Macau on direct access to Chinese merchandise was broken through the opening of Canton (besides other ports such as Amoy and Ningbo), and to other foreigners authorized by the Emperor Kangxi who set up a trading company ("Ocean Trading House") in Canton in 1686 to deal with Western trade. Further lifting of restrictions against non-Portuguese in 1757-1760 and the establishment of the Canton System allowed the opening of its port to other European and American traders. Canton, Macau and Nagasaki were of particular significance for the lucrative trade in East Asia, and the progress of the Christian mission on the other, which were both intensely interwoven.

# Decline

From the several factors that provoked the decline of the Portuguese supremacy over the European trade in Asia, only a few are worth mentioning here within the scope of this thesis. Overall, the situation of the *Portuguese State of India* changed within the period from 1570, the climax of its geo-political extension, and the beginning 17<sup>th</sup> century, a time of political and military challenges<sup>85</sup>. Towards the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the *Portuguese India's* expenses had increased as drastically as had the number of fortifications and respective fleets needed to defend their merchant ships. Meanwhile it decreased the annual revenue from the king's spice trade, now weakened by the actual increment of all other private owned commercial operations, it augmented the cost of travelling between Asia and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>82</sup> Loureiro (2007, p.218).

<sup>83</sup> Loureiro (2015, p.79).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>84</sup> Chang (1969, p.102).

<sup>85</sup> Curvelo (2009, p.25; 2011, p.50)

Europe, as well as within Asia given both the dimension of the vessels as well as the weight of their cargo<sup>86</sup>. Yet another major geo-political factor accounting for the decline of the Portuguese hegemonic power over the Europe-Asia trade routes was the fact that the government itself was so far away from the diverse fast changing realities in the Portuguese colonies, factories and settlements – correspondence between officials in the overseas territories and the crown could take up to several years to be exchanged – that rulers were not timely up to date to respond adequately to events happening overseas<sup>87</sup>. Territories as far as Nagasaki and Macau were, indeed, ruled quite independently, and decisions were made without waiting for royal orders. Apparently, this distance also brought a certain moral decay amongst Portuguese officials, whereas many factors and captains were rather more preoccupied with their personal businesses in Asia than with their Iberian crowns' own successes. Many fortunes were made beside the kingdom's official trade, which in turn accumulated an immense debt especially to the European private trading communities<sup>88</sup>.

And further, contrary to what had been originally agreed at the Cortes of Tomar (1581) – precisely that the different mercantile routes and interests were to remain under either Portuguese or Spanish rule, respectively – the latter did interfere in certain territories and markets already controlled by the Portuguese. In Southeast and East Asia Portuguese and Spanish strong economic interests also added to various local hostilities<sup>89</sup>. The arrival of the Castilians in Asian waters and the foundations of a permanent Spanish base in Manila on the Philippine Islands (in 1571) – where Chinese communities from Fujian had already established trading – came to compete and interfere with the pre-existing Luso-Asian trading network with Macau as its cosmopolitan commercial center<sup>90</sup>. There Portuguese trading in and from Macau and Nagasaki, and Castilians in and from Manila acted simultaneously as antagonists, as much as fearing mutual interference in their respective markets. It is recorded

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>86</sup> Loureiro (2015, pp.80-82)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>87</sup> For example, while the journey between Portugal and India lasted between six and eight months, the travel from Lisbon to Nagasaki could take between two or two and a half years, and the journey back to Europe a little less than two years. Under these conditions the transfer of correspondence between Lisbon and Nagasaki could take up to 6 years, cf. Loureiro (2007, p.213), Curvelo (2007b, p.275).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>88</sup> Boyajian (2008, p.7).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>89</sup> Curvelo (2009, p.20).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>90</sup> Boxer (1959b, p.3), Correia (2011, p.62), Loureiro (2015, p.79).

that per year, about 40 to 50 large junks from Fujian headed to Manila brought silk and other Chinese merchandise paid by Spanish traders with silver from Mexico and Peru. Since, like other foreigners, the Spanish had failed to gain access to mainland China through the Fujian province they focused instead on their indirect trade with China through their new lucrative maritime route connecting Manila with Mexico with a regular circulation of large size galleons crossing the Pacific. Soon after 1571, this major transoceanic path would be connecting the Pacific route to the Atlantic one via Manila and Mexico, and from here reaching European markets with an assorted array of Chinese commodities carried by the *Manila galleon* on its annual voyage via Mexico<sup>91</sup>.

After 1600, the entry of new rivals from northern Europe, namely the Dutch (*Vereenigde Oostindische Kompagnie*, VOC) and the English (East India Company, EIC) into the Iberian-Asian commercial arena overturned the whole geo-political and economic scenario in which the Portuguese and the Spanish (still ruled by the same Spanish King Felipe II) became known as the "Union of Arms" In Europe, several factors stimulated the English and Dutch to gather their military naval and economic forces to gain direct access to spices at and from the East Indies themselves. In consequence of the dispute, Portuguese ships were captured by English and Dutch chartered fleets in the Atlantic on their return trip to Europe. Simultaneously, still under the Spanish rule, Portugal became involved in the conflicts in Northern Europe, and at the same time fighting Dutch (and English) overseas, it became no longer able to maintain its hegemony over intra-Asian trading routes, Maluku Islands, Ceylon and many principal port-cities fell under either Dutch or English hands 4.

Finally, with the proscription of Christianity in 1614, and the expulsion of Catholic merchants and missionaries from Japan in 1639, the most lucrative trading possibility has

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>91</sup> Cf. Curvelo (2007a), Boyajian (2008), Loureiro (2015, pp.79,87). For example, the Spanish Manila-Acapulco galleons carried already in its first voyages 712 pieces of Chinese silk and 22.300 pieces of "fine china gilt and other porcelain ware", Boxer (1959b, p.3), Curvelo (2009, p.51).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>92</sup> Curvelo (2009, p.26).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>93</sup> The rebellion against the Spanish Habsburg authority in the Low Countries in 1568, till then the principal sales destination for Asian spices from the Cape trade with a strong resident community of Portuguese merchants, resulted in the Eighty Years War and thereinafter in a continuum of serious socio-political, financial and commercial instabilities, which for example led merchants to leave the city of Antwerp, Boyajian (2008, p.9). Furthermore, Felipe II's policy of expelling English and Dutch vessels from Portuguese ports further enhanced the rivalry.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>94</sup> Loureiro (2007, p.219; 2015, pp.79,81-82).

been lost<sup>95</sup>. Generally resumed due to the large debt and military inferiority, the Portuguese were displaced and their long-term presence in Asia was limited to the Indian provinces of Diu and Goa, Macau, and East Timor, which have remained until the 20th century Portuguese colonies.

Apart from the official trade, who were the players in the different trading spheres, responsible for the circulation of goods?

# 1.1.2. Individuals Residing, Trading and Circulating in Portuguese Asia

European settlements in Portuguese Asian territories were initially restricted to only three groups of legal residents: the soldados (soldiers), the casados and the clérigos (priests and other religious men), thus, this general provision excluded merchants, other foreigners and people of unorthodox belief. The early 16<sup>th</sup> century' policy of inter-cultural marriages brought up an amount of Luso-Asian population which was on large enough for the formation of sufficient support for Portuguese ventures among the locals, and their evangelization. Thanks to this policy in just one generation, a newborn inter-cultural population was raised with generations of half-castes to follow. Around 1600 there was an estimated number of 6000 casados in Portuguese Asia, and among those quite a large percentage was earning their lives as merchants. Around 2000 off them lived in Goa alone, the location with the largest Luso-Asian population. As years passed the settlements grew stronger, and so it did the importance of the casados merchants' families of Goa, Cochin and Malacca as major stakeholders and economic players in the inter-Asian and long-distance transoceanic trade<sup>96</sup>. Other participants in these commercial ventures were undoubtedly the New Christians, who became major players in the overseas trading activities, either as financiers or as participants in the royal enterprise, or even as individual merchants<sup>97</sup>. New Christians and European merchant communities were deeply involved in the overseas trade by huge investments and were also entangled with each other, either in Lisbon – the mother-metropolis of the royal enterprise – or in Asia.

<sup>95</sup> Boxer (1959b, p.4), Loureiro (2007, p.219).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>96</sup> Gracias (1996, p.34), Boyajian (2008, p.72), Curvelo (2009, p.32).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>97</sup> Boyajian (2008, p.30).

#### Private Trade

Regardless of how profitable the official contract commerce was, it is commonly referred that in the throes of the intercontinental trade between India and Lisbon, on the side of the swiftly growing intra-Asian trading-map, the most lucrative commercial interactions were the not so officially, but rather clandestine liaisons operated within the sea-routes connecting the major port-cities like Macau, Malacca or Goa. These private commercial ventures included the captains and contractors themselves, sailors, crewmembers, European commercial companies, *casados* and their Luso-Asian descendants, *New Christians*, noblemen, clergymen among other individuals circulating between the port-cities and settlements.

Although Portuguese laws frequently limited the extensions and conditions of private commercial activities, from the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century onward, meanwhile the royal spice trade via the Cape was in decline, private Portuguese trade within Asia expanded considerably<sup>98</sup>. The more competition for the control over richness and trading spread, the more piracy, private trade and privateering ruled side by side in the various geographic spheres. With the extension of commercial contacts, unofficial mercantile activities increased, and merchants competed directly with Gujarati, Chinese, Javanese or Japanese merchants<sup>99</sup>. Otherwise, these established strong interactions especially in areas where direct rivalry with the Portuguese crown was not at stake. This happened for example in the port-cities on the eastern Indian shore-line, particularly along the Coromandel coast where Chinese merchants were actively involved<sup>100</sup>; as well as in the Bay of Bengal; or along the Southern Chinese coast until Japan through the Macau-Japan voyages which also offered new possibilities for private participation<sup>101</sup>.

Meanwhile the inquisition stroke stronger in the west under the control of Goa, more and more *New Christians*, among other persecuted groups, who seizing the opportunity of the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>98</sup> Boyajian (2008, pp.xiii, 29).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>99</sup> Boyajian (2008, pp.12-13), Curvelo (2011, p.24).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>100</sup> Carvalho (2001b, p.137), Boyajian (2008, p.13).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>101</sup> Boyajian (2008, p.13), Curvelo (2011, p.49).

growing profitable trade, fled and began to settle along the East coast in prime locations such as Hooghly, the principal Portuguese port and factory in the Bay of Bengal, an important spot for the exchange of merchandise and artistic production, including furniture. Although Portuguese or Iberian *New Christian* merchants were of a minor percentage amongst the number of private traders, since they possessed not only the right commercial skills but also the capital needed to invest, they were soon engaged as major direct role players in the overseas maritime network. Also, within the Chinese smuggling network along the Southern Chinese coast, between Guangdong, Fujian and Zhejiang, many Portuguese *New Christians* became privately operating traders.

#### European Trading Companies

From early 15th century onward, and particularly in the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the whole trading activity surrounding the Portuguese Royal enterprise was supported by several European merchant families and agents. These wealthy companies were based in Italy, Germany, or Flanders and had commercial branches in Lisbon alongside Antwerp, Seville or Valencia, and soon settled subsidiary offices in *Portuguese India*, in portcities such as Goa or Macau. Their participation in the financial and commercial businesses between Europe and Asia was extensively funding a considerable amount of the travelling cost between those ports<sup>102</sup>. A large number of individuals – humanists – well educated in the high finance established themselves as mercantile agents travelling across Europe and overseas in charge of the greatest trading companies. This is the exemplary case of the Fugger and the Welser trade dynasties from Nürnberg and Augsburg, or the Affaitati from Antwerp, whose family businesses and consortiums were actively involved in the maritime trade since early times<sup>103</sup>.

Multiple examples attest that agents representing northern European trading houses in Lisbon and also travelling abroad to establish commercial liaisons overseas already by the early 1500's. Such were the cases of Hans Mayr, an agent of the Welser trade corporation who participated in Vasco da Gama's second journey to India in 1502-03 as well as in the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>102</sup> Mathew (1983, pp.158-69), Dias (2000, p.62), Boyajian (2008), Alessandrini (2014; 2015), Mendes (2015), Pohle (2015), Jordan Gschwend (2015c, p.143).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>103</sup> Neuwith (2000a, p.53).

journey of the fleet under Francisco de Almeida command, and who by 1503 had already opened the first Welser commercial branch in Lisbon (followed three years later by the Fugger merchants)<sup>104</sup>. Or of Balthasar Springer a trading agent from Tirol who, in 1505/06, on behalf of the Welser participated in a further journey of Almeida<sup>105</sup>. Another German from Augsburg, Ferdinand Cron (1554-1637), managed to develop a significant carrier in Portuguese India. As an agent of both German merchant dynasties (first the Welser and later the Fugger), he worked as a dealer of spices, gems and diamonds in India. He was one of many foreigners based in Goa becoming the only agent authorized as an intermediary in negotiations between Asia and Europe<sup>106</sup>. Additionally, these main agents would employ further foreigners for other important positions in the overseas trading activities 107. Along the Welser and the Fugger, other major mercantile houses from Genoa, Venice or Antwerp were likewise to be important players in the expansion of maritime private commerce. Occasionally, individual agents of private companies could also offer their services to members of royal houses, since they had an extensive and versatile network of contacts. In 1611, for example, the same Ferdinand Cron was nominated by the Queen of Spain, Margarida de Austria (r.1599-1611), as her agent in Asia, consequently, able to travel twice to Japan and probably to be one of the clients of the trade between Macau and Japan. Cron's knowledge and position as a citizen based in Goa (from 1592 onward), along with his contacts with many merchant groups and royal ranks, his numerous travels around Asia and the multiple purchases for his wealthy private and royal clients, were a major contribution for the building and enlargement of many of the Iberian and central European Kunstkammer and ecclesiastical collections<sup>108</sup>.

#### Catholic Missionaries – Jesuits and Religious Orders

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>104</sup> Werz (2015, p.91).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>105</sup> Neuwirth (2000a, p.52).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>106</sup> Cron married a Portuguese nobleman's daughter in Goa and became a citizen of the Portuguese town having professional contacts on the highest level in Lisbon, Madrid and Antwerp, as well as in India where he was protected by viceroys and governors, Jordan Gschwend & Tudela (2001, pp.32-34), Boyajian (2008, p.49), Curvelo (2011, p.45).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>107</sup> Like for example Cron's legal representative in Cochin Christoph Schneeberger, Neuwirth (2000a, p.53).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>108</sup> Jordan Gschwend & Tudela (2001, pp.32-34), Curvelo (2011, p.46).

To counteract the enormous strength Protestantism was having all throughout Northern Europe in the mid-16<sup>th</sup>century the Catholic Church initiated the so-called Counter-Reformation movement, promoting religious imagery through the arts as one of many other fundamental measures to resurge against reformists who criticized precisely this practice of deification of religious images and their miraculous powers<sup>109</sup>. Moreover, in the newly discovered territories, the counter-reformist Roman Church had to secure the propagation of the Catholic faith and attract new believers to somehow compensate for the loss of so many believers to Protestantism in Europe. Further, the missionary campaign was an important tool to gain and maintain the Portuguese crown dominance in the new settlements, the territories acquired or with a strong mercantile activity<sup>110</sup>. Under papal patronage<sup>111</sup> the Portuguese King D. Manuel I became the head of the Roman Catholic Church in the Portuguese territories overseas thereto nominating bishops or licensing religious orders and individual clergy for the passage to *Portuguese India*<sup>112</sup>.

The Franciscans were the first religious order to reach Asia as early as the first voyages (1500/ established in 1511), followed by the Dominicans (1503/1548), whereas almost half a century later the newly formed Society of Jesus<sup>113</sup> – or Jesuits – reached India in 1542 and the order of St. Augustine in 1572<sup>114</sup>.

Timely, Catholic religious orders started a visual campaign, by the means of sculptures, paintings, engravings and print media. Above all, mainly the Jesuits acted like soldiers in this counter-reformist religious war. In the various regions, they met with different preconditions,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>109</sup> Frias (2006, p.26), Bailey (2007, p.169), Costa (2016a).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>110</sup> Costa (2016a, p.730).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>111</sup> The papal bull *Ineffabilis et summi* from 1497, issued by Pope Alexander VI, permitted the Portuguese crown the evangelization of populaces eastern from the Cape of Good Hope, cf. Correia (2011, p.58).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>112</sup> Boyajian (2008, p.30).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>113</sup> The Society of Jesus was a new religious congregation founded in 1534 in Paris by Ignatius de Loyola and some co-founders, among which was Francis Xavier, who was later responsible for missions in India and Japan. Solely for men, this religious congregation was approved by Pope Paul III in Rome in 1540 and was inspired by a military structure. Their aims were the renewal of the clergy, combating Protestantism and converting non-Christians to expand the Roman Catholic faith. Jesuits are known for establishing tribunals of the inquisition and introducing censorship, mainly through the elaboration of lists of forbidden books, cf. Frias (2006, p.26), Bailey (2007, p.169).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>114</sup> Bailey (2007, p.169), Curvelo (2009, p.32), Correia (2011, p.61), Lopes (2011, p.121). However, India and China have been visited in previous centuries by Nestorian Christians (Tang dynasty, 618-907) and Franciscan monks (Yuan dynasty, 1279-1368), cf. Beinlich et al. (2002, pp.114-15), Lopes (2011, pp.28,37,61-70), Arnold (2016), Perry (2016).

and with their further progress into Asia, the number of missionaries has increased, as well as the application of new missionary methods adapted to the different host cultures<sup>115</sup>.

Authorized by the crown, they enjoyed privileged trade amenities on the Cape Route along with being granted enhanced privileges on the routes of the intra-Asian trade<sup>116</sup>. Because they frequently exchanged goods destined for newly founded missions, the Jesuits became one of the major stakeholders highly involved in the Macau-Japan trade route<sup>117</sup>, also to finance their missions. Additionally, the presence of the various religious orders was considerably important in building and consolidating the *Portuguese State of India*, since their activities were closely linked to the Luso-Asian mercantile networks, which they used for their own circulation and the distribution of information, religious texts, imagery, and various supplies<sup>119</sup>. They built churches, hospitals, religious schools and seminars overseas, even venturing into territories beyond the control of the Portuguese crown<sup>120</sup>. More importantly, the Jesuits were earnest scholars of the foreign languages widely gathering autochthonous vocabulary whether publishing dictionaries, or developing encyclopedias of the local flora and fauna; religious and cultural habits; scientific and technological knowledge, compiling extensive reports of the modus vivendi of the diverse peoples from all those regions previously unknown to Europeans - thus, profoundly, enhancing the transmission of scientific and cultural ancient knowledge between Europe and Asia<sup>121</sup>.

Within only a few decades after the arrival of the Jesuit Francisco Xavier to India in 1542, the Society of Jesus turned into the most aspiring Catholic congregation to found missions. Around 1542, Xavier founded the Jesuit school of São Paulo (St. Paul, 1560-1572) in Old Goa, which housed the first printing press in Asia. There, the Jesuits established in fact their

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>115</sup> Pina (2001), Frias (2006, p.29), Bailey (2007; 2009), Lopes (2011).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>116</sup> Boyajian (2008, p.39).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>117</sup> Curvelo (2007a, pp.280-281). For example, a list of goods sent by the Jesuits from Macau to Japan in 1618 contains numerous pair of shoes; many and diverse pieces of fabric like silk taffeta; satin from Java; damask from Canton; and, crimson from Nanjing; gold; rosaries; olives; vine; olive oil; almonds and copper plates with the depiction of saints (*veronicas de cobre*), Boxer (1959b, p.185).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>118</sup> Since 1510 all overseas missions were accompanied by members of religious orders or secular priests. The first were the Franciscans and Dominicans, followed by Jesuits and then Augustinians, and other orders, Ferrão (1990b, p.9), Lameira & Reis (2016, p.14).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>119</sup> Correia (2011, p.59).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>120</sup> Frias (2006, p.26), Curvelo (2007a, p.355; 2009, p.32)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>121</sup> Flores (1998, pp.33-39), Bailey (2007, p.169), Correia (2011, p.62).

headquarters at the church of Bom Jesus (1594-1605) later to house the tomb of Francisco Xavier<sup>122</sup>. By mid-16<sup>th</sup> century, Goa had already developed both into an important destination for Catholic pilgrimage as well as into a center of artistic production of utensils destined for devotion and liturgy.

The Jesuits were also the first missionaries to reach Japan (1549). Not long after the first residence was founded in Macau in 1562, followed by the Diocese in 1575<sup>123</sup>, this port-city became the logistic center for the Christian mission specialized in the training of missionaries up to the university level<sup>124</sup>. In 1583 Matteo Ricci (1552-1610) e Michele Ruggieri (1543-1607) arrived to Macau. From there they departed to their first missions on Chinese territory to Zhaoqing (close to Canton), followed by Nanchang in 1595, Nanjing (Jiangxi), Chaozhou and Nanxiong (Guangdong) in 1599, and Beijing in 1601<sup>125</sup>. Responsible for Jesuit activity in India, Japan and China between 1573 and 1606, Alessandro Valignano<sup>126</sup> founded the first university in Asia in 1594 – the St. Paul's College (*Colégio de São Paulo*) on the hill named after the saint next to the Our Lady of the Assumption (*Nossa Senhora da Assunção*) church built in 1565 and rebuilt between 1601 and 1640<sup>127</sup>. In 1595 arrived the first group of missionary students including some Japanese already converted to the Christian faith<sup>128</sup>. Education, for as much as evangelization, implied to resort not only to the doctrinal readings, of course, but also to all sorts of religious imagery whether those were sculptures, paintings,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>122</sup> Curvelo & Bastos (2001, pp.427-28), Bailey (2007, p.171). Finally, with such strong presence in India and their further interaction with the Mughal court, the Jesuits were also responsible for the construction of churches in Agra (1599), residences in Lahore (1597) and Delhi (1648).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>123</sup> The Diocese of Macau became responsible for the jurisdiction over the province of China outstretching till the Japanese islands.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>124</sup> Correia (2011, p.60), Bailey (2007, p.169), Curvelo (2007a, pp.351, 354).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>125</sup> Pina (2001, p.62; 2008, pp.28,30,36,38,81), Curvelo (2007a, pp.354-55), Krahl (2007, pp.236-37).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>126</sup> The importance of the Jesuit Alessandro Valignano was such that he was called to join the Japanese *Tenshō* embassy on the official visit conducted between 1582 and 1590 to Pope Gregory XIII and to several European sovereigns.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>127</sup> The rebuilt church is also known as Mater Dei Church (*Igreja de Madre de Deus*) and St. Paul's Church (*Igreja de São Paulo*). Nowadays only the imposing staircase and the ruins of the articulated facade are extant with prominent columns, obelisks, figures in niches and a pediment. Its architecture, as a replica of the Basilica of Bom Jesus in Goa, its architecture follows the style of the late Italian Renaissance. However, its intrinsic sculptural decoration shows a fusion of Christian and Chinese imagery and Luso-Asian symbolism, cf. Silva (2000a, p.87), Curvelo & Bastos (2001, pp.427-28), Bailey (2007, p.171; 2009, pp.229-30), Curvelo (2007a, p.351; 2007b, p.275).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>128</sup> Curvelo (2007a, p.354).

images or print media. In fact, the method used in the new territories overseas was not far at all from that practiced by the Holy Church to counteract the advance of Reformation in Protestant Europe. However, in Asia the method broke free from the European doctrine, with the policy of accommodation<sup>129</sup> leading to processes of inculturation<sup>130</sup> and interculturality<sup>131</sup>, which on the artistic level are reflected in the junction and confluence<sup>132</sup> of distinct expressions. This proliferation of iconography otherwise so manifest in Macau's religious architecture became moreover a strong strategy to affirm the city as the principal center for the Chinese and Japanese missions already strongly interlinked<sup>133</sup>.

Moreover, the religious intents of the Jesuit missions were deeply entangled with those of the Portuguese and Luso-Asian merchants based in Macau and Nagasaki. The first focusing on the rapid conversion of hundreds of Japanese, the latter aiming for the trading expansion in Nagasaki at all costs, both weakened the *status quo* of the Japanese highly hierarchical social structure and soon its politics. Jesuits also participated in the trade of Chinese silk and other goods<sup>134</sup>, to finance their activity in Japan, and they functioned as importers and exporters of artworks<sup>135</sup>.

Such conspicuous interference led Japanese authorities to expel all together – Christian merchants and missionaries. From the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century onward a growing

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>129</sup> It is either the action of accommodating or the process of being accommodated; adaptation, adjustment, Trumble & Stevenson (2002, p.14). Although developed earlier this method was officialized by Alessandro Valignano in 1582.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>130</sup> Related to the Christian Church it means the adaptation of Christian liturgy to a non-Christian cultural background, Trumble & Stevenson (2002, p.1351), Reis (2015, p.134). This term is generally used by Roman Catholics and escribes the adaptation of the way Church teachings are presented to non-Christian cultures and, in turn, the influence of those cultures on the evolution of these teachings.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>131</sup> Meaning the cultural adaptation of the practice of the Christian faith in its dissemination which leads to new creations, cf. Reis (2015, p.134). It signifies cultural interaction, exchange and amalgamation (fusion). Interculturality is related with other concepts, such as acculturation (Adoption or adaptation to an alien culture, Trumble & Stevenson (2002, p.16), Reis (2015, p.133), and syncretism (synthesis of religious ideas and philosophies), Lacerda (2016b, p.590).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>132</sup> A flowing together or reunion of rivers; the place where two or more rivers etc. unite; a combined flow or flood, Trumble & Stevenson (2002, p.484).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>133</sup> Curvelo (2007a, pp.356-57; 2007b, p.280).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>134</sup> The goods sent by the Jesuits from Macau to Japan in 1618 consisted of the bulk of silken textiles (silk floss, satin, cloth, damasks), but also common cotton cloth (*gangas*) and commodities for their everyday use, such as needles, olive oil and olives from Portugal, cheese from Portugal and Flanders, and articles such as rosaries or copper plates with images of Jesus or saints, Boxer (1963, pp.185-91).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>135</sup> Lopes (2011), Penalva (2011), Carvalho (2013), Osswald (2018).

unease over rising foreign influence led potentates, between 1614 and 1639, from a deepening persecution of European missionaries, merchants and Japanese converts, to total expulsion enforced with cruel violence.

#### 1.1.3. Port-Cities as Mercantile and Religious Hubs of Intercultural Exchange

Beside Lisbon as the main port from where the fleets started and ended their transcontinental journeys, through which orders were placed and received and from where many goods and artifacts were distributed further into the European continent, the following Asian port-cities, as places of cosmopolitan commerce and artistic production, were of particular importance in the commissioning, production, exchange or circulation of manufactured goods, including furniture and lacquerware.

#### Cochin

The first Portuguese factory was established in Cochin, an important Portuguese settlement on the Malabar Coast from 1500 onward. The city became commercial center for inner continental, long-distance coastal trade (Gujarat, Bay of Bengal, Coromandel Coast), and overseas trade (Macau, Malacca, Lisbon). The latter was primarily based on the availability of Malabar pepper, which attracted several other Europeans engaged in the lucrative ventures<sup>136</sup>. In 1503, the Portuguese immediately founded the church of São Francisco (St. Francis), the first Catholic church of *Portuguese India*<sup>137</sup>. Portuguese merchants began already in the early years to import Indian goods, as well as precious stones and rarities from Ceylon to Portugal<sup>138</sup>.

Cochin's main importance lay in its increasing role as an important hub in the trade with the Gujarat and between the Coromandel Coast, the Bay of Bengal, Malacca and Macau. Cochin was also linked to ports of the Kingdom of Pegu (today's Myanmar), Malay and Sumatra<sup>139</sup>. Beside several trading communities of different origin and culture, Cochin's *casado* merchants were engaged in sea-trade, such as from Cranganore, the Konkan coast or

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>136</sup> John (1998, pp.296,298,305), Boyajian (2008, p.56).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>137</sup> Pinto (1994, p.44).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>138</sup> Silva (2000b, p.68).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>139</sup> John (1998), Boyajian (2008, p.56).

from the Gujarat, activities that were left by the Brahmins to foreigners and members of lower castes.

Due to the availability of timber, this port became additionally a place for shipbuilding. Many vessels involved in the overseas trade were built there or repaired from the early 16<sup>th</sup> century onward<sup>140</sup>. From 1580 onward, its port became a significant base with large *casados* communities who were either farmer<sup>141</sup>, artisans<sup>142</sup>, worked at the shipyard<sup>143</sup> or were engaged in maritime trade<sup>144</sup>. Cochin has been an important marketplace for textiles and fabrics from all regions of India and China, and products destined for local consumption. Nevertheless, a huge part of Indian textiles has reached Europe as recorded in shiploads or diverse inventories<sup>145</sup>.

Such as with other Indian port-cities there has been trade with Chinese merchants in the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries<sup>146</sup>, and in the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, there has been a Chinese colony<sup>147</sup>. This is the reason why both the wooden core and the lacquer coating of several objects have been attributed to Cochin<sup>148</sup>.

#### Goa

As a port-of-call on the way back to Lisbon merchandise and precious goods from various regions of the subcontinent such as Gujarat, Sind, the Malabar Coast, Cambay or Bengal, but also from more distant regions such as Arabia, America, Persia, and further from

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>140</sup> John (1998, p.298).

Also the *casados* settlers developed an agricultural base, importing and cultivating for example coconuts from Africa for the use of their fibers and seeds or had large plantations of jack wood trees, John (1998, pp.299,304).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>142</sup> Among the Christian descendants in the Malabar coast is a large number or artisans whose skills were inherited from their Portuguese ancestors, such as cobblers, gunners, masons, rope-maker, carpenters, bakers, shipwrights, fishermen, painters, seamen among others, in John (1998, p.296).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>143</sup> The Cochin shipyard was another source of income for the *casados* employing a number of caulkers, guards, workers for making ropes and other supplies needed, in John (1998, p.299).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>144</sup> John (1998, p.296).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>145</sup> Silva (2007a, p.204), Crespo (2015a).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>146</sup> Sen (2011).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>147</sup> John (1998, p.297), Felgueiras (1999, pp.173,175).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>148</sup> See the following publications on Indo-Portuguese furniture and lacquered Luso-Asian examples by John (1998), Dias (2002; 2008a; 2013), Serrão (2014b). See Chapter 2 and compare the various attributions of lacquered Luso-Asian furniture pieces.

Pegu, Siam, Malacca, Java, Maluku, China and Japan were imported and available there. From the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century onward Goa turned into an important artistic center, where objects either were produced locally or ordered from other parts of India. There were also received commissions from Europe and distributed to the diverse production centers, and from where the finished objects were then sent to Europe on the Goa-Lisbon or *Cape Route*<sup>149</sup>. For more than a century, the city became one of the richest and most diverse multi-ethnical towns in Asia, a Luso-Asian metropolis supported by the *casados*-policy.

With the first bishopric in Asia from 1534 onward, Goa further turned into the strategic center of the Catholic mission and from the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century onward it became also the base of the inquisition with the foundation of a tribunal in 1561. As such, Goa became the most important production center for all kind of equipment to furnish the chapels and churches, which were scattered throughout *Portuguese India*, as well as for religious utensils and images destined for worship (See Chapter 1.2.2.). Increasingly its artistic production was focused on religious and luxury goods turning the city into the main emporium of religious and extravagant artifacts in India, further providing also other regions within *Portuguese India* with religious artworks<sup>150</sup>.

Amongst others, the Dutch traveler Jan Huygen van Linschoten observed the Goan workshops and stores were distributed in different streets according to certain crafts, merchandise or products<sup>151</sup>. From the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century onward, with the establishments of factories further East, also Chinese silk textiles and porcelain shipped from Macau became available, as did small pieces of East Asian lacquerware.

#### Malacca

Around 1500 Malacca, located on the western coast of the Malayan peninsular, has already been one of the most important platforms of Asian maritime commerce and a diverse and rich trading center of all kind of merchandise. As a vassal of China and ruled by a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>149</sup> Silva (2000, p.67; 2007, p.199), Boyajian (2008).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>150</sup> Moreira (1998), Moreira & Curvelo (1998), Silva (2000a, p.88; 2000b, p.67; 2007a, p.199; 2009b, p.245), Pinto (2003a), Frias (2006), Boyajian (2008, pp.30-31), Correia (2011), Lopes (2011, p.291).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>151</sup> Burnell (1988, pp.228-29), Ferrão (1990b, p.20), Pinto (1994, p.44), Dias (2000, p.65); Silva (2000b, p.71; 2007, pp.199-200), Loureiro (2000; 2015, p.80), Flores (2007), Curvelo (2009; 2011).

Muslim elite, it was composed of a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic population<sup>152</sup>. From 1511 onward it lasted under Portuguese for 130 years. Its geo-strategically location lead to its bridge-function in the exchange of raw materials from Southeast Asia, Indian and Chinese manufactured goods, such as silk, cotton, or porcelain, and other products<sup>153</sup>, providing the Portuguese merchants access to multiple markets and enabling them to place orders directly to southern Chinese merchants (See Chapter 1.2.3.). With a customhouse established in 1545, this port-city became one of the most important sources of revenue of the *Portuguese State of India*. Its large population contained a considerable number of Portuguese Christians and *casados*.

It was through this port that the first Chinese goods were acquired and shipped to Lisbon and were orders of porcelain were launched to Chinese merchants in the beginning 16<sup>th</sup> century. This port-city was also an important stop-over of the trade route between Macau and Goa. Jacobus van de Koutere<sup>154</sup>, for example, described the goods brought by Chinese merchants to Malacca where among large quantities of raw silk and silken textiles, porcelain, tapestries and many other goods were also beds, gilded beds and chairs. He further mentioned that some thirty-five or forty junks from Goa, Cochin, Chaul, Nagapattnam, Mylapore, and the entire Coromandel Coast and from the kingdoms of Bengal and Pegu were calling at this port. He also observed the ships coming from Goa, which headed further to China and Japan<sup>155</sup>.

## Macau and Canton (Guangzhou)

In the 1550s and 1560s, the interaction between the Jesuits and Luso-Asian merchant groups became especially helpful for the creation of the Portuguese establishment in Macau<sup>156</sup>. What used to be a fishing village on this peninsula<sup>157</sup> rapidly turned into a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>152</sup> Ferrão (1990b, p.5), Gomes (2004, p.12), Curvelo (2009, p.20; 2011, pp.42-43), Lobato (2016).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>153</sup> Gomes (2004, p.130).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>154</sup> Known as Jacques de Coutre (1572-1640), was a Flemish gem trader who has travelled Southeast Asia and wrote his memoirs *Jacques de Coutre's Life in South East Asia* and *The Memorials of Jacques de Coutres to the Crown and Viceroy*, written between 1623 and 1628, which are kept at the National Library in Spain.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>155</sup> Crespo (2015a, p.122).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>156</sup> Correia (2011, p.60).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>157</sup> The peninsula was inhabited by immigrated Fujianese and is situated right at the entrance of the Pearl River statuary. It is generally believed that its name derives from *A-m-ao*, or *A-ma-ngao* (Cantonese), which literally

Portuguese enclave at the gates of China. A simple factory was established in 1555/1557 to serve as a stopover in the lucrative trade with Chinese goods. With the permission of the Portuguese factory and settlement, Ming China aimed to regulate foreign influence and trade under Chinese control, hoping that by providing an official base the contraband of Chinese merchants and Japanese wakō pirates along the coastline would diminish. The number of Portuguese settlers grew rapidly, which certainly included those private traders who previously dwelled on the island of Lampacau, which served as an unofficial post of foreign trade. As early as 1563 it was already consisting of 600 Portuguese settlers and another 1000 people composed of Malaccans, Indians, and Africans some of which were traders and many servants and slaves<sup>158</sup>. From 1580 onward Macau was ruled by the Portuguese town senate composed of a merchant' elite and Jesuit missionaries, which in turn was submitted to the Chinese authorities who collected taxes on the factory and the passing ships 159. Soon it should become a lucrative stopover in the trade route between Malacca and Japan. Simultaneously located close to Canton and the South China Sea network its role as strategic entrepôt and religious center increased towards the end of the century. Fast it turned into the headquarters of Christian mission in the Far East, and into a place of demand for religious artworks. Its neighboring regions supplied it with all daily life necessities, only for specific practices related to the Christian mission certain demands could not be answered immediately<sup>160</sup>.

The nearby Chinese metropolis Canton (Guangzhou), capital of the Guangdong province, located further in the Pearl River estuary has a millennia old history as the main entry into China. Despite of periods in which the empire has secluded itself from the outside world with strictly limited and controlled sea trade, in the history of the city and depending on the policies of the respective emperors, there have been foreign settlements of tributary partners and merchants. Already in the Tang dynasty (618-907) Canton developed into an

means Bay of *A-ma* (a Fujianese goddess of fishermen, seafarers and their wives, also known as *Mazu*) as there was a homonymous temple in Macau, cf. Chang (1969, p.87), Zeng (1997, p.156), Lopes (2011, p.71).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>158</sup> Chang (1969, pp.95-97), Krahl (2007, p.235), Loureiro (2007; 2016), Curvelo (2013b, pp.18-19), Pinto (2014, p.85), Alves & Barreto (2007), Barreto (2016).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>159</sup> Dias (2000, p.63), Silva (2000a, pp.84-85), Gomes (2004, pp.128,129), Pinto (2014, p.86).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>160</sup> Krahl (2007, p.235).

important port-city frequented by Indian, Arab, Jewish, and Persian traders<sup>161</sup>. A visible sign of the Muslim presence is for example a mosque with its round minaret – the so-called *Smooth Pagoda* – that is easily identifiable by its uncommon plain walls compared to the nine-floor *Flowery Pagoda*. Both protrude from the city landscape. In 1564 in Canton's south along the riverside was built a second city wall to protect the space in between (which later was called New City by the foreigners)<sup>162</sup> [Fig. 1]. Beside its century-long history of foreign maritime trade with ports along the Indian coast (Malabar, Coromandel and Bengal); this town had a specific significance as production center of lacquerware and furniture, and luxury items consumed by the rising literati class during the Ming dynasty<sup>163</sup>. The 16<sup>th</sup> century Canton was one of the biggest fortified centers in southern China.



Fig. 1 Unknown Dutch artist. Panoramic view of Canton, engraving, 1660, © Dermigny (1964, Plate 19)

It was this city, which supplied a few afore elected Macanese merchants with diverse Chinese goods intended for various destinies, which they acquired at the annual fairs. From 1578 were held the Canton fairs, first once, then from 1580 onward twice a year, lasting between 2 and 4 month. Although the trade was strictly controlled by Chinese authorities

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>161</sup> Chang (1969), Cheong (1997, pp.1-5), Perkins (1999, p.194), Petisca (2010, p.76), Hsia (2013, p.14).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>162</sup> Petisca (2010, pp.76-77).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>163</sup> Clunas (1988, pp.66,68; 1991), Cheong (1997), Petisca (2010, pp.76-79), Sen (2011).

Macanese merchants enjoyed privileged excess compared to other foreigners. Only a few merchants could buy commodities for them and on behalf of others on the fairs<sup>164</sup>. The Dutch traveler Jan Hyugen van Linschoten (1563-1611) describes Canton as:

"(...) the chiefe Towne of this Province [and] is a great Towne of Marchandise, from whence the Portingals have their ware, and is the onely place where they [usually] have conference with the whole countrie of China (...)"<sup>165</sup>

And on the relationship between Canton and Macau, and the Portuguese activities Linschoten observed the following:

"(...) The Lland and Towne of Machau or Makau, is inhabited by portingales, together with naturall borne or China. They trafficke with the men of Canton, from whence the Chinayes bring all marchendises, and resort thether to buy wares, but the Portingals may not goe thither, but any shippe commeth out of India to Machau it is by Mandorijn of Governour of Machau presently measured (...) "166

Between 1757 and 1842 Canton was the sole legal center of international trade (*China Trade*), controlled by the *co-hong* from 1760 – a guilt of Chinese *hong* merchants acting as intermediaries and operating the imports and exports. It was in this period that all foreign nations (among them for example Danish, Greek, Austrian, Spanish, Swedish, Dutch, French, English, or American) trading with China began to take up residence during the trading seasons in an area out of the city walls, restricted to 12-13 factories<sup>167</sup>.

Thanks to the proximity to this trading hub, the Portuguese Japan and other long-distance trade were fed, and Macau grew and developed. From the establishment of the first Jesuit residence in 1562, and particularly after the foundation of the Diocese of Macau in 1576, the need for religious items and utensils for the Catholic missions and number of religious institutions and churches in the region grew. Macau became a center of intense missionary work and religious education, preparing individuals for the mission in Japan and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>164</sup> Chang (1969, p.102), Flores (2001b, pp.201-04), Alves & Barreto (2007, p.67), Loureiro (2016).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>165</sup> Burnell (1988, p.125).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>166</sup> Burnell (1988, p.145).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>167</sup> Cheong (1997, pp.11-13), Perkins (1999, p.194), Sargent (2000, p.76), Loureiro (2007, p.221), Petisca (2010, p.78).

China<sup>168</sup>. Mainly through the Jesuits, who were important scouts for information about the local *modus vivendi*, diplomatic pioneers, and distributers of goods, both the Chinese and Japanese missions were considerably interwoven. In Macau, not only diverse merchandise from other southern Chinese ports, India, Japan, Manila, or Mexico were exchanged, but also people of diverse origins were residing in or passing through this city, among them also Japanese converts who escaped the persecution. It was in Macau where the Jesuit *Seminary of Painters* from Nagasaki continued its activities from 1614 on. Moreover, after 1639, Macau became an important place of refuge and shelter for fleeing Christian priests and Japanese converts. Several religious artifacts of mixed influences might have emerged from the encounters in this cross-cultural port-city<sup>169</sup> (See Chapter 5.5.).

#### <u>Nagasaki</u>

After Portuguese merchants first landed on Tanegashima in 1542-43, around three years later (in 1549) with the arrival of Spanish Francisco Javier (Francis Xavier), the crown supported the Jesuits to start their missionary activities on the Japanese island until Spanish-sponsored mendicant orders such as the Franciscans and Dominicans also gained access to begin Christianizing Japan.

The Jesuits had very good progress in converting people on the Japanese island of Kyūshū and gained a powerful patron with Oda Nobunaga (1534-1582)<sup>170</sup>. After the conversion of the local *daimyō* Ōmura Sumitada on the island in 1563, the same allowed merchants from Macau to settle on his land in 1570 (ceded to the Jesuits in 1580). Soon after, in 1571 the town of Nagasaki (literally meaning "long cape") began to be built. In 1590, the fast-growing city counted 5000, and between 1600 and 1618, Nagasaki's mixed population already counted from 15000 to 30000 inhabitants, 2000 of which were Chinese. However, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, who unified Japan in 1584, linked the city in 1587 to the central power, being governed by one of his representatives, and finally in 1592 Nagasaki turned into an imperial city<sup>171</sup>. The city became one of three Luso-Asian merchant establishments in Japan and from

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>168</sup> Boxer (1948a, p.157), Dias (2000, p.65), Silva (2000a, p.85), Correia (2011).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>169</sup> Teixeira (1993), Curvelo (2008a, p.63), Carvalho (2013).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>170</sup> Curvelo (2001, p.24), Correia (2011, p.61), Kreiner (2012, p.187), Costa (2016a).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>171</sup> Murakami (1940), Boxer (1959b, pp.1-2), Curvelo (2001; 2007<sup>a</sup>; 2007b), Loureiro (2007, pp.217-18), Correia (2011, p.59), Costa (2016a).

1580 on, the most important and fixed destination of the black trade galleons (*kurofune*). Further, from 1587 Nagasaki turned into the headquarters of the Jesuit mission in Japan<sup>172</sup>.

In 1593 already a surprising amount of 215000 converts were registered. The Jesuits built colleges, which were popular also for non-Christians. The Italian painter Giovanni Niccolò (c.1558-1626), called by Alessandro Valignano, arrived to Nagasaki in 1583 from where he parts of to train students in several missions. He founded a Jesuit art school, the *Seminary of Painters*, in 1590 in Kumamoto, which between 1603 and 1614 functioned in Nagasaki. Besides the training in European painting by copying European models, which introduced European painting techniques such as the perspective and light-dark contrast (*chiaroscuro*), also the manufacture of musical instruments and clocks was taught<sup>173</sup>. However, this copying practice had already started right after the arrival of Francis Xavier in 1549 that brought the first European religious images<sup>174</sup>; its continuity also ensured that there were enough supplies of devotional images, oratories and retable<sup>175</sup>.

Nagasaki grew as a Christian town and became an intercultural space where civilizational and religious dimensions merged, between not only Japanese and Portuguese, but also including Chinese and peoples from other origins part of the Luso-Asian networks<sup>176</sup>. With the Tokugawa *sakoku* edict the presence and commerce of Portuguese and Catholic Europeans ended and were substituted by the Dutch VOC.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>172</sup> Curvelo (2001), Correia (2011, p.61), Kreiner (2012, p.187), Costa (2016a).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>173</sup> Cf. Curvelo (2001; 2016, p.127), Curvelo & Bastos (2001, pp.431-32), Bailey (2009, p.227).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>174</sup> The Japanese mission was initiated with Francis Xavier who arrived in Kagoshima in 1549 together with paintings and devotional objects.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>175</sup> Bailey (2007, pp.178-180), Curvelo (2007b, p.280). With an increasing number of Japanese and Chinese students the art produced by the seminary became increasingly hybrid. In 1603 the seminary counted 70 students, including several of Chinese origin. Nagasaki remained the headquarters of the Jesuit mission and a center of Christianity in Japan, depending totally on the shipping from and to Macau. Bailey (2007, p.178; 2009, pp.226-228), Curvelo (2007a, pp.293-325).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>176</sup> Curvelo (2001), Costa (2016a).

# 1.2. Intermingling of Peoples and Cultures along the Asian Shoreline in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries – Fusion of Asian and Catholic European Cultures and Arts

Cultures are not isolated but flexible formations that evolve, and that have mutually influenced and intermingled throughout time. 16<sup>th</sup> century maritime Asia was composed of and shaped by different cultures, their mutual material and immaterial interactions, and warlike conflicts, but also through an intensive commercial exchange. The southern European maritime ventures thus only added another contribution to the already multi-culturally composed continent, inaugurating a new era of direct contact between Europe and several Asian cultures.

This cross-cultural exchange resulted not only in the crossing of peoples, ideas, novel notions of identity, methods of cultural adaptation and appropriation, and the interpretation of cultural values on diverse levels. It also brought about the integration of new forms and functions; as well as materials, motifs, styles and techniques.

Consequently, this exchange, paired with the fascination for the unknown, led to fundamental changes in the material culture of the Europeans, both those overseas and at home. An ever-expanding catalogue of novel and exotic items excited Europeans, and further European collecting, leading to distinct markets for Asian luxury items. The variety of goods and artifacts which flooded the European markets and the prosperous strata of the population stimulated the interest and craving for previously unknown commodities, considered exotic.

The everyday life and material culture of the Asian populaces with whom the trade was driven or who have been proselytized under the Portuguese patronage was of course also influenced. In different areas a certain kind of contrariwise exoticism developed which left manifold visual traces. This is attested by several depictions of Portuguese and Luso-Asian people, their dresses, customs or furniture.

The diverse artifacts resulting from the fusion of various cultural and artistic traditions within the framework of these ventures in 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century' Asia are here summarized under the concept of Luso-Asian art, a term which spans the entire territory of Asia touched by Catholic European missionary and commercial activities. Further it combines all the manifold hybrid and heterogeneous everyday objects, exotic artistic creations and religious

implements that were produced in the different territories under Portuguese administration or in areas where commercial relations enabled a continuous presence of Portuguese and European officials, noblemen, *casados*, merchants, adventurers or missionaries, namely along the shorelines of India, Ceylon, today's Myanmar and Thailand, the Malay archipelago, southern China, Indonesia and the Japanese islands.

The fusion of indigenous craft traditions and European commission resulted in a confluence in terms of formal, iconographical, material, technical and functional aspects. Regardless of where the artifacts were produced, the objects created to suit the Europeans are decorated in a style that adopted the foreigners' taste.

With regard to religious art, also the imagery has been appropriated for both the religious orders and indigenous converts. As a result, purely novel amalgamations of diverse influences were created which do not coincide with indigenous esthetics.

While the artifacts, particularly the lacquered Luso-Asian items, reflect the origins of the manifold artistic and cultural influences that have arisen within this vast sphere of individual and multi-cultural centers, the precise origins of many objects remain obscure, due to the lack of detailed descriptions in contemporary documents and surviving examples with proofed origins. This is partly because of the constant circulation of traders, merchants, and artisans, which is indicated for this epoch.

Communities of Portuguese *casados* and other individuals naturally changed their tastes and adapted their habits and costumes to local circumstances in the regions they were settling or acting (including dress, eating, ceremony, the way of inhabiting the space and the use of objects<sup>177</sup>), in the same way as they left their own footprints in local cultures, on one hand by commissioning European-style objects and utensils and on the other hand by developing a certain taste and ordering specific typologies and decorations.

This can also be perceived in the way overseas-Portuguese, Luso-Asian, and the distinct individuals forming part of their crew (including captains, and officials, African, Indian and Malay slaves, missionaries etc.) appear dressed in numerous depictions on *nanban* 

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>177</sup> For more detailed reading on the complex and diverse cultural realities the Portuguese and their European partners adapted to, I suggest for instance Moreira (1998), Flores (1998), Braga (1998; 2001), Curvelo (2007a, pp.58-73).

screens, using their European costumes with heads, buttoned jerkins, capes, and wide trousers made of manifold decorated textiles available in the various port-cities, suitable to local climatic conditions<sup>178</sup>. Portuguese officials and noblemen for instance also adapted Asian symbols of power and status, such as parade weapons (as for example the lacquered parade shields with Portuguese noblemen's coat-of-arms, see Chapter 2.1.)<sup>179</sup>, diverse kinds of Asian fans or parasols that were often hold by servants to protect their sovereigns from the sun<sup>180</sup>, as featured on numerous *nanban* screens or seen in Goa<sup>181</sup>, Malacca<sup>182</sup>, and Macau<sup>183</sup> [Fig. 2].

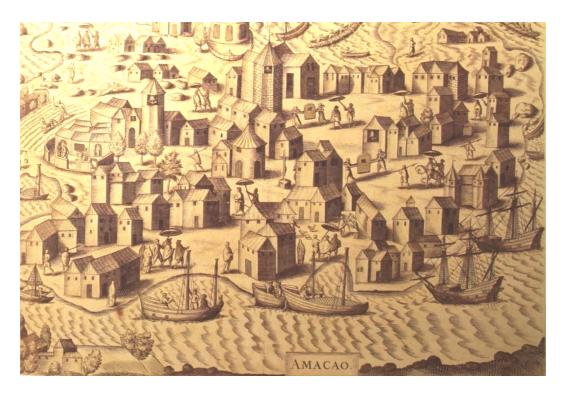


Fig. 2 Theodore de Bry. View of Macau (Amacao) (detail), ca. 1598, Hong Kong Museum of Art (Inv. no. cwM 1598 AH8121), © Urban Council of Hong Kong (1997, p.61)

The objects that emerged from the coexistence of multiple cultures and the Europeans' everyday or luxury necessities in foreign tropical regions include items for daily

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>178</sup> Cf. Braga (1998, p.527), Curvelo (2007a; 2007b; 2015a)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>179</sup> Loureiro (2010a).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>180</sup> Cf. Jordan Gschwend (2003).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>181</sup> For example, the overseas-Europeans depicted in Jan Hyugen van Linschoten's drawings, published in his *Itinerary*, cf. Curvelo (2009, p.32; 2015, p.17).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>182</sup> Cf. Braga (1998, p.532).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>183</sup> Cf. Vasconcelos & Carneiro (2009), Curvelo (2015).

use, *status* and parade objects, and moreover artifacts created under the umbrella of the Christianization conducted in different Asian territories.

To my understanding, Luso-Asian art combines fusions of several cultural, craft, and artistic influences, or religious imageries that result from this cultural intermingling, combining beside the fields of architecture (religious, military and civil) and urbanism, fine arts, and the decorative arts and crafts including textiles, jewelry, furniture, paintings, as well as religious sculpture and small-sized portable furniture. Relevant to this present study are the results of the cultural and artistic fusion of Catholic European commission with Indian art (Hindu and Muslim), which is generally labeled Indo-Portuguese art 184, as well as Chinese, Sino-Portuguese and Japanese *nanban* art.

Given that among all these artifacts that are not easy to classify there are many which involve influences of more than two geographical or cultural origins in Asia, the term Luso-Asian seems to be rather appropriate to border these items with clear Asian influences, encompassing at the same time the Catholic European contribution, as well as their historical and geo-political contextualization. The Luso-Asian lacquered furniture and parade shields,

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>184</sup> In the past different definitions have been developed of what kind of artifacts are summarized under this concept. In the second half of the 19th century the designation "Indo-Portuguese" was first applied in the scope of different exhibitions of Portuguese and Spanish arts, cf. Robinson (1881), Viterbo (1883), Vasconcelos (1883). It referred to items "made in India by indigenous craftsmen using ancestral techniques which presented an artistic connotation of Portuguese influences" or artifacts "produced in Portugal by Indian artisans who were separated from their caste and social condition" or objects "made by Portuguese artisans adapting Indian styles", cf. Robinson (1881). The concept itself does not specify at all to which of the categories one piece belongs to or to the circumstances which led to its creation, nor does it reveal the distinct influences fused together in the decoration or the origins of materials and techniques present, cf. Irwin (1955). Further this term specified objects that were produced by Indian artisans in India which present Portuguese influences, or objects fabricated by Portuguese artisans following Indian models or using Indian techniques such as gold and silver filigree, or embroidery, cf. Irwin (1955, pp.386-87), Silva (1966, p.5). The use of this concept has been extended over the past 130 years. Sometimes it described any artefact produced in the vast network of the Portuguese State of India, carrying connotations either related to the former Portuguese overseas-empire or to the colonies on the Indian subcontinent, cf. Pinto (2016), or circumscribed "the arts of India which have been touched by the Portuguese", Serrão (2016, p.110). Referring to the Indian subcontinent as the origin of the artifacts, the artisans or artistic and craft influences reflected in the objects, what is nowadays termed Indo-Portuguese art in the field of decorative arts combines elements of both geographically and culturally distant spheres. Included are goldand silversmith's work, jewelry, embroideries, fabrics and textiles, furniture and architectural elements, objects made of or using materials such as mother-of-pearl, ivory, tortoiseshell, precious stones or rock crystal, which present the same artistic, social, cultural miscegenation and religious syncretism. In summary, various objects of either religious or secular use which present different combinations and mixtures of both cultural areas in terms of their formal and esthetic, iconographic and iconological, material-specific, technical and functional aspects are covered. On diverse apects and streams of Indo-Portuguese art see for example: Silva (1966), Pinto (1985-1987, p.7), Ferrão (1990b, p.11), Raposo (1994), Silva (1996a; 1996b; 2000b; 2007a; 2009b), Moreira & Curvelo (1998), Dias (2002, 2004, 2008a, 2009a, 2009b, 2013), Ferreira (2005a), Frias (2006), Carvalho (2008), Reis (2015, pp.52-84), Pinto (2016), Serrão (2016).

which are subject to this thesis, largely copy the typologies used in the Iberian Peninsula, although there are exceptions of types of furniture originating to different regions in *Portuguese India*, which were adopted by the Europeans and decorated according to their taste<sup>185</sup>.

#### 1.2.1. Purchasers and Consumers

Throughout the 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, in mainland Portugal a multitude of prejudicial circumstances such as: penury, the plague, several wars and other major political instabilities, long periods of famine, along a strictly hierarchic socially and economically unbalanced society, the inquisitor persecution of dissenters and people of non-Catholic faith – contrasting with newly opportunities of freedom and promising riches in the Asian maritime network – led to an increasing migratory movement of individuals eager to leave Portugal for a better life overseas<sup>186</sup>.

Among the diverse multi-culturally composed groups (either resident or in transit) attracted by the maritime undertakings, and beside the officially permitted participants, were small communities of merchants and artisans, an elite of captains, public officials and cleric, missionaries, or simply adventurers. Also, individuals professionally related to commerce endeavored to establish their private businesses overseas. These included New Christians, as well as European agents and members of commercial enterprises who soon increased the importance of private ventures besides the official trading activities organized and supervised by the Portuguese crown.

A fact that one should never disregard is that, since the earliest voyages towards India, even if led by the Portuguese Kingdom, many non-Portuguese individuals have been involved. This fact can be taken in account either in direct relation to the participation of many individuals from different European nationalities in the mercantile activities<sup>187</sup>, per se,

<sup>187</sup> These included officially nominated captains and contractors, navigators, sailors and crewmembers, soldiers, agents, bankers or merchant families who either supported the trade or were directly implicated in the actual transactions or negotiations. For example, a shipwreck of the *Bom Jesus*, which left Lisbon in March 1533 in a fleet of six vessels heading to Goa was found in 2008 at the Namibian coast and offered a rare evidence of the load of a commercial ship prepared for commercial transactions that was financed by a multitude of European

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>185</sup> Cf. Ferrão (1990b), Moreira & Curvelo (1998, pp.532-35), Felgueiras (1999, p.170), Dias (2002; 2013), Moncada (2008).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>186</sup> Cf. for example Boyajian (2008, pp.vii, 30-33).

or by the multi-national composition of the different religious orders and congregations participating in the evangelization project within the overall missionary activities overseas<sup>188</sup>.

Additionally, a huge part of the Portuguese population did have relatives serving as officers, sailors or soldiers, or acting as private merchants, craftsmen or other laborer in Asia, who were seeking for easy profits with personal trading activities. It is conceivable that many of the items acquired by them found their way to Portugal stored as private merchandise in the numerous *liberty chests* aboard the vessels heading back to Europe, where they could be sold at local markets or otherwise distributed among relatives and friends. Furniture pieces like beds, cabinets, writing boxes and chests, as well as round shields (*rodelas*) from India or China arrived in modest quantities to Europe and constituted contemporary households of aristocratic individuals, among which were wealthy merchants, humanists, New Christians, or former royal officials who served as captains or viceroys in *Portuguese India*. Thus, who could effort it or whose family members were involved in the maritime activities increasingly used Asian spices, cotton and silk textiles, porcelain and other oversea commodities<sup>189</sup>.

Among the privileged elite a special taste for exotic luxury items developed which from the early 16<sup>th</sup> century onward increasingly extended to and throughout Europe penetrating not only the ruling classes, but also humanists and rising merchant families.

#### European Royalty and Renaissance Collections

The first, most important player was the Portuguese crown. Many aspects of the material culture at the royal court were impregnated with foreign novelties, be it exotic comestibles served at royal festivities, the fashion, or the use of status symbols. Spices and other exotic foods, fruits and vegetables, precious cotton and silk textiles, porcelain,

financiers and merchants. It contained twenty-two copper ingots stamped with the hall-mark of Anton Fugger destined for the spice trade, and a high number of ivory tusks on board were destined for the Indian markets, two thousand gold coins of Venetian, French, Hungarian, North African, Spanish and Portuguese origin evidencing the enormous investment carried out by an international consortium in the transatlantic trade of the *Carreira da India*, cf. Jordan Gschwend (2015c, pp.142-43), Werz (2015, pp.91-92).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>188</sup> In the same way, several religious orders and congregations also gather a considerable number of other Europeans, such as French, German, Italian, Spanish, Belgian, or other origins in their Catholic missions. Moreover, even if they are not addressed individually, they are all taken into account when referring to the Portuguese Maritime Expansion, no matter the commercial and missionary activities happened under the Portuguese kingdoms' patronage.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>189</sup> Flores (1998), Moreira (1998), Moreira & Curvelo (1998), Curvelo & Bastos (2001, p.426), Boyajian (2008, p.51), Pinto (2008), Serrão (2014a; 2015b), Crespo (2012; 2015a; 2016a; 2017a).

diversified new accessories, artifacts from precious new materials, among many other strange or mysterious things have been increasingly integrated into everyday life.

The earliest exotic pieces and artworks arrived at the royal court in Lisbon brought either as diplomatic presents or souvenirs by captains, merchants, and agents, or were sent by viceroys of *Portuguese India* and foreign sovereigns as diplomatic gifts<sup>190</sup>.

In 16<sup>th</sup> century Europe, soon developed a certain fondness among the central European royal courts to collect or accumulate artifacts embellished with exotic materials from *Portuguese India*, as well as exotic plant and animals species, and many other novel natural creations, and to display them in chambers or curiosity cabinets (*Kunst- und Wunderkammern*) where *rarietate*, *artificialia*, *exotica*, *asiatica*, *naturalia*, *mirabilia* or *scientifica* were united. They result from the technological and scientific achievements in consequence to the spotting of new continents and their diverse cultures, the Renaissance humanist movement and its thirst of knowledge. In the course of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, this practice extended further among the houses of nobles, patricians, and humanist scholars; who flaunted their prosperity, wealth and knowledge to demonstrate their range of power and worldliness<sup>191</sup>.

The European royal houses were deeply interwoven through the members of the Habsburg dynasty who then ruled much of Europe. Precious and costly gifts were exchanged through their networks, a practice that had already been established by the older generation. The earliest examples of such accumulations probably were at the courts in Lisbon, Madrid, Innsbruck, Vienna, Brussels, Dresden, as well as in Prague and Munich, although in the case of Lisbon no details are known about its organization or localization. What is based on documentary evidence is that the wife of the Portuguese King D. João III, Queen D. Catarina of Austria (1507-1578), was a passionate purchaser owning the largest group of non-European objects in mid-16<sup>th</sup> century Iberia<sup>192</sup>.

In Lisbon, where all sorts of rarities and luxury goods from India and the Far East arrived, this queen sat at the source holding a privileged key position as a purchaser for her

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>190</sup> Jordan Gschwend (1996, p.99), Flores (1998, pp.44-46).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>191</sup> Jordan Gschwend (1996, p.83).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>192</sup> Jordan Gschwend (1993, p.64; 1998, p.209; 2004, p.39; 2012a).

own use, but also as costly presents to cultivate the relationship with the European royalty, and as gifts, which she frequently sent to her relatives. These included for example her daughter and daughter-in-law Maria and Joana of Austria, her brother Carlos V at the Spanish royal court, or her nephew Archduke Ferdinand II of Tirol (1529-1595), who in 1557 was married to Philippine Welser, daughter of the famous Augsburg patrician and merchant family. The archduke in Tirol had built a big and well organized *Kunstkammer* collection at Schloss Castle, close to Innsbruck, where he created a complex in 1573 exclusively to house his collection<sup>193</sup>. Further, D. Catarina gave presents to Isabel de Valois, her nephew Felipe II of Spain, and her great-nephews Prince Carlos and Emperor Rudolph II in Prague (who also developed a great collection)<sup>194</sup>.

Between the mid-1560s and throughout the 1570s the queen purchased quantities of lacquered folding tables, caskets, chests, and writing desks from East Asia<sup>195</sup>. As Jordan Gschwend states, after D. Catarina left the court and joined the Madre de Deus convent in Xabregas nearby Lisbon in 1573, it is most probable that her successors D. Sebastião and D. Henrique did absorb and made use of parts of her compilation of exotic oversea goods and artifacts. Also, Filipe I of Portugal (Felipe II of Spain) took use of several collectibles for his own, incorporating them to his collection in Madrid or sending them to Habsburg relatives. Several pieces which match items described in D. Catarina's inventories or correspondence appear later in other Habsburg collections, all of which possibly included pieces of Asian lacquerware<sup>196</sup>.

A number of artifacts and objects made of prized materials were considered exotic and precious, such as porcelain or lacquer bowls, items made of rock crystal, coral, ivory, exotic shells (for ex. *Nautilus pompilius*, *Charonia lampas*), coco nuts; or Gujarat mother-of-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>193</sup>Jordan Gschwend & Belz (2010).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>194</sup> Cf. Jordan Gschwend (1993, p.63; 1996, p.112; 1998, pp.214-15; 2004, p.39; 2012a; 2015c), Jordan Gschwend & Tudela (2001). Queen Catarina of Austria's collection was consistent of porcelain, countless textiles and fabrics made of cotton, silk, damask, brocade etc. from India and China, ivories and rock crystal pieces from Ceylon, precious jewelry pieces with diamonds, sapphires, emeralds and so on, furniture such as chests, tables, chairs, desks, game boards and chest sets inlayed with exotic woods, mother-of-pearl or ivory, and numerous objects such as boxes, caskets and tableware of tortoiseshell and mother-of-pearl from India, among many other artifacts or goods from diverse origins, including exotic animals, cf. Jordan Gschwend (1996, p.118).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>195</sup> Jordan Gschwend (1998, p.226; 2015c, p.148).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>196</sup> Jordan Gschwend (1996, pp.96-97).

peal, tortoiseshell pieces, or vessels from rhinoceros-horn which were additionally embellished with metal mounts by Goan or European gold and silversmiths. Innumerous and diverse examples are extant in central European Renaissance *Kunstkammer* collections<sup>197</sup>.

A vast network consisted of royal servants, private agents, diplomats, couriers, sea captains, viceroys, merchants and Fugger agents who were employed in the acquisition of rarities, precious materials, exotic goods and Asian artifacts for the Habsburg. They purchased these items either on market places or in fairs held in European metropolis such as Venice, Genoa, Antwerp, Seville or Lisbon, or were involved in the shipments from Asia to the Iberian Peninsula, and within Europe<sup>198</sup>. These acquisitions and international relations have been extensively studied in the recent decades<sup>199</sup>, illustrating how these items and precious objects were bought, and distributed.

Several of the studied pieces (2.1.1., 2.2.1., 2.4.1., and 2.9.1.) must have been acquired through this network of circulating agents who were mandated to acquire the rarest materials and objects, or precious and luxurious artifacts, and explore the most qualitative and moreover cheapest of their variety for the royal collections.

The personal servant of Queen Catarina of Austria, João Pedroso, acted as her principal agent in Malacca and Goa to procure exclusive lacquerware and luxury goods, informing the queen about the things available in Malacca and the arrivals from Macau and Japan. In 1562 and 1564 the queen received for example folding fans, lacquer tables, chairs, caskets and writingboxes or desks from China and Japan<sup>200</sup>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>197</sup> Seipel (2000), Trnek & Silva (2001), Jordan (2004), Bujok (2007).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>198</sup> Jordan Gschwend (1996; 1998; 2012a), Jordan Gschwend & Tudela (2001), Bujok (2007), Gschwend & Beltz (2010).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>199</sup> For a more detailed reading see the publications by Jordan Gschwend.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>200</sup> Cf. Jordan Gschwend (1996, pp.110-117; 1998, pp.205, 209-211; 2004, p.39), Moreira (1998, p.471), Impey & Jörg (2005, p.284), Loureiro (2015, p.79). Among the goods sent to D. Catarina of the first mandate were a leather chest with two Chinese foldable chairs and four ivory fans from Ceylon, cf. Jordan Gschwend (1996, p.111). The mandate of 1564 constituted a large shipment of Chinese products which came via Goa to Lisbon, among the items were five foldable tabletops made of black lacquered wood, painted and richly decorated with animals, birds and gold foliage (two of them quite long); three gilt writing desks (escritórios) each with a drawer in the middle for the paper, two gilt chests (one large, one small), five porcelain bowls with gilt-bronze mounts and 178 folding fans (abanos lequios), Jordan Gschwend (1996, p.112); on Asian fans, cf. Jordan Gschwend (2003, p.270).

Anton Meyting, another agent that was trained at the Augsburg Fugger merchants and worked for them was occasionally acting in the service of Felipe II or Albrecht V, Duke of Bavaria, as a middleman, private courier or in artistic consultant services<sup>201</sup>. Another Fugger agent, Nathaniel Jung, who was settled in Lisbon, purchased Asian goods, novelties and *exotica* for Albrecht V's collection. Letters from 1566 document the purchase of two chests filled with luxury goods from *Portuguese India*, which have been sent to Munich<sup>202</sup>.

Anton Meyting, Hans Klevenhüller (the Imperial ambassador, artistic advisor, intermediary and agent for the Habsburgs between 1574 and 1606 based in Madrid), Nathaniel Jung, or Ferdinand Cron (Fugger agent who was sent to Goa in 1586 and who acquired goods on behalf of Albrecht VII, Archduke of Austria, in India and Macau) were among a number of individuals in the service of the Habsburg royalty<sup>203</sup>.

#### Catholic Missionaries – Religious Orders and Congregations

Most striking was the cross-cultural influence of the Catholic missionary activities, their attempt to penetrate the Asian civilizations, and their purchases and distribution of religious artifacts, and luxury goods. In Asia missionaries faced totally different cultures, artistic traditions and respective attitudes to sacred art, as for example the geometric and non-figurative representations of the Muslims in India and Southeast Asia, the overwhelmingly filled three-dimensional spaces and imagery of Hindu art, the plastic and vivid style of Theravada Buddhism<sup>204</sup> in Ceylon, Chinese Daoist, Confucian and Buddhist art, or Shinto and Buddhist arts in Japan<sup>205</sup>.

The principle tool for evangelization used by the missionaries, above all the Jesuits, was art, including engravings after Italian or Flemish masters, oil paintings, and illustrated

<sup>203</sup> Boyajian (2008, p.51), Gschwend & Tudela (2001, p.2), Gschwendt & Beltz (2010, p.104), Crespo (2015a,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>201</sup> Jordan Gschwend & Tudela (2001, p.2), Jordan (2012b, pp.14-15).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>202</sup> Jordan & Beltz (2010, p.98).

p.121).

Theravada Buddhism uses Buddha's teaching preserved in the Pāli Canon as its doctrinal core. Pāli, the classical Indic language, serves as the sacred language and lingua franca of Theravada Buddhism. It is a very conservative form of Buddhism regarding matters of doctrine and monastic discipline. As a distinct sect, Theravada Buddhism developed in Sri Lanka and spread to the rest of Southeast Asia, including today's Myanmar, Gombrich (1996).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>205</sup> Cf. Flores (1998, pp.33-39), Pina (2001), Brockey (2001; 2007), Osswald (2003), Bailey (2004; 2007; 2009), Curvelo (2007a), Correia (2011), Lopes (2011).

religious books, which functioned as visual representations of the sacred narratives and facilitated the spread of the Catholic faith. They sent original oil paintings to India, or in case of India, Japan and China they brought occasionally European artists to the missions to train non-Christian artisans in the production of devotional objects. In the case of Mughal India and China, various treatises on European arts and architecture were introduced<sup>206</sup>.

Overall, Catholic missionaries played a significant role as purchasers of all kinds of furniture, imagery and religious utensils. In any region of *Portuguese India*, Christian art produced in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries echo the diversely distinctive cultural background of the hosting cultures. Mainly the Jesuits began borrowing symbols from the indigenous arts of the respective culture they wished to convert, and established connections between local and Christian imagery, which led to a diversity of results.

The demand of portable objects and supplies was particularly increased with the growing extension of the *Portuguese State of India* along with the advance of Catholic missions further into Asia. Beside liturgical textiles, paintings, sculptured images, gold- and silversmith work, the existence of numerous portable liturgical objects and furniture does help to account for the dimension of missionary organization and its rapid progress throughout Asia. These artifacts comprise oratories (2.6.), mass book lecterns (2.7.), reliquaries, retable or host boxes, many of which are embellished with the Jesuit IHS-monogram<sup>207</sup> or heraldic devices of different religious orders.

Particularly the Jesuits encountered in the dissimilar regions of India, Japan and China sundry conditions and developed a method of accommodation, which facilitated the conversion of the respective heathens<sup>208</sup>. As it turned out, each cultural sphere required a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>206</sup> Bailey (2007, p.170; 2009, pp.216-218).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>207</sup> Used by the Society of Jesus since their foundation, the IHS-monogram is composed by three letters that stand for the abbreviation of the Greek version of the name of Jesus (*IHSOUS*) and likewise for – "*Iesus Hominum Salvator*" – Jesus Savior of Mankind. On the horizontal stroke of the H of the monogram a cross is mounted, three nails underneath, and the whole is surrounded either by a circular or in subsequent periods by an oval sunburst.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>208</sup> Costa (1998, p.123; 2016), O'Malley et al. (1999), Brockey (2001; 2007), Pina (2001), Curvelo (2007a, pp.235ff; 2007b, p.280), Bailey (2007; 2009), Lopes (2011), Correia (2011), Costa (2016b).

different method and varying grades of approximation and adaptation, which is manifest in the resulting religious architecture<sup>209</sup>, furnishings and implements.

This approach led to the tolerated inclusion of the religious visual imagery of the "other" beliefs into the Roman Catholic context, creating different forms of syncretism. On the one side, this led in many respects to the confluence and merging of Christian iconography and imagery with symbols of the respective indigenous beliefs, executed in local styles and technique, and on the other side to the creation of syncretic forms of the Catholic religion by respecting and allowing the inclusion of local rituals.

Both, in Japan and China this method of accommodation led to completely different results, which should after the escape of Japanese disciples and converts confront each other in Macau<sup>210</sup>.

The adaptation used in evangelization included not only differing approaches to the Holy Scripture, but also the adaptation of the liturgy to local customs. This further included the approximation of the missionaries' own external appearance and manners to the social and ritualistic aspects of the respective culture, thus tailoring the religious messages to fit local concepts.

In China where everything was based on an all-encompassing cosmology, the strong traditional visual culture is reflected in the arts. As the emperor and intellectuals only accepted the missionaries if they would adapt to the local tradition, they learned that instead of representing themselves like the Buddhist monks, who did not enjoy a high reputation, they rather had to approximate their appearance and discourse to the literati and

<sup>210</sup> For example, compared to the Japanese mission who between 1581 and 1611 produced about 300000 followers (including 98 missionaries of Japanese origin) the number of Chinese converts, and missionaries was much lower. Between 1583 and 1630 the Chinese mission counted only 400 converts and 13 Chinese missionaries from Macau, cf. Costa (1998, pp.94-95), Pina (2001, pp.68, 71-73). However, in Japan, the feudal lords converted to Christianity forced their subordinates to do the same or emigrate. Thus, it has to be considered that a large number were forced baptisms, Kreiner (2012, pp.189-90).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>209</sup> Outstanding examples of religious and cultural syncretism in Macau are on the one hand the remaining facade of the early 17th century Jesuit Mater Dei or St. Paul's Church (*Madre de Deus*), which depicts a very original composition of an imagery where European and Chinese elements merge together, and on the other hand the chapel of Our Lady of Guide (*Nossa Senhora da Guia*) the interior mural paintings which clearly present Chinese auspicious motifs, decorations and workmanship, cf. Moreira & Curvelo (1998, p.568), Silva (2000a, p.87), Bailey (2007, p.171; 2009, pp.229-230), Curvelo (2007a, pp.351, 359; 2007b, p.275), Lopes (2011, pp.292-298), Lampreia (2014).

Confucianism, including the study of Chinese classical texts<sup>211</sup>. The study of Chinese language and script became indispensable and prerequisite for the permission to establish Jesuit missions in mainland China and should open the doors to the imperial court in Beijing. Christian terms and teachings were adapted to traditional Chinese concepts, being presented rather as a moral and philosophical doctrine<sup>212</sup>.

Whereas in India Catholic churches were built after the contemporary European architectural style, the first churches in China and Japan followed instead the traditional architecture of local sacred spaces conforming to Buddhist temples<sup>213</sup>. In Japan, also the interiors simultaneously reflected typical Japanese elements beside Christian retable and liturgical instruments<sup>214</sup>. The latter had probably been brought from Europe or India while others were increasingly produced by local artisans and customized. This adaptation did not exist only at the formal level. In Japan, for instance, the liturgy has been adapted to Japanese customs and funerary ceremonies to Buddhist models. *Sake* was offered instead of wine during mass, and Portuguese or Latin words have been "japanized"<sup>215</sup>.

While interior wooden furnishings and retable of Indian churches are lavishly carved or colorfully decorated, in Japan and China the lacquered decoration of liturgical implements might have added a familiar frame for the East Asian converts, as in both Asian lacquer has embellished Buddhist sculpture and sacred spaces for millennia (See Chapter 1.3.2.). Naturally those Indian, Japanese or Chinese craftsmen involved in the manufacture of religious artifacts by copying European models contributed their own style, added Chinese or Japanese physiognomy, iconography and adjusted for example representations of Our Lady to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>211</sup> By the end of the 1590s the Jesuits themselves had adopted the policy of cultural accommodation towards Confucianism used the nomenclature of Buddhist monks, behaved like the literati and started to grow their hair and beards, cf. Pina (2001, pp.63-64), Colla (2009, p.218).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>212</sup> Pina (2001, pp.63-66).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>213</sup> Pina (2001, pp.61-62, 67), Curvelo (2016, p.126). This is also manifest in several *nanban* screens, where the only distinguishing element is a cross on top of the roof, and sometimes are altar tables or clerks visible inside, for various examples see in the Museu Nacional de Soares dos Reis, Porto, the Nagasaki Museum of History and Culture, Musée Guimet Paris, Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga Lisbon, Kobe City Museum, Namban Osaka, and private collections in Curvelo (2015, pp.57, 69, 74-75, 90-91,102, 105, 116).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>214</sup> For example, for some churches a central fireplace is documented which allowed preparing tea water for the gathering after mass, or the floor of one room was covered with *tatami* and there was a place for drinking tea. In one church existed a baptismal font with a turtle (a symbol of longevity), Pina (2001, p.62), Curvelo (2007, pp.257ff), Lopes (2011, pp.295-400).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>215</sup> Pina (2001, p.62).

similar Hindu and Buddhist deities. The Hindus in India could recognize the deity *Devi*<sup>216</sup>, while both in China and Japan the Virgin Mary with the Child became associated with *Guānyīn* or *Kannon*, the Buddhist *bodhisattva* of Mercy, which in southeastern China was frequently presented holding a child as *songzi Guānyīn* (*Guānyīn* who gives children) and was used as a talisman<sup>217</sup>.

In India, for example, missionaries required religious images, furnishings and liturgical equipment for their newly founded churches, along with luxury articles and an array of portable utensils to support their daily practice. From the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century onward, particularly in Goa, workshops specialized in religious objects for liturgy were scattered around the Jesuit headquarters – the sanctuary of the *Bom Jesus* Cathedral. This production was intensified when the remains of Saint Francisco Xavier were shipped to Goa in 1554 and placed in this cathedral. From then on this city turned into a Catholic pilgrimage centre. Religious artifacts produced there were then distributed to outposts throughout the whole Portuguese India, a territory stretching from Mozambique to Macau<sup>218</sup>, where they presumably served as a source of inspiration for the respective local craftsmen and artisans, and thereinafter occasionally even reaching Japan (See Chapter 5.3.). Before local industries have been established, the demand throughout this territory was most probably compensated through the strong connection to Goa<sup>219</sup>. Various factors indicate that – at least initially – newly established missions must have been supplied with works from India to satisfy the increasing demand of Christian imagery. Some extant religious artworks of Goan manufacture survived in Macanese churches. Few were additionally embellished with lacquer in Japan or China (See Chapter 5.4.), while others show the influence of Goan artifacts<sup>220</sup>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>216</sup> Lopes (2011, pp.136-137, 377).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>217</sup> Bailey (2009, pp.217, 227-229), Lopes (2011, pp.70, 301).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>218</sup> Moreira (1998, p.487), Silva (2007, p.199), Penalva (2011, pp.33-35), Lopes (2011, pp.121, 291, 304-305).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>219</sup> This production also involved European artisans. For example it is known that the Flemish sculptor and Jesuit Fr. Markus Maecht (resident at St. Paul's college in Goa) produced numerous images of Christ of differing dimensions, crucifixes of scented woods, or oratories (as if they were Hindu temples) which filled various Jesuit institutions throughout *Portuguese India*, Dias (2004, p.269), Bailey (2009, p.219), Lopes (2011, pp.291-92).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>220</sup> Silva (2000a, pp.87-90), Carvalho (2000; 2001d), Dias (2004, p.263), Krahl (2007), Lopes (2011, pp.291-292).

As evidenced by contemporary documents and extant pieces, the Jesuits were significant purchasers, collectors and distributers (diplomatic gifts) of Christian art and precious objects<sup>221</sup>, including embroidered silk textiles, porcelain, sculptured ivory saints enclosed in wooden oratories in temple form, religious pieces of tortoiseshell, rock crystal, coral, amber, mother-of-pearl among others, and rosaries of exotic tropical woods.

### 1.2.2. Artistic Production for Portuguese and Catholic Europeans along the Coastlines of India and Ceylon

#### Introduction to the Indian Arts

In the 16<sup>th</sup>century, the Indian subcontinent was already a multi-ethnical, multi-cultural and multi-religious space; a territory divided into different Hindu kingdoms and Islamic sultanates of Afghan, Arab, Persian or Turkish origin. The distinct cultures combine influences of Mesopotamia, Egypt, the Hindus Valley Civilization, the Hellenic World and Persia, as well as of the three Indian religions Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, and the Islam. Territorial and cultural changes over the centuries including invasions, sieges and reconquests of territory have left further traces<sup>222</sup>.

No matter what religious belief, the arts in India have always been deeply connected with metaphysical faith and worship, receiving multiple influences and evolving into diverse forms and facets<sup>223</sup>. Crafts in general were a sacred act and artistic lore and skills were passed from generation to generation. A highly elaborated tradition of creating religious architecture led to surfaces all covered with interwoven elements, including filigree, symbolic, mythological, vegetal, figurative as well as geometric patterns. Apart from architecture and sculpture, the same is reflected in other areas of the decorative arts<sup>224</sup>.

The influence of Chinese artifacts should also be considered. On the one side, Chinese merchandise arrived via trade to diverse centers and port-cities along the Indian coastline

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>221</sup> Carvalho (2013, pp.37, 40), Osswald (2018).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>222</sup> Cf. Dias (2000; 2008a), Carvalho (2001a), Frias (2006, pp.58-60), Flores (1998; 2007), Silva (2007), Curvelo (2009; 2011).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>223</sup> In the Hindu arts esthetic concepts are based on *rasa* (Sanskrit: juice, plant sap). It symbolizes the pleasure felt while contemplating all kind of artworks, an alchemical quintessence and spiritual element that exists since the first millennia A.D., cf. Frias (1979, pp.41-42).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>224</sup> Sousa (1994), Borges (1994), Frias (2006).

(Malabar, Coromandel, and Bengal)<sup>225</sup>, and on the other, Chinese artistic elements have been introduced to Muslim and Mughal arts<sup>226</sup>, through Mongol and Persian influences.

#### Confluence of European and Hindustani Cultures, Arts and Crafts

In a wider context, the fusion-style of the so-called Indo-Portuguese art resulted from the encounter and interchange of Catholic Europeans and Hindustani people, culture and artisans, leading to a merge of European architecture with Christian and Hindu, Jain, Buddhist and Muslim elements.

As soon as the Portuguese arrived on the Indian coast, they began to build fortifications, factories, warehouses, official and civil houses, royal residences and palaces. In the scope of the Catholic mission chapels were erected, and later churches, convents, and other religious institutions. European architectural models, Christian elements and local indigenous craft traditions (especially perceivable in interiors) merged together and created decorations of a hybrid character<sup>227</sup>.

The European influence becomes apparent in the local interpretation of Renaissance motives, themes from the New and Old Testament, other Christian depictions of apostles, evangelists, tetramorphs, angels, grape vines and other symbols, including monograms of the Jesuits and religious orders<sup>228</sup>. The Italian architects Donato Bramante or Sebastiano Serlio inspired Renaissance and Mannerist architectural decoration. Christian churches and interior wooden furnishings, altar retable and oratories are composed of semi-circular niches covered by a shell-like baldachin, small curved gables, diverse forms of pediments and Mannerist columns with the *imoscapo* decorated with cherubs, garlands, cartouches, and with fluted, twisted or Solomonic shafts. Surfaces often display cartouches, circular medallions, and phytomorphic decoration with acanthus leaves<sup>229</sup>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>225</sup> Sen (2011, pp.46,53,55,58).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>226</sup> The Mughal arts only emerged after the invasion of northern India by the Timurid Barbur in 1526 and the foundation of the Mughal Empire.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>227</sup> Bailey (2009, pp.220-221), Lopes (2011, pp.73-210).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>228</sup> Cf. Silva (1966), Dias (2000; 2004; Dias, 2009b), Pinto (2003, p.31), Reis (2009a; 2009b; 2012; 2015), Lameira & Reis (2016), Meco (2010).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>229</sup> Frias (2006, 54), Dias (2009b), Bailey (2009, 220-221).

Ornamentation of domestic architecture, interiors and artifacts on the Indian subcontinent, including both stone- and wood carved decoration, has generally been linked with the metaphysical value system. Densely loaded segmented surfaces are characterized by the continuity and plentitude of multiple motifs and repetitive patterns, sequences of forms (spirals, lozenge, swastika), the profusion of ornaments, figurative (elephants, peacocks, parrots, swan, mythical creatures from Hindu mythology) and natural motives (*kalasha*<sup>230</sup> motif of a vase with flowering plants (2.6.1.), diverse multi-petalled blossoms, climbing plants and creeper of ivy or vine, intertwined branches and foliage, leaf and dart motif among many others) all densely glued together in a *horror vacui*<sup>231</sup>.

The resulting synthesis of these distinct cultural backgrounds is reflected and still perceivable in the religious and civil architecture and their remains in almost all of the former Portuguese settlements lined up along the Indian coastline, especially in today's state of Goa. Traces are further extant in the ancient Northern Province along the Konkan Coast (including Chaul, Daman, Bassein, Manikpur, Bandra, Tana among others), Diu in the Gujarat, Cochin along the Malabar Coast in today's state of Kerala, and in former Portuguese centers along the coasts of Coromandel and Bengal<sup>232</sup>. Beside print sources, pattern books and artifacts brought from Europe, also the exchange among artisans of distinct origins might have contributed to the artistic confluence, which simultaneously becomes apparent in the manifold decorative arts including painting, gold-and silversmith work, diverse embroidered or stamped textiles, as well as furniture, religious furniture and wooden architectural elements, many of which have been preserved in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century Catholic churches.

In addition, the carving work which embellished wooden structures and religious furniture are reminiscent of the cross-cultural encounters, and hence significant items for comparison [Fig. 3]. The circumstances of their order, planning and production, as well as the involved artisans are in some cases documented and many of these works are still on site<sup>233</sup>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>230</sup> Also known as *phurna kalasha* or Vase-of-Plenty, Agrawala (1985), Pinto (1994, p.48), Lopes (2011, p.173).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>231</sup> Thakkar (2004, pp.47-71), Frias (2006).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>232</sup> Carita (1995; 2009), Issar (1997), Moreira & Curvelo (1998, p.544), Pandit & Mascarenhas (1999), Dias (2009a; 2009b), Reis (2009a; 2009b; 2012 2015), Lameira & Reis (2016), Meco (2010).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>233</sup> Dias (2004, p.263), Reis (2015), Lameira & Reis (2016).



Fig. 3 Altarpiece of Our Lady of Purification, Convent of Santa Monica, Monte Sacro, 1610, © Lameira & Reis (2016, pp.65-66)

From the early 16<sup>th</sup> century onward, numerous Hindu craftsmen were employed in the creation of civil and Christian architecture including artisans from rural areas outside the Portuguese colonies of Goa, Daman, Diu, Bassein, Chaul or Cochin. Many still extant artworks in Catholic churches, such as wooden and ivory saints, panels, altar retable, and paintings, witness the contribution of local wood carvers, sculptors, masons, painters or goldand silversmiths<sup>234</sup>.

Portuguese authorities and provincial councils issued several edicts prohibiting Christian images and other religious objects to be created by non-Christians, especially in consequence of the more rigid regulations following the contra-reformatory Council of Trent

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>234</sup> Pinto (2003, p.34), Dias (2004, pp.50-53,267-268,297), Frias (2006, p.49-50), Bailey (2009, p.218).

(1545-1563)<sup>235</sup>. But due to the growing need of sculptured wooden imagery, church equipment and liturgical utensils this has widely been ignored as not enough talented Christian artisans were available to answer the demand, even though several painters, carpenters and stonemasons converted to Christianity<sup>236</sup>. For instance, although almost all artistic programs of Jesuit buildings were projected and supervised by members of the Society of Jesus, they also employed several indigenous craftsmen for the construction of churches, residencies, or colleges of whom many were unconverted Hindus. Other artisans and craftsmen were brought from Europe together with Portuguese, Italian, and Flemish artworks, especially in the 16<sup>th</sup> century<sup>237</sup>. With the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, when local artists refined their skills, the ratio of supply and demand in relation to devotional objects and imagery destined for churches was balanced, the practice of sending objects from Europe decreased<sup>238</sup>. The religious architecture erected in India and architectonical wooden furnishings mirror well the contemporary architectural styles in Europe, which from the late 17<sup>th</sup> century onward also took the shape of the European Baroque which still can be seen in the churches of Goa or Kerala<sup>239</sup>.

## <u>Production of Furniture Commissioned or Acquired by the Portuguese and Other Catholic</u> <u>Europeans</u>

As Pinto summarizes, Indo-Portuguese furniture produced in areas under Portuguese administration or with a continuous presence of officials, *casados* settlers, soldiers, merchants or missionaries, results from the symbiosis of the indigenous Hindustani crafts on one hand (mainly Hindu and Muslim) and the European orders on the other<sup>240</sup>.

The different cultures and customs of the indigenous Indian population lead to a growing need for everyday commodities including European-style furniture. Already at the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>235</sup> The Council of Trent was initiated by the Roman Catholic Church in order to counteract the growing division of the Christian Church in Europe, and to overthrow the believers who have been lost to the Protestants.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>236</sup> Sousa (1994, p.9), Moreira & Curvelo (1998, p.539), Dias (2004, pp.5, 267-268; 2009b, p.53), Frias (2006, pp.49-51, 53), Bailey (2007, pp.169, 171; 2009, pp.217-220), Carvalho (2016, pp.14-15).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>237</sup> Osswald (2003, pp.126-127, 215-216), Dias (2004, pp.264-270), Bailey (2007, pp.171-72; 2009, pp.218-26), Carvalho (2016, pp.14-15).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>238</sup> Frias (2006, p.52).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>239</sup> Bhabha (1980), Bailey (2007, p.170), Reis (2009b).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>240</sup> Pinto (1994, p.44).

beginning, the Portuguese brought various objects from Europe to furnish their everyday lives, as well as items intended as diplomatic gifts<sup>241</sup>. Among the furniture brought were also chairs<sup>242</sup>. Compared with the higher seating habit of the Europeans and Chinese<sup>243</sup>, the people in Hindustan did not share this custom as they carried out most activities on the floor. The tradition of seating higher (although on low-chairs) was reserved to kings and deities until the encounter with the European cultures<sup>244</sup>.

The same happened to other items the Europeans were accustomed to, as pre-colonial Indian wooden furniture was very rare due to the distinct habits, the climate and the risk of insect infestation. Along with fabrics and carpets, which provided comfort and display materials such as stone, ivory and metal played a significant role in interiors. Hindus for example, apart from simple bedding on the floor, used low bedsteads of rectangular frames on turned and carved feet, or cots where they extended mattresses to lie on instead of the higher European beds<sup>245</sup>. Other types of furniture were chests and a few small tables.

Equally, the Muslims did not share the use of European furniture, as they were also sitting on cushions or carpets on the floor and likewise reserved seats for rulers, manifest in numerous Mughal miniature paintings. Religious furniture constituted lushly decorated  $rahle^{246}$  or  $minbar^{247}$ , and objects of secular use were footstools, small tables, different kinds of chests and sometimes more massive beds with headboards<sup>248</sup>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>241</sup> Pinto (1994, p.44). Such present consisted for example of Portuguese silverwork, riding gear or weapons, carpets from Flanders and Persia, or European and East Asian textiles, Silva (2007a, p.199).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>242</sup> Gaspar Correia mentions a chair transported in the boat of Paulo da Gama to be offered to the King of Melinde (today's Kenia). Another chair was among the objects to be offered to the king of Calicut, garrisoned by brocade and spiked with gilt silver, cf. Pinto (1994, p.54).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>243</sup> Chinese introduced higher stools and chairs around 200 A.D., Deroches (2003, p.23), Boyce (2013, p.61).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>244</sup> Auboyer (1949), Pinto (1994, p.44), Pandit & Mascarenhas (1999, pp.95-96), Dias (2004, p.164), Van Gompel (2013, pp.13-17), Boyce (2013, p.44).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>245</sup> Pinto (1994, p.44), Boyce (2013, p.147).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>246</sup> Articulated Islamic structures meant to hold the *Qur'an* horizontally. Made of two identically sized wooden boards, which form a hinge around a transverse axis, they are foldable and open to an X-form. Derived from the Muslim models are small-sized mass book lecterns of Indo-Portuguese, Chinese or Japanese manufacture (2.7.). These foldable and easily transportable utensils were adopted to be placed on altars and hold the Bible vertically during mass, and were widely used by Catholic missionaries in Asia.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>247</sup> These are the pulpits used in the mosque.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>248</sup> Carvalho (2004), Boyce (2013, p.147).

The Portuguese *casados* settlers and other residents of Goa, Cochin, or variant settlements adapted to local habits, climate and circumstances without abandoning their own life-styles. Either royal officials and noblemen or the traders and numerous residents, all needed furniture adapted to their everyday lives (household stuffing, private devotional items, and objects for display). Thus, the increasing demand of everyday furniture on the part of ordinary people, plus the growing vogue for exotic embellished furniture and extravagant showpieces on the part of the wealthy aristocrats, had to be acquired locally consequently evolving targeted industries.

Initially, the bigger part of furniture was produced for local consumption by the captains, viceroys, military, *casados*, and merchants in *Portuguese India*. The first furniture was probably ordered from local carpenters who copied the pieces brought from Europe<sup>249</sup>. The co-existence, crossing and intercourse between Catholic Europeans and distinct Hindustani people, increased throughout the 16<sup>th</sup> century on various social levels. Especially towards the end of the century, a bigger part of the furniture production was destined for the export to Lisbon on the *Cape Route*<sup>250</sup>. Many 16<sup>th</sup> century European collections consisted of mother-of-pearl or tortoiseshell works and colorful wood-inlayed caskets, which became sought-after luxury goods for the aristocratic Europeans.

Also, the various religious orders meant another large buyer of all sorts of everyday equipment and supplies, including religious images (such as carved ivories or wooden sculpture) and liturgical utensils to spread the Catholic faith. They required furnishings for their fraternities and newly found churches, which resulted in the creation of an industry to cater for these demands located around Goa, where cheap work force was especially available in the communities of carpenters and sculptors<sup>251</sup>.

This demand of cult or everyday objects developed into a promising source of income for local craftsmen in various Indian regions, who specialized in the manufacture of items

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>249</sup> Pinto states these could have been manufactured in workshops of churches, convents or mansions. Diogo de Couto (1542-1616) for example describes in his *O soldado práctico* cabinet-makers working for a farm overseer, who housed various workshops among which the ones of a turner, a carpenter and a cabinet maker, in Pinto (1994, pp.44-45).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>250</sup> Dias (2002, p.32), Frias (2006, p.46).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>251</sup> Pinto (1994, p.44), Carita (1995, p.60), Moreira & Curvelo (1998, pp.536-38), Jaffer (2004, p.252), Dias (2004, pp.50-53), Frias (2006, p.46), Silva (2007, pp.199-200).

sought-after by the Europeans. All kinds of artifacts and commodities manufactured in different locations throughout the subcontinent were distributed to the principal marketplaces, such as Goa or Cochin<sup>252</sup>.

The biggest or most important centers for the production of furniture were located at the western coast and situated in and around Goa, Cochin, Chaul, Bassein, Daman, Diu and Surat. On the Eastern coastline, the most important settlements and trading centers were São Tomé de Meliapore and Pulicate on the Coromandel Coast. Hooghly was the largest port and commercial center at the coast of Bengal<sup>253</sup>. In many regions, the services of different Hindu craftsman castes were claimed, especially in the Mughal Empire and Islamic Sultanates in the North, where suitable furniture for the Europeans was also produced in Hindu communities<sup>254</sup>. Moreover, in southern India the skills and services of members of stone and wood carvers' castes were employed in the construction of religious architecture.

While the typologies and purposes of the furniture in the majority of cases correspond to European prototypes, their surface decorations clearly present indigenous techniques<sup>255</sup> of characteristic contrasting color variety and Hindustani *horror vacui* ornamentation, sometimes with embedded European themes and Christian symbols.

Among the furniture available and sighted on the Indian marketplaces were according to the Portuguese chronicler João de Barros (1496–1570), the Portuguese physician Garcia de Orta (1501-1668), the Dutch traveler Jan Hyugen van Linschoten (1563-1611) or the French navigator François Pyrard de Laval (1578-1623) all sorts of typologies, such as for instance bedsteads, benches, stools, chairs, tables, trays, writing boxes or chests, cabinets, coffers – which were either "lacquered" (probably shellac coated), silvered, lined or inlayed with mother-of-pearl, colored woods, and tortoiseshell – besides other everyday items such as

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>252</sup> Ferrão (1990b, pp.13,21-28), Moreira & Curvelo (1998, p.537), Dias (2002, pp.35; 2004, p.156ff), Pinto (2003, p.31), Silva (2007, p.200).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>253</sup> Ferrão (1990b, pp.31-33), Felgueiras (1999), Carvalho (2001b, p.134).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>254</sup> Ferrão (1990b, p.26), Dias (2002, p.39).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>255</sup> These include the lining or inlays of precious or contrasting materials (different tropical woods, bone, ivory, tortoiseshell, and mother-of-pearl), painting, colored shellac coatings, and of course wood carving.

shields, game boards, wooden bowls, cups, or shells used for drinking, tortoiseshell combs, bracelets for women or rosaries of various materials<sup>256</sup>.

Adopted Hindustani models were for example chairs with wickerwork (on backrest and seat) as used in Goa<sup>257</sup> and low chairs like an example with a richly carved backrest of the studied objects group (2.8.1.), further consisting of a variety of carved mass book lectern, which is a modified form of the Muslim Qur'an stands, widely spread in all regions of the *Portuguese State of India* (Chapter 2.7.).

Portuguese settlers and their European-style furniture were certainly an exotic sight for the locals as both appear depicted on countless illustrations<sup>258</sup>, in part even on furniture and other artifacts. A 16<sup>th</sup> century' tortoiseshell-covered cabinet painted with day-to-day scenes of the European settlers depicts, for instance, Portuguese in typical dresses who are using furniture types of both Portuguese and Hindustan origin. They appear either sitting on high chairs on a folding table, on Hindustan low chairs, lying in low bedsteads, being carried in a palanquin, or are depicted while hunting or fighting with round shields and swords<sup>259</sup>.

Amongst the palette of novel and precious materials that profoundly impressed the Europeans were undoubtedly the many colorful and exotic grained, stable and resistant tropical woods available on the South and Southeast Asian trade exchanges. In India, a luxuriant range of different woods was employed for architectonical structures and elements, agricultural tools, ships, and furniture amongst other applications<sup>260</sup>. Nevertheless, by the time the Portuguese established themselves along the Indian coastline, timber was already a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>256</sup> Ferrão (1990b, pp.24-33), Felgueiras (1996, p.139), Moreira & Curvelo (1998, pp.543-46), Dias (2002; 2009c; 2013), Borges (2016).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>257</sup> Pinto (1994), Moreira & Curvelo (1998, p.544).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>258</sup> The 16th century watercolor paintings of the *Codex 1889* which are housed in the Roman Casanatense library and which were produced by an Indian painter depict beside multiple individuals originating to the vast *Portuguese India*, also Portuguese people using European-style furniture, cf. Losty (2012).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>259</sup> Museu Nacional de Soares dos Reis(Inv. No. 2689 Mob) in Dias (2002, pp.97, 15-117,119-122,126,127,129, 131,133).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>260</sup> Chattopadhyay (1985, p.79).

commodity that was exchanged through the Asian maritime commercial network and within different centers on the Indian subcontinent<sup>261</sup>.

Especially furniture of teak wood (*Tectona grandis* Linn.)<sup>262</sup> and wild jack wood (*Artocarpus hirsutus* Lam.)<sup>263</sup> left an impression on the Europeans<sup>264</sup>. Other exotic woods were Indian sandalwood (*Santalum album* L.)<sup>265</sup>, Indian redwood (*Caesalpinia sappan/Biancaea sappan*) also called brazil- or sappanwood and other varieties of the genus *Caesalipinia*<sup>266</sup>. Indian rosewoods, such as the East-Indian *Dalbergia latifilia* Roxb. (native to central and southern India, Kerala, Mysore and Malabar, Ceylon and Java) and the North Indian *Dalbergia sissoo*<sup>267</sup> were for example exported from Cochin and Cannanore<sup>268</sup>, while black ebony (*Diospyros ebenum* Koen.) was imported from Ceylon or Indonesia (*Diospyros crassiflora* Hiern.)<sup>269</sup>. Many other types of wood either originate to India<sup>270</sup> or have been

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>261</sup> See for example various entries of different types of timber traded in India, in Mathew (1983, pp.129,131,259) of Brazil-wood, Sandalwood from the Coromandel coast, Timor or Tenasserim (today's Myanmar), and *Artocarpus hirsuta*. Several commercial ventures where wood was traded either by the official Cape trade or by private merchants (*casados*, New Christians...) appear mentioned in Boyanjian (2008).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>262</sup> Teak trees are native to South and Southeast Asia such as India, Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam and Java, cf. Sachsse (1991, pp.226-27), Gottwald (1958, p.198). Its wood was commonly used as it is more resistant against infestations, Boyce (2013, p.44). It was used in construction for architectural elements, furniture, but also and beside *Terminalia tomentosa* and *Dalbergia sissoo*, for the majority of carved altar retable in Indo-Portuguese churches, Reis (2015, pp.190-95). It is thought to have been employed in many furniture pieces manufactured in the region of Goa, Abreu (2008, p.54).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>263</sup> Angelim (Portuguese) and anjili/ aini (Malayalam). In India the species is distributed in the regions of today's states of Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, and Tamil Nadu. Characteristic of the wood are its dark red color, weight and grain due to alternating rotation grew. In the state of Kerala, close to Cochin the casados had large plantations which they for commercial use and for their shipyards, grew faster than teak wood, cf. Dalgado (1982, p.44), Mathew (1983, pp.259, 261), Felgueiras (1994), John (1998, pp.298-99). This is one of about 60 tree species of the genus Artocarpus native to South and Southeast Asia. Nowadays, the wood is traded internationally under the name Keledang.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>264</sup> Felgueiras (1994, p.40).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>265</sup> This species is scattered in a wide area between India (Karnataka, Tamil Nadu), Malaysia, southeastern Indonesia and China, cf. Sachsse (1991, pp.82-83), Gottwald (1958, p.127). The *casados* at the Coromandel Coast for example acquired sandalwood from Indonesia in Malacca in exchange to cotton textiles, Boyajian (2008, p.61). Duarte Barbosa mentioned that sandalwood was exported from Timor by merchants from Malacca and Java; and camphor wood from Sumatra was available in Malacca already before 1516, Carvalho (2001b, p.147).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>266</sup> The term "brazil" refers to the dyeing agent of the wood (Brazilian) not to today's state of Brazil, Mathew (1983, pp.131, 259, 261). The very durable timber has later been imported to Europe for the dying agent, Gottwald (1958, p.105).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>267</sup> Gottwald (1958, p.127), Sachsse (1991, pp.182-204), Abreu (2008, p.54).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>268</sup> Mathew (1983, pp.244-45).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>269</sup> Gottwald (1958, p.68), Sachsse (1991, pp.54-56).

imported. It has to be noted that the termini of certain species varied throughout time and between different geographical regions and may not correspond to today's technical terms. For example, different types of dense dark-brown to black hardwood were called ebony, while "true" ebony belongs to the *Diospyros* genus, native to southern India, Ceylon, Indonesia and Mauritius<sup>271</sup>. Further, the large and varied group of available woods (including scented woods), at that time, may consist of species with similar wood grains, but which derive from distinct botanical varieties<sup>272</sup>.

The furniture produced for or acquired by the Portuguese can show a variety of makeups and ornamentation but generally, they can be attributed to the two major cultural backgrounds present in contemporary India – either Hindu or Muslim.

Furniture manufactured in the Muslim northern region of the subcontinent stands out by its inlays of different colored woods, bone or ivory to form vegetal and geometric pattern. Lavishly decorated and amazingly beautiful mother-of-pearl objects from the Gujarat or the Kingdom of Cambay stunned the Europeans, and further inspired northern European artisans to produce elaborate metal mounts<sup>273</sup>. To Sindh (today's Pakistan), the Gujarat and the Northern provinces (including Daman, Salcete, Bombay, Bassein, Diu, and Chaul) originate two different techniques using mother-of-pearl pieces<sup>274</sup>.

In the northern part of Sindh and the Gujarat Sultanate (which in 1572 has been annexed to the Mughal Empire by Akbar the Great), inlayed furniture (like ivory-inlayed

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>270</sup> See for example a list of common Indian woods and their applications which includes many other species in Reis (2015, pp.193-194).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>271</sup> Gottwald (1958, pp.67-68).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>272</sup> Often certain identification can only be provided by optical microscopy of transversal, tangential and radial micro-cuts. This technique requires sampling and is therefore quite invasive and only rarely applicable to works of art. In the case of lacquered objects, the wood identification is made even more difficult, since the surface is visible only in a few and sometimes very small places.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>273</sup> Bujok (2007).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>274</sup> Ferrão (1990b, pp.28-33), Felgueiras (1996), Moreira & Curvelo (1998, p.536), Sangl (2001), Dias (2000, p.68; 2002, pp.29-30), Jaffer (2004). The first, known to be used since the 11<sup>th</sup> century, uses diverse irisident shell pieces of diverse shapes glued to a wooden substrate to form plant of animal pattern with the space in between filled with red, brown or black pigmented mastic, thus enhancing the shining mother-of-pearl motifs. The second technique uses mother-of-pearl pieces of rectangular or lances shaped pieces which are composed jointless together and fixed by metal pins, located in the center each piece. The latter technique produces objects, such as furniture or tableware, whose surfaces are entirely covered with plates of mother-of-pearl of identical geometric shapes, cf. Sangl (2001; 2007).

chests and cabinets) has been produced at a glance, reason why already in the 16<sup>th</sup> century Portuguese merchants sailed to Cambay and other ports of the Gujarat<sup>275</sup>. Some inlayed works used marquetry composed of micro-mosaic pattern with delicate-cut geometrical pieces of wood, bone and metal alluding to Persian *khātam* marquetry (micro-mosaic) works<sup>276</sup>.

Furniture of a characteristic colorful design with surfaces filled by geometric and figurative inlays of contrasting woods (teak, Indian rosewood, ebony) and ivory which are additionally adorned with gilt copper mounts are generally attributed to 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century' Goa and the nearby region under Mughal rule<sup>277</sup>. Remarkable are extremely fine, filigree or curved pattern of ivory and darker wood inlayed into a wooden core of lighter tint<sup>278</sup>. There are multiple examples extant in museum<sup>279</sup> and private collections in Portugal, as well as in Goan households or as sacristy furniture in Catholic Indian churches<sup>280</sup>.

Cochin was another source of furniture with its large supplies of teak and wild jack wood. There, the so-called *Arcas de Cochim* (trunks from Cochin) were manufactured. These practical big-sized trunks are mentioned in numerous Portuguese or Dutch accounts<sup>281</sup>. They were used on board the vessels and were filled with plenty of merchandise<sup>282</sup>. The contrasting combination of teak wood and ebony inlays are another furniture decoration considered typical for Cochin<sup>283</sup>.

An outstanding surface decoration deeply rooted in Hindu tradition<sup>284</sup> which is produced throughout India and southern Asia are various types of bas-relief wood carving

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>275</sup> Ferrão (1990b, pp.31-32), Boyanjian (2008, p.161).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>276</sup> Carvalho (2004b, p.86).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>277</sup> Raposo (1994, p.16), Pinto (2003, p.269), Frias (2006, p.53).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>278</sup> Pinto (1994, p.44).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>279</sup> For example, the MNAA in Lisbon houses various examples in the section of Luso-Asian Art.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>280</sup> Raposo (1994).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>281</sup> An interesting descriptive reference to these chests is found in Linschoten's *Itinerario*, Loureiro (2015, p.80-81).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>282</sup> Ferrão (1990b, pp.67-71), Felgueiras (1994), John (1998), Dias (2002, pp.30, 42), Loreiro (2015, p.81).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>283</sup> Dias (2002, pp.41-47),

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>284</sup> There are many examples extant of lavishly carved wooden furnishings, doors, or pillars of Hindu temples, Frias (2006, pp.56-57), Reis (2015, pp.190-191).

embellishing architectonical structures, religious sculpture, and furniture. Every region on the subcontinent has its own tradition, specialized in the manufacture of certain objects and using specific available wood sources. The regions of Gujarat and Kerala are probably the most prominent. The age-old craft traditions, esthetic conventions and skills, have been handed down through generations<sup>285</sup>. In West Bengal the wood-, stone-, and ivory carvers were part of the century-old carpenters-caste (*Sutradhars*), the traditional architects who mostly worked with wood produced sumptuously carved windows, doors and other architectural structures. Only a few examples of early carvings survived (wooden pillars, brackets, beams and rafters of house or village community hall structures), but can still be perceived in more recent facilities such as in the case of a 17<sup>th</sup> century village community hall in Atpur Village, Hooghly district<sup>286</sup> [Fig. 4]

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>285</sup> Reis (2015, pp.190-191).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>286</sup> Sen (1992, p.112), Reis (2015, p.191).

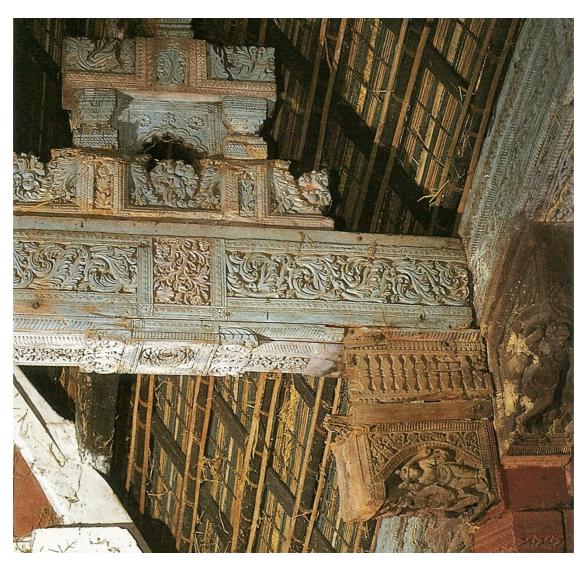


Fig. 4 Carved wooden beams, pillars and brackets, 17<sup>th</sup> century. Atpur Village, Hooghly region, © Sen (1994, p.113)

Further, the Gujarat has been an area of rich structural wood carvings and carved furniture<sup>287</sup> and the same is true for the Bengal region. There the columns in houses are still finally embellished with intrinsic carvings<sup>288</sup>.

In the southern state of Karnataka along the Malabar Coast, which until 1565 was part of the Hindu Vijayanagara Empire, most talented wood-carvers of the *Gudigara* sculptorcaste were involved in the creation of churches and convents and were specialized in

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>287</sup> Chattopadhyay (1985, p.80), Pramar (2001), Thakkar (2004).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>288</sup> Sen (1992), Reis (2015, p.191).

sandalwood sculptures of Hindu deities<sup>289</sup>. Their traditional profession was to build temples and places of worship. The skills were passed on only in *Gudigara* families<sup>290</sup>. Having in mind the existence of specialized wood-carvers it seems very obvious that carved furniture was also produced in Cochin and its surroundings.

This is also the most prominent kind of ornamentation present on more than half of the studied and related objects, which might originate to distinct regions on the subcontinent, and perhaps also to the island of Ceylon. With the variety of wood carvers of different geographical and cultural origin who produced and decorated wooden elements, it is not surprising that distinct carving styles were used (Tab. 6).

Hindu and Muslim Indian carvers in Gujarat, in the Goa region, along the Malabar Coast or the coasts of Coromandel and Bengal, inherited the Hindu traditions and both, Hindu and Islamic ornaments merged together. Resulting surface decorations are characterized by the absence of empty spaces and the dominance of decorative elements<sup>291</sup>. Naturally these local artisans (converted or not) continued to add their peculiar influences to the artworks, either to everyday items or to wooden furnishings and implements destined for religious use. Reflections of the marriage of the distinct European and Hindustani cultures become especially evident in sculptured Christian images of the Madonna. She appears depicted either with a white lotus in her right hand, emerging from a lotus flower base (in the same way as Hindu or Buddhist deities), standing on a crescent<sup>292</sup> or having the mythical being *makara*<sup>293</sup> at her feet (just as the Hindu deities Lakshmi or Parvati who have this sea monster as their vehicle). Sometimes she is presented standing on a crescent or holds a crescent in her hands<sup>294</sup>. Thus, decorative languages were created according to the tradition and concept of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>289</sup> Chattopadhyay (1985, p.82), Reis (2015, p.191).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>290</sup> Borges (1994, p.76), Frias (2006, p.53), Veenendaal (1985, p.67).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>291</sup> Silva (1966, pp.30, 175), Pinto (1994, p.47; 2003, pp.31, 137, 147), Borges (1994, p.74), Frias (2006, pp.48, 56-57).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>292</sup> Two 17<sup>th</sup> century examples of wood-sculptured Madonna in the Xavier Center for Historical Research's museum in Alto Porvoim, Goa, attest exactly this phenomenon, in Borges (1994, p.86).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>293</sup> Pinto (1994, p.46), Lopes (2011, p.183).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>294</sup> Raposo (1991, p.59), Sousa (1994, p.12), Borges (1994, pp.75-76).

sacred art of the local Hindu artisans, which was also familiar to the heathens whom the Portuguese and ecclesiastical authorities wished to convert<sup>295</sup>.

Simultaneously in 16<sup>th</sup> century Europe carving was a highly prized method of furniture decoration, which comprised mixed Gothic and Renaissance motifs combined with Mannerist exaggerations<sup>296</sup>, thus such exotic Indian carvings were very appreciated by the Europeans. Along the Indian coast, carved furniture has been produced for local markets and consumption<sup>297</sup>. The existence of such an industry along the Coromandel Coast (Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh) is evidenced by Dutch written sources, as well as the fact that they may have taken advantage of the local wood carvers' artistic skills in the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The Dutch sources, such as correspondence, travelling reports or inventories of VOC official households, mention pieces of ebony, sandal or teak wood carved furniture and witness that a number of craft centers were scattered along the Coromandel Coast (such as Masulipatnam) where furniture with figures, flowers and foliage in bas-relief was produced<sup>298</sup>.

Many of the earlier carved furniture produced for the Portuguese may not have survived for several reasons. Extant 17<sup>th</sup> century examples produced under the Dutch presence in India, Ceylon and Indonesia provide a good basis for comparison<sup>299</sup>.

#### Singhalese-Portuguese Art

The island of Ceylon located off the southeastern Indian Coromandel coast and rich in precious stones (rubies, sapphires, topazes, hyacinths, cat's-eyes, chrysolites and amethysts), rock crystal, ivory, ebony<sup>300</sup>, and cinnamon became an important Portuguese source of delicately crafted luxury goods and precious raw materials.

With the Kingdom of Kotte, the Portuguese established contacts in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century and a special relation to its King Dharmapala. The royal workshops produced

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>295</sup> Sousa (1994, p.9), Dias (2004, p.264), Frias (2006, p.49).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>296</sup> Umney & Rivers (2003, p.11).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>297</sup> Carita (1995, pp.60,158).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>298</sup> Veenendaal (1985, p.25), Van Gompel (2013, p.44).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>299</sup> Terven-de Loos (1985), Veenendaal (1985), and Van Gompel (2013).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>300</sup> Van Gompel (2013, p.14).

lavishly carved ivory veneered caskets based on 16<sup>th</sup> century European leather models with a five-facetted lid embellished with gold mounts and precious stones. Most of them date to the 1540s and subsequent periods.

Some examples present Christian iconography and motifs derived from European prints or pattern books combined with motifs of the local flora and fauna and foliage scrolls. Other examples show the rich decorative grammar of Ceylonese Theravada Buddhist tradition, including human and mythical figures, animals such as lions, peacocks, elephants, birds, sacred animals or mythical creatures such as the sacred goose *hamsa*, the lion *simha*, the elephant with a lion's body *gaja sinha*, or the deer *mrija*<sup>301</sup>.

An exceptional example manufactured to commemorate the conversion of King Dharmapala to Christianity was probably among the gifts offered to King João III by a Singhalese delegation sent to Lisbon in 1541-1542 (See 2.4.1.). Many of these caskets were sent as diplomatic gifts or have been ordered from Lisbon (especially by Queen D. Catarina of Austria) and constituted important European Renaissance collections.

In the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century' Ceylon has also been an important production center for luxuriously crafted ivory objects (comps, circular and other fans...), ivory veneered and carved furniture, carved rock crystal pieces (many of which present Christian sculpture such as the Jesus Child), jewelry, and furniture<sup>302</sup>.

Furniture has been produced in Colombo, Gale or Maturé. Although there is not much documentary evidence about the production of furniture destined for Portuguese consumers, a few pieces exist which are attributed to a Singhalese manufacture by the means of formal comparison with the decorations on carved ivory objects<sup>303</sup>. Apart from small caskets and chests veneered with ivory or tortoiseshell, teak chests, or chests of teak and ebony, show surfaces densely filled with intrinsic filigree carvings of curled foliage and grape-like vines, as well as lions, gazelles or birds and other mythical creatures. The lid's decorations often are

Silva (2007b, p.283). For more detailed r

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>301</sup> Silva (2007b, p.285).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>302</sup> For more detailed reading on the Singhalese artistic productions see, cf. Ferrão (1990b, pp.78-87), Silva (1996b; 2000b, p.68; 2007a, p.212), Schwabe (2000), Flores (2001a), Bailey (2007, p.175; 2009, pp.222-223), Biedermann (2007), Silva (2007a, p.202; 2007b), Jordan Gschwend (2004, p.39), Jordan Gschwend & Belz (2010, p.110), Crespo (2015b, p.194).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>303</sup> One of these chests is housed in Lisbon's Museu do Oriente (Inv. no. FO/0990), in Calvão & Pereira (2008, pp.38-39). Examples in Portuguese private collections are depicted in Dias (2002, pp.52-53; 2009c, pp.89-90).

divided in outer friezes (often filled with foliage scrolls) and central medallions with lions or other animals. Surfaces of individual sections, such as rectangular or circular shapes are commonly framed by beading or diamonds. Some of these chests have inferior drawers, or a fall-front hiding interior drawers in the lower part<sup>304</sup>. In addition, a foldable table of teak and other inlayed woods has been ascribed to a Singhalese origin. (See the Chapters 2.2.4. and 2.4.1.) The latter displays a frieze with very similar carved decoration of curled foliage and grape-like fruits.

Far more famous is the Singhalese furniture production during the Dutch and British colonial periods, especially of carved ebony low-chairs and chests<sup>305</sup>.

#### 1.2.3. Sino-Portuguese Art

Chinese artistic concepts and visual traditions reflect a culture that differs a great deal from the Europeans. Symbolic and decorative esthetics are closely linked to the Chinese language and cosmology, as well as to Buddhism, Daoism and Confucianism<sup>306</sup>. Recurrent periods of foreclosure against the outside world and the preventing of foreigners entering the empire especially during the Ming (1368-1644) period, paired with the still perceivable visual and artistic concepts reflect the millennia old conservative Chinese culture.

Nevertheless, the presence and commissions of Portuguese merchants in the South China Sea, Macau and Canton, as well as the presence of and interactions with missionaries has led to mutual influences, especially through the production of crafts destined for the Europeans and through the exchange of knowledge conducted by the Jesuits. The effects of the European presence, however, did only become noticeable in Chinese art and culture from the end of the 17th century onward when several Jesuits stayed at the court in Beijing to offer their services and skills to different Chinese emperors, namely Kangxi (1662-1722), Yongzheng (1723-1735), and Qianlong (1736-1795), until 1783<sup>307</sup>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>304</sup> Pinto (1991a), Flores (2001a), Dias (2002, pp.52-53; 2009c, pp.89-90), Abreu (2008, pp.54-55).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>305</sup> Veenendaal (1985), Van Gompel (2013).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>306</sup> Eberhard (2004, pp.4-5), Welch (2008).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>307</sup> Krahl (2007, p.235), Bailey (2009, p.231), Curvelo & Bastos (2001, p.426), Lopes (2011, pp.329-368).

In the decades of clandestine trade, it is important to note that the Portuguese had no access to the factories or workshops or any knowledge whatsoever about the original locations in which such goods were made further inland<sup>308</sup>. Accounts of Portuguese officials and chroniclers – along with the number of extant pieces of porcelain datable to the first three quarters of the 16<sup>th</sup> century – reflect these apparently informal trading liaisons and, thus confirm that certain East Asian goods (mainly porcelain and silken textiles) became quite early common utensils in Portuguese royal and aristocratic households<sup>309</sup>.

The first exotic objects and rarities from *Portuguese India* may have reached the Portuguese court as pattern pieces brought by captains and sent by viceroys as trophies or show-pieces of the promising riches available in the regions which access had just opened up. Others were diplomatic presents, either from local kings of territories in *Portuguese India*<sup>310</sup> or as gifts from viceroys to their sovereigns. This happened for example with Chinese porcelain, which already reached Lisbon during the reign of King D. Manuel I (1469-1521). Beside private purchases (of captains, agents, merchants), there were certainly royal orders which were answered via the existing trading network. Moreover, many of these early commissions show personalized decorations of religious or secular character, along with the date of manufacture or heraldic details, revealing the Portuguese client<sup>311</sup>. For example, an order of porcelain pieces, destined as a gift for King D. João III, was placed in 1527 to Fujianese merchants in Malacca and handed out there a year later<sup>312</sup>. And between 1511 and 1514 in Lisbon's *Casa da Índia* almost 700 pieces of porcelain were already registered to the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>308</sup> Matos (2000b, pp.66-67; 2002/03, pp.36-40), Chang (1969, pp.62-68), Loureiro (2007, p.215), Krahl (2007, pp.237, 239), Ptak (2007, p.163).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>309</sup>Matos (1998, p.115), Moreira (1998, pp.454-55), Moreira & Curvelo (1998, pp.536-37).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>310</sup> For example in 1528 D. Catarina was already presented with cottons from Bengal, Asian fans and coconuts by an Indian ruler, and among many other diplomatic offers the queen received several gifts from the kings of Ceylon that appear in the inventories of Queen Catarina's collection, cf. Jordan Gschwend (2004, p.39). See Chapter 2.2.1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>311</sup> Moreira (1998, pp.475-82), Moreira & Curvelo (1998, pp.535-37), Matos (1998, pp.109-10; 2003/03, pp.37-40), Loureiro (2007, pp.215-16), Krahl (2007, p.237).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>312</sup> Matos (1996, p.114), Carvalho (2000, p.13), Krahl (2007, p.237).

Royal House<sup>313</sup>. Among these porcelains and silks probably also lacquerware did arrive in Lisbon via the Cape Route that derived from exchanges with Southern Chinese merchants<sup>314</sup>.

A good evidence of the continuity of non-official Portuguese trade with the Southern Chinese merchants is also the amount of white Chinese silk mentioned amongst other several items "from India" listed in the 1528's inventory of the Portuguese Queen D. Catarina of Austria<sup>315</sup>, illustrating these commissions were limited to a reduced number of high ranking individuals, a condition that must have continued through the following decades.

Personalized objects with coat-of-arms, Christian symbols or other Western subjects must have reached Lisbon right after the capture of Malacca, probably increasing from the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century onward, when Macau became an official Portuguese trading base. Subsequently, Sino-Portuguese trade was well developed, and orders were probably transmitted by Portuguese traders and agents directly to Chinese middlemen or merchants. Evidence is the mention of several East Asian objects in the inventory of the wardrobe of Queen D. Catarina of Austria of 1557<sup>316</sup>.

Furthermore, a variety of personalized Chinese textiles, embroideries, damasks (bedspreads, carpets and rags) or textiles for religious use (canonicals, liturgical clothing, and fronts of altar) must have been commissioned by nobleman and specifically by the missionaries, which is indicated by numerous extant pieces in ecclesiastical collections<sup>317</sup> [Fig. 5]. These appear decorated with the typical auspicious flora and fauna motifs of the traditional Chinese decorative repertoire, closely linked to the decorations present on the studied Luso-Asian lacquer pieces. Along the southeastern and southern Chinese coast were produced religious textiles and ivories (Zhangzhou)<sup>318</sup>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>313</sup> Matos (2000b, p.66).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>314</sup> Duarte Barbosa mentioned "gilded caskets" as being exchanged for Indian spices and cotton in Malacca, but of course we cannot know if these were Chinese, Japanese or of other origins, cf. Carvalho (2001d, p.42).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>315</sup> Among these things where two fans, cottons textiles from Bengal, benzoin, coconuts, among other goods, cf. Jordan Gschwend (2005, p.184).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>316</sup> Jordan Gschwend (1998).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>317</sup> Ferreira (2005b; 2007, pp.81-93; 2011), Jordan Gschwend & Lowe (2017, p.152).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>318</sup> Bailey (2009, p.229).



Fig. 5 Fragment of altar frontal, ca. 1550-1600. MNAA (Inv.no. 612 Tec), © Jordan Geschwend & Lowe (2017, p.152)

#### Chinese Furniture

To be able to better characterize the objects under scrutiny some words are needed on domestic Chinese furniture, its origins and developments. All Chinese artistic creation is subject to the unchanging order of the universe, including the creation of buildings and of course furniture, as both are interdependent and have evolved together. As will be seen later in Chapter 1.3.2., also the lacquer craft follows the same principles. From antiquity onward, traditional Chinese furniture has been distinguished by its reliance on high quality crafted joinery based on construction methods, which exclude nails and screws, and only rarely employ dowels and glue. Structures have been pegged together or mortised since Neolithic times and methods of stable joints have been developed which allowed the wood to expand and contract in reaction to climatic changes. Common are different kinds of mortise-and-tenon joints, miter joints, and to a lesser extent dovetail joints. Turning, however, was unknown and three-dimensional decoration on furniture parts was carved<sup>319</sup>.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>319</sup> For more detailed reading on the origins of Chinese furniture and its evolution, as well as the methods of construction used consult: Beurdeley (1979), Wang (1986), Clunas (1988; 1996b), Berliner (1996, pp.15-19), Evarts (1996), Mota & Lorena (1999, pp.37-41), Perkins (1999, pp.172-73), Handler (2001), Deroche (2003), Boyce (2013, pp.60-62).

In early time, men were crouching or sitting cross ledged on the ground and used low furniture such as screens (*ping*), beds, chests, armrests (*li*) and tables. Between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries, higher chairs (*hu chuang*, literally barbarian's chair) were introduced through influences from the West<sup>320</sup>. Already during the Tang dynasty, carpenters created solid and stable furniture. During the Song dynasty (960-1279) architectonical styles that lasted well into the Ming and Qing dynasties were established and the craft of woodworking has already achieved a high state of sophistication, being distinguished between rough (large carpentry) and refined (small carpentry) of which the latter included furniture<sup>321</sup>.

Reflecting the extremely conservative nature of Chinese culture, over the centuries, similar furniture types have been produced using the same techniques and sequences in their production. This did not change when the Ming (1369-1644) imperial government closely regulated the domestic furnishings of the distinct ranks of society, establishing rules, which varied very little over this period.

Since the Song dynasty, all sorts of crafts, including carpentry, were organized into family like guilds, which controlled competition and introduced a rigorous training system of apprenticeship to master craftsmen on a regional basis<sup>322</sup>.

Further, throughout the empire they were required to register and to work for the workshops of the court in Beijing (the new capital since 1421), either as resident or shift artisans, which led to the dissemination of specialized knowledge and the unification of woodworking skills throughout China.

Most of the population most probably used simpler furniture produced by village carpenters with locally available wood and covered with no more than a simple plain lacquer

From the Tang dynasty (618-907) onwards, *jiao chuang* or cross-legged chairs were used, Deroches (2003, p.23), Boyce (2013, p.61).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>321</sup> Evarts (1996, p.53).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>322</sup> Clunas (1988, p.69), Evarts (1996, p.55). As in all other craft industries the division of labor has been a long practice also in the wood working craft. Such as a single piece of porcelain or lacquerware might have been produced by many different hands, every finished piece of furniture was a result of a kind of assembly line process, which included many craftsmen, specialized in different work steps. Even the work of wood carvers was divided into three-dimensional, high- or low-relief, or open carvings. Either one of them were executed by rough and fine carvers who worked in a team. Also other specialists were involved in furniture making such as finishers who smoothed the surfaces or prepared them for the final oil or lacquer coating, seat weavers, or metal smith who lastly fixed the metal hardware and fittings, cf. Evarts (1996, pp.56-58).

coating<sup>323</sup>. With the rising of the literati and wealthy people, whose furniture mirrored their noble taste and status, the use of sophisticatedly crafted fine hardwood furniture became popular from the late 16<sup>th</sup> century onward. However, pictorial, written and archeological evidence suggest that fine furniture in the pre-Ming period was almost always lacquered, often black or red<sup>324</sup>.

Famous centers of domestic furniture production were for example Canton (folding beds, lacquered and other diverse types of furniture), Fuzhou (bamboo furniture), Suzhou (bamboo furniture, chairs of sinuous wood), Nanjing (beds and alcove beds), Wujiang (bamboo chairs), and Yangzhou (finest wooden chairs).

It is important to mention that Canton has a long tradition as a production center of lacquered and luxury furniture<sup>325</sup>. The common types of wood for furniture making came from domestic species such as oak, elm, camphor, paulownia, ginkgo, pine, fir or cypress. Southern Chinese wood sources were either the dark and dense hardwood *zitan* (*Pterocarpus santalinus*), which grew on the island of Hainan, or the two softwoods, a type of cypress (*Cryptomeria japonica* var. *sinensis*) and a type of fragrant pine (*Cunninghamia lanceolata* Hooker), the latter of which was the most important conifer tree cultivated for timber.

In the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, furniture with heavy and dark colored hardwood became most popular because of their beautiful wood grains, especially among the ruling and wealthy classes. Due to this vogue, the domestic sources of *zitan* wood and other rosewood species went out. Subsequently the luxury furniture industry became more and more dependent on imports of South and Southeast Asian redwood, rosewood, or padouk (*Pterocarpus* and *Dalbergia*), to cater for the increasing demand of hardwood furniture<sup>326</sup>.

With the lifting of the ban on imports in 1567, issued by the Longqing emperor (1567-72), trade along the coastal regions was stimulated, resulting in an increasing use of imported

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>323</sup> Clunas (1988, p.65).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>324</sup> Clunas (1996a, p.24).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>325</sup> Clunas (1988, pp.65-68).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>326</sup> Beurdeley (1979, pp.69-71), Evarts (1996, pp.67-68), Daniels & Menzies (1996, pp.374-376, 597), Mota & Lorena (1999, pp.48-53), Boyce (2013, p.61).

tropical hardwoods for luxury furniture<sup>327</sup>. For instance, Chinese goods in Manila were exchanged for silver and tropical woods such as Indian ebony, also known as Makassar ebony (*Diospyros celeica*), or different rose- and redwood species<sup>328</sup>. And the Portuguese when entering the port in Macau or Canton sometimes paid their taxes also with brazilwood and Indian tropical woods<sup>329</sup>.

However, beside the late 16<sup>th</sup> century' vogue of sumptuous furnishings admired and enjoyed among the moneyed classes, there must have been furnishings and crafts destined for common people's everyday life, both in the big urban centers and in more remote regions. But given the long lore of woodworking and related craftsmanship, the organization of apprentice training, knowledge transfer, the strictly conservative and centuries-old tradition, it would be reasonable to assume that certain basic canons (regarding form, materials, construction, and techniques used) were also applied to simpler productions. Lacquered furniture was generally produced of lighter softwoods and not of the precious hardwoods.

### Chinese Furniture for European Consumers

In 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century' documents, all sorts of furniture, including lacquered items (chests, caskets, chairs or beds) appear mentioned as "from China"<sup>330</sup>. These are manifest either in inventories of wealthy noblemen's possessions in Portugal and abroad, were observed as being available, traded, loaded or discharged from ships, and described in European travelogues<sup>331</sup>. As the inventories of royal possessions, wealthy officials, merchants, and humanists reveal, Chinese lacquered furniture was reserved to high dignitaries, either lay or religious, and clearly meant as luxury items for collecting or personal display, that the ordinary population could not afford. Curiously, it seems that none of these items have survived to this day as there is no indication of existing pieces from that time.

Different descriptions evidence the presence of furniture among the shipments within Asia (Malacca, Macau, Canton, and Japan) or back to Europe. Chairs, folding beds and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>327</sup> Evarts (1996, pp.54,67), Mota & Lorena (1999, p.15), Deroches (2003, p.25).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>328</sup> Evarts (1996, p.67).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>329</sup> Boxer (1963, p.184), Mota & Lorena (1999, p.49).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>330</sup> Such as the inventories of Queen D. Catarina

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>331</sup> Boxer (1963, pp.182-184).

gilded writing boxes<sup>332</sup> were reported as being shipped from China (Macau and Canton) to Lisbon<sup>333</sup>. Likewise, the loads of the *Great Ship* on its way from Macau to India consisted, beside a diversity of merchandise, of gilded beds, tables, and again writing boxes<sup>334</sup>.

To some of these mentions of typologies such as cabinets (*contadores*), writing desks or boxes (*escrivaninhas*, *escritórios*), trays (*bandeijas* and *tabuleiros*), various types of small boxes (*bocetas*, *caixas*, *caixinhas*), beds (*leitos* and *camas*), game tables (*mesas de jogo*) and so forth, was added that they were lacquered (*charão*, *acharoado*<sup>335</sup>) or gilded (*dourados*). However, due to missing accurate descriptions we do not know how these items were like in terms of shape, construction or decoration. The term "gilded", mentioned in these listings, does not necessarily mean that the entire surface was gilded, but may perhaps refer to gold decoration.

As referred in Chapter 1.2.1., from the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century onward, East Asian artifacts and furniture were increasingly commissioned by the Portuguese Queen D. Catarina of Austria. Among them feature Chinese furniture and several lacquer items of varied possible origins (Japan, China, Ryūkyū Kingdom and perhaps others). Many of these exotic East Asian objects were distributed by her to other members of the Habsburg dynasty. Apart from the collapsible tabletops with associated frames, which can be identified due to their

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> What often appears referen

What often appears referenced as writing boxes or desks, no matter if from India, China, Southeast Asia or Japan, does not have to correspond to the same typology, shape or function. This designation may unite pieces of completely different make-ups, because of the lack of vocabulary or knowledge of their original purposes through the comparison with European models that were destined to house writing utensils, documents and paper, or which acted as writing furniture equipped with a reading or blotting pad. Dalgado for example proposed that the escritórios da China [writing boxes from China] correspond to the cubic type of cabinet (contador) with a side-hang front door which accesses various interior compartments, called ventó in Portuguese. Generally, this type of furniture has its origin in East Asia, from where it was brought by the Portuguese into other regions such as India, as many extant pieces (painted or inlayed with colored woods) attest. It also featured among the Japanese nanban lacquers produced for the Portuguese, Dalgado (1982, pp.118, 382), Houaiss & Villar (2015, p.596). Its Portuguese name seems to derive from the Japanese bentō (its etymological origin derives from "something that is convenient"). In these portable boxes of similar shape were carried bentō dishes (different food receptacles for picnic) for instance for rich people's open-air Kabuki dance viewing. In Japan this term is still associated with portable food containers or small picnic furniture. The Jesuit Portuguese-Japanese dictionary Vocabulario da Lingoa de Iapam (referred to in Capter 1.3.2) quotes that it is "a box like for writing, which has drawers inside, where things to eat are carried. My translation of the original: "(...) hua caixa como escritório, que tem dentro gavetas em que se levão causas de comer (...)". I am indebted to Kobayashi Koji and Alexandra Curvelo for the information.

<sup>333</sup> Ferrão (1990b, p.31).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>334</sup> Boxer (1963, p.181).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>335</sup> Dalgado (1982, pp.262-63).

extensive description and compared with a still existing copy (2.4.1.), we have for example no idea of how these "writing boxes or desks" and other items were like. In many cases, there is only room for presumptions. The mentions of certain typologies in 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century inventories may suggest the origins of certain extant objects of the same typology, but they do not provide solid evidence for identification.

However, the skillfulness of Chinese craftsmen and the variety of handicrafts available in Canton has been observed by the Portuguese Dominican friar Gaspar da Cruz (1520–70) who was in Asia between 1556 and 1569/1570. In 1556 he arrived at the island of Lampacau and spent one month in Canton. He reported his observations on the artistic production in this city in the 1569' *Treatise on things Chinese –Treaty in which China's affairs are extensively counted*<sup>336</sup>. Cruz describes the trading center of Canton as a place where:

"(...) There are in this country many workmen of all trades, and great abundance of all things necessary for the common use (...) there be many and perfect workmen, and great abundance of things of every trade, and very perfect (...) There are also good carpenters and very good workmen of all manner of work. They have continually many boxes made of many sorts, some varnished with a very fair varnish, others painted, others lined with leather, and likewise of other sorts. They have continually a great number of chairs made, some of very fair white wood, and others fairly gilt and silvered, very finely wrought (...)".

He further mentions the same objects that appear in so many references as produced there, among which:

"(...) <u>little boxes gilt, and platters, and baskets, writing desks and tables, as well gilt as with silver, there is no count nor better. Gold-smith, silver-smith, copper-smith, iron-smith, and of all other trades (...)"<sup>337</sup>.</u>

In 1635, the New Christian António Bocarro (1594-1642?) who left for India in 1615, and became an official chronicler of the *Portuguese State of India* from 1631 onward, mentions the following about the voyages between Macau and Japan:

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<sup>336</sup> My translation of the original: "(...) Tractado em que se cotam muito por esteso as cousas da China (...)".

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>337</sup> Boxer (1953, pp.124-25), Ferrão (1990b, pp.29-30, 32).

"(...) four ships go annually to Japan loaded with various kinds of silk, gold, China-root, which are exchanged for some of the mass of natural silver, we export copper, camphor, and many gold lacquered cabinets, for those of Japan are much better than those of China or elsewhere, many kinds of little boxes and writing desks (...)"<sup>338</sup>.

However, according to the Italian Marco d'Avalo<sup>339</sup> Macau was not a center of production but rather a center of trade and distribution:

"(...) No manufactured goods or textiles are made within the city limits, but everything required for these voyages [Macau-Japan] must be brought from Canton with junks or other vessels. For this purpose, two large fairs are held there annually, at which seasons several Macanese merchants are nominated to go and buy there, both for themselves, as on behalf of others, and to order in time for delivery at the next fair, such goods as may be required. These sometimes stay as long as 4-5 month in Canton. Only afore elected representatives can go there (...)"<sup>340</sup>.

He describes this city as a very rich marketplace:

"(...) They import silver bullion and export manufactured goods, enjoying a commission of 2%... Moreover this city of Maccauw contains some fine Chinese shops, as likewise a large number of Chinese who peddle clothes and silken stuff from house to house (...) I believe that Maccauw or Maccau may justly be considered as the best, strongest and most profitable of the Portuguese possessions in the Indies... The trade driven there, consists in gold, according to touch, refined silver, raw white silk, countless manufactured goods, gold lacquers, pearls, rubies, musk, quicksilver, zinc, very fine china-ware, china-root, rhubarb (...)"<sup>341</sup>

The British merchant and traveler Peter Mundy (1600-1667) noted the following about the trade between Macau and Japan in 1637:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>338</sup> Boxer (1984, pp.29-30).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>339</sup> "Description of the City of Maccaou or Maccauw, with its Fortresses, cannon, trade, and customs of the inhabitants" written by Marco D'Avalo, Italian first published in Amsterdam in 1645 in the Dutch collection of voyages and travels under the title of *Begin ende Voortgangh van de Vereenighde Nederlantsche geoctroyeerde Oost-Indische Compagnie*, cf. Boxer (1984, pp.69-80).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>340</sup> Boxer (1984, pp.78-79).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>341</sup> Boxer (1984, pp.79-80).

"(...) A Fleete appointed For Japan: Within were 6 vessels bound For Japan and expected the Caphila [convoy of smaller cargo ships] off goodes From Cantan, the Cheife Citty of this province they goe by water in a great River that passeth by the Citty (...) The lanteea of Caphila arrived From Canton... 5 long large, lighter vessels, laden with goods from that Citty, where the Portugalls make yearly investments For the lading off their Japan Fleete (...)"<sup>342</sup>.

D'Avalo and Mundy have observed that obviously the bulk of Chinese merchandise sent to Japan had to be brought from Canton and that no goods were manufactured within the city limits.

However, there is little proof if and when artistic production has started in Macau specifically in relation to portable European-style furniture; nevertheless, a variety of silverware; sculpture or liturgical textiles are generally considered to have been produced in this city, which is understood as both center of distribution and manufacture<sup>343</sup>. Within different time frames and depending on the development of Macau, its population, the commercial background and Catholic missions this may vary from craft to craft.

Have lacquered objects been produced in Macau and in which period did such a production start? The earlier cited European observations on Macau on the one side and Canton on the other reveal that the Cantonese origin of lacquered and gilded goods transported from Canton to Macau where worth noticing. I would argue that if there have existed lacquer workshops in Macau, in the fall of the 16<sup>th</sup> and dawn of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, these most probably would have been noticed and mentioned by the Europeans too.

Although diverse mentions of Chinese pieces of furniture (as for example writing boxes with gilded drawers, gilt folding beds, or gilded trays with basketry) appear in historic documentation and inventory lists, we do not know how these objects looked like. Most probably they were of contemporary Chinese assembly and design belonging to articles produced for everyday use that were sold at local markets and shops, such as the East Asian lacquer cups examined in this study (2.9.). It is noteworthy that none of these 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>342</sup> Boxer (1984, pp.42-44).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>343</sup> Silva (2000a), Matos (2000b), Carvalho (2000; 2013, pp.39, 40, 41), Curvelo (2007a; 2007b; 2013b, p.19), Bailey (2009, p.229), Krahl (2009, pp.312-13), Lopes (2011, pp.275, 291-92).

century objects seem to have survived or been identified. Most descriptions of the referred items are missing details, not allowing the identification of specific object types, except the typical lacquered boxes with basketry work observed by Cruz and Pyrard de Laval<sup>344</sup>, which were common everyday products both along the southern Chinese coast and in the Ryūkyū Kingdom<sup>345</sup>. These commonly were of very light structures and might not have survived the past 400 years and if there are extant pieces, they might be hidden in public or private collections with no longer comprehensible circumstances of their journey to Europe<sup>346</sup>. Notwithstanding, the numerous mentions evince lacquered articles from China were circulating in the *Portuguese State of India*, also reaching Europe increasingly from the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century onward<sup>347</sup>.

The 16<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup> century inventory entries of wealthy aristocrats' households, however, feature several small furniture types of Chinese origin, and their contemporary market values. The 1570' inventory of the former captain of Malacca, Simão de Melo Magalhães, for instance, mentions among many other items: "one gilded writing cabinet from China"; "one writing cabinet with silver mountings and also its lock with gilded drawers and silver pullers"; "two round boxes from China, each with two compartments, one gilded and the other worked in black"; "one old casket from China painted in red and gold"; or "one China stand [or shelf] and a large missal already used"<sup>348</sup>. It is conceivable they rather refer to Chinese merchandise or export articles purchased on the various markets, and occasionally to personal commissions, gifts or souveniers, such as several objects acquired by Fernando de

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>344</sup> The French navigator François Pyrard de Laval observed in Goa in the early 17th century lacquered small boxes with basketry work as being discharged from the *Great Ship* coming from China and Japan, in Ferrão (1990b, p.32). Additionally, already in the 1557's inventory of Queen D. Catarina's wardrobe there was mentioned, among various kinds of boxes, a black lacquered small lidded box, both lid and base made with basketry work, in Jordan Gschwend (1998, p.205).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>345</sup> Watt (2008).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>346</sup> The big 1755' earthquake which devastated major Lisbon including royal residences, together with many other occasions in the course of the centuries, may also be responsible for the absence of surviving examples and certainly it contributed to the lack of documentation.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>347</sup> Possibly some East Asian lacquer items (three baskets of wood and gilt silver wire and two bowls of different sizes of beautiful varnished wood, with gilded edges) had arrived even earlier as diplomatic gifts. An 1523' inventory of Archduchess Margaret of Austria (1480-1530), Governor of the Habsburg Netherlands, already mentions 5 small pieces of lacquerware that were presented by Eleanor of Austria and Castile (1498-1558), then wife of King D. Manuel I, cf. Impey & Jörg (2005, p.284).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>348</sup> Crespo (2015a, p.259; 2016d, pp.250-51).

Noronha and adorned with the coat-of-arms of the Noronha family<sup>349</sup>. His inventory also lists among many other items: "one long lacquered box from China having two inner compartments", "one small writing cabinet from China of more than two spans with its seven drawers", "one other smaller writing cabinet from Pegu with its drawers, of gold and red", "another writing cabinet from China, of gold and white which has twelve drawers", "one box from China, of gold and black with its nook", "one writing cabinet from Pegu, entirely gilded" (perhaps a typical Sutra box?), "two shields from China without their arm support, with their coat-of-arms", four trays from China, three of them with their coat-of-arms, lacquered in black and gilded" "350. With reference to similar typologies, which may have been of various forms and manufactures, these mentions do not allow to identify existing pieces from the group of Luso-Asian objects examined here. All these furniture types and gold lacquer items, sent to Europe and other destinations, were most likely pure contemporary creations of typical Chinese shapes, make-ups and decorations of this thesis.

The Portuguese and other residents in Macau might have used furniture brought from Europe, India and other origins, as well as Chinese models. The Chinese themselves, contrasting to other Asian cultures, used similar types of furniture. On one hand the exact shapes and functions differed to what the Europeans were used to, but on the other hand it was both very much appealing and even similar in its typologies. It is most conceivable, that the Europeans have adopted the use of local furniture types<sup>352</sup>. In the following periods this must have become comon practice by Macanese residents. In 1770, the Dutch traveler Van Braam Houckgeest noted that the Portuguese Macanese houses are equipped with rather Chinese than European style furniture<sup>353</sup>. Earlier, the Italian merchant Francesco Carletti, who traveled between 1594 and 1606 around the world and stayed nearly two years in Goa, noted in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century that even the houses in Goa were equipped with silk and gold

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>349</sup> Crespo (2016d, pp.253-55; 2017a, p.170).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>350</sup> Crespo (2015a, p.123).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>351</sup> Exempted are here the folding tables (2.4.), which corresponded to a European type of furniture and which were used by the Portuguese throughout the *Portuguese State of India*, either brought from Europe or copied from European modles in different areas.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>352</sup> This has also been suggested earlier, cf. Carvalho (2001d, p.46; 2013, p.39), Bastos (2013, p.147).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>353</sup> Braga (2001, p.468).

ornaments and many furniture pieces from China (gilded beds, chests, small tables, chairs and cabinets coated with black lacquer), beside richly decorated furniture from diverse parts of India<sup>354</sup>. If Chinese furniture has been distributed throughout *Portuguese India*, consequently it must have been available by residents in Macau. Given the restricted access to the Canton fairs, allowing only a limited number of merchant's access, further questions arise concerning the circumstances in which such furniture might have been purchased. Has it been acquired by Macau's residents at the biannual Canton fairs, in local markets or shops in Macau or elsewhere, or through the southern Chinese trading network?

From what we know about the purchases, the collectables united and distributed by the Portuguese queen, it seems that at that date lacquered furniture was still a very expensive and appraised commodity, destined for member of the most powerful ruling classes in Europe, who used their network of Portuguese officials, agents, merchants and personal servants to acquire them. Given the restricted access of the Portuguese and their lack of direct contact to the actual workshops in mainland China we cannot observe the same phenomenon which has happened in India, where the close exchange with producers of all kinds of artworks, lead to the manufacture of furniture of a hybrid character and mixed influences.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>354</sup> Dias (2004, p.159), Bastos (2013, p.147).



Fig. 6 Cabinet with fall front, 18<sup>th</sup> century. Museu do Oriente (Inv. no. FO/0628), © Marques (2001, p.477)

Sino-Portuguese furniture or more specifically, lacquered Chinese furniture that adapted European typologies and commissioned by the wealthy classes in Portugal, are of a younger date and were produced in exactly the city of Canton in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. An 18<sup>th</sup> century cabinet with a fall front, hiding interior drawers and a central tabernacle, is housed in the Museu do Oriente in Lisbon. Its gold and black exterior lacquer decoration depicts horsemen and musicians in a scene with palast architecture, framed by an undulated band with spirals <sup>355</sup>[Fig. 6]. The same decorative frieze frequently adorns the examined examples (See Chapter 4.1.2., Tab. 7). Beside the appreciated folding screens, lacquerware produced *en masse* for the export to Europe and the USA indeed copied European typologies, which is testified by numerous extant pieces. From the 18<sup>th</sup> century onward, Canton turned into a huge commercial center in the scope of the *China Trade*<sup>356</sup> (export of porcelain, tea, ivories, silken cloth, silverware, and among others, lacquered European-style furniture and Chinese wooden screens<sup>357</sup>).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>355</sup> Braga (2001, p.477), Calvão & Pereira (2008, pp.234-35).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>356</sup> Crossman (1972, pp.168-87), Mota & Lorena (1999), Curvelo & Bastos (2001), Curvelo et al. (2004), Nagashima (2008, p.32), Petisca (2010; 2011b; forthcoming), Petisca et al. (2011; 2016), Hidaka (2011a), Bastos (2013).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>357</sup> Crossman (1972), Carvalho (2001d).

However, even if the manifold records of "lacquered and gilded" items "from China" do not allow certain identification or add clues to the study of the group under scrutiny, they indicate where such lacquer decorations may have come from.

#### 1.2.4. Artistic Production in the Scope of Catholic European Presence in Japan

In late 16<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup> century' Japan, during the Muromachi (1333-1573) and Momoyama (1573-1615) periods, all foreigners entering the archipelago via the southern islands (Tanegashima and Kyūshū) namely from Southeast Asia, were called *nanban-jin* (literally meaning "southern barbarian" this term derives from a Chinese origin and was originally attributed to non-*han* peoples). This designation was then also applied to the southern Europeans, as well as to all foreign merchants trading with Japan in the ports of the southern Japanese island of Kyūshū<sup>358</sup>.

*Nanban* is associated with the cultural and artistic phenomenon of Catholic European presence on Japanese territory and interactions with the Japanese civilization. *Nanban* art (*nanban bijutsu*<sup>359</sup>) comprises the artistic productions of the Jesuit painting seminary (religious paintings), of local painting schools<sup>360</sup>, and includes as well as metal artifacts, ceramics, or domestic lacquerware with decorations depicting the *nanban-jin*, missionaries or their European culture. Thus, the vast group of *nanban* artifacts preliminary were destined for two markets: the inland Japanese (including Christian art destined for the Japanese mission), and the Asian market via the Portuguese and Luso-Asian network<sup>361</sup>.

The fashion of curious and exotic European themes and depictions of *nanban-jin*, that evolved among the Japanese elite, found expression in the decoration of domestic Japanese objects, such as the hand protection and part of Japanese sword guards (tsuba), foldable painted paper screens ( $by\bar{o}bu$ ) with the depiction of these foreigners and the astonishing big

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>358</sup> Ferrão (1990b, p.191), Curvelo (2016, p.124).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>359</sup> In Japan, there not being any esthetic equivalent, the Western concept of "Fine Art" (*bijutsu*) was adopted in the Meiji period. *Bijutsu* literarily meaning "Fine Arts", was first coined on the occasion of Japan's participation in the 1873 *Weltaustellung* in Vienna. For more detailed reading see: Sato (2011, p.67). Since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century this designation has been common in Japanese art historiography, Curvelo (2016, p.124).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>360</sup> The  $Kan\bar{o}$  painting school who worked for the ruling elite, for instance, increasingly produced the nanban  $by\bar{o}bu$  with meticulously detailed representations of the nanban-jin and the arriving  $Black\ Ship$ , an exotic motif of growing interest, Curvelo (2016, p.125).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>361</sup> Curvelo (2007a, pp.vii-viii; 2016, p.128).

*Black Ship*, stirrups (*abumi*), cases for writing utensils (*suzuribako*), or food containers (*jubako*) among others. This domestic production, of high-quality finishes, continued beyond the banishment of Christianity. Such decorations have probably been commissioned by Japanese individuals during the entire period of national isolation (between 1633-39 and 1853)<sup>362</sup>.

In terms of lacquered furniture destined to the Europeans the term *nanban* refers particularly to the applied techniques and the decorative style developed in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half and towards the fall of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Japan was the Asian territory where the Jesuit artwork flourished the most, though for not quite a century<sup>363</sup>. Another term *-kirishitan* art<sup>364</sup> is exceptionally used for Christian art produced on the Japanese archipelago. As referred to earlier in this chapter (1.1.), Japanese and Chinese converts at Giovanni Niccolò's *Seminary of Painters* have been trained in European style painting by copying Christian images. Devotional scenes of the Virgin Mary with the Child or scenes of Christ's life were usually painted on wood panels, canvas, brass or copper sheet and inserted into lacquered wooden frames or retable, serving as portable altars or oratories for missionary and private use<sup>365</sup>.

As on the Indian subcontinent, also in Japan artisans understood the promising market and specialized in the creation of objects that suited the taste and demand of the foreigners, who themselves contributed to the creation of an alien style by commissioning specific decorations.

These decorations consisted of densely filled surfaces with motifs in flat sprinkled gold and silver powders (*hiramakie*) and less densely sprinkled metal fragments of irregular shape (*nashiji*, "pear skin") combined with inlays of mother-of-pearl. The use of the latter

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>362</sup> Cf. Canavarro et al. (1989; 1990), Pinto (1990), Flores (1998, p.41), Moreira & Curvelo (1998, pp.552-55), Impey (2001), Leiria (2001), Heckmann (2002, p.262), Impey & Jörg (2005), Nagashima (2008), Canepa (2008; 2009), Curvelo (2007a; 2007b; 2010<sup>a</sup>; 2015; 2016), Kawamura (2003; 2013; 2016), Kobayashi (2016).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>363</sup> Cf. Moreira & Curvelo (1998, p.552), Carvalho (2013).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>364</sup> Term is related with Christian art produced in the scope of Jesuit missionary activities in Japan, including the lacquered liturgical objects, cf. Moreira & Curvelo (1998, pp.552-55), Curvelo (2007a, pp.235-248; 2016, p.128), Onn (2016).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>365</sup> For detailed information on the Jesuit's missionary practice and the developed artistic practice of copying, see Curvelo (2001; 2007c, p.120ff; 2016, p.127), Bailey (2007; 2009, p.227). For further information and examples of *nanban* retable, cf. Ferrão (1990b), Vinhais & Welsh (2003, pp.46-55; 2008, pp.246-53) or Impey & Jörg (2005, pp.186-89), Martins (2010, pp.87-99).

material became a special characteristic of *nanban* lacquer production, reflecting the Europeans' taste acquired on their pathway to Japan by artifacts produced in Gujarat, and possibly also combining influences from Korean mother-of-pearl lacquerware<sup>366</sup>.

Prerequisite for the availability of craftsmen were the fundamental changes in Japanese social structures in the course of the *sengoku jidai* (age of warring states) period. Between 1467 and 1568, a civil war involved religious sects, clan lords (*daimyô*), and other local lords who fought for territorial power, resulting in the rising of the samurai class and clan lords<sup>367</sup>. Previously, artisans followed esthetic conventions dominated by the court, nobles, temples and shrines to which they were attached to. By the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century lacquer and *makie* (sprinkled picture) craftsmen related to members of the imperial court became increasingly employed by samurai families. It followed a period of prosperity and flourishing decorative arts enhanced by the Muromachi shoguns, whose tastes and lifestyles were similar to those of courtiers. It is thought that the great changes in Japanese society provided *makie* craftsmen with new opportunities, who became independent and migrated to the cities, in particular to Kyōto, in search for new careers supplying samurai families with lacquerware. This change was especially perceivable in Kyōto where a new style of *makie* lacquer decoration has evolved. Certain canons of the *makie* craft that were established during the Muromachi shogunate continued valid until the Edo period<sup>368</sup>.

# Lacquered Nanban Furniture

The most important purchaser of liturgical implements and portable furniture was the Society of Jesus holding the monopoly of missionary work in Japan until 1593. Far from Europe and the already established industry for devotional objects in the Goa region, missionaries needed religious images and utensils for their activity, but also several furniture such as various kinds of cabinets, chests, boxes, coffers, or tables. Some of the latter even reached Europe entering several royal, but moreover ecclesiastical collections<sup>369</sup>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>366</sup> Kreiner (2012, p.184).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>367</sup> For descriptions of the complex political events throughout the turbulent 16<sup>th</sup> century cf. Curvelo (2007a, pp.77-92), Kreiner (2012, pp.165-70).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>368</sup> Cf. Leiria (2001), Nagashima (2008, pp.32-33).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>369</sup> In the inventory of the collection of Emperor Rudolph II in Prague are mentioned several lacquered *nanban* cabinets, cf. Miklin-Kniefazc & Miklin (2013, May), many other furniture pieces, such as chests and cabinets,

This manufacture of portable lacquered furniture (*nanban shikki*) generated a style, which does not correspond to Japanese esthetics, but to decorations ordered by the Catholic Europeans under the Portuguese patronage. In spite of that the techniques used, and the depicted motifs were traditional Japanese and derived from the style developed in 16<sup>th</sup> century Kyōto.

The Jesuits predominantly commissioned religious utensils such like *pyxis* (small containers for consecrated wafer), portable oratories and retable, mass book lectern and different receptacles to house reliquaries. These figure the society's insignia with the IHS-monogram, a cross and three nails, framed by a sunburst in mother-of-pearl. The amount of surviving liturgical *nanban* pieces embellished with the Jesuit monogram illustrates their practice of putting the arts in the service of faith<sup>370</sup>. Many of these pieces have survived in Iberian churches, monasteries or convents, and are extant in museums and private collections around the world.

As observed by Bocarro in 1635, gold lacquered cabinets were exported from Japan, presumably containing *nanban* lacquered objects. Many of these were distributed among Portuguese bases and Catholic missions in Asia, but also in South and Central America (reaching New Spain via Manila) including paper screens and *nanban* lacquerware<sup>371</sup>. French Jesuit Fr. Bonnani doubtlessly referred to *nanban* lacquered ware when he states in his 1620' compilation:

"(...) The caskets – which ordinarily are sold in City of Bengala in the Oriental Indies, where they are transported from Japan – are usually seen decorated with foliage, among which are often embedded fragments of irisident colors (...)"<sup>372</sup>.

The fabrication of Christian or liturgical *nanban* lacquer items are thought to have been produced between the last quarter of the 16<sup>th</sup> and the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century. Impey and Jörg suggested this period started in the 1580s and lasted until somewhere between 1614 and

still belong to diverse ecclesiastical collections on the Iberian Peninsula, cf. Silva (1993b; 2010), Kawamura (2013; 2016), Kobayashi (2016).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>370</sup> Curvelo (2007b, p.279).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>371</sup> Boyajian (2008, pp.48, 51, 68), Nagashima (2008, p.37), Curvelo (2013c).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>372</sup> Bonnani (2009, p. 26).

1639, when Tokugawa shoguns issued the Christianity banning edicts. However, it is likely the practice of ordering these Christian *nanban* items has started before and lasted even longer<sup>373</sup>.

Beside Chinese merchants, the Dutch East Indian Company (VOC) were from 1639 onward the only Europeans allowed to restricted trade on the fan-shaped island Dejima in Nagasaki harbor. The VOC initially also traded with *nanban* lacquer, first in 1610, indicating that this export manufacture was well established at that time. Very soon it was discovered that *nanban* objects were too expensive to be quickly sold for profits in the Netherlands. Unsold stock has been accumulated both in Batavia and Amsterdam. These unsalable *nanban* objects were employed as diplomatic gifts to both European and Asian potentates, initiating a practice that became common routine in the following decades when the VOC employed Japanese lacquerware as special presents<sup>374</sup>.

With the change of the costumer, following the expulsion of the southern Europeans, lacquered furniture produced in the subsequent periods for the Dutch VOC display very distinct decorations. *Kōmō shikki* ("red hair" lacquer)<sup>375</sup>, is characterized by an increasing renunciation of mother-of-pearl inlay, and focusing on the contrast produced by *makie* decorations, flat (*hiramakie*) and in relief (*takamakie*), all on black backgrounds<sup>376</sup>. Apart from these simpler lacquerware, VOC officials and private Dutch traders also acquired elaborated high-quality lacquers of contemporary traditional Japanese techniques<sup>377</sup>.

The "red hair" lacquer production was not only shipped to Europe, but also played an important role in the trading transactions of the VOC within Asia. Thus, numerous lacquerwares did reach the Indian subcontinent as diplomatic gifts to Indian rulers<sup>378</sup>, as well as large quantities of lacquerware have been shipped to VOC factories in Siam (1608-1767) and Cambodia (1636-1667). From both regions, the VOC acquired raw thitsi lacquer (called

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>373</sup> Impey & Jörg (2005). Nagashima found a 1577' record of the commission of religious items, cf. Nagashima (2008, p.36).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>374</sup> Impey & Jörg (2005, pp.242-45), Jörg (2008, pp.44-46).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>375</sup> Nagashima (2008, pp.37-40), Curvelo (2010a, p.12).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>376</sup> Impey & Jörg (2005, pp.83-96).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>377</sup> Jörg (2008, pp.45, 48-50).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>378</sup> Impey & Jörg (2005, pp.251-64).

# THE JOURNEY OF ARTIFACTS: THE STUDY AND CHARACTERIZATION OF A NUCLEUS OF LACQUERED LUSO-ASIAN OBJECTS FROM THE $16^{\rm TH}$ AND $17^{\rm TH}$ CENTURIES

rak in Siamese). In Siam, the VOC additionally purchased large quantities of rayskin, which is another feature of the later  $K\bar{o}m\bar{o}$  export lacquerware. Cabinets and chests were covered with rayskin or decorated instead with sprinkled rayskin grains ( $togidashi\ same$ ). In exchange the VOC brought low quality lacquerware of different make-ups and mostly of domestic Japanese shape, such as food bowls, food trays, and boxes, but also cabinets with mother-of-pearl inlay according to the then considered "old", the nanban style  $^{379}$ .

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>379</sup> Impey & Jörg (2005, pp.245, 264-266), Nagashima (2008, pp.37-40), Kreiner (2012, p.193).

# 1.3. Asian Lacquer – Material Characterization, History and Lacquering Traditions in Different Regions

#### 1.3.1. Material Characterization and Applications

# Origins of Terminology

The term "lacquer", and related variants used in various languages, is nowadays applied to several glossy finishing materials of either organic or synthetic origin. These terms, however, originate from the word lac – lakh in Hindi – which in turn is derived from the Sanskrit number word laksha or laksa meaning "a hundred thousand". In India, it has been used to designate the shellac resin, which also creates brilliant and lustrous surfaces, reason why this term must have been adapted by the Portuguese and other Europeans to describe objects of eastern Asian origin with a similar glossy appearance. The term *laca* was first used by the Portuguese traveler and royal official Duarte Barbosa in 1516, in relation to two different materials. While visiting the port of Martaban in today's Myanmar he noticed the existence of two different types of lacquer. He observed that the biggest amount loaded onto the vessels was lac, further stating it was of a better quality then the Indian one of Narsingua (Vijayanagara Kingdom). Barbosa has also mentioned that some people claim it was the gum of a tree and others that it would grow on the thin branches of trees<sup>380</sup>. As Carvalho states, obviously he was referring to the same two different types of material, shellac – the animal resin, and the tree sap<sup>381</sup>. Mainly on the Indian subcontinent, but also in Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia or in Sumatra the resin is obtained from the secretion of "one hundred thousand" female scale insects (Coccus lacca, Tachardia lacca, Laccifer lacca, Carteria lacca, Kerria lacca Kerr) which infest various species of possible host trees and shrubs and eat their resins. Raw shellac, the excretion product, adheres to the branches from where it is collected, purified and processed<sup>382</sup>. The first reference of the use of *lac*, *lak* or *luk* (Persian and Arabic) in varnish making appears in the 1590's Ain-i-Akbari - the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>380</sup> Dalgado (1982, pp.502-03).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>381</sup> Carvalho (2001a, p.248; 2001b, p.133).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>382</sup> Garner (1979, p.19), Daldado (1982a, pp.501-03), Mathew (1983, p.275), Masschelein-Kleiner (1985, pp.77-78), Thomaz (1998, pp.321-22), Mills & White (1994, pp.115-17), Webb (2000, pp.103-04), Langenheim (2003, pp.410-11).

administration report of Mughal emperor Akbar<sup>383</sup>. On the Indian subcontinent the shellac coating has been important in daily life, whether on jewelry, bowls, boxes, cradles, furniture, spinning wheels or children's toys<sup>384</sup>. These shellac coatings were probably the first shiny surfaces of this kind that have been seen by the Portuguese and other Europeans in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Derived from the Hindi term, the Portuguese word *laca* was therefore used to describe similar lustrous surfaces, including those of East Asian lacquerware. In his *Itinerario* (Amsterdam, 1596) the Dutch traveler Jan Hyugen van Linschoten observed in Goa (1583-1588) the use of the shellac resin as follows:

"(...) There is also another street where Benianes of Cambaia dwell, that have all kind of wares out of Cambaia, and all sortes of precious stones, and are very subtill to bore all kinds of stones, pearles, and corrals, on the other side of the same street dwell other heathens, which sell all sortes of bedsteedes, stooles and such life stuffe, very cunningly covered over with Lacke, most pleasant to behold, and they can turne the Lacke into any colour that you will desire (...)"<sup>385</sup>

The sealing wax lac or *lacre*, used by the Europeans to seal their correspondence was imported from Malabar, Bengal, Sumatra, and other places in Southeast Asia, such as the kingdoms of Pegu or Siam from the early 16<sup>th</sup> century onward<sup>386</sup>. The latter two kingdoms

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>383</sup> Langenheim (2003, p.411).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>384</sup> For more detailed reading on the Indian craft, materials and techniques, consult Shah (2002). Among the Hindus of Bengal, the use of shellac for decorative purposes follows a long tradition. This is for example the case of conch shell bangles (*sankhas*), coated with red shellac, worn by women for the first time at their marriage and indicating their status. The shellac is applied by heating both, the shell bangles and the shellac stick on a low charcoal fire, cf. Chattopadhyay (1976, p.138).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>385</sup> Burnell (1988, pp.228-29). Linschoten further mentioned that *Lacke* is used by the Malabars, Bengalis, and Decanis, and that the Moors call it *lac*. The best type was found in the kingdom of Pegu from where it was exported in great quantities to India and Sumatra in exchange for pepper, and from there to the Red Sea, as well as to Persia and Arabia. According to the technique of its application Linschoten observed that it was beaten to powder and melted. Mixed with all type of colors, it is used to cover all kind of wooden elements while turning them, whereby the heat generated by turning melts the shellac. Through this procedure, objects are coated with nail-thick layers. Afterward they are burnished with straw which results in shiny surfaces as smooth as a mirror. He also described the resin as being the product left by certain insects on the branches of trees. In India all kind of household things are covered in this way, such like bedsteads, stools and other kinds of turned woodwork. Linschoten himself confuses the lacquerware from China as being made of the same material, the shellac resin, cf. Tiele (1988, pp.88-90).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>386</sup> Commander João Rodrigues Salema de Carvalho boarded many chests loaded with diverse goods in the ship *Garça*, which departed in January 1559 from Goa to Lisbon. Among these appears mentioned "some lac for sealing" (*huum pouco de lacre pera aselamentos*), which beside various pieces of jewelry was stored inside "a Chinese writing box" (*huum escritorio da China*), cf. Pinto (2008, p.6). Sealing wax was exported from Cochin

have been producers of both, the animal resin and thitsi lacquer sap. Additionally, also lac dye, a red dyestuff extracted from the resin has been exported<sup>387</sup>.

In Persia and then also in the Mughal North of the Indian subcontinent another art of "lacquer" has developed, for no further confusion better designated as varnishing. It probably has been developed from the intention of copying East Asian lacquerware, and it shows doubtlessly great influence of the Chinese lacquer art-craft<sup>388</sup>. After the term "*laca*" has been brought to Europe for the first time, it was adopted in multiple languages to describe similar glossy appearances.

The Asian lacquer, subject of this thesis, differs from the South and Southeast Asian lac or shellac, with which it used to be confused due to the terminology used in historical records. It is further distinguished from the European oil or spirit varnishes developed by European craftsmen to imitate the peculiar luster of Chinese or Japanese lacquerware from the 17th century onwards. In 16<sup>th</sup> century Europe East Asian lacquered pieces with the before-unseen lustrous appearance became sought-after luxury items among wealthy classes. First, they found their way to Europe through merchants and missionaries in the scope of the Portuguese presence in Asia, and later through the bulk commissions of northern European trading companies in Japan (Nagasaki) and China (Canton) in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. The novel lustrous finishes ignited the interest and enthusiasm among European aristocrats, stimulating the attempts of European court artisans of mimicking such surfaces, and simultaneously adapting and recreating the exotic Asian decorations. Lacking original material and adequate processing conditions, cabinetmakers and artisans at the European royal courts tried to create glossy surfaces that were decorated with chinoiserie and Orientalist motifs in the course of exoticism. As a result, the European lacquer art ("vernis de la chine", "chinoiserie", "Japan work" or "Japanning") evolved during the 17th and throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, to cater for the demand among the European ruling classes. This development was supported by records with detailed descriptions on the lacquer art of

and also from Cannanore, between 1506-1507 4098 kg, between 1510-1518 138492 kg, and between 1515-1517 21912.7 kg, cf. Mathew (1983, pp.130-131, 241, 245, 247).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>387</sup> Dalgado (1982, pp.502-03), Webb (2000, p.104), Brachert (2001, p.114).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>388</sup> Stanley (2001; 2010; 2017), Frade & Körber (2011).

Japan and China (combined with treatises including experiments of imitation methods) primarily compiled by Jesuits and other missionaries in Asia<sup>389</sup>.

#### Material Composition and Characteristics of Asian Lacquers

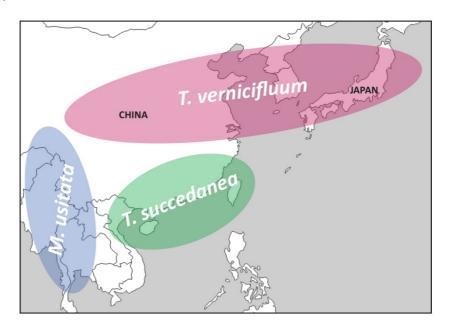
To better understand and inquire the studied objects it is important to dive deeper into the complexity of the lacquer material and its craft. Unlike the animal resin shellac, Asian lacquer sap is collected by tapping several species and subspecies of deciduous trees from the Anacardiaceae family, genus Toxicodendron or Melanorrhoea, which originate to countries in Southeast Asia (Vietnam, Taiwan, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, Myanmar) and East Asia (China, Korea, Japan, Ryūkyū Islands). With a millennial old history Asian lacquer is the base material for various applications. First used primarily as glue or as an impermeable and antiseptic protective coating, through a long process of improvements and refinements, various applications for decorative purposes have been developed and individual decorative techniques in each of the regions within the "lacquer culture zone" were created over time. Several properties, such as its high resistance against water, heat, acids, or insect infestations (such as termites) made it suitable for diverse purposes. The fact that it can be applied to several substrates such as wood, bamboo, basketry, metal, ceramics, porcelain, leather, fabric, paper, horn etc. and the variety of decorative options are responsible for the importance it acquired over centuries in the various Asian regions.

Generally, are distinguished three main tree species that yield lacquer saps suitable for decorative coatings. It is thought that lacquer art in China, Korea and Japan is based on the sap from the *Toxicodendron vernicifluum* (Strokes) species (formerly known as *Rhus vernicifera* D. C. or *Rhus verniciflua* Strokes), while the sap of *Toxicodendron succedanea* L. (*Rhus succedanea* L.) is used in Vietnam and Taiwan and the sap collected from the *Melanorrhoea usitata* species is the base material for the lacquer art in regions of today's Myanmar and Thailand<sup>390</sup> (Map 4). Individual properties of the tabbed saps differ depending

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>389</sup> Webb (2000, p.99), Kühlenthal (2000a; 2000b), Carvalho (2001d, p.44), Curvelo & Bastos (2001, pp.446-50), Kopplin (2002b, pp.45-46), McSharry et al. (2007), Henriques (2011), Bastos (2013), Kleutghen (2017, pp.175-206).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>390</sup> Garner (1979, p.20), Webb (2000, pp.3-4), Fraser-Lu (2000), Thein (2000), Niimura & Miyakoshi (2003), Capelo (2004), Weigelt (2005), Frade et al. (2009a), Honda et al. (2010), Frade (2011), Heginbotham & Schilling (2011), Schellmann (2012), Schilling et al. (2014; 2016), Yuasa et al. (2015), Igo et al. (2015), Heginbotham et al. (2016).

on the overall conditions, such as tree species and age, topography, season of harvesting, and climate (etc.).



Map 4 Generalized distribution of the three main lacquer producing trees in Southeast and East Asia

In all lacquer producing countries the sap is collected from incisions done at the bark of the tree. Freshly tapped raw lacquer is a milky grayish viscous liquid, which immediately darkens to yellow-brown or up to dull black due to the oxidation when exposed to air. Anacard lacquers are complex water-in-oil emulsions consisting of substituted catechols, substituted phenols, carbohydrates, glycoproteins and enzymes<sup>391</sup>. The presence of oxygen and elevated levels of relative humidity are essential for the lacquer to dry through a complex process of polymerization. In contact with moist and oxygen, and only when applied in thin layers onto various substrates, lacquer forms a polymeric cross-linked structure. The dried film is produced by the action of the oxidizing copper enzyme laccase on the phenolic compounds – catechols: urushiol, laccol, and thitsiol –, the main constituents of the lacquer saps. These catechols, which are of very distinct chemical structures and have a variety of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>391</sup> Depending on the tree source raw lacquer is generally consistent of: 55-70% pyrocatechol derivates, acetone-soluble/ water-insoluble, 20-30% water, 5-7% carbohydrates/ polysaccharides dissolved in water, 2-5% water insoluble glycoprotein, and 0.1-2.0% of two enzymes which are the copper glycoprotein laccase and stellacyanin, cf. Kumanotani (1995), Mills & White (1994, pp.118-19), Webb (2000, p.8), Umney & Rivers (2003, p.149), Kitagawa (2008; 2013), McSharry et al. (2007, p.31).

possible side chains, are the main distinguishing lacquer compounds, whereby the sap of *Toxicodendron vernicifluum* (Strokes) contains urushiol; the lacquer obtained from *Toxicodendron succedanea* L. comprises laccol, and the sap of *Melanorrhoea usitata* contains thitsiol. For urushi and laccol lacquer, the phenolic-lipids consists mainly of alkyl and alkenyl derivatives of catechol, the side chains of which are located at the 3-position of the aromatic ring. They have 15 carbon atoms in the case of urushiol and 17 carbon atoms in laccol. The phenolic-lipid fraction of thitsiol is a more complex mixture, consisting mainly of catechol derivatives and some derivatives of resorcinol and phenol. The exact position and geometry of the double bonds in the side chains of the thitsiol components are not yet explicitly determined. However, all three lacquers have complex structures of phenolic-lipids, which, as shown in Figure 7, are not single but mixtures of similar substances of general formula<sup>392</sup>.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>392</sup> For more details on the chemical structure of these catechols see: Mills & White (1999, pp.118-119), Niimura & Miyakoshi (2000; 2003), Frade (2011, pp.28-33), Igo et al. (Igo et al., 2015).

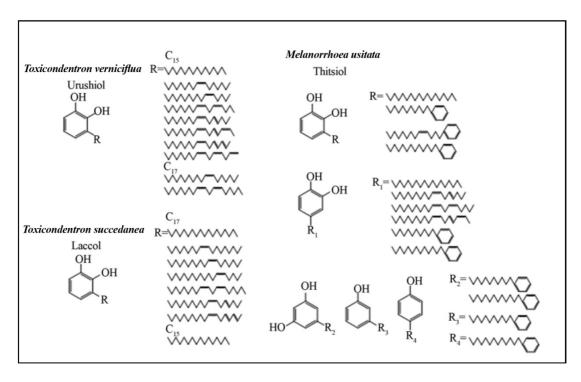


Fig. 7 Complex structures and possible side chains (R) of the different catechol types. © Wang et al. (2014)

During polymerization, which can take several days under the above-mentioned conditions, each of the lacquer saps forms a hard, cross-linked film. This surface is durable, impervious to liquids, unaffected by high temperatures, and resistant against insect infestations. If the macro-molecular structure has not been damaged by light exposure, cured lacquer surfaces are stable against water, acid, alkaline, and organic solvents<sup>393</sup>. In this thesis the different lacquer saps present in Luso-Asian lacquerware will be addressed as urushi, laccol or thitsi lacquer, according to their main chemical component.

#### General Information on Processing and Refinement of the Sap, and Lacquer Formulations

For decorative coatings the sap has to undergo previous treatments before being applied, while raw lacquer can be used for inferior coating and primer layers. For upper, final or colored layers the sap is subjected to a process of refining. By filtering it through cloth impurities are removed. To evaporate excess moisture the sap is stirred in an open vessel at room temperature, in the sun, or over a slow fire during several hours and thus homogenized.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>393</sup> Herberts (1963, p.258), Daniels & Menzies (1996, p.19), Mills & White (1994, p.119), Webb (2000), Heckmann (2002), Kitagawa (2008; 2013), Frade (2011).

The refined sap is stored in sealed airtight containers. Lacquer films produced with processed lacquer are almost transparent<sup>394</sup>.

According to the material properties, that require the application of very thin individual layers, lacquering is a complex multi-layer process. Generally, a decorative lacquer coating consists of foundation layers, multiple thin lacquer layers which form the body, and decorative or finishing layers. Several numbers of thin layers create an opaque and glossy film<sup>395</sup>. Depending on the surface ornamentation other layers may be applied subsequently, such as pigmented or pure lacquer layers, to adhere metal foils or powders, a variety of which can be employed for ornamental purposes. Varying slightly from region to region and the type of sap used, different grades and qualities of lacquer are prepared for specific uses at different stages of the application process<sup>396</sup>. Generally, the number of individual layers is indicative of a coating's quality. Each layer may have added different organic and inorganic materials for specific purposes. Colored layers are stained with dyes or have pigments added. Due to the lacquer's chemical composition, historically only few colors were possible to achieve, such as red, red-brown, yellow, green and black<sup>397</sup> (See Chapter 1.3.2.).

High quality East Asian lacquerware consists of several foundation layers of an inorganic matrix to even and prepare the surface<sup>398</sup>. In this, mineral fillers are agglutinated

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>394</sup> Kumanotani (1995), Daniels & Menzies (1996, p.21), Niimura & Miyakoshi (2000, p. 124), Webb (2000, pp.6-8), Umney & Rivers (2003, pp.149-50), McSharry et al. (2007, pp.31-32).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>395</sup> If these individual layers are polished to produce a high gloss, they do not contain drying oil. Lacquer layers mixed with drying oil are not polishable, but achieve a shiny surface while polymerizing, which however, will have a different appearance than a polished one. The addition of drying oil to lacquer is a common Chinese praxis. Especially the up to hundred lacquer layers built up to produce carved lacquer contain a high amount of drying oil to create a softer coating, which is easier to be carved, cf. Heginbotham et al. (2016, p. 31).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>396</sup> Webb (2000, pp.6-8), Umney & Rivers (2003, p.150).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>397</sup> For red lacquer, cinnabar has been added or iron oxide for a more brownish tint, while black lacquer was achieved by adding pine or lamp soot to the sap. Yellow lacquer was produced by adding orpiment, and for lacquer of green color, indigo and orpiment, or powdered malachite have been mixed with the sap, Webb (2000, p.39), Kopplin (2002b, pp.25, 27), Pitthard et al. (2016, p. 100). The dyestuff indigo is extracted from the plant *Indigofera tictoria* L., native to various regions such as India, China, Mexico, South America, Egypt and Algeria. In China it was especially produced in the southern provinces, d'Incarville (1904, p. 163). Similar dyestuff is extracted from the European plant *Isatis tinctoria* L., Brachert (2001, p.127). It was also used for blue litharge painting.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>398</sup> For an example of the complex structure and composition of Japanese foundations applied to high quality lacquerware, see Webb (2000, pp.27-28), Heckmann (2002, pp.82-87).

with lacquer. Inorganic fillers for foundation layers are for instance clays, such as burnt clay (aluminum and other silicates), lime stone or quicklime (calcium carbonate, calcium oxide) or ground seashells (calcium carbonate). Employed as binding matrix and mixed with the sap are various organic substances as for instance drying oils, starchy or proteinaceous materials. With each added foundation layer, the ratio between filler and lacquer increases and added mineral fillers are becoming increasingly finer. Often sheets of paper, fabric or layers of organic fibers (hemp, ramie, silk, linen or cotton fibers, paper or rags etc.) are incorporated as buffer zone, reinforcing joints and edges. Figures 8 and 9 show the cross-section of a 17th century' cinnabar lacquered Chinese cup (2.9.2.). The lacquer agglutinated foundation differs significantly from the two lacquer layers, the lower of which is pigmented with red iron oxide and the final layer with cinnabar.



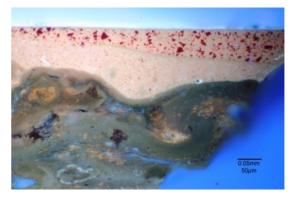


Fig. 8 Cross-section, Chinese lacquer cup, VIS

Fig. 9 Cross-section, Chinese lacquer cup, UV

In contrast to the East Asian layer methods, in the regions of today's Myanmar and Thailand, layer sequence and lacquer formulations do not present such a contrast between foundation and top layers. These Southeast Asian coatings consist of several lacquer layers of distinct compositions applied in a way in which each additional layer contains increasingly less inorganic or organic fillers, up to the final layers of processed lacquer. Lacquer can be mixed with various organic and inorganic additives, such as several drying oils; rice starch glue, bone ashes, sawdust, ground charcoal powder; teak or rice husk ashes, fossil wood, calcium carbonate or clays can be added in varying quantities and combinations (See Chapter 1.3.2.). Figures 10 and 11 feature the cross-section of an 18<sup>th</sup> century lacquered, and gold decorated Burmese chest from a Portuguese private collection. In both distinct traditions the multi-layered structure ensures the creation of a stable and durable coating, avoiding stresses between both substrate and coating, or within the layer structure itself.

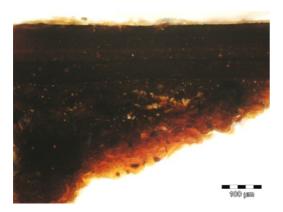


Fig. 10 Cross-section of a 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century Burmese chest, VIS. Private collection

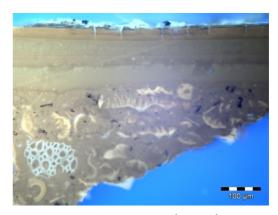


Fig. 11 Cross-section of a 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century Burmese chest, UV. Private collection

Nevertheless, objects destined for everyday use, foreign clients or export present simplified procedures. Such foundations generally use cheaper substitutes for lacquer, such as wheat or rice starch, animal glue, pig's blood, drying oil or persimmon juice, and also a reduced number of lacquer layers<sup>399</sup>. In Chinese export lacquerware, lacquer layers consist of a considerably large amount of drying oil, which beside of altering viscosity or opacity, also influences the polymerization process. Moreover, finishing layers containing drying oil are generally left polymerized without a final polishing, as the oil increases the gloss of the polymerized film<sup>400</sup>. The today's preservation state of many objects reflects these simplified or short-cut procedures with foundations detached from the substrate due to the degradation of proteins and oil substituted for the more expensive and time-consuming lacquer sap. As a consequence, delaminating of lacquer coatings and the flaking of lacquer layers from those foundations are characteristic for such items, including the Luso-Asian specimens<sup>401</sup>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>399</sup> In Japan non-lacquer-containing foundations (*doro shitaji*), which instead contain animal glue (*nikawa*) or rice starch (*nori*) are used since the 12th century, cf. Webb (2000, pp.25-31). Additionally, top lacquer layers containing drying oils have been applied to Japanese *nanban* lacquers, as shown further in this chapter, cf. Leiria (2001, pp.18-19).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>400</sup> D'Incarville (1904, p. 157), Heginbotham & Schilling (2011, p.99).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>401</sup> For examples of export lacquerware and its specific conditions of preservation, cf. Miklin-Kniefazc (1999), Piert-Borgers (2000a; 2001b), Breidenstein (2000), Webb (2000, p.28), Curvelo et al. (2004, p.48), McSharry et al. (2007, pp. 34-35), Petisca (2010; 2011a; 2011b), Petisca et al. (2011; 2016), Moore (2011), Schellmann (2012), Auffret et al. (2014), Heginbotham et al. (2016), Matsen et al. (2017), Mogensen et al. (2017).

#### Typical Admixtures and How to Identify Them

As shown earlier, Asian lacquer coatings of artifacts are complex and consist of multiple layers of varying composition. Preservation and conservation of lacquered artifacts require the understanding of combined materials and the formulation of individual layers. However, Asian lacquer's complex structure and its indissolubility complicate scientific analysis. Only few methods bring concrete results. The exact chemical composition and the differences between saps from various species remained obscure for a long time. Artisans discovered the best conditions for it to dry empirically. Technical evolution in analytical methods allowed for the understanding of the complex polymerization process, the identification of the various tree sources, as well as the understanding of the different properties of the distinct saps. Various scientific studies revealed that Py-GC/MS analysis is suitable for the identification of the type of lacquer present, as it does not require a pretreatment of the sample and also only a small sample amount is needed. As shown in Figure 12, the three lacquer types can be distinguished by their pyrolyse products. As urushiol, laccol and thitsiol consist of two hydroxyl groups with high polarity, which are easily absorbed in the GC column; nowadays the samples are treated with derivatization reagents such as tetramethylammonium hydroxide pentahydrate (TMAH) to increase volatility and improve the detection sensitivity for THM-Py-GC/MS analysis 402.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>402</sup> For more detailed reading on the development of analytical techniques and the increasing understanding of the chemical composition and structure of these Asian lacqueres see: Kumanotani (1995), Niimura et al. (1996), Kamiya & Miyakoshi (2000), Niimura & Miyakoshi (2000; 2003), Lu et al. (2006), Honda et al. (2008; 2010; 2015), Niimura (2009), Heginbotham & Schilling (2011), Frade (2011), Igo et al. (2015), Schilling et al. (2016).

Lacquer film Country	Rhus vernicifera Japan, China	Rhus succedanea Vietnam, Taiwan	Melanorrhoea usitata	
Pyrolysis products	Japan, Chilla	vietnam, raiwan	Thailand, Burma	
Monomer	Urushiol	Laccol	Thitsiol	
Alkylcatechol	3-Heptylcatechol	3-Nonylcatechol	3-Heptylcatechol	
			4-Heptylcatechol	
Alkylphenol	3-Heptylphenol	3-Nonylphenol	3-Heptylphenol	
Main component of				
the lacquer sap	Urushiol	Laccol	Thitsiol	
	ОН	ÓH	ОН	
	ОН	C OH	ОН	
	C <sub>15</sub> H <sub>31</sub>	C17H35	$\vee$	
	<i>D</i>		C17H35	
C <sub>15</sub>				

Fig. 12 Pyrolyse products that enable the identification of Asian lacquer saps using Py-GC/MS analysis. © Kamiya & Miyakoshi (2000, p.117)

While natural organic binders in other inorganic mixtures can usually be identified by various analytical methods, this turns impossible once they are bound in Asian lacquer. For the detection and identification of other organic and inorganic substances in artifacts are generally used various spectroscopic methods. Generally, FTIR analysis of organic chemical compounds only allows for the identification of the substance groups, such as Asian lacquer, natural resins, waxes, drying oils, among others, and does not identify specific varieties. This method has been applied in the earlier study performed at the LJF in Lisbon, and to identify the compositions present in a few samples at the GCI in Los Angeles<sup>403</sup>. However, for the distinction between Asian and European lacquer it is a suitable method<sup>404</sup>. Additionally, natural dyes can be identified using high performance liquid chromatography (HPLC), Py-GC/MS or micro-chemical analysis<sup>405</sup>. The presence of proteins, starch and fatty acids can also be detected using histochemical staining methods in cross-sections. Due to the naturally

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>403</sup> Körber et al. (2011), Frade & Körber (2011), Körber (2012a).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>404</sup> Mills & White (1994, p.122).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>405</sup> Mills & White (1994, pp.44-45).

dark color of the lacquer sap, cross-sections of lacquer coatings, however, require the use of specific dyes<sup>406</sup>.

Pigments and mineral fillers are usually identifiable by elemental analysis using X-ray fluorescence (XRF), scanning electron microscopy coupled with energy dispersive X-ray spectroscopy (SEM-EDX), or X-ray diffraction (XRD) for phase identification and to determine the atomic and molecular structure of crystals, and Raman spectroscopy<sup>407</sup>. In Chapter 3 are introduced the specific biomarkers and parameters that were used for the identification of different ingredients by performing THM-Py-GC/MS analysis. In Appendix IV are listed the marker compounds and elements detected by all analytical methods used in this present and the earlier study, including FTIR, SEM-EDX, XRF, and XRD.

In the Asian lacquer craft, various uses of vegetable oils have a long history. The most important oils in lacquer formulations are, among others, tung<sup>408</sup>, perilla<sup>409</sup>, tallow tree<sup>410</sup>, sesame<sup>411</sup>, linseed<sup>412</sup>, or Chinese tea oil<sup>413</sup>. The oil can, for instance, be used as a binder in

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>406</sup> Heckmann (2002, p.82), Schellmann (2012), RAdICAL Workshop 2012, GCI, Los Angeles.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>407</sup> Schramm & Hering (1995), Mills & White (1994, pp.14-30).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>408</sup> The tung oil tree (*Vernicia fordii* or *Vernicia montana*) originates in southern China and was cultivated there for tung oil, but the date of cultivation remains unknown. Tung oil is etymologically derived from the Chinese *tongyou*. The Chinese have obtained the oil from the kernels, which is also known as China wood oil, for at least 2500 years for building waterproof boats and waterproofing paper parasols, wood finishing and wood waterproofing, caulking, inks and paints. In the lacquer craft its use probably dates back several centuries, Chang & Schilling (2016), Heginbotham et al. (2016, p.31).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>409</sup> Perilla oil is a vegetable oil obtained from the seeds of the green-leafed variety of the perilla plant (*Perilla frutescens*). The plant comes originally from the mountainous areas of India and China, Heginbotham et al. (2016, p.31), and it is thought to have been the main drying oil employed in the lacquer craft before being substituted by tung oi, Chang & Schilling (2016, p. 41).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>410</sup> The oil is obtained from the seeds of the Chinese tallow tree (*Sapium sebiferum*) which is mainly distributed in southern China. It has a long history of cultivation for a variety of crops and uses, Daniels & Menzies (1996, p.8), Heginbotham et al. (2016, pp.31-32).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>411</sup> The oil extracted from sesame seeds (*Sesamum indicum*) is non-drying, rather consumed as food, or within the lacquer craft employed for polishing or tool cleaning, rather than as an additive. A Song Dynasty Chinese recipe, however, suggests the addition of seme oil in order to extend the drying time. The Jesuit Fr. Bonnani describes the admixture of cooked sesame oil to lacquer in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Daniels & Menzies (1996, p.7), Bonnani (2009, p.23), Heginbotham et al. (2016, p. 32).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>412</sup> Linseed oil is pressed from flax seeds (*Linum usitatissimum*), a plant similar to the perilla. Linseed and perilla oil habe similar properties. From historical sources it is uncertain if linseed oil was employed in the lacquer craft, Heginbotham et al. (2016, p. 32).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>413</sup> The non-drying oil, derived from the Chinese tea plant (*Camelia sinensis*), was used for various purposes including food preparation in Chinese culture. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century memoirs of Fr. D'Incarville it is said to be rendered siccative by boiling it with arsenic, cf. d'Incarville (1904, p. 151). However, experiments performed at the GCI did not confirm such a treatment would yield a drying oil, Heginbotham et al. (2016, p. 32).

foundation layers, or it is added to the lacquer saps as drying agent, extender, thinner, or plasticizer. Most lipids and oils consist of glycerol esters of monocarboxylic fatty acids. Drying oils, in specific, consist of unsaturated fatty acids of different ratios and in the form of triglycerides, which are converted into glycerol and free fatty acids during the aging process. Oil-mixed finishing layers are more transparent and polymerize already with a certain gloss, not requiring any final polishing. The addition of drying oil may additionally have an influence on the application process; by rendering it more fluid or by decreasing the curing time. Furthermore, non-drying oils are employed for polishing, tool cleaning, or to extend the drying time of lacquer. In the Chinese lacquer craft, a variety of drying oils were used for millennia, and some recipes even mention mixtures of different oils<sup>414</sup>.

Various types of proteinaceous materials were used as binders in foundation layers, including egg<sup>415</sup>, animal glue<sup>416</sup> or blood (generally from domestic pigs or boar, cattle, and other sources)<sup>417</sup>. Contrasting to the dark oxidized lacquer-based ground layers, lighter colored grounds on lacquerware from many countries suggest the use of animal glue or blood. Foundations consisting of protein-mixed lacquer are much more durable than primer layers that do not contain any lacquer. Chinese records dating to the Yuan dynasty (1279-1368) mention the use of pig's blood in foundation layers, usually as a lacquer substitute. This practice has probably been adopted in the Ryūkyū Kingdom. These proteins are, depending on the sources, composed of different amino acids of characteristic combinations and structures.

The use of starchy materials, primarily obtained from flour, is evidenced for both Chinese and Japanese crafts added either as binding agent or increase the viscosity of liquid lacquer sap, such as common in the Japanese craft, where rice or wheat starch are frequent

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>414</sup> Chang, J. (2015). Discussion and questions on different drying oils used in Chinese lacquer. [email], Heginbotham et al. (2016, pp. 30-33).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>415</sup> Egg yolk, for example is rich in protein and fatty acids, and contains cholesterol. Chinese recipes dating to the Northern Song dynasty mention the use of whole egg. Many recipies refer to egg white. However, diverse Chinese objects from diverse period analyzed at the GCI have not contained egg so far, Chang & Schilling (2016), Schilling et al. (2016), Heginbotham et al. (2016, pp. 33-34).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>416</sup> The addition of animal glue to primer or surface layers in China is evidenced by records from the Northern Song dynasty (960-1127). Among the many Chinese lacquer samples analysed at the GCI animal glue has only been detected in foundation layers so far. In Japan animal glue has also been used for primer layers, Webb (2000, p.28), Heginbotham et al. (2016, p. 33).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>417</sup> Heginbotham (2016, pp. 33-34), Miklin-Kniefazc et al. (2016).

components in lacquer grounds. A Chinese Yuan dynasty recipe mentions flour as a common additive in grounds. Starchy material has also been detected in Southeast Asian lacquer coatings. Polysaccharides, such as starch, can have a variety of plant origins<sup>418</sup>.

Natural resins are another important substance group added to Asian lacquer formulations that affect either leveling, gloss, drying time, aging behavior, or solvent sensitivity. In the Asian lacquered objects analyzed at the GCI, several resins have been identified including camphor<sup>419</sup>, cedar oil<sup>420</sup>, exudates from *Dipterocarpus* genus (such as wood oil<sup>421</sup> or dammar), benzoin resin<sup>422</sup>, pine resin<sup>423</sup> and shellac<sup>424</sup>.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>418</sup> Webb (2000, p.28), Heginbotham & Schilling (2011), Heginbotham et al. (2016, p. 34).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>419</sup> Camphor is an aromatic terpenoid present in the wood of the camphor laurel tree (*Cinnamomum camphora*). It is generally applied to pigmented layers to render it more fluid, such as mentioned by d'Incarville with regard to mordant layer for gilding or colored lacquer layers, D'Incarville (1904, p. 161), Mills & White (1994, p.97), Brachert (2001, p.133), Heckmann (2002, p.49), Heginbotham et al. (2016, p.35). It consists of several monoterpenes including large amounts of camphor.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>420</sup> Generally dubbed cedar oil, is an oily and resinous substance obtained from different kinds of *Cupressaceae* trees, Langenheim (2003, p.329). At the GCI it has been detected in several Chinese lacquerware from various periods, Heginbotham et al. (2016, p. 34).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>421</sup> The resinious material, due to its fluidity called wood oil, is obtained from several Southeast Asian Angiosperms and was once one of the most important resins in Southeast Asia, used as an illuminant, waterproofing and for other purposes, such as varnishes, diluents, Langenheim (2003, pp.332-33).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>422</sup> Benzoin (also gum benjamin), a fragrant balsamic resin, is obtained from the bark of several trees in the *styrax* genus (*Styracaceae*) originating to Southeast Asia. In European lacquer recipes benzoin is said to increase the gloss of the final coating, and it frequently forms part of Asian lacquer formulations, Webb (2000, pp.198-09), Langenheim (2003, p.347), Heginbotham & Schilling (2011, p.101). Benzoin consists of structures of esters with benzoic and cinamic acids.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>423</sup> The collection and use of resines from *Pinaceae* trees for several uses, including traditional medicine, has a long history in China. Pinaceae markers have been detected during lacaquer analysis of several pieces analyzed at the GCI, though it is not clear wheater the resin itself has been added to the sap, or if pinaceae markers derive from the pyrolysis products of pine charcoal, added as a pigment.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>424</sup> See Chapter 1.3.1., Heginbotham et al. (2008; 2016), Heginbotham & Schilling (2011), Schilling et al. (2016).

# Distribution of Different Lacquer Producing Trees

Many species of the *Anacardiaceae* family are spread throughout the world. More than 600 tree species grow in moderate subtropical regions between East, southeastern Asia and North America<sup>425</sup>. Only few produce suitable saps for the use as glue, protective coating or decorative finishes. They probably were once part of a complex agro-forestry system based on the different crops the trees offered<sup>426</sup>. Among them the three lacquer producing species mentioned earlier, also including poison ivy or sumac, as well as mango (*Mangifera indica*) or cashew trees (*Anacardium occidentale*)<sup>427</sup>. The latter cashew tree produces a similar filmbuilding, non-toxic, but less durable and stable sap in its nut shells, which is of a different chemical composition. In a processed form cashew nut shell liquid, or "cashew lacquer", is sometimes substituted in conservation treatments for the poisonous urushiol or laccol based fresh lacquer saps that can provoke serious contact dermatitis<sup>428</sup>.

The increasing knowledge on the characterization of lacquer saps and its tree sources, through numerous studies performed in the last decades, reveal that the questions of origin and distribution are far more complex as generally assumed. While we do not know the occurrences of individual species in the 16<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, it is conceivable that distinct trees existed simultaneously in one region and as well as that certain species were spread over a wider area than previously assumed. This is suggested by several subspecies with similar ingredients. International research on various levels may lead to new conclusions in the field of lacquer research in the future. Without claiming to be complete, the following table illustrates the dissemination of different tree species, some of which share the same catechol type in their chemical structure.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>425</sup> Nie et al. (2009).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>426</sup> The Lemo people in the Chinese Yunnan province for instance had build up a complete agro-forestry system based on *Toxicodendron vernicifera* plantation. Beside the sap for trading, farmers harvested leafy shoots for vegetable, pericarps for making wax, roots and leaves for pesticides, dry sap for medicine, and seeds for the extraction of vegetable oil, cf. Daniels & Menzies (1996, p.23), Long et al. (2003). *Rhus javanica*, for example, which creates gallnuts due to the infestation by the gall aphid *Schlechtendalia chinensis* has been an important source for tannins used for dying blue silk or in traditional Chinese medicine, cf. Wickens (2001, p.353).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>427</sup> Mills & White (1994, p.121), Webb (2000, pp.3-4, 10), Umney & Rivers (2003, p.149), Langenheim (2003, p.406).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>428</sup> Webb (2000, p.10), Heckmann (2002, pp.50-51), Niimura & Miyakoshi (2003), Schilling et al. (2016, p. 11).

Tab. 1 Distribution of Different Anacardeaceae Trees

Tree species	Catechol type	Distribution
Toxicodendron vernicifluum (also known as Rhus vernicifera D.C. or Rhus verniciflua Strokes)	urushiol	China (Guizhou, Yunnan, Shaanxi), Japan, Korea <sup>429</sup>
<b>Toxicodendron succedanea L.</b> (haze)	laccol	Indo-China, Vietnam, Taiwan, Japan, China (Yunnan, Guizhou, Sichuan), Ryūkyū Islands <sup>430</sup>
Toxicodendron ambigua Laval ex Dipp. (Rhus orientalis Schneid. or Rhus ambigua, Asian poison ivy, yields tsuta urushi in Japan)	laccol	Taiwan, Japan, Ryūkyū Islands <sup>431</sup>
Toxicodendron trichocarpa (yama urushi in Japan)	?	China (Zheijiang), Korea, Japan <sup>432</sup>
Semecarpus vernicifera	laccol	Taiwan <sup>433</sup>
Melanorrhoea usitata Wall.	thitsiol	Myanmar, Thailand <sup>434</sup>
Melannorhoea laccifera Pierre	moreacol	Cambodia <sup>435</sup>
Toxicodendron javanica L. (Also known as Chinese sumac, Rhus chinensis)	?	Indonesia, Ryūkyū Islands, South China, Japan <sup>436</sup>
Toxicodendron Silvestre Sieb. & Zucc.	?	China (Zhejiang) <sup>437</sup>
Anacardium occidentale L. (Cashew nut tree)	Does not contain catechols	Originally Brazil, today also growing in Vietnam, India, Nigeria, and the Ivory Coast

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>429</sup> Mills & White (1994, p.118), Daniels & Menzies (1996, pp.19-20).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>430</sup> Garner (1979, pp.19-20), Daniels & Menzies (1996, pp.19-20), Mills & White (1994, p.118), Webb (2000, pp.3-4), Nie et al. (2009).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>431</sup> Garner (1979, p.20), Mills & White (1994, p.121), Webb (2000, p.4).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>432</sup> Garner (1979, p.20), Mills and White (1994, p.121), Webb (2000, p.4), Nie et al. (2009).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>433</sup> Daniels & Menzies (1996, p.20).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>434</sup> Garner (1979, p.20), Daniels & Menzies (1996, p.20), Mills & White (1994, p.118), Webb (2000, p.4), Golloch & Sein (2004).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>435</sup> Garner (1979, p.20), Daniels & Menzies (1996, p.20), Mills & White (1994, p.118).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>436</sup> Mills & White (1994, p.121), Webb (2000, p.4).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>437</sup> Nie et al. (2009).

What is generally designated qi by the Chinese and urushi by the Japanese simply refers to the tree sap without specifying the exact tree species it is collected from. Urushilacquer, the sap from Toxicodendron vernicifluum, is thought to originate to China from where it has been introduced to Korea and Japan, which was the main source of the lacquer sap<sup>438</sup>. It is widely assumed this species produces the lacquer of the best properties and quality<sup>439</sup>. At least nine species of the *Toxicodendron* genus are growing in Japan, three of which are suitable for lacquerware production<sup>440</sup>. Beside *Toxicodendron succedanea* L. the species Toxicodendron ambigua Laval ex Dipp. (or Rhus ambigua also known as Toxicodendron orientalis Schneid.) is native to Taiwan (Formosa), the Ryūkyū Kingdom and Japan. In Japan the sap of this species is named tsuta urushi, and Toxicodendron trichocarpa Mig. (or *Rhus trichocarpa* Mig.) yields *yama* urushi. A phylogenetic study on trees in the southwestern Chinese provinces of Yunnan, Guizhou and Sichuan also identifies these as the Toxicodendron succedanea L. species<sup>441</sup>. Laccol lacquer producing trees were identified in the southwestern Guanxi province (Wan et al., 2007). Also, Harry Garner mentioned the possibility that the sap of *Toxicodendron succedanea* L. was used for lacquerware in southern China<sup>442</sup>. In fact, laccol lacquer has been identified in several Chinese artifacts from different periods, which were initially believed to have been coated with urushi lacquer. Many analyzed pieces formed part of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century export lacquer production located in Canton 443. In the regions of today's Myanmar and Thailand lacquer craft is and was based on the sap of Melanorrhea usitata Wall., and in Cambodia the sap of Melanorrhoea laccifera Pierre is used as a coating material. Further, the species Semecarpus vernicifera is native to

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>438</sup> Garner (1979, p.19), Bourne (1984, p.20), Daniels & Menzies (1996, p.20), Mills & White (1994, pp.118-19), Webb (2000, p.3). However, through archeological findings in Japan it is evidenced that already in Neolithic times the sap has been used as a protective coating, Yuasa et al. (2015).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>439</sup> Garner (1979, p.19), Webb (2000, p.4), Heckmann (2002, p.13), Umney & Rivers (2003, p.149), Impey & Jörg (2005, p.78).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>440</sup> Garner (1979, p.20).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>441</sup> Nie et al. (2009).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>442</sup> Garner (1979, pp.20,24), Bourne (1984, p.20).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>443</sup> Piert-Borgers (2001b), Petisca et al. (2010; 2011; 2016), Schellmann (2012), Auffret et al. (2014), Schilling et al. (2014), Heginbotham et al. (2016).

Taiwan, and in Indonesia, southern China, the Ryūkyū Islands and Japan another sap is obtained from *Toxicodendron javanica*.

However, raw lacquer has been a trade commodity in Asia for a long time. Lacquer saps from different origins have been imported and applied together with native lacquer, turning its identification difficult without the help of chemical analyses. For example, large quantities of lacquer from the region of today's Vietnam have been offered to the Ming Imperial court as tributary gifts<sup>444</sup>. In the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the Chinese emperor purchased raw lacquer from Japan or through the Ryūkyū Kingdom<sup>445</sup>. Further, Southeast Asian thitsi lacquer was identified in 16<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup> century' pottery containers found in ruins in Kyōto, indicating this lacquer sap has been imported at that time<sup>446</sup>. It is also well known from Dutch records that the VOC imported thitsi lacquer from Siam and Cambodia in the 17<sup>th</sup> century<sup>447</sup>. The German medical doctor Engelbert Kaempfer, who has worked for the Dutch VOC in Dejima in the 1690s, also observed that fluid black lacquer sap from Southeast Asia has been imported to be used for cheaper objects<sup>448</sup>. Simultaneously thitsi lacquer forms part in several Japanese *nanban* lacquer formulations<sup>449</sup>. Different lacquer saps have also been mixed, which can further complicate the identification of exact compositions<sup>450</sup>.

# 1.3.2. Lacquer Craft Traditions in Asia: Contemporary Ornamental Techniques Used in China, Japan, the Ryūkyū Kingdom, and the Ancient Kingdoms of Today's Myanmar and Thailand

The wonderful properties of Anacard tree saps were probably discovered already in Neolithic times by different cultures in East and Southeast Asia, in particular the Chinese and Japanese<sup>451</sup>. Lacquer is one of the older agro-industrial crafts in East Asia and has a long

<sup>444</sup> Heginbotham et al. (2016, p. 29).

<sup>445</sup> Arakawa (1989, pp.171-72).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>446</sup> Honda et al. (2010),

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>447</sup> Impey & Jörg (2005, p.264).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>448</sup> Kaempfer (1906, p.171), Boyer (1959, p.21), Hutt (2004, p.236).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>449</sup> Curvelo (2010b), Heginbotham & Schilling (2011), Miklin-Kniefazc & Miklin (2013, May), Ma et al. (2014).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>450</sup> Igo et al. (2015).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>451</sup> Clunas (1997b, p.27).

history of use. Beside silk and porcelain, it is one of the important Chinese cultural achievements. Before the development of decorative techniques as esthetic refinement of everyday, and luxury articles (initially reserved for imperial, noble or religious use) lacquer has been used as glue or for water-proofing coatings of everyday objects, especially in China which is generally seen as the cradle for lacquer art and whose influences on the arts of neighboring empires are recognizable<sup>452</sup>. Archeological evidence of the use of lacquer in China (on a wooden bow) found in the Zhejiang province dates to approximately 6000-5000 BC<sup>453</sup>. In many Asian regions these excellent properties led to its use for domestic vessels, burial artifacts and the embellishing of religious sculpture and sacred spaces for millennia<sup>454</sup>. Various researchers assume that the Chinese lacquer craft did have a great impact on the neighboring empires, and that it has been transferred first to Korea, then to Japan and to the Ryūkyū Kingdom via the spread of Buddhism and the Ming Chinese tribute system. Generally, one can say that the Chinese lacquer craft did have an impact on those of the neighboring kingdoms and empires by the means of trade and exchange of gifts<sup>455</sup>.

Over millennia, complex procedures and techniques have been developed, and people employed in the manufacture of these objects included many specialized craftsmen. From examinations of earlier wares and studies of historic documents one can suggest that lacquer manufacture has become a highly elaborated and labor-intensive "industry" either in Japan, China or the Ryūkyū Kingdom, where each stage has been carried out by specialist craftsmen in a process of labor division<sup>456</sup>. In Japan for example, there has been a distinction between "lacquer layer masters", who were responsible for the manufacture of the lacquer body, and the "sprinkled picture masters", responsible specialist for the sprinkled metal powder decoration<sup>457</sup>. Labor division in Chinese lacquer craft dates back to the Han dynasty, where

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>452</sup> Figgess (1969), Lee (1972, pp.24, 210, 285), Garner (1979, p.15), Daniels & Menzies (1996), Kopplin (2002a), Takahashi (2002), Frade (2011).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>453</sup> In China the earliest application of the natural raw material dates as far back as Neolithic times, known today due to unearthed specimen from tombs in the south Chinese Zhejiang province and elsewhere. The oldest lacquer articles which are about 7000-8000 years old were found there near Ningbo, cf. Kopplin (2002b, p.25), Kitagawa (2013, p.27), Chang & Schilling (2016, p.38).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>454</sup> Garner (1979, p.22), Daniels & Menzies (1996, pp.19-27), Webb (2000, pp.8-10), Kopplin (2002a).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>455</sup> Garne (1971/1972; 1979, pp.15-16), Bourne (1984, p.19), Arakawa (1989, pp.170-71), Hidaka (2011a, p.6).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>456</sup> Evarts (1996), Nagashima (2008, p.36).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>457</sup> Herberts (1963).

the manufacture of a single piece of high-quality lacquerware employed multiple craftsmen<sup>458</sup>. In 15<sup>th</sup> century' China the new established Imperial lacquer workshop (*Guo Yuan Chang*) at the court in Beijing also used a similar system and employed at least 300 people<sup>459</sup>. That allowed the specialization of artisans in certain work stages, and was fundamental for the manufacture of large quantities, and similar to the production of porcelain. As in other traditional crafts, know-how and certain skills were passed down from generation to generation. The knowledge of processes and recipes was constantly refined till the late Ming, and the beginning mass production destined for export in the Kangxi period (1662-1722) of the early Qing dynasty (1644-1912). Apart from the very long history and regional developments of manifold applications and ornamentation techniques in different Southeast and East Asian regions, in this thesis the focus lies on decorative techniques present on the studied items and used in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries – period when the lacquered Luso-Asian objects emerged. Appendix III contains a glossary of the most important Chinese and Japanese terms related to the lacquer craft that are used throughout this thesis.

### <u>China – Contemporary Decorative Techniques, Materials and Compositions</u>

Over the millennia a versatile range of decorative techniques have been developed in the Middle Kingdom. Due to their extraordinary decorated surfaces, the most known artifacts are either the filled-in lacquers or carved lacquerware, which imply the application of numerous (up to hundred) individual lacquer layers. Many other techniques, including the inlay of various materials such as metal leaf or wire, mother-of-pearl, ivory, tortoiseshell, precious stones; painted decoration with colored lacquer, as well as gold lacquer decoration, or oil paint and diverse combinations of these techniques compose stunning effects<sup>460</sup>.

As stated earlier in Chapter 1.2.3., it is noteworthy that the majority of the Chinese furniture pieces mentioned in 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century Portuguese documentation has not

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>458</sup> An unearthed Han dynasty ear cup's inscription listed the following craftsmen involved in its manufacture: substrate maker, lacquerer, decorator, metal worker, painter, inscription carver, polisher, and workshop manager, cf. Chang & Schilling (2016, p.42).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>459</sup> Lee (1972, p.23).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>460</sup> For more detailed reading on Chinese lacquer ornamentation techniques and their evolution, cf. Herberts (1963), Lee (1972), Garner (1973a; 1979), Kopplin (1998; 2002a), Zhengyu (2002), Kopplin (2006).

survived or been identified. Therefore, historic reports on the art of lacquering from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> century are important and helpful in the present study as they provide information about contemporary ornamental techniques and the materials used. Most important for this study is the late Ming treatise Xiushi lú (Records of lacquering) written by lacquer artisan Huang Cheng from Xinan, province of Anhui, who was especially famous in the Longqing era (1567–72). It further contains a preface and some comments added by Yang Ming from Jiaxing in 1625. This treatise is the only existing pre-modern Chinese account on lacquer art. Its structure is based on Chinese cosmology (The Book of Changes - Yijing) and is divided into two parts, heaven (qian) and earth (kun), the first of which deals with the tools and materials involved, while the second makes reference to manifold decorative techniques applied on objects destined for a range of purposes, from domestic use to elaborate and sophisticated extravagant goods destined for the increasing luxury market in 16<sup>th</sup> century China. Rather than serving as a manual with technical details for artisans and craftsmen, the Xiushi lú is a book for the educated and prosperous classes and literati, providing information to acquaint them with finished lacquer artifacts 461. Nevertheless, its references to materials and decorative techniques commonly found on Chinese lacquerware of that era make it an important source for this study.

Other sources of information on Chinese lacquer are the reports of European travelers and missionaries. The most precise and detailed accounts derive from Jesuit missionaries<sup>462</sup>, who had developed good relations and enhanced the exchange of knowledge at the court of several Qing emperors. Beside travelling vast regions of China, several friars annotated on the Chinese lacquer craft, recording its governmental system, culture, philosophy, spiritual beliefs, and regional arts and crafts. Among them was the French Jesuit Fr. Louis Le Comte (1655-1729), who was sent to China by King Louis XIV and who stayed there between 1687 and 1692. In his account on Chinese lacquer written in several letters he sent back to France,

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>461</sup> The manuscript was lost in China and owes its survival to Japan where a handwritten copy survived. The numbered entries referred to later in this thesis are additions by Wang who profoundly studied the traditional treatise, translated it into modern Chinese, added annotations and comments and made it available to a broader audience, cf. Wang (1983). The following publications refer to Wang's translation, cf. Clunas (1997b), Wang (2012), Jixing (2013, p.199), Frick (2013).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>462</sup> Among the Jesuits were the authors of works that mentioned the Chinese lacquer and its application on furniture such as Fr. Athanasius Kircher (1602-1680), *China monumentis*, or Fr. Martinius Martini (1614-1661), *Novus Atlas Sinensis* (1655).

and in his *Nouveaux mémoires sur l'état présent de la Chine* published in 1696, he specified the lacquer tree as the source of the sap, and describes its advantageous properties (protection against damp, insect infestation)<sup>463</sup>. Maybe the most popular and influential European source on Chinese and Japanese lacquer, including information of various sources and imitation methods for European artisans, is the treatise of the Italian Jesuit Fr. Fillipo Bonnani (*Trattato sopra la vernice detta comunemente cinese*) published in 1709 in Latin and 1720 in Italian, where he cited many contemporary international studies and publications. Another important source is the memoirs of the French Jesuit Fr. Pierre Nicholas d'Incarville (1706–57), written before 1735, who stayed at the Qing court in Beijing for seventeen years and sent a long description of lacquer art to the Academy of Sciences in Paris. He obtained detailed information from a former craftsman at the Imperial workshops converted to the Christian faith. First published in 1760, these memoirs describe the lacquering procedures and materials used for the production of goods at the Imperial workshop<sup>464</sup>.

During the Ming dynasty, and especially by the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Chinese lacquer art has developed into a craft of remarkable complexity with a vast range of sophisticated ornamentation techniques, of which some were inherited from previous dynasties and others were innovated. The 16<sup>th</sup> century Chinese treatise lists manifold decors such as "lacquer painting", "painted decoration", "filled and inlayed decors", "decoration in relief", "carved decor", "incised decoration", and versatile combinations of these techniques<sup>465</sup>. For this study the focus lies on gold decoration, mother-of-pearl inlay, and oil painting. Concerning gold decor, the *Xiushi lú* (Part I, Section 1 – "Tools and Materials", Entry 4) lists several types of gold material used which are mud gold, fragments, powder, foil, flakes, or wire<sup>466</sup>. Mud gold refers to a kind of shell gold, which is produced from gold leaf mixed with glue and kneaded up to the formation of tiny particles. Simultaneously different types of silver are mentioned as applied in decorative techniques. However, surviving Chinese examples contemporary to the studied nucleus, using exclusively gold leaf decoration (*tiejinqi*) with details incised in thin lines (*zhuihua*) are rare, although its use is proofed by the reference in the *Xiushi lú*. Garner

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>463</sup> Chou (1999/2000, p.33), Kopplin (2002b, p.45), Bonnani (2009, p.24)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>464</sup> D'Incarville (1904).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>465</sup> Frick (2013, p.32).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>466</sup> Frick, P. (2015-2017). Discussions on techniques and materials mentioned in the *Xiushi lú*. [e-mail]

mentions gold leaf decorated red lacquer grounds and refers to the so-called kinrande (Japanese term for gold brocade) porcelain pieces that are thought to have been produced in the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century in China, more specifically in the center of porcelain manufacture in Jingdezhen. Kinrande was used by 20th century art historians to designate the technique employed on Ming Chinese porcelain bowls from the Jiajing (1521-1567), Longging (1567-1572) and Wanli (1572-1582/1620) eras, that applied motifs of gold leaf with lacquer on red, green or turquoise enameled grounds, while the interiors of the bowls present decoration in painted underglaze cobalt blue. The time lasting process that needed several individual firings produced luxury items. Only few examples are extant in China from where they were exported to Japan, the Ottoman Empire, where several examples are extant in the Topkapy Saray Museum, and other Western countries<sup>467</sup>. It is thought that the technique was applied to lacquerware from the early Ming dynasty onward, although it is not known whether it first was used on lacquer or on porcelain 468. Although, many of the surviving lacquer pieces exclusively adorned with gold leaf design and needle-drawing are attributed to the Ryūkyū Kingdom, still some Chinese specimens may exist, as for example a 16<sup>th</sup> century Chinese tea-canister<sup>469</sup> which is decorated with flowering plum branches and decorative bands in gold leaf [Fig. 13].

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>467</sup> Other examples are extant in Japanese collections, or for example in the V&A and the British Museum, as well as those which belonged to former *Kunstkammer* collections in Europe, cf. Jordan Gschwend (1998, pp.206-07), Seipel (2000, pp.279-82). Further examples reached Spain or even Mexico and its colonies in the New World towards the Spanish trading routes via the Philippines, cf. Krahe (2016, pp.79-80, 93).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>468</sup> Arakawa (1989, pp.200-01), Garner (1979, p.203), Krahe (2016, p.61), Matos & Kerr (2016, p.66).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>469</sup> Tokugawa Art Museum (1997, pp.88, Plate 156).





Fig. 13 Gold leaf decorated tea canister and detail of decorative bands. Ming Dynasty, China, 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> century. © The Tokugawa Art Museum (1997, p.156)

Another technique for gilded decoration – *miaojin* literally meaning "gold painting" – is equated with "gold painted lacquer", in which shell gold mixed with almost transparent lacquer is applied with a brush to paint motifs of flora and fauna on plain red or black lacquer grounds. As Harry Garner suggested this technique has been commonly applied during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries<sup>470</sup>.

D'Incarville's 18<sup>th</sup> century' account refers to shell gold when reporting about the gilding technique applied to furniture. A brush loaded with finely powdered gold leaf is lightly rubbed over a mordant layer consistent of a mixture with tung oil, pigments and camphor to render it more fluid. The gold can also be added to the lacquer and then painted onto the surface. He further refers to the Chinese imitation of the Japanese *nashiji* decoration which uses a mordant layer of golden color, consistent of lacquer mixed with tung oil, onto which the shell gold is applied, followed by an almost transparent covering layer of yellow color which again contains tung oil<sup>471</sup>.

A method which produces motifs that are composed of gilded incised lines is called "incised gold" (*qiangjin*). Its history dates to the late Yuan dynasty (1279-1368) and formed

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>470</sup> For more detailed reading on Chinese gold decoration see: Surface Gold-Decorated lacquer in Garner (1972; 1979, pp.195-208).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>471</sup> D'Incarville (1904, pp.160-62).

the basis for the development of the filled-in lacquer technique, which became popular at the Imperial court in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. In a 1366' record (*chuogeng lu*) of Tao Zongyi (ca. 1316–1402) the technique is described as follows: the depressions of the decor, which mostly are incised into a black not yet fully polyerized lacquer surface, are covered with a blend of lacquer and orpiment, and then gold leaf is impressed into these incisions. Surplus gold leaf is removed with cotton wool. Instead of gold leaf also gold-powder can be used. If silver is applied instead the mordant layer is composed by lacquer and lead carbonate powder<sup>472</sup>. The technique however was also employed on red lacquer grounds, where the mordant layer was either of yellow or of black color. Many 14<sup>th</sup> century Chinese *qiangjin* decorated *sutra* boxes survived in Japanese temples<sup>473</sup>. Throughout the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries *qiangjin* lacquer continued to be popular in China, often in combination with other decorative techniques as evidenced by the mentions in the *Xiushi lú*.

Mother-of-pearl inlay (*luotian*) has a longer tradition. Earliest examples of unearthed lacquerware fragments inlayed with mother-of-pearl date back to the Shang dynasty (c. 1600-1027 BC)<sup>474</sup>. Mother-of-pearl inlays used different shell sources, as for instance sea snails (*Trochidae*), turban shells (*Turbinidae*) such as *Turbo marmoratus* or *Turbo cornutus*, or abalone (*Haliotidae*). Different techniques were employed throughout the dynasties. While in earlier periods thick pieces of mother-of-pearl were inlayed into the lacquer surface, later techniques developed used very thin, up to paper-thin shell pieces that were glued onto the substrate previously to the application of several lacquer coatings. The irisident ornamentation again came to light after polishing. This technique developed during the Ming dynasty (1368-1644)<sup>475</sup> and an even more sophisticated version became especially popular from the 17<sup>th</sup> century onward in the Qing dynasty. It can be distinguished between the "hard mother-of-pearl" inlay which uses thick shell pieces and the "soft mother-of-pearl" inlay using the paper-thin layers of shell. Thin sheets of shell can be obtained by grinding. The paper-thin layers are extracted from previously boiled shells, such as turban shells. The act of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>472</sup> Garner (1979, p.157), Frick (2006).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>473</sup> For example, cf. Garner (1979, pp.157-60).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>474</sup> Garner (1979, p.209), Kopplin (2002b, p.42), Chang & Schilliing (2016, pp.40-41).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>475</sup> It is unclear to what extent this technique is based on influences from Korea, where it was used 200 years earlier, cf. Garner (1979, p.214).

boiling for several hours removes impurities and enables the peeling off thin layers of shell which have reddish, greenish and bluish colored sections, which stand out especially when applied to black substrates<sup>476</sup> [Fig. 14].

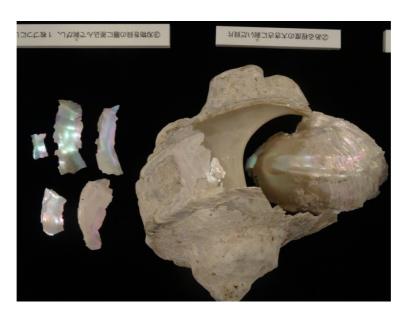


Fig. 14 Boiled and peeled green turban shell with extracted thin iridescent layers on the left

This technique of "soft mother-of-pearl" inlay produced colorful and irisident designs of punched tiny pieces forming diaper patterns and landscapes. In later Qing lacquers this technique culminated in the application of tiny particles, sorted by color, which produced almost painting-like motifs composed of hundreds of minuscule pieces applied according to their color shades. The *Xiushi lú* does not distinguish between hard or soft shell inlay, but it refers to many techniques combined with it, and to the gold lining of inlayed shell pieces<sup>477</sup>.

The oil-litharge painting technique (*miaoyou*) allowed a wider range of colors then pure lacquer painting by using pigments mixed with lead monoxide (litharge), which was added as a desiccant, agglutinated in a drying oil, such as tung or perilla. Earliest pieces showing colored tung oil paintings date back to the Western Han dynasty (206 BC- 8 AD)<sup>478</sup>. It is unknown when *miaoyou* was used in the meantime, but from the late Ming dynasty onward it was frequently applied alongside with other decorative techniques such as *qiangjin* 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>476</sup> Garner (1979, p.211), Brandt (1988, p.32), Arakawa (1989, p.177), Kopplin (2002b, pp.41-42).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>477</sup> Frick, P. (2015-2017). Discussions on techniques and materials mentioned in the *Xiushi lú*. [e-mail]

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>478</sup> Garner (1979, pp.38, 252).

or *miaojin*. This is also evidenced by the references in the *Xiushi lú*. The majority of extant Ming Chinese *miaoyou* decorated artifacts (mostly trays and rectangular boxes with basketry work) date to the Wanli period (1573- 1620). The technique was applied throughout the 17<sup>th</sup> century and further, accompanying a general decline and simplification of lacquering procedures adapted to the increasing demand of lacquerware for domestic and export markets.

Motives and Ornaments in Ming Chinese Decorative Arts, Including Contemporary Lacquerware

Surface decorations in Chinese art are generally marked by the absence of blank spaces. Artifacts, everyday objects or architecture are adorned by motifs or scenes that convey concepts of moral and social value, carry a religious content (Daoist, Confucian and Buddhist symbols or scenes) or are of a profane character, sometimes enclosed in cartidges. Background surfaces or segments are generally filled with numerous diversified designs and patterns. Typical are diaper patterns consisting of repeated designs, linked geometric pattern (lozenges, swastika, coins, stylized clouds, stacked waves), or stylized flowers. These single ornaments or figures have ancient symbolic roots related to the agricultural past (dots, small curlicues, lines, trapezoids, spirals, diamonds, lozenges), or mythological and symbolic roots related to the Chinese Cosmology and ancestor worship (stylized fishes, plants, fruits and blossoms)<sup>479</sup>.

Beside decorations with symbolic meaning alluding to Daoist or Buddhist content, other contemporary decorations on Chinese lacquerware are genre scenes related to historic events or literary themes with landscapes of mountains, water, vegetation, architecture, and human figures. Frequently these motifs and scenes are framed by decorative borders, an important part of the decoration in Chinese art which is required to give an idea of wholeness or completeness. Border patterns frequently use repetition of single elements, or just single or double lines. Spirals, an archaic stylization of clouds, appear in countless variations of decorative bands. Classical borders of either repeating spirals, juxtaposed squared-off spirals (key-fret, *hui wen*)<sup>480</sup> or the mystic knot are very common. Whereas the frieze of juxtaposed

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>479</sup> Williams (1976, pp.117, 122), Baird (2001, p.17), Eberhard (2004, pp.5-14), Welch (2008, pp.212-13).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>480</sup> This had evolved from the thunder and cloud pattern.

rectangular spirals is one of the oldest decorative borders and embellished all kind of artifacts throughout the dynasties. Also, numerous varieties of scrolls-work, from almost geometric patterns to more natural floral shapes with tendrils compose ornamental friezes. On a variety of objects appear also borders of a spherical mythological flower that are consistent of a stylized bud alluding to lotus, peony, pomegranate or chrysanthemum, which is flanked by scrolls and leafs (known as *baoxianghua*, *baobao*, or "Buddha's rose")<sup>481</sup>. Undulated friezes with stylized floral scrolls or wavy borders with spirals are very typical on ceramics, textiles, lacquerware and other decorative art works<sup>482</sup>.

Unique, and typical for the Ming dynasty, are additional forms of artistic expressions with a huge repertoire of flora and fauna motifs, which carry meanings or coded messages based on homophony in Chinese language and homonymic association with Chinese characters. Single motifs and combinations can express – a concept based on religion, Chinese cosmology or fortune-telling, a convention, a sentiment, a symbol, a wish, or a blessing. All kind of fruit, plants, animals or mythical creatures with meanings behind their simple depictions, may act as metaphors or form rebuses. The Luso-Asian lacquered pieces present a variety of motifs derived from the flora and fauna which carry hidden auspicious messages (see Appendix II), some are simultaneously Christian symbols (Chapter 4.1.2.).

#### Ryūkyū Kingdom – Contemporary Decorative Techniques, Materials and Compositions

Due to the strong tribute relation and exchange with Ming Chinese culture, the principal decorative techniques used on 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century' Ryūkyūan lacquerware originated in southern China, employing the same materials, techniques, and Chinese conventional decorative schemes<sup>483</sup>. The gilding techniques which flourished the most in the island kingdom and which evolved into Ryūkyū own styles were on one hand, the Chinese *qiangjin* technique, and on the other hand the application of gold leaf.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>481</sup> Williams (1976, pp.117,120), Welch (2008, pp.212-13).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>482</sup> Welch (2008, p.213).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>483</sup> For more detailed reading on the Ryūkyū lacquer art, historic documentation and origins, and its various influences and evolution over time, cf. Garner (1972; 1979), Kamakura (1972), Arakawa & Tokugawa (1977), Arakawa (1978; 1989; 1996), Tokugawa (1989; 1995), Watt (1991; 2008), Tokugawa & Maeda (1995), Miyasato (2000; 2017), Yamashita (2000), Kopplin (2002b, pp.70-78), Maeda (2002).

Oiangjin lacquer has been introduced by the Chinese to Okinawa from the first half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century onward, where the Ryūkyūan artists developed an own individual style which continued well into the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Remarkable and early examples with *qiangjin* decoration are circular boxes of the Noro priestesses<sup>484</sup>, dating to 1500. Several late 15<sup>th</sup> and early 16<sup>th</sup> century boxes were handed down on Kume Island or the Amami Islands, both spared from the devastation during the Battle of Okinawa in 1945. The two boxes on Kumejima are thought to have originally belonged to a prince of Shuri, exiled from the main island in 1470, and were handed down as heirlooms. They were probably used as containers of symbolic ornaments, necklaces and hairpins<sup>485</sup>. The former Museum für Asiatische Kunst Berlin, houses a similar decorated cylindrical red lacquered lidded box, a loan from a private collection<sup>486</sup> [Figs. 15, 16]. A sketch of the design pattern is first copied to the finished lacquer ground, outlines and the lines of details are engraved using a variety of tools which vary in form and size. Lacquer is rubbed over the engravings and the excess from outside the lines is wiped off. Previously cut gold leaf is then pressed onto the lines with floss, or for very thin lines gold dust is used. The network of gilded lines contrasts to either black or red backgrounds. On black lacquer grounds the mordant lacquer is usually red, while on red lacquer grounds a yellow mordant layer (stained with orpiment) is chosen.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>484</sup> As part of the ancient Ryūkyūan belief system of ancestor worship or "respect", *Noro* priestesses cared for the relationship between the living, the dead, the gods and the spirits.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>485</sup> Garner (1972, p.18; 1979, pp.166-76), Tokugawa (1989, pp.iv-vi).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>486</sup> Thanks to Barbara Piert-Borgers and Juliane Wernicke for enabeling the close examination of the object.



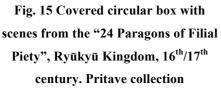




Fig. 16 Lid detail showing partly worn inscided gilded lines in *qiangjin* technique

On one hand, gilded diaper patterns on red lacquer grounds resemble the Chinese paragons and, on the other hand, these are believed to be representative for the Ryūkyūan lacquer craft<sup>487</sup>. Since about 500 years, inscribed gilded decorations are of the most characteristic technique that is still practiced on the islands. An example of the sophisticated brocade resembling background pattern can still be observed on surviving offering trays and dishes produced for the Royal Shō family at Shuri Castle, or on a reproduced vessel displaying incised decoration by Shigeru Toma, lacquer artisan and associate professor for the urushi craft at Okinawa Prefectural University of Arts in Naha, Okinawa [Fig. 17].

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>487</sup> Garner (1972, pp.16-22; 1979, pp.164-67), Arakawa (1978, p.258; 1989, pp.179-80; 1996, pp.204-06), Kopplin (2002b, p.71).



Fig. 17 Shigeru Toma. *Qiangjin* decoration reconstructed on a reproduced royal vessel of Shuri Castle, Okinawa

While gold leaf was doubtlessly used on the incised boxes passed down on the islands of Kume and Amami, gold leaf motifs especially on red lacquer grounds are thought to have been applied from the 15<sup>th</sup> century onward, sometimes combined with *qiangjin* decoration, although reliable records and dated objects are rare. In this technique the area of the motif to be gilded is filled with a pigmented layer and then gold leaf is applied to the still wet mordant. Often inner designs and details are drawn with a needle or another pointed tool (Chinese *zhuihua*, Japanese *harigaki*). Around 1600, incised and gilded diaper background patterns were frequently combined with cartouches filled with motifs in gold leaf. It is also believed this technique was brought to perfection in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and that from then onward *qiangjin* decorations and diapers increasingly have been substituted by the less time-consuming gold leaf painting. Many 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries' mass-produced lacquerware presents gold leaf decoration on red lacquer grounds, sometimes in combination with *qiangjin*, mother-of-pearl inlay, litharge oil painting or scattered powdered gold leaf<sup>488</sup>. The latter technique is frequently taken as a hint to the growing Japanese influence on Ryūkyūan lacquer production and thus as a Ryūkyūan version of Japanese *makie*.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>488</sup> Arakawa (1978, pp.225-256, 259; 1989, pp.200-01; 1996, pp.202-06), Garner (1979, pp.195-208), Tokugawa (1989, pp.vi-vii), Kopplin (2002b, p.73).

However, an 18<sup>th</sup> century record mentions an individual who travelled to a city in Fujian in 1663, where he learned methods of cinnabar lacquering, black and red lacquer with scattered gold leaf fragments, and the production of gold- and silver-leaf. These methods where transmitted by him to the "shell polishing office", The same technique is mentioned in the 16<sup>th</sup> century Chinese treatise *Xiushi lú* (Part II, Entry 154, Decor with a lacquer ground of scattered gold and combinations with eleven other techniques)<sup>490</sup>, and is obviously a Chinese version of the Japanese *nashiji* grounds, which could well have been transmitted from southern China to Ryūkyū.

Ryūkyūan mother-of-pearl inlayed lacquerware, using a variety of domestic shells, was already documented in the 15<sup>th</sup> century trade reports. Especially inlays with the green turban snail (Turbo marmoratus, Japanese yakogai) and the same filigree techniques introduced from southern China - "soft mother-of-pearl inlay" - became a Ryūkyūan specialty. Throughout the 17<sup>th</sup> century Ryūkyūan natives went to Fujian on several occasions to study Chinese techniques, not only related to the lacquer art-craft. According to the documents Liu Ch'iu Kuo Chiu Chi (Old Records of the Ryūkyūs) a Ryūkyūan artisan in 1636 spent almost four years in the Fujian province where he learned different lacquer techniques including shell inlay. After returning, in 1641 he became the first "master of shellpolishing" (kaizuri-shi). The technique of shell-boiling that produced the "soft mother-ofpearl" has been introduced to the "director of shell works" in 1691 by another Ryūkyūan native who has spent a study period in Hangzhou. It is generally believed that these novel knowledge and skills acquired by these craftsmen included the use of thin-shell fragments, the addition of color or gold leaf to the undersides, and the sprinkling of crushed shell pieces<sup>491</sup>. Figures 18 and 19 depict a quadratic covered box destined for instance to house a seal or incense, which is housed in the Urasoe Art Museum (Inv. no. 433), Urasoe,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>489</sup> Mentions in official documents from 1592 and 1612 refer to a literally called "shell polishing office" (Japanese *kaizuri bugyōshoku*), established by the royal government, which was probably responsible for the entire lacquer production<sup>489</sup>, Garner (1972, p.15), Arakawa (1996, p.203).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>490</sup> Frick, P. (2015-2017). Discussions on techniques and materials mentioned in the *Xiushi lú*. [e-mail]

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>491</sup> Kamakura (1972, pp.369-70), Garner (1972, pp.13-15; 1979, pp.243-50), Arakawa (1989, p.177).

Okinawa<sup>492</sup>. Squirrels and grapevines are depicted in gold painting and mother-of-pearl inlay before a black background with crashed and sprinkled shell fragments.





Fig. 18 Covered box, Urasoe Art Museum (Inv. no. 433), Okinawa

Fig. 19 Detail of the lid with squirrels in grapevine in mother-of-pearl inlay

Litharge oil painting on lacquerware flourished on the Ryūkyū Islands in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Alongside with the decline in lacquer manufacture from the 16<sup>th</sup> century onward, colorful litharge oil painting has increasingly been combined with incised gold décor, a typical Ryūkyūan characteristic. Surfaces of vessels or containers were covered with a filigree network of golden lines, most typically contrasting to red lacquer grounds, though within embedded cartouches floral motifs were painted in green, red, white and blue. This technique was among many others adapted from China and was frequently combined with gold leaf painting and gilt line engraving<sup>493</sup>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>492</sup> Many thanks to Miyasato Masako, director of the Urasoe Art Museum, and curator Kinjo Satoko for enabling a close examination of several objects, including this so-called "Chinese box".

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>493</sup> Garner (1972, pp.15-16; 1979, pp.251-58), Arakawa (1978, p.259; 1989, pp.188-89), Tokugawa (1989, p.viii), Kopplin (2002b, pp.72-73).

## Typical Motifs on Ryūkyūan Lacquerware

As the lacquer art developed in Ryūkyū was under the influence from southern China, the lacquerware produced on the archipelago during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries deeply reflect these strong ties, turning it sometimes difficult to distinguish between a Chinese or Ryūkyūan manufacture. Nevertheless, some Ryūkyūan peculiarities have been developed, too, and especially in later periods. Common themes on lacquerware produced in the kingdom are flower and bird depictions, water scenes with lotuses and carps, beside of conventional Chinese symbolic arrangements or genre scenes. Ryūkyūan lacquerware displays the same limits or borders of single or double lines, and similar background diaper pattern as present in Chinese art<sup>494</sup>. The combination of various decorative techniques is thought to be unique, such as motifs or diaper patterns in incised gilded lines, gold leaf decoration, mother-of-pearl inlay, lacquer painting and colored litharge oil painting. Nevertheless, the *Xiushi lú* evidences that similar combinations were applied to 16<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup> Chinese lacquerware.

According to Kamakura, it was from the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century that Ryūkyūan artisans started to merge Japanese influences into Ryūkyū own creations, developing unique techniques such as the *tsuikin* where molded lacquer putty in the desired shape and of diverse colors are glued onto the lacquer surface and then carved<sup>495</sup>. Occasionally, in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, Ryūkyūan lacquerware functioned in a way that suited both Chinese and Japanese clients, by providing the first with Japanese style decorated lacquers and Japanese customers with Chinese style lacquerware<sup>496</sup>. From the late 18<sup>th</sup> century onward lacquerware was increasingly mass produced with notable declines in quality. Popular decorations included gold leaf (*hakue*) combined with *tsuikin*. From all the consulted authors and in relation to early 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century lacquerware presenting the above-mentioned techniques, it becomes clear that the dating and the attribution, to either a southern Chinese or a Ryūkyūan origin, are complicated. Only a few pieces allow certainty about a Ryūkyūan provenance based on reliable documentation, the presence of Ryūkyūan specific heraldic devices or seals.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>494</sup> Garner (1972), Arakawa (1978; 1989), Tokugawa & Maeda (1995), Miyasato (2000; 2017), Kopplin (2002b).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>495</sup> Kamakura (1972, p.370), Arakawa (1989, pp.191-92), Tokugawa (1989, pp.viii-ix).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>496</sup> Kopplin (2002a, p.45).

## Japan – Contemporary Decorative Techniques, Materials and Compositions

In Japan evidence of the use of lacquer dates back to the Jōmon period (ca. 12500 – 400 BC) due to the fact that simple artifacts and several pieces coated with lacquer have been excavated<sup>497</sup>. This shows that there has been an earlier use of the raw material in Japan, although it is generally believed that lacquer techniques have been introduced by Chinese artisans who came to Japan in the late 6<sup>th</sup> or early 7<sup>th</sup> century AD. Another possibility is its introduction together with Buddhism via Korea in the 8<sup>th</sup> century<sup>498</sup>.

During periods of abandoned official intercourse with China, Japanese culture developed in isolation and the lacquer art flourished in its own particular way, developing native stylistic and technical innovations<sup>499</sup>. However, like many other traditional Japanese crafts the lacquer art experienced several Chinese influences, through Japanese Zen Buddhists' predilection for *karamono* ("Chinese things") and also through numerous imported pieces. Between the 14<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, many Chinese lacquerware items found their way to Japan, where there remained in the treasure house Tōdaiji's Shōsōin in Nara or were used and appreciated in the Japanese tea ceremony. Many objects of the Sung, Yuan and Ming dynasties were appreciated, carefully preserved and passed down through generations<sup>500</sup>. Most of the high-quality mother-of-pearl inlayed lacquer that has been preserved in the Shōsōin repository is of Chinese origin, and even the Japanese *makie* technique may derive from Chinese techniques too<sup>501</sup>, however in Japan it underwent certain distinctive improvements and peculiarities, evolving into a remarkable unique Japanese technique of lacquer embellishment.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>497</sup> In summer 2000 the oldest urushi object (a set of ornaments of fibrous material meant for a high position deceased) nearly 9000 years old was excavated in Hokkaido. In the Yatsu ruins in Chiba, prefecture two unearthed objects have been analyzed: an earring, dating to 3000-2300 BC, and a painted pot dating to 6000-5000 BC. Both were coated with urushi lacquer mixed with drying oil. The coating of the earring was more elaborated, consistent of seven layers pigmented with cinnabar, that was added in different particle sizes (fine and coarse). The pot's coating was of simpler structure consisting of only two layers, whereas the first layer was pigmented with red iron oxide; cf. Yuasa et al. (2015).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>498</sup> Figgess (1969, p.37), Garner (1972, p.20), Kuraku (1988, p.45), Arakawa (1989, p.170), Chang & Schilling (2016).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>499</sup> Webb (2000, p.3), Baird (2001, pp.17-18), Kopplin (2002b, pp.62-64), Nagashima (2008, p.30), Hidaka (2011a, p.5), Kitagawa (2013), Yuasa et al. (2015).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>500</sup> Figgess (1969, pp.37-38).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>501</sup> Arakawa (1989, p.170), Nagashima (2008, p.30), Hidaka (2011a, p.5).

Japanese culture is conditioned through a long tradition of visual symbolism, functioning either as metaphor, a metonymy, or identifying tags. Early symbols were derived from animals, but Tang-Chinese influences in the 8<sup>th</sup> century introduced Buddhist symbols, the use of flower and plant motif and a number of their symbolisms<sup>502</sup>. Further, equally introduced via China were diaper patterns, Persian and West-Asian inspired motifs, imaginary flowers, or arabesques and scroll-works. The same happened with conventions of representations of fixed pairs of plants or animals. Also, the assignment of specific meanings or messages based on homophones for auspicious concepts were adopted from China and have been increasingly adopted to the Japanese language itself over time<sup>503</sup>.

The predominant and characteristic technique of *makie* found on *nanban* lacquerware evolved from the Heian period (794 - 1185) onward and developed in the following centuries into the most outstanding and distinguishing technique used in Japanese lacquer art, with an increasing refinement in sprinkling techniques and differentiation of metal powders (gold, silver or alloys)<sup>504</sup>. The powders are sprinkled onto an area previously coated with lacquer while it is still wet and adhesive. After polymerizing the excess powder is wiped off.

Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536-1598), a great costumer and promoter of this craft, used *makie* ware as political propaganda and had for the first time all kind of household items decorated with the Toyotomi family crest of golden chrysanthemum and paulownia, and with autumn plants. The Kōdaiji Temple in Kyōto, which houses the mausoleum of him and his wife, preserves many fittings and objects decorated with flat gold *makie* against a spacious black lacquer surface in the main. In the Muromachi (1333-1573) and Momoyama (1573-1615) periods the depiction of portrayal scenes from flora and fauna drawn from nature and especially seasonal plants within medallions became common decorative themes. Characteristic to the new style developed by the artisans was that motifs were drawn free-hand and in dynamically flowing lines, mostly without an earlier under drawing of the motifs, which was common practice in earlier periods [Fig. 20].

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>502</sup> Baird (2001, pp.9, 10, 15).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>503</sup> Baird (2001, pp.17-18).

Yoshimura (1988), Webb (2000), Kopplin (2002b, pp.58-61), Nagashima (2008, p.30), Kawamura (2013, p.38). At that time the *togidashi makie* or "polished sprinkled picture" technique was used.



Fig. 20 Portable cabinet, c. 1600. Kōdaiji Temple, Kyōto.
© Kawamura (2013, p.40)

The earliest lacquerware presenting the style, now dubbed *kōdaiji makie*, dates from between 1553 and 1570<sup>505</sup>. From the 12<sup>th</sup> century onward the craftsmen producing such sprinkled designs were called *makie-shi*<sup>506</sup>. Whereas in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century (Tenshō era, 1573-91), when this *kōdaiji makie* production most flourished, the craftsmen producing and marketing this lacquerware were called *makie-ya*<sup>507</sup>. Two important families of *makie* craftsmen, the Kōami and the Igarashi, were in the service of the Muromachi shogunate and produced a lineage of skilled *makie* craftsmen that continued until the Edo period<sup>508</sup>. Two different kinds of productions in terms of quality evolved in Momoyama period, *hon-makie* of high esthetical and technical quality which included productions by reknowned artisans (including the Kōami), and *machi-makie*, everyday lacquerware produced for common town people. The latter was influenced by the market and more flexible with respect to technical

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>505</sup> Kopplin (2002b, p.66), Nagashima (2008, p.33).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>506</sup> This term, literally meaning makie craftsman, was found beside some other designations by Nagashima in different documents starting from the 12th century, cf. Nagashima (2008, pp.31-32).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>507</sup> The use of this term only lasted until 1644, cf. Nagashima (2008, p.30).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>508</sup> Nagashima (2008, pp.32-33). For another example of *kōdaiji makie* see the Mirror Stand, fig. 14 (ICP, Suntory Museum of Art, inv. Urushi100) in Kawamura (2013, p.38).

and stylistic changes. Both different qualities of manufacture were referred to in the Japanese-Portuguese dictionary printed in 1603-1604 by the Jesuits in Nagasaki<sup>509</sup>.

The *nanban* decorations are thought to derive on one hand from the newly created  $k\bar{o}daiji$  *makie* style developed in Kyōto, and on the other hand, and with respect to the mother-of-pearl decorations these may also be influenced by Korean lacquerware, which traditionally uses a lot of shell inlay. Further, Portuguese commissions of mother-of-pearl decorated artifacts in the Indian Gujarat and their new developed exotic taste might have contributed to these unique decorations<sup>510</sup>.

Such as in China, also in the traditional Japanese lacquer craft a manifold variety of decorative techniques were used before the arrival of the nanban-jin. Different qualities of the lacquer sap itself are prepared for distinct purposes, being used as raw lacquer for primer layers or for mixing pastes to fill losses and irregularities or refined for the body lacquer layers and finishing layers, and almost transparent lacquer or colored lacquer can be used. Consonant to the desired color or effect natural dyes (gamboge, indigo) or pigments such as carbon black (e.g. pine charcoal), cinnabar, orpiment, or red iron oxide, are added. A manifold palette of metal powders (makie fun) for makie decoration were used of either gold, silver, or mixtures of the latter two (aokin), which produce a greenish gold in different shapes although the term literally means "bluish gold", depending of the method they have been produced (filing from a piece of metal or kneading a mixture of glue and gold leaf). For cheaper objects other metals such as tin, brass, and copper, alloys of copper and gold, and even iron powder were employed. Generally, have been applied two types of powder, which is powder of circular shape (maru fun) for makie decoration and nashiji fun. In the latter method metal filings are subsequently pressed, creating flat fragments of irregular shape for nashiji decoration<sup>511</sup>. For mother-of-pearl inlay various sources have been used, although in the majority of objects different types of the abalone mollusk were employed<sup>512</sup>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>509</sup> Vocabulario da Lingoa de Iapam com a declaração em Portugues, feito por alguns Padres, e irmãos da Companhia de Iesu com a licença do Ordinario, e Superiores em Nagasaqui no Collegio de Iapam da Companhia de Iesu Anno 1603. Supplemento deste vocabulário. Anno 1604, cf. Leiria (2001).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>510</sup> Kopplin (2002b, p.65), Curvelo (2007a, pp.195-96), Kitagawa (2008, pp.84-85).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>511</sup> Heckmann (2002, pp.167-68), Kitagawa (2008, pp.76-77).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>512</sup> Webb (2000, pp.47-51), Kitagawa (2008, pp.79-80).

Contours and inner details of individual motifs, including leaf veins, flower pistils, eyes, fur or shed of animals, are produced in distinct techniques. While in *makie* decorated areas these lines are either scratched (*harigaki*) or left uncoated (*kakiwari*), on motifs in mother-of-pearl and *nashiji* these lines are painted in gold *makie* (*tsukegaki*)<sup>513</sup> [Figs. 21, 22].



Fig. 21 Examples of *tsukegaki* (1) and *harigaki* (2) in *nanban* lacquer. © Kawamura et al. (2016, p. 28)



Fig. 22 Example of *harigaki*, *kakiwari* and *tsukegaki*. © Heckmann (2002, p.262)

Catholic resident missionaries in Japan, refer in several records to the lacquer craft. Probably the earliest and most interesting European source, which contains detailed information on materials, techniques and tools used in the Japanese lacquer craft around 1600, is the Jesuit Portuguese-Japanese dictionary mentioned earlier. The article of Leiria provides an insight into the Jesuits' knowledge on the lacquer craft at that time and the procedures employed with the increasing mass production of *nanban shikki* in response to the foreign orders<sup>514</sup>. According to the entries, artisans with different specializations were employed in the manufacture<sup>515</sup>. Holes of irregularities were filled with a paste of *urushi* (*uruxi*) and edges and joints were reinforced with strips of linen. As binding media for the foundation coatings also animal glue was employed. To reinforce the substrate pastes of powdered clay or earth mixed with lacquer were applied as foundation layers. The application of coating by multiple thin lacquer layers with a brush is mentioned. Different ways of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>513</sup> Heckmann (2002, p.262), Kawamura et al. (2016, pp.27-28).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>514</sup> Yoshimura (1988), Leiria (2001).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>515</sup> The specializations were ranging from those producing the wooden substrate, those who applied the lacquer layers, to those who produced the *makie* decorations, cf. Leiria (2001, p.13).

achieving the finished lacquer coating, including intermediate rubbing of each lacquer layer or the final use of oil and polishing powder to produce a glossy surface (*roiro-nuri* – "wax color coating"), are referred. Another method which produces a glossy final lacquer film used a mixture of lacquer sap and vegetable oil (*hana-nuri* – "flowery coating")<sup>516</sup>. With exceptions, the majority of *nanban shikki* was produced using the latter *hana-nuri* technique. This method creates an intrinsic gloss and does not require polishing; thus it is also less time consuming and suitable for mass-production to answer the foreign orders.

Concerning the decorative techniques typical for the small-sized furniture produced for the Europeans, the Vocabulario da Lingoa de Iapam mentions makie as "Magive. Painting [made] with gold ground into powder". On nanban objects is generally applied hiramakie, but in the dictionary also appears reference to the decoration of metal powders on a relief surface as "Tacamagiye" <sup>517</sup>. The latter technique for example is present on lacquerware produced for the domestic market<sup>518</sup>, as well as for the Dutch in the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Also, different techniques of sprinkling irregular shaped flat foil fragments resembling pear skin (nashiji), are mentioned and different qualities of metal powder, such as very fine grinded powder for makie decorations, or the application of gold leaf. Regarding mother-of-pearl ornamentation the source aogai (blue shell) is mentioned. In some objects the shell pieces are deliberately cut into certain shapes, while in others irregular fragments are glued onto the substrates. This refers to the abalone mollusk, in Japanese awabi<sup>519</sup>. Although many different maritime shell species were used in Japanese lacquerware <sup>520</sup>, most mother-of-pearl inlays on *nanban* lacquerware used this source which is distinguishable due to certain dark surface patterns<sup>521</sup>. There was also the technique of *aogai* nuri or makigai, sprinkling cracked shell pieces to produce an irregular pattern. The dictionary further mentioned same, a term specifying both ray- and shark skin. It was used to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>516</sup> Leiria (2001, pp.13-19).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>517</sup> Leiria (2001, p.19).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>518</sup> For example a gunpowder flask with depictions of the *nanban-jin* in the Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga in Lisbon (inv. no.931 div.).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>519</sup> Leiria (2001, pp.19-20).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>520</sup> Heckmann (2002), Kitagawa (2008; 2013).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>521</sup> On different sources of mother-of-pearl and characteristic features of *awabi*, cf. Kurozumi (2017).

cover object' surfaces and derived from the original Japanese use on arms and armor – especially on long (*katana*) and short swords (*wakizashi*) hilts – common during the Momoyama period<sup>522</sup>. Two techniques were applied, either a prepared skin was affixed to an object, and then lacquered and polished (*samekawa nuri*), or rayskin denticles previously removed from the skin were scattered over a freshly lacquered surface, coated with lacquer and polished (*togidashi same nuri*)<sup>523</sup>. Sometimes both techniques were combined to create a homogeneous pattern on bigger surfaces.

The members of the Jesuit Society responsible for the compilation of the dictionary must have studied well the different techniques used in Japanese lacquer art, as also materials and techniques not employed in the *nanban* lacquer production are described. These technical mentions correspond to results from analyses carried out on several *nanban* lacquer objects. For instance, a cabinet now in the *Kunstkammer* of the Kunsthistorisches Museum (inv. KK5421) in Vienna<sup>524</sup>, Austria, has been examined in the scope of its conservation treatment. It is decorated with *nanban* decor's typical gold *makie* and silver *nashiji*. Lacquer layers contain *urushi* and little *thitsi* lacquer, as well as a drying oil, while the ground layers beside their inorganic additives mainly consist of starch and to a lesser content rosin and perilla oil<sup>525</sup>. In contrast to the studied Luso-Asian decorations, the *nanban* decorations do not present any use of gold leaf.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>522</sup> Leiria (2001, p.21), Kitagawa (2008, p.80).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>523</sup> Guth (2016; 2017).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>524</sup> This cabinet could be one of a group of cabinets listed in the 1607-11' inventory of the *Kunstkammer* of Emperor Rudolph II in Prague, which are not described in detail. From Prague it might have been transferred to Schloss Ambras via the Viennese Schatzkammer during the Barrock period, cf. Miklin-Kniefazc & Miklin (2013, May).

<sup>525</sup> Miklin-Kniefazc & Miklin (2013, May).

### Decorative Motifs on Nanban Lacquer

Surfaces decorations of the objects commissioned to Japanese craftsmen, who most probably worked to order and had no stock of finished objects, are contrasting to domestic  $k\bar{o}daiji\ makie\ decorations^{526}$ . They are densely filled with motifs and framed by a variety of decorative friezes [Fig. 23]. Two different shapes and hues of metal powders (*hiramakie* and *nashiji*) contrast with the irisident shell inlay, all together creating an outstanding contrast to the black lacquer background. In *nanban* decorations feature especially the seven grasses of autumn and plants such as dwarf bamboo (*sasa*), pine tree (*matsu*), maple (*kaede/momizi*), cherry tree (*sakura*), plum tree (*ume*) or mandarin orange tree (*tachibana*), calabash (*yûgao*), morning glories (*asagao*), Japanese bean vines (*kudzu*), camellia (*tsubaki*), bellflower (*kikyô*), peony (*botan*), chrysanthemum (*kiku*), paulownia (*kiri*) and wisteria (*fuji*), bush clover (*hagi*), vines (*budô*), clematis (*tessen*), among boneset plants (*fujibakama*) and other common grasses. Occasionally animals like hares, lions, tigers, rodents or the flower and bird motif (*kachô*) are placed among these vegetal motifs<sup>527</sup>.

Surfaces and corpus sides were framed by single bands or multiple decorative friezes, either undulating golden scrolls painted in gold (*nanban karakusa*<sup>528</sup>), borders with surface patterns of geometric forms in mother-of-pearl inlay of various shapes (squares, triangles, lozenges, or pattern of interlocking cycles (*shippô*), sometimes with enclosed four-petalled stylized flowers (*karahana*) to form the *hanabishi- or hana shippô*, tortoiseshell (*shokko*) or checkered pattern<sup>529</sup> [Figs. 24]. Subordinate surfaces, such as rear sides or interiors, commonly feature vining scrolls of morning glories, Japanese bean, or bush clover.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>526</sup> Nagashima (2008, p.36), Kawamura (2013, pp.39-42).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>527</sup> Pinto (1990, pp.114-19), Baird (2001, pp.18-19), Impey & Jörg (2005, pp.77-81), Kobayashi (2016), Kawamura (2013, p.42ff).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>528</sup> This type of decorative band only appeared in relation to the foreign commissioned *nanban* lacquerware, Kawamura (2013, p.50).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>529</sup> Ferrão (1990b, pp.311-21), Pinto (1990, p.112), Baird (2001, p.86), Kawamura et al. (2016, pp.43-45).





Fig. 23 Vessel showing a variety of *nanban* friezes. Namban Bunkakan Osaka. © Yoshiro (2009, p.31)

Fig. 24 Examples of typical decorative friezes on *nanban* lacquer with saw-tooth pattern, *hanabishi*, *hana shippô* and *karakusa* scroll. © Kawamura (2013, p.50)

Myanmar and Thailand – Lacquer Techniques, Materials, and Gilding Techniques Used in Southeast Asia

A distinguishing group of Luso-Asian artifacts presents embellishments with Southeast Asian lacquer and respective gold decoration<sup>530</sup>. Due to the fact that some Luso-Asian lacquer formulations contain thitsi lacquer, the following closely related lacquer traditions need to be introduced to distinguish them.

Mainland Southeast Asia is marked by complex interactions and mutual influences of multiple ethnicities which share similar cultural origins, combining southwestern Chinese inputs, and elements from Hindu and Buddhist religions amongst others. Only from the ancient kingdoms Ayutthaya (Siam/ Thailand) and Pegu (Myanmar) the use of a characteristic gilding technique on lacquerware is known. Probably both lacquer arts derived from initial Chinese influences, but the exact circumstances are obscure and only a few artifacts or fragments can be dated back to the 8<sup>th</sup> century<sup>531</sup>. Comparatively decorated lacquered vessels or furniture did not survive until our days in consequence to cultural

<sup>531</sup> Garner (1979, p.264), Fraser-Lu (2000, pp.15-16), Nyunt (2002, p.173), Weigelt (2005). The oldest lacquer fragments excavated in Myanmar date to the late 8<sup>th</sup> or early 9<sup>th</sup>, and to the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>530</sup> Körber et al. (2011), Frade & Körber (2011, pp.34-38), Körber (2012b).

aspects and climatic issues. However, in royal and religious spaces, such as palaces, monasteries and pagodas, 17<sup>th</sup> century architectonic elements or utensils have survived<sup>532</sup>. Further, the lack of documentation and extant pieces from earlier periods, paired with the fact that these Southeast Asian regions were populated by many ethnicities in different kingdoms with continuously changing frontiers complicates the study of these lacquer crafts' histories<sup>533</sup>.

The sap obtained from *Melanorrhoea usitata* trees, in Myanmar is called *thit-si*, and in Thailand *rak*. In both regions it was applied in thin layers over different kinds of substrates, the most common being woven bamboo or coiled bamboo strips, horse hair wickerwork, cloth, bamboo paper, as well as metal, and wood. The lacquer coatings of both share similar characteristics. Everyday objects, such as all kind of vessels and containers, betel boxes, food containers, cloth storage boxes, tables, bookcases and chests; and offering trays, diverse types of vessels and utensils related to religious practices.

Compared to Chinese or Japanese coatings the thitsi lacquer surfaces are of a thicker and glossier black appearance and may also contain a drying oil such as tung. Coatings consist of dark brownish ground layers composed of lacquer mixed with organic and inorganic materials. In contrast to the East Asian lacquer traditions where ground and coating layers are more distinguished, Burmese and Thai lacquer coatings are of a characteristic different stratigraphy. Consecutive layers suggest an ascending refinement with fewer additives in each layer up to the final layer of refined lacquer sap<sup>534</sup>.

In Myanmar, ground layers are composed of lacquer, bone ashes, sawdust, ground charcoal powder, teak or rice husk ashes, and clay, to fill in bumps and small holes. This paste is called  $tha-yo^{535}$  (Burmese: tha = meat, yo = bone), probably referring to cow-bone ashes added as a filler to thicken the natural sap<sup>536</sup>. Afterwards a finer tha-yo is applied, and after drying ground and polished. This step is repeated until the surface is completely smooth.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>532</sup> Garner (1979, p.264), Simareang (2002, p. 137), Weigelt (2005).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>533</sup> Garner (1979, p.265).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>534</sup> Körber et al. (2011).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>535</sup> The same paste is used for a decoration technique in relief, known under the same name. Every workshop has its own recipe.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>536</sup> This Information was obtained from Veronika Gritsenko (Black Elephant – Institute for Bagan Lacquer, Bagan, Myanmar).

According to the stratigraphies, the quantity of these additives is progressively reduced in the following layers until the final layer is applied which consists of only a refined lacquer [Figs. 10, 11]. In Thailand, after applying raw lacquer, a coarse ground layer is applied (clay, rice husk ashes, or banana leaf ash, and lacquer). Afterwards a fine undercoat (ground rice-husk ashes, lacquer) is applied in at least three stages, followed by a layer of refined lacquer. Each layer is smoothed after drying for several days in a humid cellar.

## Southeast Asian Gold Leaf Decoration

In both regions manifold decorative techniques developed depending on the ancient kingdoms and ethnicities, among them the application of gold leaf, which was reserved for items serving either royal or religious purposes, as a praiseworthy deed<sup>537</sup>. Centers for the gold leaf decoration were the capitals of the Siamese kingdom of Ayutthaya and later Bangkok, and the Burmese kingdom of Bagan, as well as in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the cities of Prome and Mandalay (Map 2), where they are still practiced today.

Surfaces are almost completely covered with gold decor, Burmese *shwei-zawa* or *shwe-zawa* or *shwei-zawa* or

There are various ways of copying the sketch or pattern to the finished lacquer surface. In a kind of negative technique, the areas designed to show the black or red<sup>540</sup> lacquer ground are covered with an orpiment colored water solvable gum solution<sup>541</sup>. Gold leaf will not adhere on the gum solution. After applying a thin lacquer layer onto the areas left uncovered and curing it for a while, gold leaf is attached to the not totally polymerized surface. After several days, when the lacquer is completely dried the whole piece is washed with water to remove the gum and any surplus lacquer. The inner drawing of the design, previously covered by the gum mix, appears as black or red lines. For small motifs filtered sap is directly applied onto

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>537</sup> Fraser-Lu (2000, p.27), Nyunt (2002, p. 178), Simatrang (2002, pp. 134-135), Weigelt (2005), Risdonne et al. (2018).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>538</sup> Fraser-Lu (1985, pp.23-24; 2000, p.42ff), Thein (2000, p.88), Isaacs & Blurton (2000, pp.37-39), Htaik (2002), Nyunt (2002, p.178), Weigelt (2005, p.21).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>539</sup> Garner (1979, pp.265-66), Fraser-Lu (2000, p.27), Nivilai (2000, p.80), Saengaramroungroj (2002), Capelo (2004).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>540</sup> Either domestic or cinnabar imported from China, or red iron oxide were added as pigments, cf. Garner (1979, p.264).

The *neem* gum is derived from the *tamar* tree (*Azadirachta indica*), Htun (2013, p.37).

the design following the same steps. This technique created a vivid contrast between the deep glossy surface and the gold décor. It is thought this technique originates to the Siamese capital Ayutthaya where it flourished in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries and that it has been introduced to the ancient kingdom of Pegu by Thai craftsmen deported to the royal court as prisoners, in consequence to the successful Burmese siege and destruction of Ayutthaya in 1767. The latter is believed to have led to a flowering of art and culture in the kingdom of Pegu<sup>542</sup>. However, already earlier occasions of sieges included the hostage-taking of craftsmen. Between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, several warlike conflicts, mutual sieges and conquest attempts marked the relation between both regions, also bringing in lacquer craftsmen at several occasions. The exchange of lacquered tribute and trade had additional influences on applied techniques and styles. Already in the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century the king of Chiang May (today's Thailand) was forced to send some 40000 craftsmen to Pegu. including lacquer artisans<sup>543</sup>. Without doubt there have been mutual influences in the arts and crafts before, also among the many different cultures in these regions. It is a fact that there is not much knowledge about the evolution and historical uses of that technique, in these two regions of today's Myanmar and Thailand. Similar gold decorated artifacts dating before the 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century did not survive, for both climatic and cultural reasons. This is certainly another field, which needs a profound study the research. To this a comprehensive study on the thitsi lacquered Luso-Asian artifacts adorned with this technique could contribute.

Typical decorative themes derive from Buddhism in Thailand, and Theravada Buddhism in today's Myanmar. In the Burmese lacquer craft, frequent ornamentations are plant and animal motifs, with apes, monkeys, elephants, horses, cattle or mythical creatures, spirits (*nats*), demons and divas, the icons of the weekdays, or the twelve zodiac symbols edged by vegetal or floral scrolls with convoluted lotus stems, buds or blossoms, or arabesques, and the characteristic Burmese circular *chu-pan*<sup>544</sup> motif. Vegetal scrolling is generally the most popular form of decoration in Burmese gold leaf decoration [Figs. 25, 26].

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>542</sup> Garner (1979, p.265), Fraser-Lu (2000, pp.29, 42), Capelo (2004, pp.17, 25), Weigelt (2005).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>543</sup> Fraser-Lu (2000, pp.16-17).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>544</sup> Cropped foliage winding arranged in sequence and in bands that line one another, cf. Thein (2000), Fraser-Lu (2000, pp.16-17), Capelo (2004, pp.23-36).

Themes range from Theravada Buddhist, Burmese lore and folklore, to scenes of domestic Burmese everyday live<sup>545</sup>.



Fig. 25 Betel nut box with typical *chu-pan* scrolls in *shwei-zhawa* gilding technique, 20<sup>th</sup> century, Pagan, Myanmar. Private collection. © Capelo (2004, pp.204-04)



Fig. 26 Circular box with typical Burmese vegetal *chu-pan* scrolls, 20<sup>th</sup> century, Pagan, Myanmar. Private collection. © Capelo (2004, pp.254-55)

In turn, Siamese and Thai gold decorations are distinguished by their vertically directed, flamboyant and flame-like forms (*kranok*). Beside Buddhist themes and genre scenes, frequent ornamentations are also woody landscapes filled with birds and diverse animals as shown in the example in Figure 27.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>545</sup> Fraser-Lu (2000, pp.77-82), Nyunt (2002, pp. 180-181).



Fig. 27 Detail of *lai rod nam* decoration with vertical *kranok* forms on the edges of a manuscript cabinet,

Thailand, 18<sup>th</sup> century. Private collection. © Capelo (2004, pp.266-71)

However, the ornamentation on several 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century writing boxes (2.3.) and larger chests lacquered and decorated for Portuguese costumers, present floral scroll work and round shaped friezes which more likely point to the lacquer craft, which according to contemporary art historiography, likely originated in the ancient kingdoms of today's Myanmar [Figs. 28, 29]. Surviving gold decorated artifacts of both origins are more recent and date to the 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The lack of historic documentation and surviving domestic artifacts from earlier periods complicate the exact attribution of the Luso-Asian examples with such gold leaf decorated thitsi lacquer coatings.



Fig. 28 Detail of a writing box showing partly worn gold leaf ornamentation with the typical inner drawing of black lines left uncoated. Private collection



Fig. 29 Detail of a chest showing gilded carved and gold leaf decoration with circular scrolls on the right. MNAA (Inv. no. 1661 mov.)

## 2. Formal and Esthetic Characterization of the Selected

# **Specimens**

## 2.1. Lacquered Wood-And-Leather Parade Shields

Shields of all sorts and materials are among the earliest defense weapons, meant to intercept attacks either from projectiles, arrows, swords, spears or battle axes and have been used by many different folks around the world, carried by foot soldiers, knights and cavalry<sup>546</sup>. In Europe different types of shields were used during the Middle Ages. On the Iberian Peninsula shields were of rectangular shape with a curved base<sup>547</sup>, the same shape as the heraldic shields of the coat-or-arms present on the studied specimens (2.1.1., 2.1.3. and 2.1.4.). With the development of plate armors between the 13<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> century's shields began to diminish in size, becoming less and less used by knights, except for parade purposes and tournaments as they were still functioning to display heraldic art, thus later leading more decorative shield types to evolve. From personnel defense devices necessary to protect the body to a parade object symbol of the owner's status and authority, these shields also served as equipment for guards, illustrating the special relationship between man and his weapons leading armors and apparel alike to reach its esthetical and functional perfection during the 16<sup>th</sup> century. In this period, characterized by the up-spreading humanism, the preference of classical scenes and the resulting use of historical and mythological motifs of the Greco-Roman world reflect the Renaissance interest in all aspects of classical culture<sup>548</sup>.

In the 16<sup>th</sup> century the use of round shields made of steel, wooden lamellar or cross-lamellar structures became more common<sup>549</sup>. Wooden cross-lamellar shields for ceremonial

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>546</sup> Wise (1980), Pant (1983).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>547</sup> Wise (1980, pp.9-10).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>548</sup> Prints and pattern books with grotesque ornaments of interwoven human, animal and plant forms inspired by classical works and mythological motifs of the Greco-Roman world, as well as biblical scenes and allegoric figures were distributed throughout Europe serving as models for diverse decorative arts, including gold and silversmith who lavishly decorated arms and armor, cf. Cimarelli (1973, pp.7-8), Fliegel (1998, pp.96-97).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>549</sup> On the use and evolution of shields and the development of armor, cf. Ciramelli (1973, pp.7-8), Wise (1980, pp.9-10), Pyhrr (1992, p.100).

purposes are documented in England and Italy. Circular and convex shields, known as "rondache", "rotella", "rodela", "rundell" or "target", with classical scenes painted polychrome or in grisaille manufactured in Venice, Mantua, Bologna, Florence, Rome or Naples were a 16<sup>th</sup> century' Italian specialty. By mid-16<sup>th</sup> century, these shields of a revived neo-classical style were unexceptionally used for display in pageants, triumphal entries and feast-day parades likely attested by numerous specimens spread all throughout Europe. The same way, several examples of wooden cross-lamellar structures faced with linen or sometimes covered with leather are extant in collections and armories throughout Europe and abroad<sup>550</sup>. These shields usually have a padded arm support with two vertical straps attached to the backs in which the forearm is inserted. Guy Wilson has mentioned already a similarity of this shield type popular in 16<sup>th</sup> century Italy with the lacquered Luso-Asian examples under scrutiny<sup>551</sup>.

#### The Use of Round Shields in Asia

The Muslim Near and Middle East, South and Central Asia comprise of many regions with distinctive cultures and traditions (e.g. Byzantine, Ottoman, Arab, Persian, Chinese, Mongol etc.). Mutual exchanges, influences and adaptions of arms and armor took place due to conflicts, conquests, invasions or sieges on one hand, and on the other, due to trade, both ways actually resulting in a profusion of styles. Captured arms have been continued to be used by the victors or besiegers, whether Turkish, Persian, Indian or Mongol, thus during centuries certain arms and armor shared similar styles or elements<sup>552</sup>. Because of century-old exchange and mutual influence so-called Muslim weapons consist of a large variety of types. Across a vast region the same weapons can have multiple names, or the name has remained constant, while the form has changed or been innovated<sup>553</sup>.

In parts of Europe, Middle East and Central Asia the chief materials for the making of shields were wood, leather or hide, wickerwork and metal. Central and East Asian round shields were made of rods wrapped in multi-colored threads, like Persian or Ottoman *kalkan* 

For further examples and more detailed information of the make-ups of painted Italian parade shields, cf. Pyhrr (1992, pp.100-11), Fahy (1992) and Meighan (1992, pp.141-43).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>551</sup> Wilson (1983, p.163).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>552</sup> Gorelik (1979, pp.40-41), Elgood (2010, p.58).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>553</sup> Elgood (2010), Loureiro (2010a).

shields, as Mongol and Persian armor merged during the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Also, convex round painted leather shields with a metal umbo and edge were used. All these shields, Mongol or Persian had central metal umbos or buckles. The handle of these consisted of either two straps or a string. The size has become standardized and covered the body from the waist to the neck. Such shields were used as well as in Tibet as in China, made of wicker, cane, or leather with a single handgrip in the center of the rear side. Cane shields were domed or flat and its use spread over a wide geographical area, but the Chinese models were the most convex always having this central metal umbo. This type probably culminated in shape and structure with Ottoman or Persian cane shields of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries<sup>554</sup>. In Japan none of these types existed. When comparing arms and armor employed either by Europeans or Japanese, the Jesuit missionary Luís Fróis (1532-1597) noted that while, gilded round shields and hard leather shields were used by the Europeans, the Japanese used bare wooden blanks, as for example a door<sup>555</sup>.

The Persian term for shield is *sipar*. *Dhal* means protection, and is applied to all kinds of Indian shields including smaller bucklers, targets etc. Round convex and with rolled edges it is held by two handles fastened to ring bolts which are riveted to the bosses on the outside<sup>556</sup>. Indian miniatures from the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries show Mongol and Persian-style armors, including round shields. And most of this type continued to be used until the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, while Persian armor itself did evolved into something different.

In many parts of India round, convex shields constructed of a variety of tropical woods were faced with leather and coated with resin varnishes, beside shields produced of molded raw hide (*dhal*). Buffalo and rhinoceros hide, among others, were the chief materials for Indian shields until the 17<sup>th</sup> century, when the iron shield was probably made to complete Indo-Persian equipments<sup>557</sup>. For the wood construction sal (*Shorea robusta*), mango (*Mangifera indica*), neem (*Azadirachta indica*), sisham (*Dalbergia sissoo*), or teak (*Tectona grandis*) were preferred. For the ornamental design or as a protective coating served resin varnishes (shellac, mastic) and colored painting. These shields' diameter varied between 20

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>554</sup> Gorelik (1979, pp.40-41, 46), LaRocca (2006).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>555</sup> Schütte (1955, p.191).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>556</sup> Robinson (1967, pp.220-21), Pant (1983, p.92).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>557</sup> Robinson (1967, pp.112-13), Pant (1983, pp.94-95), Körber (2013, p.49).

cm and 66 cm (eight and 26 inches), the variation width of the surfaces varies from almost flat to convex shapes. Depending on the use and purpose the handle consisted of two or more straps that were either grasped with the hand or additionally fastened to the forearm. Generally, the arm support was padded with a kind of pillow filled with cotton and lined with either velvet, silk or cotton cloth<sup>558</sup>.

Different shield types are also depicted in Mughal miniatures, where they appear decorated with great variations, showing Mughal rulers holding shields luxuriously decorated with Persian arabesques<sup>559</sup>. In Mughal lore, carrying a shield conferred dignity; bearing arms and emblazoned with emperor's crest was a prestigious court honor<sup>560</sup>. Many examples of either Hindu or Muslim-Indian shields are extant in various museum collections, collections of arms and armor, armories as well as in diverse ethnological museums and private collections.

### Luso-Asian Lacquered Parade Shields

Shape and structure of the five lacquered shields in study correspond to those used in southern Asia, but their Asian lacquer embellishment does not. They belong to a unique group of shields adorned for European aristocrats with an Asian lacquer coating and are decorated sumptuously on a wide variety of ways with gilded motifs on a black lacquer ground. All five share similar decorative schemes presented on their front and rear sides, composed by heraldic arms of Portuguese aristocrats combined with arabesque and Renaissance scroll-work and traditional Chinese motifs.

They consist of a core of wooden strips joined together and then faced with leather. Similarly decorated front sides of three specimens present Portuguese coat-of-arms which are framed by two circular friezes, a narrow band of linked trefoils and dots; followed by a broad frieze of Renaissance arabesque scroll-work with floral or animal motifs and grotesque masks around the edges (2.1.1., 2.1.3., 2.1.4.). The presence of a helmet facing *dexter* (to the viewer's left) crowning the coat-of-arms indicates the high status of the individuals for whom the shields were commissioned. The division into a central area framed by arabesque friezes

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>558</sup> Pant (1983, pp.95, 97).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>559</sup> Pfaffenbichler (2013, p.32), Körber (2013, p.48; 2015b, p.217).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>560</sup> Pant (1983, p.78).

indicates European Renaissance decoration, similarly present on the painted Italian shields mentioned earlier.

An exception is the Vienna shield (2.1.2.), whose front decoration consists of lacquered and polished rayskin. Its rear-side decoration is similar to the just mentioned three examples with four groups of motifs from the traditional Chinese decorative repertoire representing flowers, flowering shrubs, vines or other branches with squirrels and birds equally arranged around the handles and arm-support, while the depicted branches above the arm-pad emerge from the top, and the flowering branches underneath grow from the bottom. The whole is framed by the same kind of narrow band of consecutive spirals and dots or wave-border with spirals. Another exception is the Amsterdam shield (2.1.5.) which shows an equestrial scene on the front and a plane black lacquered surface on its rear.

Shape and structure also correspond to the manufacture of a shields type, which was used by the most diverse peoples from areas between Western Europe, the Near and Middle East, and regions in South or Central Asia, and especially on the Indian subcontinent, along whose coastline, were scattered countless Portuguese fortresses, storehouses and settlements. This kind of shields constituted personal equipment of Portuguese noblemen as can be seen on various Japanese *nanban* screens that by meticulous observation show a wealth of detail, many overseas-Portuguese and their servants are depicted carrying black round shields with gold ornamentation <sup>561</sup>.

Imported shields from India or China are cited in several documents, as for example a 1559' cargo lists of a vessel bound from Goa to Lisbon<sup>562</sup>. The 1570's inventory of the estate left by Simão de Melo, former Captain of Malacca (1545-48) and resident in Lisbon's important commercial axes, the *Rua Nova dos Mercadores*<sup>563</sup>, inventories two new Chinese round shields, three old painted round shields from India, and four old Chinese roundels along with porcelain, textiles, and furniture, including writing boxes (*escritórios da China*), writing

As for examples figured in the *nanban* screens attributed to Kanō Naizen in the Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga (Inv. nos. 1640 and 1641), cf. Curvelo (2015, pp.100-13); Museu do Oriente, Lisboa (Inv. FO/0633) featuring smaller shields with arabesque pattern, cf. Curvelo (2015, pp.147-54); the pair of *nanban* screens from the Kobe City Museum in Curvelo (2015, pp.115-23); or another pair of screens from a private collection, as well as screens in the Namban Bunkakan Osaka, cf. Curvelo (2015, pp.125-33, 135-145).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>562</sup> Pinto (2008, p.246).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>563</sup> Crespo (2015a, pp.122, 260-261).

box with drawers, porcelain, and a Chinese table. In the estate inventory of Fernando de Noronha (ca. 1540-1608), third Count of Linhares and his wife Filipa de Sá, are mentioned among numerous objects from China and Pegu:

"(...) two rondels from China to be equipped with an arm-support and handles [,] with its arms, evaluated 1.000 reais, joined by sixteen others, evaluated 9.000 reais<sup>564</sup> (...)"

Baltazar Jorge de Valdez, knight of the Casa del-Rei and customs judge in Diu died in 1546 and bequeathed a third of his assets to the Misericordia of Évora among which were listed 34 defense shields of which 10 were from Cochin and 24 have been sent by Jorge Cabral<sup>565</sup>.

It must have become common practice among Portuguese noblemen circulation within maritime Asia, of commissioning the lacquering of parade shields for personal display evolving probably into a fashion also noticed by Indian rulers. Probably Indian rulers found a liking for such decorated shields, turning lacquered shields into appreciated gifts and merchandise, which helped the Dutch to improve or maintain diplomatic relations with their Indian trading partners. This development was probably prerequisite for the later systematic and well-documented shipping of hundreds of Indian rhinoceros or buffalo hide shields (*dhal*)<sup>566</sup> from Bengal, Surat and Coromandel to Dejima in Nagasaki Bay by the Dutch VOC. From the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century until well into the 18<sup>th</sup> century, those lacquered shields, made of molded raw hide, and mentioned for the first time in shiploads of 1647 were primarily destined for the Indian market, used by the VOC as diplomatic gifts for Indian rulers to maintain Dutch relations with their Indian trading partners<sup>567</sup>. Some examples decorated with the arms of VOC officials, which certainly were intended as personal luxury showpieces of Dutch officials are still extant in European collections<sup>568</sup>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>564</sup> My translation of the original: "(...) duas rodelas da china por embaracar\* com suas armas, avaliadas em 1.000 reais, as quais se juntam outras dezasseis, avaliadas em 9.000 reais (...)", in Crespo (2016a, p.117). \*Although the exact meaning of the term embaracar is misleading and could not be determined this connotation was earlier proposed by Crespo.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>565</sup> Dias (2004, p.23).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>566</sup> Pant (1983, p.74).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>567</sup> Impey & Jörg (2005, pp.252-64), Körber (2013, p.49; 2015b, p.213).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>568</sup> Impey & Jörg (2005, p.194).

These five specimens are representative of a whole group of twenty-five currently known examples adorned with distinct lacquer coatings of either Southeast Asian or East Asian origin from the same period. Nowadays they are scattered throughout Europe and the USA and there might be more still unrecognized examples extant in collections around the world (2.1.6., Tab. 2).

## 2.1.1. Lacquered Parade Shield, Porto

#### Provenance

The lacquered wood-and-leather shield is housed in Porto's Museu Nacional de Soares dos Reis (Inv. no. 63 div.; Ø 51.5 cm<sup>569</sup>). Acquired by the museum in 1943, its former owner and circumstances of the acquisition are unknown. It was first studied in a 2008' thesis written by the author and then examined in detail at the LJF-DGPC in Lisbon, where analyses prior to conservation treatment were undertaken<sup>570</sup> (Tab. 2, no. 10).

# **Description**

The convex shield is made of a wooden core covered with leather. In the front's center it bears the coat-of-arms of a Portuguese aristocrat, although it is not possible to identify the exact tincture the residues of which refer to two different Portuguese families<sup>571</sup>. Close examination and analyses revealed the tincture of the heraldic shield was only completed after the arm-pad was mounted<sup>572</sup> [Fig.30]. The center of the shield's front features five or what were originally six eight-petalled gilded brass nails with washers, laterally arranged in two

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>569</sup> Formerly the diameter has been mentioned incorrectly with 61.5 cm, Körber (2013, p.47).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>570</sup> Körber (2008; 2011; 2011/2012; 2012a; 2013; 2015b), Körber et al. (2011, Table 1, no.27).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>571</sup> Probably originally parted quarterly, the only traces of a tincture in the heraldic shield are the remains of red paint in the upper field dexter (field one), and right underneath in the bottom field dexter (field three). The remains of five golden and four red stripes (*barry of nine or and gules*) are visible on the latter bottom field dexter (third field), with tiny traces of red or gold in the remaining area. Analyses of the paint layer on the third field from 2008 revealed this area was repainted several times. Several Portuguese families used the tincture of gilded and red stripes (*barry or and gules*) of different number, such as the Ferreira (*barry of nine or and gules*) or Mascarenhas families. Several viceroys or governors with the latter surname served in Portuguese India. There is too much abrasion and uncertainty about the tincture of the remaining fields to identify the specific individual who owned this shield, but traces of two crossed axes above the knight's helmet on top, which are evident under UV illumination, refer to the crest of the coat-of-arms of the Machado family, cf. Godinho (1987, fl. 35v).

Outlines of the heraldic shield and the knight's helmet were executed in lacquer. Traces of the same red, oil-bound paint were found on the central eight-petal rosette nail washer; cf. Körber (2008; 2011; 2011/2012; 2013; 2015a).

rows of three. They have the form of eight-petal rosettes, decorated with incised double lines. These nails were presumably intended to attach the handle to the back of the shield. Two circular decorative friezes frame the coat-of-arms: a narrow band of linked trefoils with dots within a double-lined border (Tab. 7; A, D) and a broad frieze contained in a double-lined border circles the edge [Fig.31]. It consists of vegetal scrollwork on a diaper-patterned background of thin gilded cross-hatching lines. The shield's rear shows a series of nail holes arranged in a rhomboid figure with traces of cotton and indigo stained blue-green velvet, suggestive of an arm-pad laterally attached<sup>573</sup>. The back also bears gilded decoration in four groups arranged around the handle. Vines with two squirrels appear at the top; a pair of magpies resting on peonies, below; to the left is a peony; and to the right a camellia. The entire back of the shield is framed by a narrow band of consecutive spirals surrounded by dots within a double-line border (Tab. 7; B), around the edge. A breach in the shield's leather covering exposed its wooden core [Fig. 32]. While the exact species of wood could not be identified, it clearly tested as tropical and deciduous. Radiographic testing showed that this is consistent of eight wooden strips or planks joined together [Fig. 33]. Due to its profound examination it was discovered at this juncture how it has been constructed<sup>574</sup>.

## 2.1.2. Lacquered Parade Shield, Vienna

#### Provenance

The Viennese shield now housed in the Hofjagd- und Rüstkammer of the Kunsthistorisches Museum (Inv. no. A915;  $\varnothing$  54 cm)<sup>575</sup>, is a particularly important specimen as its history is known back to its first mention in the estate inventory (fol.457v) of the

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>573</sup> In the center of this area is a later museum inventory paper label and a yet-unidentified shellacked seal (showing the initials ".P.P."), which is attached to an uncoated rectangle of leather.

Experiments in 2008 attempted to replicate how the shield might have been covered with leather. Our findings show that the shield was wrapped with two leather disks probably using the cuir bouilli (boiled leather) technique, wherein leather is treated with hot liquid before molding. Once dry it benefits from increased resistance to cuts or damage and better retains its molded form. Tests further confirmed that the concave shield back was covered first with leather of the same diameter as the wooden core. A leather disc of a wider diameter was then affixed to the front, the excess stretched across the rear and fastened. Once dried, the overlapping excess was trimmed to approximately three centimeters from the edge. The sample left the same tracks – in the form of wrinkles on the folded edge of the leather evident on the Porto shield and other Luso-Asian shields, Körber (2011, pp.107-08; 2013, p.48).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>575</sup> Cf. Wilson (1983, pp.154-65), Neuwirth (1997, pp.214-15), Seipel (2000, pp.209-11; 2006, pp.276-78), Carvalho (2001a, pp.257-58), Pfaffenbichler (2009, p.88), Körber (2011; 2013, p.51; 2015b, pp.217-18), Körber et al. (2011, Table 1, no. 25).

deceased Archduke Ferdinand II of Tyrol elaborated in 1596 at Schloss Ambras in Innsbruck as:

"(...) An Indian medallion, lined with velvet inside, where the hand and arm are placed, is made or painted inside with leafage and all kinds of birds, on the outside it appears to have been dyed, white with mixed black dots on the top of the medallion are found 6 square silver rosettes with figures (...)"<sup>576</sup> (Tab. 2, no. 13).

This allows us to establish a time frame (or *terminus ante quem*) for the manufacture of this specific example and the other related shields under scrutiny.

## **Description**

Recto decoration of the Vienna shield does not bear any European coat-of-arms, but is covered instead with rayskin which was then lacquered and polished<sup>577</sup>. Eventually, along the edges there perhaps have been additionally sprinkled rayskin grains (dermal denticles) into the freshly lacquered surface which was then polished, a technique developed to cover large continues surfaces with an even pattern, which is not achievable using a single fish skin<sup>578</sup>. In the center are two horizontal rows with four of once six European silver rivets displaying Leda with the Swan in scrollwork. Where the silver bosses are missing circular traces of gold

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>576</sup> My translation of the original: "(...) Ain Indianisch rundell, inwendig, wo man mit der hand und armb darein schleuft, mit rotem sammet gefuettert, ist inwendig von laubwerch und allerlei vögl gemacht oder gemalt, auswendig sicht si gleichsamb als wann's pain wer, weis und Schwarz under einander gedipflt, hat oben auf der rundell 6 silberne viereggete rosen mit figurn (...)", in Neuwirth (2000b).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>577</sup> During the examination of the shield in 2009 it was not possible to verify, whether the shield was covered with an entire rayskin or leather from another source which has been coated with lacquer and rayskin grains sprinkled onto it. However, from the comparison with a shield covered with unlacquered rayskin (Table 2.1. no.13, Figs. 37, 38), lacquer analysis results, an X-ray analyses carried out in Vienna, in Körber (2011, p.109); as well as the presence of Japanese written kanji characters together with the Japanese practice of using rayskin in decorating specially armor it was concluded the covering with rayskin and lacquer might have been executed in Japan or at least by a Japanese craftsman.

Samakawa nuri (Japanese: lacquer coated ray or shark skin) and togidashi samenuri (sprinkled rayskin grains) were techniques in 16th century Japan chiefly applied to arms and armor. The use of rayskin as a covering for sword hilts and other instruments that needed to be grasped firmly in the hand has long tradition; see Morinaka (2004), Guth (2016). During the period of Dutch trade monopoly in Nagasaki rayskin for Japanese use was imported from either São Tomé de Meliapore on the Indian East coast, Champa in southern Vietnam or from Siam. Especially the later nanban furniture and those commissioned by the Dutch VOC used rayskin coverings on caskets, cabinets and chests, and many imports of that material are documented, cf. Impey & Jörg (2005, pp.83-84, figs. 251, 331, 336-340). For more detailed reading on the origins of rayskin application, sources and techniques used in Japan and its reverberation in European decorative arts, cf. Perfettini (2005), Hagelskamp & Duin (2012, pp.330-31), Guth (2016; 2017).

paint are visible, probably deriving from the coating of the original rivets and indicating their circular shape.

The reverse displays gilded motifs in a similar manner arranged in four groups around the arm-support which consists of two straps and a handle all covered with red velvet. Flowering branches, likely loquat, with long-tailed squirrel like beasts emerge from the top; a peony or camellia is situated on the left and a stylized lotus or mythical flower on the right. The bottom presents a water landscape with lotuses, herons and other birds [Fig. 34]. All is framed by a double-lined border. Curiously, the rear side has been coated and decorated with gilded decoration twice. The top coating presents gilded decoration achieved by either applying gold leaf or shell gold. Traces of the first coating and gilded decoration remain visible in the now unlined rhomboid shape of the former arm-pad, with remains of leaf tips in gold leaf [Fig. 35]. In the center of the trapezoid shape is a rectangular left uncoated which exposes the leather surface and the residues of *kanji* characters [Fig. 36]. The meaning of the legible three characters is "palace", "blue", and "ground/ floor". Possibly this was originally a Japanese name (usually consisting of four characters) which is not decipherable as the last character is not legible anymore. According to the stroke and way of how the characters have been written they are clearly Japanese<sup>579</sup>. It is unknown whether the craftsman who applied the rayskin or lacquered the shield's front did leave his name, which would be unusual, or that of the future owner or the name of the person who commissioned the work.

## Attribution

In the past three and a half decades this shield has been attributed to diverse origins, although most scholars recognized its complex composition. While Guy Wilson suggested this shield being Japanese<sup>580</sup>, Neuwirth and Seipel identified the fusion of styles that indicate its origin within the scope of the Portuguese presence in Asia<sup>581</sup>, although the gold décor on the inside resembles Chinese work, Seipel mentions that nowadays it is thought the work results from Indian-Portuguese relations, originating to Goa, although they could also have been commissioned by Portuguese in China or Japan. Carvalho suggested the rayskin

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>579</sup> Acknowledged are here Julie Chang, Shimatani Hiroyuki (director of the Kyūshū National Museum and specialist in Japanese calligraphy) and Kobayashi Koji.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>580</sup> Wilsen (1983, pp.164-65).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>581</sup> Neuwirth (2000b), Seipel (2006, pp.276-78).

covering being of Japanese manufacture but proposed the rear side's gold decoration being perhaps produced by Indian craftsmen along the coasts of Bengal or Coromandel according to the European predilection for Chinese art and as many Chinese goods passed through East-Indian ports there<sup>582</sup>.

# Comparison

In the *Kunstkammer* collection at Schloss Ambras there is another shield which front is faced with uncoated and unpolished rayskin (Inv. no. PA 562)<sup>583</sup> allowing sighting the original appearance of the same type of fish skin used on the shield in Vienna [Figs. 37, 38]. The rear side presents a plain black lacquer surface, which has not been analyzed so far (Tab. 2, no. 15).

## 2.1.3. Lacquered Parade Shield, Oxford

#### Provenance

The Ashmolean Museum's shield (Inv. no. AN1685 B.13;  $\varnothing$  54 cm) is part of a rich history. It constituted the early Tradescant collection of the late 17<sup>th</sup> century forming the core of the today's Ashmolean Museum<sup>584</sup> (Tab. 2, no.12).

# **Description**

The Oxford shield's decorative program resembles that of the Porto shield. Almost identically organized its front bears the coat-of-arm of a Portuguese nobleman. Examination on the heraldic shield was undertaken at the Ashmolean Museum revealing that its tincture of was again not executed in lacquer and that it must have been painted close in date to the lacquering of the shield<sup>585</sup>. The Portuguese coat-of-arms combines the family names Aranha e Vasconcelos<sup>586</sup>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>582</sup> Cf. Carvalho (2001a, pp.257-59).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>583</sup> Cf. Körber (2015b, Table 1, no.12).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>584</sup> The core of the Ashmolean collection was the Lambeth Museum of John Tradescant the Elder (1570 – 1637) and his son, John the Younger, who were England's premier botanists in the first half of the 17th century. Both an extensive plant collection and a "cabinet of curiosities", the Lambeth museum (Tradescant's Ark) benefitted from their plant collecting missions to Europe, Russia, North America, and North Africa. The Lambeth Museum was bequeathed to Elias Ashmole (1617- 1692), who later offered it to Oxford University. A special building was constructed to house the collection, which opened in 1683 and became England's first public museum, and the predecessor of today's Ashmolean Museum.

The cracked structure, or craquelure, of the tincture suggests a distinct binding material, not containing lacquer, which has now become degraded. Cracks in the lacquer layer, which had extended into the paint layer of

The center of the shield's front features six eight-petalled bronze bosses laterally arranged in two rows of three, of similar shape as present on the shield in Porto. The central area is likewise framed by a narrow circular band of interlinked trefoils and ovals surrounded by dots within double-line borders and followed by a broad frieze of typical Renaissance decoration, which in this case is composed of a sequence of flowering shrubs flanked by cornucopias with flying birds.

Rear side's decoration again features four Chinese motif groups around the rhomboid arm-support in the center. Again, there are grapevine branches emerging from the top with squirrel-like beasts and a flying magpie flanked by two dragon flies [Fig. 39], a stylized or mythical flower on the left and a camellia flower on the right of the rhomboid shaped field. Below are two magpies among peony branches. The whole is framed by a narrow waveborder with spirals within double-line borders along the shield's edge.

## Attribution

Guy Wilson mentions its similarity with the gessoed and painted 16<sup>th</sup> cenury' Italian shields, although referring that its decoration is contradictory and rather of Persian or Asian style. He compares many existing examples coming to the clue that these may rather have their origins somewhat in the scope of the Portuguese activities in India, being exported through the Portuguese colony of Goa. Further he notes similarities of the decorative motifs with those present on *nanban* lacquerware suggesting it has been manufactured in Italy and decorated in Japan, or both manufactured and decorated in Japan. In the end he leaves the question open<sup>587</sup>.

the tincture, suggest that the latter may have been applied before the lacquer itself had cracked, close in date to the lacquering of the shield. Thanks to Jevon Thistlewood (Paintings Conservator, Ashmolean Museum) for sharing his results and observations.

The area above the helmet is damaged that no traces of a former crest remain visible, only those of a helmet facing dexter. However, the heraldic shield *party per cross* remains in good shape and allows for the identification of two Portuguese family names: the Aranha family (field one and four) and the Vasconcelos family (field two and three), cf. Godinho (1987, fl. 21r, 10v). According to the rules in heraldry, the crest above the helmet should be related to the tincture in the fields one and four, upper left and lower right of the viewer, and in this specific case to the crest of the Aranha family, figuring a *fleur-de-lis or*. Jevon Thistlewood it should read as follows: "Quarterly one, four *azure* between three *fleur-de-lis*, a *chevron humetty gules* and a border *or*, ensigned on top with *escutcheon argent* with a bend and three spiders *tergiant sable* on the blend all within a border *or*; two, three field of *sable*, three *bars per fess vairy argent* and *gules* bordered *or*, the whole within a border *or*", cf. Körber (2013, p.50; 2015b, pp.212, 216ff).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>587</sup> Wilsen (1983, pp.162-66).

## 2.1.4. Lacquered Parade Shield, London

#### Provenance

Nothing is known about the provenance of the Wallace Collection shield (Inv. no. A315; 45.5 cm) (Tab. 2, no. 2).

### Description

The London shields' front displays a Portuguese coat-of-arms with a heraldic shield bearing three hunting horns stringed or, surmounted by a barred helmet to the dexter, and with a crest of a lion salient or. A foliated mantling encompasses the heraldic shield. The tincture with three stringed hunting horns possibly refers to the Portuguese Monteiro family<sup>588</sup>. The coat-of-arms is framed by an identical narrow band of linked trefoils surrounded by dots set within double-line borders followed by a broad frieze of flowing arabesques terminating in dolphins' heads and grotesque masks on the edge. The bosses which originally fixed the handle and carrying straps onto the rear side are missing [Fig. 40]. On the reverse, the lacquer coating is almost completely worn, but there are still visible traces of gilded decoration and the remains of a narrow band with consecutive spirals surrounded by dots set within double-line borders on the edge (Tab. 7; B), identical to that on the Porto shield's rear side. Close examination of the traces of gold decoration plus a description in 1986, when this shield was less degraded, confirmed the decorations applied on the reverse are like those present on the Viennese shield<sup>589</sup>. The surface of the front appears very glossy, a consequence of a synthetic varnish added in the scope of a conservation treatment conducted in 1975 at the Courtauld Institute of Art (University of London)<sup>590</sup>. Interesting to note is a fracture vertically overlaying the entire shield on the right side of the coat-of-arms, which can be better seen on the back where it has not been retouched.

#### Attribution

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>588</sup> The typical coat-of-arms of the Monteiro had three hunting horns, with two crossed hunting horns in the crest above the helmet, but the presence of the lion *salient* in the crest makes the arms difficult to assign with certainty. In this case no technical study of the tincture of the heraldic shield of the twin shield has been made; however, the outlines, the mantling and the helmet appear to have been carried out in lacquer technique. Most likely the tincture of the heraldic shield and the crest were applied later with materials other than lacquer.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>589</sup> Norman (1986, p.95).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>590</sup> Bowes (1975).

According to an earlier entry in the catalogue of 1962, this shield was suggested being German circa 1600. When Edwin Bowes wrote the report on its conservation treatment in 1975 this shield was thought to be an Italian work around 1600<sup>591</sup>. In a supplement to the catalogue of European arms and armor in the Wallace Collection it was suggested the shield was possibly Japanese<sup>592</sup>.

# Comparison

Recently, a twin of the Wallace Collection shield was discovered which is housed in the Livrustkammaren in Stockholm<sup>593</sup> (Tab. 2, no.1). Of similar dimension its front side shows exactly the same decoration and the same coat-of-arms<sup>594</sup>. It further displays the same eight-petalled nails to affix the handle to the rear side as present in the Porto and Oxford shields and seven further specimens (Tab. 2, Category IV-i). According to information currently available, this shield is among three others of the same type given to the Swedish Royal Armory between 1683 and 1696 by the dowry queen Hedwig Eleonora<sup>595</sup>. Rear sides' decoration is equally arranged in four groups of Chinese motifs around the still existing armsupport with two leather straps. Two magpies sit in branches with spherical flowers or fruits which emerge from the top above, a mythical flower and a camellia flower on either side, and below are two magpies sitting on camellia branches. All framed by the same frieze of consecutive spirals with dots within double-line borders as present on the Porto and London shields [Figs. 41, 42]. Most interesting to note is the fact this twin shield in Stockholm shows exactly the same type of fracture occurring vertically on the right side of the coat-of-arms, suggesting both had suffered identical circumstances. Since, until the discovery of these twins each of the other shields seemed to be unique objects, the existence of two identical shields leads to new considerations. Were these shields used by personal servants, which would indeed display the same arms?

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>591</sup> Bowes (1975).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>592</sup> Mann (1962, pp.195-96), Norman (1986, p.95).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>593</sup> I thank Walter Borgers in Cologne for informing me about the existence of this shield.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>594</sup> This example is depicted in Körber (2015b, pp.216, Fig. 208).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>595</sup> I thank Bengt Kylsberg and Andreas Olsson for the information and support provided.

## 2.1.5. Lacquered Parade Shield, Amsterdam

#### Provenance

The Amsterdam Museum's shield (Inv. no. KA 13521;  $\emptyset$  78 cm) earliest provenance known is the Wapenkammer of the Amsterdam City Hall at the Prinsenhof in 1888, which owned collections from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries<sup>596</sup> (Tab. 2, no. 25).

## **Description**

Only the front side is embellished with gold decoration, similar to the other examples, but of a distinct manner. Decorative elements resemble multiple influences. The front is decorated with an equestrian scene. In the center are two human figures depicted, a horseman (with moustache and goatee) with reins in his left hand and a whip in his right, followed by a servant on foot who holds a sword in his right hand and in his left a shield with six similar bosses [Fig. 43, 44]. The figures clearly represent Europeans around 1600 in their European Renaissance fashion clothes and hats, unlike to the headgear and dresses worn by Indians (Muslim or Hindu) or Chinese. These representations are identical to other depictions of overseas-Portuguese<sup>597</sup> and differ, for instance, from the depictions of the Dutch on Chinese Coromandel screens<sup>598</sup>. The figures are set into a landscape with Chinese style fauna with grasses, bamboo, plum and a tree<sup>599</sup>. On top of this scene are birds flying among typical Chinese clouds. The whole scenery is framed by decorative friezes, first by a narrow band of consecutive spirals and dots within double line borders (Tab. 7; B) followed by a broad frieze with arabesque scroll-work and within cartouches lotus flowers and birds defined by a waveborder with floral scrolls on the shields edge. In the central area there are two horizontal rows of three each of bell-flower shaped metal bosses, which cover the nails that fasten strap and handle onto the rear side. The back solely presents a plain black lacquer surface with the armsupport consisting of a wood-and metal handle, a single leather strap and a leather lining. The Amsterdam shield is of larger dimension with a diameter of 78 cm, and it presents a more

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>596</sup> Thanks to Jaap Boonstra for this information.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>597</sup> Dresses of these figures can be compared with depictions of overseas-Portuguese on several of the already mentioned *nanban* screens, as well as other contemporary illustrations.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>598</sup> For example, a large Coromandel screen in the Rijksmuseum (inv. BK-1959-99) from the late 17<sup>th</sup> century displays Dutch people with long red hair and hats with wide brims.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>599</sup> In case this tree is a pine tree, it could be the motif of the "Three Friends of Winter" in the presence of plum tree and bamboo symbolizing steadfastness, perseverance, and resilience (Appendix II).

convex shape, compared to the other 4 examples. It is the first and until now the only example with the depiction of a gentleman holding a shield.

## 2.1.6. Further Siblings

In the course of this study were reunited many other related shields all displaying an Asian lacquer decoration shown in Tab. 2<sup>600</sup>. Subsequent to the observations and listing by Wilson of nine similarly decorated and related shields<sup>601</sup>, a group of twenty-five specimens was catalogued, including the earlier presented examples (Tab. 2, nos. 2, 10, 12, 13, 25). At least fourteen present Chinese lacquer characteristics [Fig. 45], while the remaining copies display Southeast Asian lacquer decorations. It is conceivable that more unidentified specimens may exist in public and private collections and appear in future<sup>602</sup>. With only one exception, the majority of specimens are constructed of a number of wooden strips joined together and covered with leather. X-Ray analyses on a few examples performed in Lisbon, proofed in one case the use of wooden dowels for the joints of the strips (Tab. 2, no. 19). Only one shield within this group has a core of wicker-work (Tab. 2, no. 14) [Fig. 46, 47]. While the exact species of wood could not be identified, in several cases it clearly tested as tropical and deciduous. All specimens have a rhomboid shaped arm-pad or its remains, and if extant, nails and metal bosses of diverse shapes, among which some were probably of Indian origin.

These shields embody European tastes in the 16<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, when shields and armor were highly valued for their esthetic qualities, especially by members of the ruling classes. The most typical Renaissance decorations adopted were grotesques, composed of interwoven human, animal and plant elements and curving foliage<sup>603</sup>, as can be observed on the front of the shields in Porto, Oxford, or London and its twin in Stockholm, as well as on diverse other examples (Tab. 2, Cat. III-b). Eleven specimens display heraldic devices or coats-of-arms, which are a principal motif for almost half of the twenty-five shields catalogued. At least eight of these could be confirmed as referring to Portuguese families

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>600</sup> Körber (2015b).

<sup>601</sup> Wilson (1983).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>602</sup> Donald LaRocca (Arms and Armor, Metropolitan Museum of Art) told me of two further shields, but nothing is known about their condition or whereabouts (Table 3, nos. 9 and 15), cf. Lepke (1904, p.lot. no. 159), Wilson (1983, p. 165), Szendrei (1986, pp.400, 402).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>603</sup> Cf. Fliegel (1998, pp.94-100).

(Tab. 2, Cat. II-a). Other examples were decorated with scenes borrowed from classical mythology and inspired from contemporary European prints (Tab. 2, nos. 5, 11, 22). Such as in other artifacts commissioned in Asia at that time clients who ordered the lacquering of their shields must have delivered certain models of their arms and prints with Renaissance ornaments to be copied to the shield, which is also evidenced by the Renaissance style decoration and shared similar decorative program (Tab. 2, Category III, a, b, and g, nos. 1-13). Both the heraldic shield and crest above the helmet of a shield in the Armeria Reale in Turin bear a cross (Tab. 2, no. 6). This refers to the coat-of-arms of the Portuguese family Pereira<sup>604</sup>. The ornamentation surrounding the central arms consists of grotesques applied in a Mannerist style. As in the Porto shield the example in Turin has nails of the same shape (Tab. 2, Category IV-i), and the reverse decoration has similar grouped motifs around the handle and the same narrow band of consecutive spirals (Tab. 2, Category III-g). Both shields share another decorative element: a diaper pattern background of incised gilded lines [Figs. 48, 49].

On those shields with a Southeast Asian lacquer coating the heraldic shields appear executed in a lacquer technique with gold leaf application set into a black lacquer ground, which is close to contemporary Burmese or Siamese gilt lacquer techniques (Tab. 2, nos. 16-19). Finally, seven shields of larger dimension may derive from a different production center. The cane shield in Stockholm (Tab. 2, no. 14), as well as the Cotohele shield (Tab. 2, no. 22), both shields in Amsterdam (Tab. 2, nos. 23, 25), the other rayskin covered shield from Schloss Ambras (Tab. 2, nos.15), and two of three shields in the Royal Danish Kunstkammer<sup>605</sup> (Tab. 2, nos. 20, 24) present the same glossy black lacquer surface and identical bellflower-shaped metal bosses. Five of them also display on their rear sides the same arm pads with one leather strap and wooden hand grips (Tab. 2, Category V-p), although one only shows traces of the same type of fitting and the other shields' rear side is unknown (Tab. 2, nos. 23, 24). As seen in these examples, shields of the same structure can display distinct lacquering traditions.

The decoration on the other Amsterdam shield (Tab. 2, no. 23) only consists of a full moon, a sixteen-point star and a sun all executed in yellow paint in a vertical line with respect

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>604</sup> Godinho (1987, p.f. 10v), depicted in Körber (2015, p.220).

<sup>605</sup> Dam-Mikkelsen & Lundbaek (1980, p.208).

to the horizontal rows of metal bosses. It demonstrates a purely Muslim Indian decoration and might be another proof for this shields type's origin on the Indian subcontinent. Further it is very probable the shields from the Royal Danish Kunstkammer (Tab. 2, no. 20, 24) may derive from the Danish relations with India in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. Due to an agreement between the Danish East Indian company and the Prince of Tanjore, Tarangambadh at the Coromandel Coast has been ceded to Denmark<sup>606</sup>. The existence of this shield further evidences the use of leather covered wooden shields on the Indian subcontinent at that time.

Given this kind of shield was produced as a parade object, it seems noteworthy to observe that few of them exhibit signs of use as objects of defense, such as sword cuts or spear stitches (Tab. 2, nos. 3, 10, 12, 18), underscoring these weapons were more likely purchased as symbolic objects for display. During the 16<sup>th</sup> century it became fashionable for members of the elite in *Portuguese India* or Europe to buy and display extraordinarily decorated armor<sup>607</sup>. Apart from overseas-Portuguese using parade shields in Portuguese Asia, European nobles may have wanted to bring back trophies of their ventures and bought lacquered shields as mementos. Focusing on the four similar decorated specimens and the group of closely related shields (Tab. 2, nos. 1–14) questions arise. Were they individual orders made ad hoc, or part of an organized production? Were they coated and decorated in one workshop, or different workshops in the same region? Among the group studied here, there are notable differences in structure and decoration. Some pieces show more sophisticated decoration and were executed with more expensive materials, such as the Viennese shield (2.1.2., Tab. 2, no. 13). Creating these categories to group them illustrates that it is not easy to establish certain rules, as several specimens do break out. The best examples are the shields in Vienna, Copenhagen and Amsterdam (Tab. 2, nos. 13, 20, 25). In the past many have not been recognized as hybrid creations reflecting the network established by the Portuguese but have been labeled as Japanese, Chinese, Persian, Italian, Hungarian, French, Flemish, or German<sup>608</sup>.

<sup>606</sup> Dam-Mikkelsen & Lundbaek (1980, p.100).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>607</sup> See also Loureiro (2010a).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>608</sup> Cf. Wilson (1983), Szendrei (1986, p.400), Napoli (1996, pp.315-16), Körber (2015b).

Tab. 2 Catalogued Luso-Asian Shields: Comparative Sizes, Lacquering Traditions and Decorations

, o	Shield owner/ Inv. no.	Diameter cm	I		II		III									IV					V		
			E	SEA	Α		Front					Rear											
						В	а	b	С	d	е	f	g	h	i	j	k	ı	m	n	o	р	
1	Livrustkammaren, Stockholm, 9355 (2869)	45.2	•		•		Р	•					•		•					•			
2	Wallace Collection, London, A 315	45.5	•		•		Р	•					•						•	•			
3	Etnografiskamuseet, Stockholm, 1889.04.4163	45.5	•		•			•		•			•		•						•		
4	Nationalmuseet Copenhagen, Bb.10	47	•		•			•	•			•			•					•			
5	Museo Nazionale di Capodimonte, Naples, OA 1907, 2726	48	•		•			•	•				•		•						•		
6	Longleat House, Wiltshire, 681/vi.	48.5	•		•		U	•					•						•	•			
7	Royal Armories, Leeds, XXVI 156A	49.5	•		•			•		•			•		•					•			
8	Armeria Reale, Turin, F 99	50	•		•		Р	•					•		•						•		
9	Collection Karl Gimpel	51	•		•		Р	•				?	?	?	•					?	?	?	
10	Museu Nacional de Soares dos Reis, Porto, 63 div.	51.5	•		•		Р	•					•		•					•			
11	Arundel Castle, West Sussex	50-54	•		•			•	•							•					•		
12	Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, AN1685 B13	54	•		•		Р	•					•		•					•			
13	Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, A 915	54	•		•					•			•					•			•		
14	Etnografiskamuseet Stockholm, 1889.04.4162	62,5	•			•				•		•					•					•	
15	Schloss Ambras, Innsbruck, PA 562	46	•	?	•					•		•					•					•	
16	Metropolitan Museum, New York, 14.25.728	48,3		•	•		U	•				•				•				•			
17	Collection Count Samuel Tekely, Belmont, OH USA	50		•	•		Р	•				?	?	?						?	?	?	
18	MNFMdC, Évora, ME 18343	50.5		•	•		U	•			•			•				•		•			
19	Private Collection, Lisbon	51-58		•	•		Р	•			•			•					•	•			
20	Nationalmuseet Copenhagen, Db.73	58	•		•					•							•					•	
21	Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence, 788 AM	64.5		•	•						•	•						•			•		
22	Cotehele House, Cornwall, 347404	66.5		•	•					•	?	•					•					•	
23	Amsterdam Museum, KA 13522	70	•	•	•						•	•					•					•	
24	Nationalmuseet Copenhagen, EDb74	73		•	•							?					•					?	
25	Amsterdam Museum, KA 13521	78	•	•	•			•	•	•		•					•					•	

I. East Asian (EA) or Southeast Asian (SEA) lacquer techniques; II. Structure: wooden plank construction faced with leather (A), or wickerwork (B); III. Decoration categories: a) Depiction of European coat-of-arms, of Portuguese (P) or unidentified (U) origin, b) European Renaissance influenced motifs or decorative elements (arabesque, scroll-work); c) Depiction of typical Renaissance scenes (e.g. Greco-Roman mythology, allegorical, equestrian or hunting scenes), d) Chinese or East Asian decorative motifs, e) Muslim-Indian or Southeast Asian decorative motifs, f) No decoration, g) Four groups of Chinese motifs arranged around the centre framed by a decorative band at the edge, h) Only decorative band on the edge; IV. Form of decorative nails/ washers on the front, which fasten the straps to the shield: i) eight-petals, j) cockle-shell, k) bellflower, I) European or other, m) Missing bosses on the front; V. Arm-pad and carrying straps: n) Remains of an arm-pad, 1-2 straps and hand-grip, o) Complete arm-pad, 1-2 leather straps (or covered with velvet) and hand-grip, p) Leather arm-pad, single strap and wooden hand-grip with metal-mount.



Fig. 30 Shield 2.1.1., front, outlines of the coat-ofarms after removing a nail



Fig. 31 Shield 2.1.1., front, decorative bands and frieze along the edge



Fig. 32 Shield 2.1.1., rear edge, exposed hardwood core

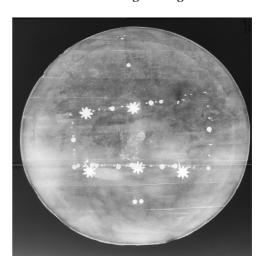


Fig. 33 Shield 2.1.1., X-ray image. © LJF-DGPC



Fig. 34 Shield 2.1.2., rear side bottom scene



Fig. 35 Shield 2.1.2., exposed first lacquer coating



Fig. 36 Shield 2.1.2., kanji characters



Fig. 38 Rayskin covered shield with plain lacquered reverse. Ambras Castle. © Schloss Ambras Innsbruck



Fig. 40 Shield 2.1.4., front



Fig. 37 Rayskin covered shield with unlacquered front. Ambras Castle. © Schloss Ambras Innsbruck



Fig. 39 Shield 2.1.3., rear side motifs with squirrels in grape vine and a magpie



Fig. 41 Identically adorned shield.

Livrustkammaren Stockholm. © Livrustkammaren



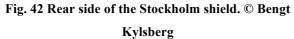




Fig. 43 Shiel 2.1.5., central decoration framed by a decorative band with consecutive spirals. © AM



Fig. 44 Shield 2.1.5., detail of equestrian scene with Portuguese figures wearing European dress of c. 1600



Fig. 45 Chinese decoration on a shield displaying an identical decorative band. © Etnografiskamuseet



Fig. 46 Cane shield. © Etnografiskamuseet



Fig. 47 Rear side of the cane shielf showing exposed structure. © Etnografiskamuseet



Fig. 48 Shield 2.1.1., detail of qiangjin decoration



Fig. 49 Shield, detail of the same diaper pattern in qiangjin technique. © Armeria Reale Turin

# 2.2. Carved and lacquered Chests and Writing Chests

As early as the Medieval period, in the Iberian Peninsula, as well as in other parts of Europe, case-furniture such as chests, coffers, caskets and boxes of various dimensions were either used as essential domestic objects in which clothing, textiles and various household items and precious objects were stored, or as portable containers for transport and traveling <sup>609</sup>. Over time, with the improvement of the domestic living conditions new and ennobled furniture typologies were created and consequently used. In 16<sup>th</sup> century Spain (like throughout Europe) we find splendidly decorated case-furniture with carved or inlayed decorations (such as the rich inlayed cabinets from Augsburg), or those pieces covered with velvet or leather, and embellished with beautiful metal hardware. As mentioned in Chapter 1.2., many types of case-furniture appear mentioned in descriptions and inventories of Portuguese royal and aristocratic households<sup>610</sup>. In the case of Portuguese furniture, the native woods commonly used were: pine, oak, walnut, chestnut, cherry or cedar-wood<sup>611</sup>. Often, when not carved, these carcasses were constructed of wooden boards bond together through dovetail joints sometimes additionally fixed with iron pins and hidden by profiled bars, as it is common to find among European joiners<sup>612</sup>. This exemplar method of construction can be observed on the chests studied on this thesis.

Within the context of 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> century Portuguese overseas activities, various types of case-furniture were purchased by and manufactured for the Portuguese and Europeans in diverse centers of Portuguese territories overseas. There was used a variety of materials and adornments original from very specific regions, of which Asian lacquer (Kingdom of Pegu, Kingdom of Siam, South China, Japan) has only been one of the many appreciated exotic decorations at that time. Case-furniture of all dimensions and diverse typologies became both practical items for storage and transport, and when embellished with exotic materials (carved or inlayed tropical woods, ivory, mother-of-pearl, Asian lacquer) were sought after as luxury

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>609</sup> Umney & Rivers (2003, pp.10-11).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>610</sup> See for example the inventories of the Portuguese queen, in Jordan Gschwend (1993; 1998; 2004; 2012a), or the inventories of Portuguese humanists, in Crespo (2014, pp.44,105; 2015a, p.128; 2016a; 2016b; 2016c; 2016d, pp.238-261; 2017a), which feature distinct types of furniture, such as "writing chests" from China.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>611</sup> Pinto (1985-1987, p.5), Ferrão (1990a, pp.207-68).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>612</sup> Edwards (2012).

items for personal usage and display often destined to house precious jewelry and gems, or designed to keep correspondence, personal documents and writing utensils. These are amongst the most delicate artworks produced in *Portuguese India* in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries<sup>613</sup>. While simpler chests of diverse but up to large dimensions were especially used for the transport of merchandise on the voyages within Asia or travelling back to Lisbon – like the big travel-trunks of wild jackwood (*anjili*) – other larger chests might have just suited to store cloth or other household objects, as it was common in Europe. Many kinds of case furniture for transport and storage appear depicted on numerous *nanban* screens being unloaded from the *Black Ship* and carried by servants<sup>614</sup>. The examined examples (2.2.1.-2.2.4.) given its exotic decorations were with no doubt destined for wealthy clients, whether to be used for mere decorative display, or rather for the storage of personal documents or valuables.

All these case-furniture pieces are made of board construction with through dovetail joints in the four corners. The latter two (2.2.3., 2.2.4.), also portable and equipped with inner drawers and a read-flap, are larger examples of the so-called writing boxes or *escritório* (secrétaire, escritoire), and as such forerunners of the modern writing desks. Such type of lockable private bureau was used to keep writing utensils and personal correspondence, and therefore they relate to the smaller size portable writing boxes (examined in Chapter 2.3.). Both examples are adorned with wood carvings in low-relief, and an additional Asian lacquer coating showing several iron studs on their lids to hide bent over nail ends.

Similar decorative studs can also be found on both, larger chests and smaller writing boxes. On the lids, five in number, two studs are at the front edge covering the nails which fix the hasp, and three are applied at the rear edge of the lid hiding the attachment of the inserted hinges. The shape and mechanism of the inserted hinges fixing the lid correspond to those used on contemporary Portuguese models<sup>615</sup> that were either applied to vertically holding

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>613</sup> Ferrão (1990b, pp.135-72).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>614</sup> Various types of case-furniture are depicted on *nanban* screens, cf. Curvelo (2015).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>615</sup> Cf. Ferrão (1990c, pp.23, 25, 31).

doors, horizontally linking panels of a folding table, or articulating the chests lids or fall fronts<sup>616</sup>.

Equipped with a fall front and hidden drawers, the two larger writing chests (2.2.1. and 2.2.2.) shown here are rare, yet still extant, examples of this particular typology. Official documents; inventories of personal goods amassed by Portuguese noblemen; records of goods shipped from certain areas; as well as descriptions of voyageurs or other individuals travelling to and from *Portuguese India* all report the existence of such case-furniture pieces as common merchandise, evidently<sup>617</sup>. There are innumerous references to these "writing boxes from India", "lacquered Indian works" or "writing boxes from China"<sup>618</sup>. The four chests examined here are all closely related to each other in dimensions, construction method (which clearly follows European models), the metal mounts and hinges (also used on contemporary Portuguese pieces of furniture), the vegetal low-relief carvings (reminiscent of South Asian carving works) and, additionally, sharing characteristics of similar Chinese style lacquer decorations. Several other chests and cabinets, here observed, possess identical inside lacquer decoration of Chinese motifs in gold over a red lacquer ground on the fall fronts and lids' interior<sup>619</sup>.

One chest's lid with similar interior lacquer decoration belongs to the collection of the Millennium BCP Foundation (Inv. no. 404; 70 x 141 cm) [Fig.50]. In contrast with the examined examples, rather than the flora motifs, this lid portrays a harbor of a Chinese portcity edged by two city walls, with typical Chinese houses and various human figures dressed in typical Han Chinese garb and head wear, all busy along the shore or in small boats in front

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>616</sup> Generally, common to the smaller writing boxes, two of these studs are located close to the front edge of the lid and three or more along the lid's rear edge covering the nail ends that fix either the hasp or the hinges in the back and that were bent over on the reverse.

<sup>617</sup> Pyrard de Laval gives us a rather good example on the goods arriving in Goa from China and Japan in the Black Ship: "(...) small cabinets of all shapes, made in the way of those from Germany [Augsburg or from central and northern Europe, in general], and are the most beautiful thing and most well finished to see if you can, because they are all of exquisite wood, mottled and of marquetry in ivory, mother-of-pearl and precious stones. Instead of iron they add gold (...)". My translation of the original: "(...) pequenos armários de todos os feitios, feitos ao modo dos da Alemanha, e são a coisa mais linda e mais bem acabada que ver se pode, porque são todos de madeira esquisita, mosqueada e marchetada de marfim, madre-pérola e pedras preciosas. Em vez de ferro poem-lhe ouro (...)". Further, Duarte Nunes de Leão affirmed that from Lisbon were exported escritórios dourados [gilded writing boxes] to the rest of Europe, cf. Ferrão (1990b, pp.27, 139).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>618</sup> Cf. Ferrão (1990b, pp.138-43), Crespo (2015a), Jordan Gschwend (2015c, p.263).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>619</sup> Ferrão (1990b, pp.72-73).

of the scenery, ashore clearly stick out two smaller ships which occupants show distinct physiognomy and dresses in European fashion [Fig. 51]. The headgear<sup>620</sup> worn by the Chinese figures indicates that this scene dates from before the fall of the Ming dynasty and the takeover of the Manchu (1644), who founded the Qing dynasty [Fig.52]. Pinto, already in 1983, ascribed it to a Sino-Portuguese manufacture, suggesting it to depict a Portuguese embassy to Peking, specifying Canton or Macau as the possible centers of its production<sup>621</sup>. It has also been proposed this could be, in fact, a depiction of a Portuguese embassy to Beijing or Nanjing<sup>622</sup>, although it rather seems to feature Portuguese merchants in the southern Chinese port-city Canton.

From the urban landscape which on the lid is represented from a kind of bird's-eye view, clearly stand out the two higher towers, of which the left one with plain walls might be the Arabian minaret (ca. 850 AD, also called *Smooth Pagoda*), while the right one clearly identifies as a pagoda and seems to be the *Flowery Pagoda*<sup>623</sup>. The same buildings as well as the double city wall and the mountains in the background of the city appear on a Dutch engraving from 1660, depicting a panorama-view of Canton [Fig. 1]. Unfortunately, it was impossible to see this piece, but either Pinto or Felgueiras stated it belonged to one of the large travelling trunks ascribed to Cochin. To Felgueiras, however, it seemed inconceivable that the lacquer covering would have originated from a different location, or to the Middle Kingdom<sup>624</sup>. However, specific details of the whole scenery and the narrow, undulated band with spirals in lacquer clearly point to Chinese lacquer art and are nonetheless consistent with those present on other Luso-Asian lacquered objects (Tab. 7; C).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>620</sup> A black hat with two wing-like flaps on each side is called the *wushamao* (formally known as *futou*).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>621</sup> Pinto (1983b), Matias (2003, pp.110, cat. no. 40).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>622</sup> Pinto (1983b), Vanhaecke (1991a, pp.184-185, cat. no. 156), Neuwirth (1998, pp.120-21), Flores (1998, p.41), Matias (2003, pp.110, cat. no. 40), Ptak (2007, pp.167, cat. no. VII.I.16).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>623</sup> Petisca (2010, pp.76-78).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>624</sup> Felgueiras (1999, pp.173-74).

# 2.2.1. "Pope's Trunk", Vienna

### Provenance

Known by the term "Pope's trunk" is presently housed in the Museen des Hofmobiliendepots in Vienna (Inv. no. MD047590; 38 x 85.7 x 53 cm). It belonged to the former *Kunstkammer* collection of Emperor Rudolph II in Prague, where it appeared mentioned in the inventory from 1607-1611 as "(...) one rather large Indian box or chest carved with raised foliage and gilded overall, I ell 8 inches long, 19 inches wide, 16.5 inches high" (...)<sup>626</sup> [Fig. 53]. This trunk probably served to house Indian or Chinese textiles and other smaller exotic collectables, as the inventory reveals<sup>627</sup>. Since 1821 there is a mention of the chest being used to store the consecrated children's clothes sent by the Pope on the occasion of the baptism of Habsburg princes<sup>628</sup>. Probably, it was used for keeping consecrated clothing just following a certain tradition within the Habsburg court or the chest was particularly chosen due to its Christian iconography in the interior.

## Description

This rectangular chest presents vegetal carvings in bas-relief on the outside, except the back which shows the bare wood surface. Carvings of a central blossom flanked by intertwined vegetation with stylized flowers and curled leaf tips repeat the same pattern on all the corpus sides. On top of the lid, there is a central rosette or floral wreath with a multi-petal flower (lotus or sunflower) from which emerges, on both sides, a set of curled and intertwined branches with the same flowers as on the sides which shape resembles that of the Indian stylized pine cone- or mango-motif<sup>629</sup>, or the Persian *boteh* [Fig. 54, 56]. Apart from the back, all the sides and the lids top are framed by a twisted rope frieze followed by beading in low-relief. Front and sides have covering profiled bars on the lower and side edges, which are then

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>625</sup> Felgueiras (1994, pp.34-41; 1999, p.173), Miklin-Kniefacz (2000), Seipel (2000, pp.212-13), Neuwirth (2001), Carvalho (2001a, pp.250-52), Mendonça (2010, p.94). The chest is exhibited on a wooden base which is part of the museum furniture and not original, cf. Hutt (2004, p.245).

<sup>626</sup> My translation of the original: "(...) I zimlich grosze indianische von erhebten laubwerckh geschnitene und alles vergulte kisten, oder truhen, ist lang 1 eln 8 zoll, braitt 19 zoll, hoch 16 ½ zoll (...)". Without knowing the exact length of the regional inch at that time, the conversion of today's measure of length, inch (2.54 cm), or the Viennese inch (2.6 cm) has comparable results in cm.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>627</sup> Seipel (2000, pp.212-13), Trnek & Silva (2001, pp.179-80), Bukovinska (2001, pp.214-16).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>628</sup> Cf. Neuwirth (2001).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>629</sup> Cf. Thakkar (2004).

fixed with wooden dowels, hiding the simple dovetail underneath that join the carcass sides<sup>630</sup>. The lid is articulated by three galvanized iron metal hinges, which traces of red lacquer and gold leaf decoration reveal that they were originally all covered with red lacquer and finally gilded [Fig. 55]. Iron angle brackets inserted into the upper edges of the chest' sides help to further consolidate the piece's corner joints. Once again, these parts still expose their original lacquer coating. The escutcheon of the lock, however, is missing, exposing the bare wood surface<sup>631</sup>.

Except for the back and the underside, all surfaces are covered with Asian lacquer. The carvings on the exterior are highlighted with gold leaf on a black lacquer ground with gilded dots of two different sizes. The upper rim, which is only visible when the lid is open, presents an undulated frieze of leaves and flowers (Tab. 7; E) [Fig. 57]. The chest's interior is red lacquered. The narrow top surface of the corpus sides is decorated by a narrow undulated frieze with volutes (Tab. 7; C). The lid presents a central medallion with a tree on which rests a pelican feeding its starving youngster in low-relief and highlighted in gold on a background equally decorated with gilded dots, all framed by a golden sun burst and a double line border [Fig. 58]. Surrounding the medallion there is a landscape with several scattered Chinese motifs. Rocks of which emerge tree peonies in the center of the bottom, flanked on the left side by a water scene with ducks among lotuses and aquatic grasses, and on the right, by herons stalking through the water and landing amongst lotus blossoms. This water scene is limited by two spits of land, which project at the upper edges of both sides. On the upper right is a rocky spit of land with a pine-tree with a bird of prey sitting on, while another on the ground has a hare under control [Fig. 59]. On the opposite side are two little tigers under another pine tree. Flying around there are magpies, along with bees and butterflies. The underside of the lid's black lacquered molded rim is decorated with a narrow band of consecutive volutes with dots (Tab. 7; B).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>630</sup> Images of the back of the chest without an edge covering profile expose the dovetail joints, Miklin-Kniefacz (2000).

<sup>631</sup> Miklin-Kniefacz (2000).

## Attribution

Although various scholars seemed to agree that the "Pope's trunk" is of south Asian origin, apparently, its exact origins are still uncertain and continue to puzzle them<sup>632</sup>. If it is often assumed that the wood and the lacquer work are made in the same location. Then, it is right to propose that this chest is a result of the presence of Chinese artisans in Cochin or Quilon<sup>633</sup>, or it was entirely produced in the Kingdom of Pegu<sup>634</sup>. More recently, though, the same work has been attributed to the Coast of Coromandel where a specialized furniture production was indeed established. Carvalho suggests that, because the sculpted tree in the central rosette on the trunk's lid does not show Chinese influence at all, the "pseudo-Chinese" scenery was in fact, produced by Indian artisans<sup>635</sup>. More recently, however, it has been also assumed that this chest was produced in coastal cities in Chinese provinces of Guangdong or Fujian, or in the close related Ryūkyū Kingdom<sup>636</sup>.

# Comparison

Many objects of Luso-Asian origin, like the other chests under the scrutiny of this thesis, present decorations with very similar vegetal carvings (see 2.2.2. and 2.2.4.). Even other objects with the same origin but of totally different typologies, from portable oratories to wooden furnishings in Indo-Portuguese churches in the region of Goa, depict carvings of similar formal characteristics<sup>637</sup>, including the particular leaf shape motif that appears not only on Indian textiles but is reminiscent of Muslim works of art too, which in turn could also refer to a possible origin in the Muslim regions of the Indian subcontinent.

Another example featuring exactly the same gold dotted background on its carved corpus sides' exterior is a writing box of wild jack wood owned by the brothers Eduardo and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>632</sup> Neuwirth (1998).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>633</sup> Felgueiras (1994).

<sup>634</sup> Moncada (1996, pp.6-9).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>635</sup> Carvalho (2001a, p.260; 2001b, pp.127-141).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>636</sup> Crespo (2015a, p.128; 2016d, pp.302-03).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>637</sup> A good example can be found in: Pinto (2011b, pp.198-99); for other examples of furniture attributed to an Indo-Portuguese manufacture see: Dias (2013).

Luís Moreira Barreiros in Lisbon<sup>638</sup>. This is a very rare and important piece we will specifically return to later (see 2.3.). Other good examples of the same formal characteristics are the lid's interior of a chest in the Palácio Nacional de Sintra (2.2.2.), or, yet another small chest<sup>639</sup> and a tray<sup>640</sup> (from a private collection) which lacquer decor depicts this same background of gilded dots of varying sizes.

A wood-sided chest resting on lion-shaped feet is embellished with identical carved decoration: a central flower blossom both on the front side and lid. It is not unlikely that this chest has been changed overtime. The brass escutcheon, for instance, resembles 18<sup>th</sup> century furniture produced in Goa. Despite, till the moment, nothing has been further known about its dimensions, provenance or whereabouts, this is still a very fair example of the same type of carved decoration of the "Pope's trunk" [Fig. 60].

In the antiques market appeared recently another similar chest (39 x 87 x 50 cm)<sup>641</sup>, which exterior surfaces present identical carvings found on "Pope's trunk". It has a lid and two drawers in the lower part of the front, assessable from the exterior. The lid's top has a central rosette with a multi-petalled lotus flower, surrounded by a diamond banding. From the top, bottom and both sides emerge intertwined branches with curled leaves and flowers towards the edges. The same diamond banding frames the whole lid, as well as the quarter cycle cartouche with a quarter flower bud and branches in each of the corners. The lid's red coated inside presents gilded motifs of paired birds, lotus, flowers and a tree peony. It is in bad condition due to several treatments and it is not sure whether its gilded decoration is still the original.

## 2.2.2. Carved Chest, Sintra

#### Description

Now housed at the National Palace of Sintra (Inv. no. PNS 2963; 38 x 79.5 x 41 cm) in Portugal, though its earlier provenance is unknown, this large chest is overall similar to the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>638</sup> Carvalho (2001b, p.149). This is the only known exception out of the group of similar writing boxes (2.3.) which does not present a thitsi lacquer coating, but in turn presents the same type of Chinese auspicious motifs from the flora and fauna including the same type of decorative friezes (Tab. 7; A, C, D, E, F).

<sup>639</sup> Körber et al. (2011, p.5, Table 1, no.10).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>640</sup> Dias (2002, p.48).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>641</sup> Roque (2014, pp.210-11).

"Pope's trunk" only slightly varying its dimensions and carved decoration. Made of teak wood, this chest has a rectangular corpus of entire wooden boards joined together by dovetail joints. The lid's top is bigger than the corpus itself and rests on a profiled circumferential ruler. It is articulated by the same type of inserted metal hinges also found in other specimen, still presenting traces of the original Asian lacquer coating. Lacquer remains are also present on other metal hardware [Figs. 61, 62]. On the pawn shaped feet-rest, profiled wooden strips run around the lower edge of the body, protruding with the same distance as the ruler above. Five decorative iron study reinforce the dovetail joints in each of the corners. And like before, the bas-relief decoration depicts flora and fauna sceneries. Front and backside are divided into two rectangular sections in which emerge stylized and curled leaves symmetrically in both sides of a central lotus flower. Each of the sections is framed by a band of carved diamonds. The lateral corpus sides are decorated identically, only presenting one of the rectangular sections [Fig. 63]. On the lid's top floral intertwined branches with foliage and curled leaf tips evolve again from a central multi-petal lotus flower [Fig. 64]. All surfaces were originally covered with Asian lacquer except the underside. Traces of a black lacquer coating are still present on its outer surfaces and above all in the recesses and corners of the carved decoration. Other traces on the feet reveal that these were also originally coated with lacquer. All exterior surfaces are covered with layers of wax and accumulated dirt.

The chest's interior was originally completely covered with red lacquer and gilded motifs of magpies flying upon tree peonies that emerge from the centers of the lower edges. Even the bottom displays traces of gilded decoration. Most of the lacquer coating has come detached due to water damage and exposes now the beige, light brownish wooden surface and traces of the sandy foundation layer. The lid's interior is also lacquered red and presents an intricate and rich variety of gilded motifs with inner drawings of incised lines of flora, such as: two pine-like trees oddly with two types of leaves, typical bamboo strands, branches of lychee, and in the lower right possibly an orchid and other (unidentified) flowers – and of fauna like a pair of phoenixes underneath the tree in the center; a pair of pheasants at the bottom left side of a second tree; a pair of magpies close to the lychee; a pair of doves on top of the central tree; a single magpie and a butterfly flying, and, on the red and gilded dots ground, a creature resembling both a squirrel and a kangaroo at the same time. The whole is framed by an undulated band of alternating stylized maybe lotus and chrysanthemum flowers (Table 7; E) [Fig. 65]. The black lacquered underside of the lid's rim presents a frieze of

consecutive spirals and dots (Table 7; B). Compared with the gold decoration on the lid's interior, the motifs on the sides' inner corpus seem to have been produced on a quite faster or careless manner.

#### Attribution

This chest, now part of the permanent exhibition at Sintra's National Palace, has been entirely attributed to 17<sup>th</sup> century India<sup>642</sup>.

# Comparison

There is a very similar chest belonging to the collection of the MNAA (Inv. no. 1418) in Lisbon, Portugal. It presents the same type of formal partition of front and backsides into two sections and similar carvings with central multi-petalled flowers and diamond banding. Unfortunately, this piece has suffered major alterations throughout the time and its outer surface seems to have been completely stripped and sanded, while the inside exposes an imitation of the same type of Luso-Asian gold decoration over a red ground. Yet further analysis performed on the extant coating only identified traces of an original lacquer covering <sup>643</sup> [Figs. 66, 67].

# 2.2.3. Chest with Two Drawers and Reading Flap, Porto

#### Description

Belonging to a Portuguese private collection<sup>644</sup>, this black covered rectangular chest – equipped with a big compartment (accessible through the lid) and two drawers in the front hidden behind a reading flap or fall front – is a writing chest (36.5 x 83 x 50 cm) of yet unidentified wood (according to its owner). Cross-sectioning the lid, articulated by forged iron ring hinges, the lower part with the circulating profile is of bigger dimensions than the middle section, but they all close almost flush with the turned columns composed of horizontal convex sections divided by little bulges that are attached to the four outer edges, thus hiding the dovetail joints. The chest's lower edge rests on a plinth frame forming a circumferential wooden bar of successive carved petals, resembling stylized Mannerist

<sup>642</sup> http://www.matriznet.dgpc.pt/MatrizNet/Objectos/ObjectosConsultar.aspx?IdReg=1005063.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>643</sup> Report of the study: Arca (Reserva), 31-10-AM, in Körber (2012a).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>644</sup> Costa (1998, p.302), Carvalho (2001b, p.147, cat. no.71), Dias (2008a, pp.119-120), Dias (2013, pp.93-95), Körber et. al (2011, Table 1, no. 1).

gadroon motifs, rods or petals. In the underside of the four corner blocks that stabilize this frame structure there are now holes, where there used to be feet. The whole chest is lockable by an inserted iron lock in the fall front with an incised escutcheon shaped like a shield on the outside. All corpus sides are decorated with blossom branches low-relief carvings [Figs. 68, 69]. On the lid, three decorative iron studs hide the ring hinge fittings, while carved curled blossom branches emerge diagonally from the two front corners, from apparent root-like formations, into the center where the branches connect to each other. Three pairs of birds, two long-tailed and a short-tailed pair of birds are sitting and picking on fruits that hang from the branches, a frequent motif in Indian decorations [Figs. 70, 71]. Two pairs of long-tailed squirrel-like rodents, of smaller dimensions compared to the birds, climb along the branches [Fig. 72]. On the back, more carved branches evolve similarly from the lower edges growing symmetrically towards the center. Again, on the front side, yet another pair of birds eating fruit sits among the branches that emerge from a single trunk in the center of the lower edge. On the lateral corpus' sides, the decoration emerges from a tree trunk in the lower center of each panel. The gilded gesso lower rim of yellowish color is carved in a manner that resembles both, the stylized lotus petal border common in Buddhist and Hindu deities usually depicted resting on or emerging from a lotus flower, and 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> European decorative friezes with stylized gadroons, or niches and rods.

The turned pillars in the corners could simply figure stylized bamboo tubes with bulges between the individual segments that are gilded. The outer black painted surface is partly worn out exposing the brownish hardwood core and, here and there, flakes of a thick original lacquer coating underneath the paint layer. The front, with the two drawers hidden behind the reading flap, is completely gilded and equally decorated with blossom branches in low relief emerging from a central bottom in each of the compartments. One metal pull is attached to a carved six-petal-shape placed in the center of each drawer.

Interiors of the chest and drawers, lid and fall front were originally coated with red lacquer and embellished with gilded motifs. Probably due to over the time damages, the chest has been subjected to several notable interventions. The lid's red lacquer coating and gilded decoration is lost, while the fall front still exposes traces of the original lacquer decoration with grasses, flowers and beasts, all framed by an undulated border with spirals (Tab. 7; C). In both inside walls of the bigger compartment (accessible through the lid) and the drawers' interior are still visible butterflies and stylized mythical flowers – a motif also found in the

interior of other Luso-Asian lacquered case furniture [Fig. 73]. Only in some areas the original lacquer coating is still extant.

Despite looking slightly different, this same object has been published in 1996<sup>645</sup>. The very identical carvings, clearly contrasting against the black background, suggest these were gilded. The fall-front escutcheon was in the shape of a heraldic shield with its upper part designed as battlements, while the carved base frame, similarly contrasting with the present, rested on four feet featuring hybrid- like beings with the face of a men and the body a lion [Fig. 74].

### Attribution

Along the years, this chest has been ascribed to several geographically different areas and centers of production, thus showing how difficult it can be to determine the exact origin of such artifacts with similar carved and lacquer embellishments. In 1998 Costa first described this piece as being made of a kind of scented wood<sup>646</sup>. However, according to the owner, no analysis has ever been made to identify the specific species of wood. Plus, due to the fact that the entire piece is covered with lacquer and paint that would require an invasive sampling. Consequently, assuming it is in fact made of scented wood, the manufacture of this chest (and the example that follows) has been attributed to centers on the eastern Indian coast<sup>647</sup>. Otherwise, also published as being made of *anjili* wood, the same chest has been ascribed to Cochin, a region known for its large plantations of this wood species, at the same time it has been suggested that there existed a Chinese colony where the lacquer coating must have been, most likely, applied<sup>648</sup>. More recently, the chest was also ascribed to an entirely southern Chinese origin, woodwork included, given all the edge hiding bamboo-like columns at the four corners, the shape of carved flowers and the curled leaf work, the type of birds

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>645</sup> This identical example was available in April 1992 at the auction of Leiria & Nascimento in Lisbon, cf. Moncada (1996, p.6). After comparing the carvings and imperfections in the wood surface, this is undoubtedly the same object.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>646</sup> Costa (1998, p.302).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>647</sup> Carvalho (2001b, p.147, cat. 71).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>648</sup> Dias (2008, pp.119-120).

depicted and overall Chinese motifs of the lacquer coating, along with the use of a scented wood, now identified as camphor wood (*Cinnamomum camphora*)<sup>649</sup>.

## Comparison

As far as the bamboo-inspired motifs they seem to offer some more controversy into the actual origin of this chest. Chinese furniture used this particular type of adornment indeed, especially in the Qing dynasty. Further, the chest's woodwork elements do not appear to have involved any Chinese craftsmanship. Besides China, bamboo grows in many other countries of Southern and Southeast Asia including India. As early as 1598, Linschoten<sup>650</sup> observed that bamboo was well used by Indian craftsmen who mastered this raw material.

Comparatively, the stylized lotus petal-shaped carved bar that constitutes the plinth of the chest has very similar characteristics to the early 17<sup>th</sup> century carved lotus petal decorated base of a large polychrome wooden low-relief with "Saint Ursula and the eleven thousand virgins" in the Convent of Santa Monica in Old Goa (Inv. no. 02.1.10)<sup>651</sup>. Also, same formal characteristics are recognizable on the base of a baptismal font in St. Mary's church in Kuruppampady in Kerala<sup>652</sup>. In what regards common decorative motifs, the stylized lotus petal borders frequently appear on Singhalese ivory carvings, as well as on Indian and Chinese artifacts and religious sculptures. Hence, the lotus flower is not only a significant symbol of Chinese culture alone but is also deeply rooted in both Hindu and Buddhist traditions throughout southern, Southeast and East Asia.

Another carved and lacquered Luso-Asian chest features front and lateral corpus' sides with the same segmented pillars attached to the four corners, and on the front one drawer in the lower part with identical low-relief wood carvings of vegetal scrolls with birds that flank

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>649</sup> Crespo (2015a, p.128; 2016d, pp.301-03). Despite from the fact that there has not been performed any wood analyses, the present lacquer coating does not offer any view of a bigger section of the wooden support and it seems more obvious that the scent may derive from earlier restoration treatments. Further, as seen in the interior this chest is composed of varied species. The exteriors of the drawers and the interior in the lower drawers section presents wooden surfaces, which have been analyzed by a Japanese biologist (3.2.2.). The bottom of the drawers has been fixed to the sides by the same kind of hook-shaped iron nails, only of a reduced dimension, as present in the trays (2.5.) and other furniture pieces studied.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>650</sup> Linschoten mentions the very big bamboo species (*Bambusa arundinacea*) that grows along the Coromandel Coast, of which the Indians in Goa and Malabar construct the palanquins, cf. Burnell (1988, pp.91-92).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>651</sup> Pinto (2003b; 2011c; 2011d).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>652</sup> Carita (2009, pp.188-189).

the Vase-of-Plenty or Tree-of-Life motif (a vase from which emerge curling branches with multi-sectioned leafs, tendrils, five-petal flowers and berry-like fruits). According to Moncada<sup>653</sup>, the red lacquered lid's interior is decorated with vegetal designs and birds and Chinese characters on the underside of the drawer. The lid is divided into two circular sections framed by narrow diamond-shape borders with a quadruped in the center of the first section. In between the borders is a circular frieze of scrolls, half vegetal half birds. Another broader frieze of the same nature frames the lid inside two narrow diamond-shape borders.

A further example, it is a cabinet on a stand from a private collection in Porto – which according to Ferrão might have been originally also coated with Asian lacquer – that presents a very similar carving work with rolled leaf tips, intertwined branches and flowers<sup>654</sup>. This cabinet's layout, however, is quite different from the writing chest (2.2.3.), but similar to the other two chests (2.2.1. and 2.2.4.) in the way the profiled bars were applied to all the edges framing each of the corpus sides.

## 2.2.4. Chest with Three Drawers and Reading Flap, Private collection

## **Description**

This rectangular lidded chest (43 x 77.5 x 49.5 cm)<sup>655</sup> from a private collection rests on four compressed ball feet. Its exterior sides are decorated with low-relief carving with each side and the top framed by a narrow diamond band. Three interior drawers of the same size with iron handles are on the lower part of the inner front which is hidden by a fall front. A bigger compartment is accessible through the lid. On the outside, the dark brownish surface partly exposes the wooden layer, still showing eventual traces of an original lacquer coating [Fig. 75]. The lid, articulated by inserted hinges using the same five iron studs type found on the two chests described earlier, is decorated with a central medallion figuring two intertwined blooming twigs, from which emerge, on both sides, intertwined branches with six petal-shaped leafs, grape-like fruits and leaves with rolled tips that develop symmetrically into all directions covering the whole surface.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>653</sup> Moncada (1996, p.8).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>654</sup> Ferrão (1990b, p.141).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>655</sup> Castilho (1999, pp.56-57), Carvalho (2001a, p.250; 2001b, pp.147, cat. no 71), Dias (2008a, p.120), Körber et al. (2011, Table 1, no.2).

The corpus sides' carvings depict branches with flowers (alike the ones in the lid's medallion), cone shaped multi-petal leafs and berry-like-fruit-bushes with its branches and twigs emerging from a bundle at the lower center of each side of the corpus. The drawers' front is all decorated with carved blooming branches of the same sort of the corpus' sides and, likewise, all gilded. The same kind of carved decoration embellishes the exterior corpus' sides, again, with blooming branches coming out of the center lower edge. Only the lid presents a central rosette with two intertwined flowering branches of the same kind found on the sides. From the latter, four branches disperse into all four directions, filling the entire surface with curled branches, six petal-shaped leaves and grapes-like fruits, all enclosed by a narrow diamond border [Fig. 76].

Similar to the "Pope's trunk", every side of the corpus has profiled bars framing the lower and side edges, thus, allowing the slightly bigger lid to flush shut properly within the dimensions of the sides. Additionally, a set of handles was mounted on both sides of the corpus for easier carrying.

The hinges that articulate the lid are covered with paint or lacquer<sup>656</sup>, while the inside surfaces are red lacquered with gilded motifs. Both the lid's inside and the fall front are richly decorated, figuring scattered lotuses, peonies, bamboo, several grasses, and, in the central scene, pheasants paired with other animals stand on rocks underneath a peony-tree where pairs of what seem to be magpies rest. In the lower left side, close to the lotus flower, there is a water scene with ducks, prawns or shrimps; and in the lower right, speckled fawns and bamboo, two cypress trees<sup>657</sup>, other pairs of birds, and butterflies. Both the lid and fall front interiors have been treated already and it is unknown whether the gilded decoration of the latter is still original.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>656</sup> This object has not been examined by me personally. Samples were provided by Pedro Cancela de Abreu for the earlier study at the LJF-DGPC, cf. Körber et al. (2011, Table no. 2).

<sup>657</sup> These resemble the one depicted in the third level of the facade of the Mater Dei church in Macau.

## Attribution

The origin of this chest has already been attributed to South Asia<sup>658</sup>. Further it has been assumed it was made of odoriferous wood, reason why it has been ascribed to the area of São Tomé de Meliapor (or former Mylapore and today's Chennai) where several types of furniture – handcrafted of scented wood like aloe, sandalwood or camphor wood, among others – could have reached the Indian East coast via the extensive trade with Malacca, cityports in China, or other Southeast Asian mercantile hubs such as Java<sup>659</sup>.

# Comparison

The vegetal-type carvings of this chest share certain characteristics with the so-called "Pope's trunk" (2.2.1.) mainly in the way leafage is figured in a somehow convex carving remarkable in both objects. Although differing in the exact type of motifs, both chests share a carving style that focused on the convex character of its shapes. In fact, this particular style shows many similarities with the applied carving technique also found, for example, in a canapé belonging to the church of Our Lady of Hope (in Vypin nearby Cochin)<sup>660</sup>, or, once again, in the carved motifs of the central medallion in a carved tray at the MNAA (Inv. no. 3 band), in Lisbon, where twigs with identical shaped leaves emerge from a similar leave-like formation at the bottom. Once more, the carved foliage and the berry-like-fruit-brunches motifs allude to an Indian or southern Asian manufacture. This type of stylized intertwined foliage with flowers (and even grape-like-fruits) commonly found in architectonical wood carving, was also applied to furniture in Gujarat or Bengal regions, and probably in many other areas of the subcontinent<sup>661</sup>.

Also comparable is yet another chest in the Asian Civilization Museum in Singapore (Inv. no. 2014-00463; 40 x 81 x 38 cm), acquired in 2013 at an art dealer in London<sup>662</sup>. It is of very similar characteristics, meaning: a fall-front hiding three interior drawers in the lower part, but in this particular case with an exterior filigree carved decoration, which is generally

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>658</sup> Castilho (1999, pp.56-57).

<sup>659</sup> Carvalho (2001b, p.147).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>660</sup> Pinto (2011a).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>661</sup> Thakkar (2004, pp.55, 69-70).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>662</sup> Many thanks to Clement Onn (Asian Civilizations Museum, Singapore) for providing information and images of this piece.

# THE JOURNEY OF ARTIFACTS: THE STUDY AND CHARACTERIZATION OF A NUCLEUS OF LACQUERED LUSO-ASIAN OBJECTS FROM THE $16^{\rm TH}$ AND $17^{\rm TH}$ CENTURIES

attributed to Ceylon<sup>663</sup>, featuring curling branches with leafs and grape-like fruits coming out of vases flanked by birds and other animals inside a central rectangle, all framed by foliage scrolls and beading [Fig. 77]. Interior red lacquered surfaces present Chinese auspicious motifs in gold, framed by single gold lines on the drawer fronts and an undulated wave-border with spirals in the lid's interior (Tab. 7; A, C) [Fig. 78].

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>663</sup> See for example: Dias (2009c, pp.89-90), Sousa (2016).



Fig. 50 Chest lid interior displaying a view of Canton and vessels with Portuguese passengers. © Ptak (2007, p.167)

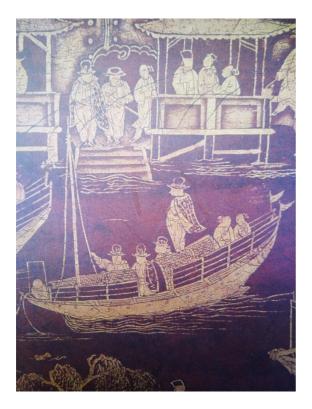


Fig. 51 Detail of vessel with Portuguese passengers

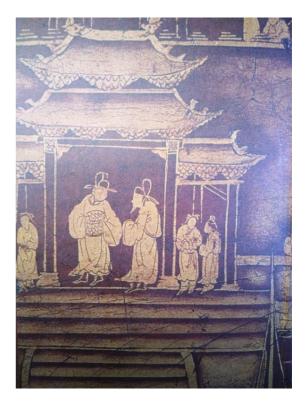


Fig. 52 Detail of Han Chinese individuals



Fig. 53 Chest 2.2.1., on a museum base. © Bundesmobilienverwaltung, Collection: Bundesmobilienverwaltung, Object location: Franzensburg in Laxenburg, Austria



Fig. 54 Stylized mango motif from hand-printed cotton textiles, Uttar Pradesh. © Thapa et al. (2007, Plate 43, Fig. 360)



Fig. 55 Chest 2.2.1., hinges with remains of a gold lacquer coating. © Silvia Miklin-Kniefacz



Fig. 56 Chest 2.2.1., lid showing intertwined vegetal carvings. © Silvia Miklin-Kniefacz



Fig. 57 Chest 2.2.1., detail of exterior front side with missing escutcheon on the left, gilded carvings and background with gilded dots, carved twisted robe and decorative frieze on top. © Silvia Miklin-Kniefacz



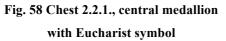




Fig. 59 Chest 2.2.1., detail of interior motifs. © Silvia Miklin-Kniefacz



Fig. 60 Unknown wood sighted chest with very similar carved ornamentation. Image provided by Manuel Castilho, Lisbon



Fig. 61 Chest 2.2.2., repainted hinges with lacquer remains on the nailhead



Fig. 62 Chest 2.2.2., lacquer remnants on metal corner reinforcements



Fig. 63 Chest 2.2.2. © Sónia Costa, LJF-DGPC



Fig. 64 Chest 2.2.2., lid exterior carvings. © Sónia Costa, LJF-DGPC



Fig. 65 Chest 2.2.2., lid interior, gilded red lacquer decoration. © Sónia Costa, LJF-DGPC



Fig. 66 Chest with similar carvings, heavily altered. © Maria João Petisca



Fig. 67 Interior of the same chest. © Maria João Petisca



Fig. 68 Chest 2.2.3. © Dias (2008a, p.120)



Fig. 69 Chest 2.2.3., lateral side with symmetrical carvings



Fig. 70 Motif in Indian stone mosaics. Throne room, Diwan-i-Am, Red Fort, Delhi. © Thapa et al. (2007, Plate 19, Fig. 177)



Fig. 71 Motif in Indian stone mosaics. Throne room, Diwan-i-Am, Red Fort, Delhi. © Thapa et al. (2007, Plate 19, Fig. 176)



Fig. 72 Chest 2.2.3., lid detail showing symmetrically carved intertwined branches with rodents and birds snatching fruit



Fig. 73 Chest 2.2.3., drawer interiors showing Chinese stylized flowers



Fig. 74 Chest 2.2.3. in an earlier stage © Moncada (1996, p.6, Fig.2)



Fig. 75 Chest 2.2.4. © Carvalho (2001, p.147)



Fig. 76 Chest 2.2.4., carved decoration on lid and rear side. © Pedro Cancela de Abreu



Fig. 77 Chest with animal and vegetal carvings.  $\ensuremath{\mathbb{C}}$  ACM



Fig. 78 Chest with open lid and fall front exposing three drawers. © ACM

# 2.3. Carved and Lacquered Writing Boxes

Although this group of objects does not belong to the investigated nucleus of this thesis, they may be broadly related since at least one example out of this set displays the same decorative scheme of Chinese motifs along with a variety of ornamental bands, all present in the Asian lacquer vestments of objects studied here.

These are portable and lockable writing boxes of rather small dimensions (the majority circa 16-18 x 40-45 x 30-35 cm) with an upper lid or fall-front, containing in its interior drawers or other compartments for storing correspondence and writing utensils. Overall, the boxes' exterior corpus sides, and sometimes the lid's interior, are decorated with different types of low relief floral carvings or scrollwork always arranged symmetrically, whereas the interiors are coated with red lacquer or paint. Both inside and outside sculptured motifs are highlighted in gold. Their lids and read-flaps are usually articulated by iron ring hinges, occasionally inserted hinges, and as referred to earlier decorative studs employed to hide the bent over nail ends that fix the hinges to the edges of the lid, as well as those that fix the hasp and the escutcheon to the front. Circular iron study of smaller diameter additionally reinforce the dovetail joints that join the corpus sides [Fig. 79]. Generally attributed to the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, these writing boxes are usually made of dark brown to reddish brown, dense and heavy tropical hardwood such as wild jack wood (Artocarpus hirsutus), Indian redwood (Caesalpinia sappan), teak or other woods. These writing boxes clearly follow under the type of case-furniture normally destined for an educated clientele and mainly preferred for its necessary portability since used by Portuguese noblemen (in charge of the crown or occupying administrative positions), agents and merchants traveling overseas, as well as by members of the religious orders who frequently moved around Portuguese India<sup>664</sup>. It is probable that more than twenty of these smaller writing boxes still exist today in Portuguese collections, though the majority belongs to private collections, some might still be in circulation within the antique market and auctioning.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>664</sup> As referred to in Joseph Wicky's *Documenta Indica*, vol XV, p. 813: In 1588 the father Rudolfo Acquavia ordered that at least in schools and in residences with higher epistolary movement, such as in Goa, Cochin and Bassein (Vasai), the consultants and auditors of the Society of Jesus should have their own, small and with a lid that could close, cf. Dias (2002, p.32).

All extant examples possess an Asian lacquer coating but, while the majority is of a Southeast Asian origin, apparently, there is one example (2.3.1.) which lacquer coating and decoration are consistent with the lacquer decorations found on the four chests, previously described (2.2.1.- 2.2.4.).

Unlike the other case-furniture, described before, many of these writing boxes feature decorative motifs (either carved or in gold lacquer fashion) inspired by southern Asian and Hindu traditions [Fig. 80], European Renaissance prints depicting classical scenes from the Greek-Roman mythology<sup>665</sup> to allegoric themes<sup>666</sup>; scenes of Biblical lore or Christian iconography<sup>667</sup>; themes related to the contemporary Portuguese and European history or literature<sup>668</sup>, or even the presentation of Portuguese coat-of-arms<sup>669</sup>.

Apparently, apart from the fact that all these writing boxes present symmetrically arranged floral carvings and scrollwork, a closer look to the carving styles of the bulk of these boxes allows differentiating them from each other in both technical execution and formal language (2.10.). Comparatively, this means, either more rounded plant stems and leaves, or more concave and convex shapes [Fig. 81]; Muslim arabesque inspired shapes or rather forms that resemble Persian, Mughal or Singhalese spiral-shaped scroll decorations.

This same type of carved decoration with circular scrolls can be found on another chest in Lisbon with an inner compartment and a little drawer assessable from the corpus front

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>665</sup> Cf. Carvalho (2001a, p.253; 2001b, p.143, cat. no. 67).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>666</sup> See examples in Ferrão (1990b, pp.154-57), Carvalho (2001b, p.144, cat. no.68), Dias (2002, p.61), Silva (2007, p.207), Henriques (2009, p.272), Körber et al. (2011, Table 1 no.11), Körber (2012, p.320, Ill. 2), Crespo (2017, pp.170-171, cat. no. 153).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>667</sup> A writing box (16.7 x 40.8 x 29.2 cm), formerly in a private collection in Lisbon and acquired by the Asian Civilizations Museum in Singapore, with a scene alluding to the Old Testament on the top (the Sacrifice of Isaac) and a double-headed eagle in the lid's interior (possibly the Hindu mythical creature *Gandaberunda*, see Chapter 4.1.2.), cf. Körber et al. (2011, Table 1, no. 9), Serrão (2015a, p.82), Chong (2016a, pp.118, cat. no. 41); MNSR (Inv. no. 112 div.; 16.8 x 41.5 x 32 cm), cf. Körber e tal. (2011, Table 1, no. 8) and Serrão (2015a, p.104).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>668</sup> The lid's exterior decoration of one example (17 x 45.5 x 34 cm) features a verse derived from a poem of Luis de Camões, the Portuguese poet and author of the 16<sup>th</sup> century epic *Os Lusiadas*, cf. Serrão (2014b; 2015a). Yet another example of smaller dimension (12 x 26,5 x 21 cm) represents a scene after a print probably inspired by a 14<sup>th</sup> century poem by Francesco Petrarcha, cf. Carvalho (2001a, pp.253, 254-255; 2001b, p.143, cat. 67).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>669</sup> As for example a writing box with similar vegetal carvings and droplet-shaped leafs from a private collection in Porto, which has a carved coat-of-arms on top of the lid, and the same in lacquer technique in the lid's interior, depicted in Ferrão (1990b, pp.157-58), and an example housed in the MNSR in Porto has traces of a no longer identifiable crest in gold on the interior of the lid (Inv. no. 112 div.), cf. Körber et al. (2011, Table 1, no.8), Serrão (2015a, p.104), Crespo (2017a).

on lion shaped feet (MNAA, Inv. 1661 mov.)<sup>670</sup>. Both external and internal surfaces depict floral scrolls, either in low-relief or executed in lacquer technique like inside the lid. This depicts probably another European influenced scene carved in low-relief highlighted in gold and flanked by a gilded scroll-work on the black lacquer ground just as it is typical in Burmese art – the already mentioned *chu pán* motif present on *shwei zawa* – Burmese gold lacquer pieces [Fig. 29]. Comparably, this same technique is also found in an example of smaller dimension (27 x 54.5 x 38.5 cm) recently available on the antiques market<sup>671</sup> and many examples in private collections.

As found out in the earlier study conducted at the LJF-DGPC in Lisbon, the bulk of these writing boxes show a lacquering and decorative technique that in fact correspond to those originated at the old kingdoms of Pegu (todays Myanmar) and Siam (Thailand). During this earlier study, the lacquer coatings of the chest on lion feet, along with the coating from other writing boxes of similar shape and dimensions have been analyzed. Lacquer revetments revealed to be made with thitsi lacquer and the Southeast Asian technique of gold leaf application. The materials employed correspond indeed to the lacquering traditions used in the kingdoms of Siam and Pegu, while the shape of the gold decoration points more to a Burmese manufacture<sup>672</sup>.

Generally, these writing boxes are made of a very heavy wood, reason why it is often assumed that they are made of *anjili* or wild jack wood, even if the wood surface itself is not always visible. Whereas some scholars<sup>673</sup> suggest that these small pieces of furniture were all produced in Cochin, others have suggested these writing boxes were manufactured in centers with a strong Portuguese presence, such as the Bay of Bengal or the Coast of Coromandel<sup>674</sup>, proposing that even the lacquering on the pieces was equally executed in this area either by Indian or Chinese artisans. Hugo Miguel Crespo in his turn suggests that they were entirely

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>670</sup> For depictions see: Carvalho (2001b, p.145, cat. no.69) and Frade & Körber (2011, pp.34-39); and for analyses results see Körber et al. (2011, Table 1 no. 4).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>671</sup> Crespo (2016d, pp.238-61).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>672</sup> Ferrão (1990b, pp.154-57), Silva (2007, p.207), Körber et al. (2011, Table 1, nos. 5-9, 11), Körber (2012b).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>673</sup> Felgueiras (1994), John (1998), Dias (2002, pp.42-45; 2013).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>674</sup> Cf. Carvalho (2001a, p.250; 2001b, pp.139, 143).

produced in the Burmese kingdom of Pegu<sup>675</sup>. On the other hand, as for the metal mounts, hinges and locks, there is no doubt that these chests were made after Portuguese models. More particularly they present distinctive carving styles and wooden structures sharing some features with other case-furniture like, for example, the so-called travelling trunks from Cochin<sup>676</sup>. However, these formal differences in the carved decoration may or not indicate either different workshops or even different locations within the vast area of South and Southeast Asia. Likely important, the fact that in many cases the metal hardware was mounted before the pieces were lacquered allows us to infer that the finished product was delivered to the artisans who then, finally, lacquered the entire object<sup>677</sup> [Figs. 82, 83].

## 2.3.1. Carved and Lacquered Writing Box, Lisbon

#### Provenance

This peculiar example belongs to the collection of Luís and Eduardo Moreira Barreiros  $(16 \times 40 \times 32 \text{ cm})^{678}$  [Fig. 84].

## Description

Like many of the other examples of Southeast Asian lacquer coatings studied here, the Barreiros' writing box has the same structure comprised off a lid with an inner compartment and a fall front (or blotting pad) hiding an inner front with a drawer at the base. And, both inner front and all exterior surfaces show low-relief carvings of floral scrolls and Persian boteh motif droplet-shaped leaves. Though identical in dimensions and structure to the Southeast Asian thitsi lacquered objects, it presents a complete different decorative scheme rather corresponding to the Chinese style laccol lacquered objects. Exterior flowers and droplet-shaped leaves carvings (also present on several other writing boxes of the same

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>675</sup> For a closer look on these comments, see Crespo (2016a; 2016d; 2017a). Are there any references on such furniture productions for Portuguese settlers and merchants in the region? In fact, under the rule of the British, teak furniture was produced in the region of present-day Myanmar, but Burmese teak carvings are of different character. This would definitely be a field that deserves to be investigated more closely.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>676</sup> Felgueiras (1994) or Loureiro (2015).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>677</sup> The lacquer was applied over the escutcheons, hinges and iron studs rather than underneath it. For this matter, see other examples mentioned in Chapter 4.1.1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>678</sup> Cf. Carvalho (2001b, p.149, cat. no. 73).

structure<sup>679</sup>) are equally highlighted in gold, while the black lacquered ground exposes the same gilded dots like in the Viennese "Pope's trunk" (2.2.1.) or the chest in Sintra (2.2.2.). Alike other Chinese style laccol lacquered items, the Barreiros' piece shows, beside other friezes, wavy borders with spirals or stylized lotus flowers and leaves (Tab. 7; C, E), such as in the Sintra chest. The interior red lacquered surfaces have the same sceneries of Chinese flora and fauna as well as the type of decorative borders common to the group of objects studied here. Interestingly, after a closer look, this same piece seems to have been lacquered twice. Still visible on the front of the drawer there is an earlier black lacquer coating with gold leaf decoration with formal characteristics identical to the Southeast Asian lacquer coating and gold leaf application techniques, such as not gilded black lines of details [Figs. 85, 86].

## Attribution and Comparison

This writing box ascribed to the Gulf of Bengal<sup>680</sup> has low-relief carvings similar to a cabinet on stand in the Jorge Neves da Mota collection in Porto that has been identically attributed to the Bay of Bengal<sup>681</sup>. The latter presents a Southeast Asian thitsi lacquer coating and carved adornments with European Renaissance and Hindu elements<sup>682</sup>. Yet from another private collection in Porto, a different cabinet on stand with a lavishly carved skirting (which might not be original) resting on *naga* shaped legs and couched lion feet, also has carved motifs identical both in the formal language and execution to the above-mentioned examples, and its manufacture points to the Indian subcontinent<sup>683</sup>. This, in turn, contradicts Crespo's earlier suggestion that these lacquered writing boxes were entirely produced in the region of today's Myanmar<sup>684</sup>. However, these writing boxes built, notwithstanding, another very interesting group of objects that would certainly deserve a deeper study, including the wooden structures, the different carvings styles and the lacquer coatings, yet not in the scope of this thesis.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>679</sup> As for example a box housed in the MNSR, cf. Ferrão (1990b, pp.167-68), Körber et al. (2011, Table 1 no. 8), or from the Fernando Távora collection in Porto, cf. Ferrão (1990b, pp.162-63), Körber et al. (2011, Table 1 no. 5), and other examples in Portuguese private collections, cf. Ferrão (1990b, pp.157-158, 164-165, 168).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>680</sup> Carvalho (2001b, p.149).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>681</sup> Carvalho (2001b, p.146, cat. 70).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>682</sup> Körber et al. (2011, Table 1 no. 13).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>683</sup> Ferrão (1990b, pp.150-52), Körber et al. (2011, Table 1, no. 13).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>684</sup> Crespo (2017a).



Fig. 79 Writing box with accessible drawer. Private collection



Fig. 80 Writing box with interior drawer, fall front and blotting pad. Private collection



Fig. 81 Writing box with interior drawer, fall front and blotting pad. Private collection



Fig. 82 Detail of iron stud with lacquer remains on a thitsi lacquered writing box. Private collection



Fig. 83 Writing box 2.3.1., detail of lacquer covered metal ring pull



Fig. 84 Writing box 2.3.1., inferior inner drawer and blotting pad, overall decorated with Chinese motifs,

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Fig. 85 Writing box 2.3.1., detail of the drawer front with thitsi lacquer coating and Southeast Asian gilding technique (gold with black ungilded lines) underneath the brownish laccol lacquer coating



Fig. 86 Writing box 2.3.1., detail of the drawer front with exposed underlying thitsi lacquer coating and Southeast Asian gilding technique

# 2.4. Lacquered Foldable Tabletops

Foldable tabletops with separate collapsible frame structures, known as mesa de campanha (camp table) or mesa de gonzos or engonzos (table with hinges) were common furnishings in Medieval and Renaissance Portuguese households and appear mentioned in contemporary travel accounts and numerous inventories<sup>685</sup>. The inventory of the household of King Dom João III from 1534, for instance, refers to "one big table with its legs and hinges, and chains or straps on their legs which allow them to open up"686. Or another inventory of the household items in Rua Nova dos Mercadores in Lisbon, from around 1540, abruptly left behind by the fleeing family of New Christian Duarte Gomes. Since here is just mentioned, with no more detailed description, "a space to eat with folding table", this might just refer to a contemporary Portuguese model of simple structure<sup>687</sup>. These are, indeed, more or less common domestic items, often represented in 16<sup>th</sup> century paintings where they appear covered by textiles<sup>688</sup>. Overall, these objects may have the same denomination, though its main characteristics may vary depending on different factors such as: the status of the owner; the usage given to their original purposes; the construction and ornamental techniques and materials; as well as their dimensions. The same is applicable to the tables used and produced in Portuguese overseas territories<sup>689</sup>, however, when made to order of the foreign clients or export to Europe, these tables were even more embellished using diverse decorative techniques like wood carvings, inlays of exotic materials (e.g. tropical woods, ivory or mother-of-pearl) and Asian lacquer coatings. Easy to assemble and dismantle, foldable tabletops were multi-purpose items ideal for traveling since they were portable and at the same time did not take too much space either when in use or folded aside. Already existing in early 16<sup>th</sup> century, these objects must have suited writing and storing needs of many Portuguese traveling overseas, not only during the long journeys on the ships where space

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>685</sup> Ferrão (1990a, pp.7, 268-283), Dias (2013, p.185).

 $<sup>^{686}</sup>$  My translation from the original: "(...) Huũa mesa gramde com pees e bysagras, e correas nos pees  $\tilde{e}$  que talham (...)" in Ferrão (1990c, p.165).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>687</sup> Crespo (2015a, p.124). A simple version composed of a single board and with a foldable rack with iron chains is depicted in Ferrão (1990a, pp.282-83).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>688</sup> Ferrão (1990a, p.278).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>689</sup> Ferrão (1990b), Dias (2013, pp.184-199).

was scarce and limited, but also in land<sup>690</sup>. Importantly enough, these objects are specifically depicted on several different kinds of Indo-Portuguese artifacts, from Indian textiles and embroideries on wall hangings and coverlets<sup>691</sup>, to caskets and cabinets<sup>692</sup> [Figs. 87, 88]. A good example is a casket from Kotte lavishly decorated with Singhalese ivory carvings where a table with an X-shaped rack is pictured next to a Ceylonese high rank individual with a Portuguese nobleman sitting on Renaissance scissors chairs<sup>693</sup>.

Generally the top of these tables is divided into two (2.4.1.) or three (2.4.2.) panels joined together by hinges to be easily collapsible. The hinges came in a wide range of types, from simple forget iron ring hinges<sup>694</sup>, to recessed hinges of iron or brass, normally, inserted into the wooden top surface. The legs are usually composed of two frame structures, which are joined together in the center of the long sides, rotating around a pivot point and thus opening into an X-shape<sup>695</sup>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>690</sup> Ferrão (1990b, pp.128-29), Pinto & Garcia (1998, pp.165-66).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>691</sup> Such as on the fragment of a coverlet housed in the MNAA (inv. 3413).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>692</sup> Like, for example, a 16<sup>th</sup> century Indo-Portuguese cabinet covered with tortoiseshell which detailed decoration reproduces daily life scenes of Portuguese settlers using several types of furniture including similar table structures with foldable racks, cf. Dias (2002, pp.97, 120; 2013, pp.312-315).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>693</sup> This casket was probably produced on behalf of the Queen D. Catharina of Austria after the ambassador Sri Ramaraksas's visit to Portugal between 1541 and 1542, representing the emperor Bhuvaneka Bahu (1521-1551), Jordan & Beltz (2010, pp.99, 102). Comparably, this piece is of the same shape and carvings (exterior corpus sides) as an earlier example given to D. João III as a gift by the same embassy. Both caskets entered the *Kunstkammer* collection of Albrecht V (founded in 1565) appearing already in the collection's inventory of 1598, and are still housed in the treasury of the Munich Residence (Inv. 1241 and 1242), cf. Ferrão (1990b, p.81), Schwabe (2000, p.10), Jordan Gschwend & Belz (2010, pp.97-104), Dias (2013, p.187). These two precious caskets were among other ivory pieces probably offered by Queen Dona Catharina of Austria to Albrecht V, who in 1574 had inquired the court in Lisbon several times for "strange and weird things" for his *Kunstkammer*. Curiously enough, on behalf of Albrecht V, the Fugger agent Anton Meyting traveled to Lisbon also to negotiate the marriage between Albrecht's daughter and D. Catharina's grandson the young Portuguese King Sebastião, Jordan & Beltz (2010, p.101).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>694</sup> See an early 16<sup>th</sup> century contemporary Portuguese example from the Acores of a low furniture type *escabelomesa* (stool-table) with a collapsible tabletop, articulated by ring iron hinges, in Ferrão (1990b, pp.306-07) or Silva (2009a).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>695</sup> Such are the examples described in Ferrão (1990a, pp.279-83).

### 2.4.1. Foldable "Cardinal's Tabletop", Vienna

#### Provenance

The so-called "Cardinal's tabletop"<sup>696</sup>, once in the library of the Archduke Ferdinand II at Schloss Ambras near Innsbruck, was identified as "an Indian tabletop from the Cardinal" in the 1596 estate inventory, elaborated after his death in 1595, and is currently on loan at the MAK in Vienna (KHM, Inv. no. 4958; 121.5 x 96.7 x 3.2 cm) [Fig. 89].

The "Cardinal" mentioned in the name of the piece is probably related to Cardinal Albrecht VII, appointed by Felipe II of Spain (Filipe I of Portugal) for the post of Lisbon's viceroy between 1583 and 1593, period during which the Royal *Kunstkammer* collections both at Schloss Ambras and in Prague grew significantly at the peak of the Portuguese Cape trade. Neuwirth suggests that the Ambras tabletop was precisely gifted to Archduke Ferdinand II as a payment for military services he had granted to Felipe II<sup>698</sup>. Respectively mentioned in the several inventories, these tables were owned by different members of the European royalty or nobility, likely to have been offered by the Portuguese Queen D. Catarina of Austria known for her practice of giving exotic objects from *Portuguese India* (normally purchased by her agents) to her manifold of family members or to aristocrats of other European courts, instead, as diplomatic gifts. Hence, it seems very possible that this tabletop came originally from the queen's collection in Lisbon, later to have reached the Ambras collection whether via her natural successor, King D. Sebastião, or more likely, via Cardinal Albrecht VII or King Felipe II of Spain.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>696</sup> Felgueiras ( (1994, pp.34-41; 1999, pp.171-73; 2000; 2001), Kreiner (1996, p.276), Jordan Gschwend (1998, pp.210-212; 2015c, pp.148-149), Neuwirth (1997; 1998; 2000a, p.51; 2009a, p.240; 2009b, p.218), Schiestl (1999), Bukovinska (2001, pp.216-18).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>697</sup> My translation of the original: "(...) *Ain Indianisch tischbladt vom cardinal* (...)", in Felgueiras (2000, pp.211-12; 2001, pp.178-79), Neuwirth (2009b, p.218).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>698</sup> In the case of an unpaid bill from 1578 owed by Felipe II to the Archduke Ferdinand II, who has apparently sent his messenger to Madrid with the instruction to insist the payment and to launch "artistic orders", suggesting the sending of artifacts instead of a cash payment, Neuwirth (2000a, p.51; 2009a; 2009b). This illustrates that it was not at all uncommon, but rather highly welcomed and appreciated, to make material payments with rare, precious and exotic objects, instead of money per se.

Documents from 1562 and 1564 do evidence that the queen received several lacquered folding tables among other furniture, such as Chinese folding chairs (*jiaoyi*<sup>699</sup>), sent to her by her personal agent in Malacca, João de Pedroso. In 1562 the Queen received:

"(...) three tables from China each one with its legs labored in the same labor which came this present year 1562 from India sent by chamber boy of the so mentioned lady and her overseer in parts of India (...)"<sup>700</sup>.

The description is quite specific about the resemblance of all tables' legs (or racks) proving that they were made after the same model. In turn, the second shipment's report (from 1564) mentions that, this time, the tables came with no hinges, but just two loose panels constituted the tabletop, thus, suggesting that the table arrived in separate parts already lacquered and later to be assembled in Portugal. Measuring around 1.70 x 1.10 m each<sup>701</sup>, these pieces are richly gilded or silvered on a black lacquer ground and decorated with birds, quadrupeds, branches, deer, or human figures dressed in multi-colored costumes.

Whereas, the first table is described to have a frieze framing the central area as: "(...) one frame executed of the same wood as the one of the table of some small creatures with features like fish tails with wings over a blue field [background] (...)"<sup>702</sup> – worth noting here that, apparently, the "Cardinal's tabletop" presents the same blue background. The second table shows mainly human figures, though the rear black lacquered sides were decorated with gilded branches and birds<sup>703</sup>.

The second shipment (from 1564) also included two pairs of tabletops and one single tabletop of which the first and bigger pair  $(1.65 \times 0.65 \text{ m})$  is described as:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>699</sup> Wang (1986, p.23).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>700</sup> My translation of the original: "(...) três mesas da china cada hũa cõ seus pees labrados do labor das mesmas as quaes vierao estre presente anno 562 da India que mandou João de pedrosa moço da camara da dita sõra e seu feytor nas partes da India (...)", in Jordan Gschwend (1998, p.226).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>701</sup> This conversion from the contemporary unit of measurement was done by Bernardo Ferrão (1990b, pp.129-30).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>702</sup> My translation of the original: "(...) huã moldura labrada do mesmo pao da mesa de uns bichingos de feyção de Rabos de pejes com asas sobre campo azul (...)", in Jordan Gschwend (1998, p.226).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>703</sup> Ferrão (1990b, pp.129-30), Jordan Gschwend (1996, p.112), Jordan & Tudela (2001, p.25).

"(...) two big ones all painted with golden branches over a black field [background] and with some animals of deer and little birds and other animals of birds and bogeymen<sup>704</sup>. And on the other side (rear) branches and two peacocks and one bird all gilded... they are each table of two boards and have no legs (...)"<sup>705</sup>.

And, another pair of tables of smaller dimensions but identical decoration, also consistent of two boards and no hinges. The single and smallest tabletop (approximately 1.10 x 0.90 m) is the most similar in size when compared to the "Cardinal's tabletop"  $^{706}$ .

And, in fact, the decoration of the "Cardinal's Table" is quite similar to the description of the tables Queen D. Catarina received from her personal agent in Malacca, João de Pedroso<sup>707</sup> [Fig. 90]. Foldable tables and tabletops of unique design decorated with complex decoration of foliage, flowers and birds from *Portuguese India* were collected and exchanged as diplomatic gifts among European aristocrats<sup>708</sup>. Some of these luxury objects were to be later given away as precious gifts to her relatives in Spain<sup>709</sup>. Not being part of the

This may refer to grotesque's masks or other creatures as often part of Renaissance scroll-work, such as present on the Luso-Asian shields (2.1.) and even on the Cardinal's tabletop.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>705</sup> My translation of the original: "(...) duas grandes todas pintadas de Ramos de ouro sobre campo preto e com algũas alimárias de cervos e passarinhos e outras alimárias aves e papões. E da outra banda (verso) ramos e dous paboes e hun pasaro tudo dourado... são cada hua mesa de duas tabuas e não tem pees (...)", Jordan Gschwend (1998, p.226).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>706</sup> Ferrão (1990b, p.130), Jordan Gschwend & Tudela (2001, p.25).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>707</sup> Neuwirth (2009a, p.240; 2009b, p.218; 2000a, p.51), Jordan Gschwend (2015c, p.148).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>708</sup> A few good examples are: the 1607-1611 inventory of Emperor Rudolph II *Kunstkammer* mentioning six similar black lacquered tabletops with gold painting and foldable legs, cf. Bukovinská (2001, p.217). The 1562 account that the son of King Felipe II of Spain, Prince Don Carlos, received from the Duke of Bavaria Albrecht V a rectangular table with ivory inlays featuring roses and branches, Ferrão (1990b, p.130), Jordan Gschwend & Tudela (2001, p.25). The list of gifts sent by Cardinal D. Henrique to the Sheriff of Morocco between 1577 and 1580 which refers two tables from China with their respective legs. One of them gilded on black lacquer with silver mounts and equally decorated legs. The other decorated with mother-of-pearl and silver mounts on the edges with black and golden legs with silver mounts. Both racks had chains of green velvet to hold them in a certain position when open, cf. Ferrão (1990b, p.130; 1990c, p.211).

Other few good examples of this royal practice are: two chairs and a folding table offered by D. Catarina of Austria to her grandson Infant D. Carlos in 1564, cf. Jordan Gschwend (1998, p.215; 2015c, p.148, note 32); or, a table offered by D. Catarina to Isabel de Valois as documented in an inventory of Isabel's possessions, cf. Jordan Gschwend (1998, p.214), Felgueiras (1999, p.172). Other documents mention a chest loaded with tables sent by the Fugger factor Christoph Hörmann to the Spanish King Felipe II (I of Portugal) in 1561, cf. Jordan Gschwend & Tudela (2001, p. 24). Spanish royal inventories also refer similar tabletops as a "(...) square from China, covered with black lacquer, painted with gold and birds and other things from India (...)" [my translation of the original: "(...) cuadrada de la China, cubierta de lacquer negro, pintada de oro e aves y otras cosas de la Yndia (...)"]. And herein recounting that Carlos V sister Maria of Hungary had "(...) a table of China, painted, and on its surface painted some images of gold and in the middle a piece of green cloth with corners and hinges on the sides of gilded iron with his feet of ebony and chains of black velvet with gilded iron

autochthonous Chinese furniture typologies; the probability is highly these tables were part of a special order on behalf of the queen, although it still remains unclear where exactly the wooden core has been produced.

## **Description**

This foldable tabletop is divided into two identical collapsible boards connected by three brass hinges inserted into the top surface. Alike in shape (as mentioned earlier) the table's brass hinges make-up follows contemporary 16<sup>th</sup> century Portuguese models. No vestiges are notable of the existence of a former rack on the panels. Any eventual original mounting or legs' locking device, a scissors shaped rack, or even a stand, are now missing. Albeit the whole surface is covered with Asian lacquer coating, losses in the lacquer surface expose the foundation layers barely showing the wooden structure thus, not allowing the exact identification of the wooden species<sup>710</sup>. Yet multiple cracks from shrinkage of the lacquer covering reveal the former construction method underneath showing a frame-filling design [Fig. 91]. Each panel consists of a middle board framed by narrow boards on the four sides which, in turn, are fixed to the central board through mortise and tenon joints<sup>711</sup>.

Entirely coated with Asian lacquer and gilded motives, the "Cardinal's table" top surface presents a series of motifs drawn in gold with a blue coating carefully filling the spaces in between and continuously running up to the outer edges of the two panels with a band of consecutive interlinked spirals. Skillfully balanced, the whole decoration pattern of the tabletop is divided by its fold, similarly developing artwork on either side from the outer edge towards the central fold between the two panels. Each panel's decorative pattern likely reflects the other in a 180 degrees rotation. This face of the tabletop is framed all around by a broader frieze with scroll-work that resembles Renaissance motifs with "grotesque" creatures – one may say spying dragons with a scaled body and claws, with bodies ending in a *ruyi*-like shape – from which emerge another set of floral scrolls. This broader band, in turn, is framed

buckles (...)" [my translation of the original: "(...) Una mesa de la China, pintada, y en la haz della pintada ciertas imáxenes de oro y en médio un pedazo de paño verde con las cantoneras y visagras de los lados de hierro dorado, con su pie de ébano y las cinchas de terciopelo negro con hebillas de hierro dorados (...)"], Felgueiras (1999, pp.172-173).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>710</sup> The exposures of the wooden support along the edges may allow us to identify the substrate as a tropical hard wood and, though not enough to enable an exact classification of the specific species, it has already been, nonetheless, "identified" as *anjili* wood (*Artocarpus hirsutus*) of the Wild Jack tree, cf. Felgueiras (2000; 2001).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>711</sup> For a drawing of the construction method see Schiestl (1999, p. VIII).

by two narrow friezes with linked trefoils and dots within double-line borders (Tab. 7; D). On the narrow side edge, around the entire tabletop, there is a frieze of interlinked spirals, a slight variation of the frieze commonly present on these Luso-Asian items (Tab. 7; B). The table's central decorative scene displays auspicious symbols of the Chinese flora and fauna, featuring: a deer; rocks, a water scene with water nuts, lotuses, and herons, goose, several pairs of birds and waterfowls, magpies, and jumping carps. At the center of the bottom scene of each panel grows a pine tree, on which trunk grow vines branches with squirrels climbing on. At the bottom, between rocks, emerge chrysanthemum, grasses, bamboo and stylized lotuses<sup>712</sup> in another water scene with swimming carps, herons, water caltrops and aquatic grasses. The backside, in contrast to the top, only pictures branches of stylized lotus or mythical flower which again emerge from the center of the outer edge and grow towards the central fold along a pair of long-tailed Asian paradise flycatcher<sup>713</sup> on each panel. This side is framed by a peripheral narrow undulated wave border with spirals (Tab. 7; C).

#### Attribution

While Neuwirth interprets the decoration as a complex New Christian iconography, attributing it to a center somewhere along the Asian coast-line with a strong Portuguese presence, Felgueiras states that this tabletop, among other Luso-Asian objects with identical characteristics, has been erroneously classified as a Chinese or Japanese work of art, since even if assumedly the decorations were done by Chinese craftsmen, the piece's Indian origin is unquestionable<sup>714</sup>. Carvalho, furthermore denying any Chinese contribution, argues that although the motifs themselves are completely part of the Chinese decorative repertoire, for him the execution itself shows no evidence of a Chinese craftsmanship. Instead, he compares this type of decorative work with a cotton painting from Golconda, Central India, which shows, indeed, some franc similarities between the division of space and the distribution of the motifs. Hence, since Golconda has been for long an important center of production and export of textiles to various regions, Carvalho tends to rather ascribe the actual manufacture of the "Cardinal's table" to the centers along the coasts of Coromandel and the Bay of

<sup>712</sup> These resemble the Chinese fire lotus, often depicted within drawers or on interior corpus sides of chests.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>713</sup> Osselt (2011, p.48).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>714</sup> Neuwirth (1998). Felgueiras (2000, p.211).

Bengal<sup>715</sup>. Moreover, after Carvalho's examinations, the table has been highlighted as an example of Indian lacquerware<sup>716</sup>. Otherwise, it has also been suggested that this tabletop has been produced in Cochin, like many other lacquered furniture objects with similar characteristics, recounted by travelers in Bombay or Bassein (today's Vasai)<sup>717</sup>. After Carvalho's suggestion, Silva refers that the fauna and flora motifs on this table's decoration is very similar to the ornamental schemes applied in the textile production of the Deccan sultanate of Golconda. Further supporting his perspective, Silva also mentions several other jack wood writing boxes with a lacquered ornamentation that resembles the "Cardinal's table". However, he compares this table with a particular writing box that has been, in fact, coated with thitsi lacquer according to Southeast Asian techniques<sup>718</sup> [Fig. 79]. Jordan Gschwend proposes that it is yet far more conceivable to assign such pieces to trading centers like Malacca or Macau where orders for Asian lacquerware were commonly placed<sup>719</sup> and Crespo assigns this table either to a southern Chinese or Ryūkyūan manufacture<sup>720</sup>.

## **Comparison**

Both the decorative motifs and friezes on the Ambras tabletop are clearly Chinese. The broader frieze along the outer edge appears to be a Chinese adaptation of European Renaissance ornamentation, given similar friezes but with dragon-like heads are also common on Sino-Portuguese embroidered textiles used for liturgical purposes, like the "door-cloth" in the collection of the Museu São Roque in Lisbon (Inv. no. MT186)<sup>721</sup> or the fragment of an altar frontal in the collection of the MNAA (Inv. no. 612 Tec)<sup>722</sup> [Fig.5]. Plus, the narrow spiral band on the edge frequently appears adorning Chinese porcelain pieces contemporary to the "Cardinal's table"<sup>723</sup>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>715</sup> Carvalho (2001a, p.256; 2001b, pp.137-140; 2013, p.39).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>716</sup> Kawamura (2013, p.43).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>717</sup> Felgueiras (1999, p.171; 2000, p.211), Jordan Gschwend & Tudela (2001, p.72, note 285), Silva (2007, p.206).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>718</sup> Silva (2007, p.206), Körber et al. (2011, Table 1 no. 11), Körber (2012, p.320, Ill. 2).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>719</sup> Jordan Gschwend (1996, pp.128-155; 2015c, p.148), Jordan Gschwend & Lowe (2017, p.144).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>720</sup> Crespo (2015a, p.128; 2016d, p.302).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>721</sup> Ferreira (2007, p.171).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>722</sup> Jordan Geschwend & Lowe (2017, pp.152, cat. no. 100).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>723</sup> Macintosh (1994); Matos (1996; 2000a; 2000b).

There are two other very good examples of tabletops with similar characteristics noteworthy to compare with the "Cardinal's table". One is a teak wood tabletop with inlays of ebony and other tropical woods at the Casa Museu de José Rego in Portalegre (Inv. 1217; 120 x 93 x (?) cm). Its method of constructions is similar to the Ambras example, four narrow boards are attached to the edges of the main board and, alike the outer frame parts, joined together at the corners with miter. Here, although very much worn out, the central wooden board is framed by a band of floral scrolls carved in low relief. Along the edges is another frieze forming scroll-works of colored inlayed woods. This tabletop, which was already ascribed to a Portuguese manufacture<sup>724</sup>, is generally attributed to a Singhalese origin<sup>725</sup>.

The other is a foldable tabletop that used to belong to a private collection and was now recently on sale at São Roque Antiguidades in Lisbon (114 x 92 x 2.5 cm). Consisting of two panels joined together by iron ring hinges, this piece is completely covered with a glossy black likely thitsi lacquer coating<sup>726</sup>. X-ray analyses showed it is constructed of two simple wooden boards. When opened all around the framing friezes both its rectangular surface and four corners' cartouches are equally embellished with a carved stylized floral design low relief specially found on Islamic adornments. Though now only a few traces of gold remain visible, possibly these carvings were originally highlighted in gold. In contrast, this arabesque carving work rather alludes to a different carving style commonly found on writing boxes and other artifacts influenced by southern Asian arts and crafts of Muslim influence.

As it is the case of the earlier mentioned writing boxes (2.3.), Crespo ascribes this example to a total Burmese manufacture, in view of its carving work and glossy black lacquer covering<sup>727</sup>. During the Portuguese presence in South and Southeast Asia furniture for the overseas-Portuguese has been produced in different parts along the Indian coastline and there is nothing known about a comparable production in the Kingdom of Pegu<sup>728</sup>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>724</sup> Ferrão (1990a, p.279).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>725</sup> Ferrão (1990a, pp.278-81), Pinto (1991a), Pinto & Garcia (1998), Jordan Gschwend (1998, p.210), Jordan Gschwend & Lowe (2017, p.144).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>726</sup> Schiessl (1999, p.XIV, Figure 19), Crespo (2016c).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>727</sup> Crespo (2016c).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>728</sup> Only during the presence of the British in the region the production of carved and uncarved teak furniture became very popular, cf. Boyce (2013).

A much simpler example from a private collection consists of a foldable rack and a single undecorated tabletop (made of two simple boards joined together by tongue and groove) has been described by Ferrão as a native Portuguese wood-carving work<sup>729</sup>.

## 2.4.2. Foldable Tabletop, Porto

#### Description

This is a tropical hardwood<sup>730</sup> rectangular tabletop in a private collection in Porto (64 x 51 x 2.1 cm) made with a slightly rougher and simpler construction method with its foldable rack, or base, now missing. It has a wide middle board and two narrow adjacent folding boards interlinked by four inserted iron hinges, two on each side fixed with four iron nails which endings are bent over (clinch-nailed) on the reverse. On the underside of the middle board (about ten centimeters from the side edges) are two conic grooves placed transversally to the longer side of the tabletop indicating these were intended to house tapered sliding dovetails originally meant to fix a rack or some other structure. The top surface is all decorated with low relief carving and framed by a narrow band of equally carved rectangular diamonds. In the center there is a medallion with the Eucharistic symbol of the pelican surrounded by its young hatch feeding on their parent's blood<sup>731</sup> [Fig. 93]. The broad frieze on the top consists of concave and tube-shaped twigs and branches intertwined scrollwork. Albeit the entire top surface has been covered with red paint, an exemplary cleaning job<sup>732</sup> done in just one spot has been enough to expose traces of a previous black lacquer coating and original gilding work on the carved wood, gold leaf decor and wave-borders with spirals along the plain edge of the table's top surface (Tab. 7; C) [Fig. 94].

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>729</sup> Ferrão (1990a, pp.282-83).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>730</sup> In Garcia & Matias (1998, p.165-166), Schiesstl (1999, p.XIX), Dias (2013, pp.185-186), Crespo (2016c). As mentioned earlier, the wood is thought to derive from the *Gmelina arborea* Roxb species, aka *Gumari*, cf. Schiesstl (1999, p. XIX, figure 27), though it is unknown if this conclusion results from analyses performed in Japan in the late 1990s, but which records according to the owners' information have been lost unfortunately.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>731</sup> Mendes Pinto defends the fact that this motif was widely used in civil furniture, whether appearing on Indo-Portuguese carved trays, or depicted on embroidered coverlets; cf. Garcia & Matias (1998, p.166). Nevertheless, it seems reasonable that if not all the majority of these items depicting religious motifs were most likely destined for religious use or at least to be used by Christian clientele.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>732</sup> Maria José Távora, Porto.

#### Attribution

Dias attributes the origin of this piece to Cochin for all the similarities he establishes with all the carved lacquered trays (2.5.) and writing boxes (2.3.), he ascribes to the same Indian production center<sup>733</sup>. Otherwise, without any formal justification but solely based on inventory records listing similar types of furniture from Pegu, this tabletop has also been ascribed to a Burmese manufacture, entirely. This assumption could be probably based on a mistaken idea of the low-relief woodwork itself since the carving style of the tabletop in Porto is quite different from the style found on several writing boxes equally attributed to the same Burmese origin<sup>734</sup>. In alternative, given the nature and composition of these small writing boxes, it is highly plausible that this same attribution could be based on the probability that, if not the manufacture itself, at least the thitsi lacquer coatings could have been applied in one of many Burmese ports like Martaban, Pegu, Bassein or Tavoy, before continuing its journey to another destination. However, the nature of the lacquer coating in this tabletop rules out any Southeast Asian contribution in its making.

## Comparison

The first item (49.5 x 57.5 x 47 cm) worth to compare with the Porto tabletop is a piece of clearly Indo-Portuguese origin that belongs to a private collection<sup>735</sup>. Although the decorative motifs are of a different style<sup>736</sup>, this tabletop still shows a similar disposition of carved patterns on its surface, additionally ornamented with silver applications. In contrast to the examples in Vienna and Porto, this one presents the bare surface of a reddish-brown tropical hardwood. It is built of a single almost square wooden board (2.2 x 57.5 x 47 x cm<sup>737</sup>) and its original foldable rack decorated with the same pattern in low-relief carvings as the one on its surface.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>733</sup> Dias (2013, pp.185-186).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>734</sup> Crespo (2017a).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>735</sup> Depicted in Dias (2013, p.187). Important to note that this object has been acquired in India where it belonged to the sacristy of the Saint Monica church in Goa a long time before it was sold to a private collection.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>736</sup> Its top surface is decorated with a central medallion surrounded by a frieze of five petalled flower-buds and undulating branches along the edges within narrow borders of lozenges and petals inside quadrants on the four corners.

<sup>737</sup> With its foldable rack the table is nearly 50 cm high.

The second comparative example, from another private collection<sup>738</sup>, is a wood-sighted writing box that not only is also made of tropical hardwood but it displays a very similar type of carving-work. Likewise, this has an inner compartment accessible through the lid and a lower drawer in the front equally ornamented. Motifs-wise, there is no central medallion but the carved frieze that frames the plain lid is very much alike the Porto tabletop. Equally to diverse other types of furniture Dias attributed this box to Cochin<sup>739</sup>.

The third and last example is a massive chest-on-feet from yet another private collection in Porto<sup>740</sup>. Comparatively, both pieces share similar carving work low-relief style of convex tube-shaped twigs and branches, and decorative motifs that divide into a central rosette with a multi-petalled flower, flanked by two other rosettes with flowers<sup>741</sup>. A circulating frieze frames the entire lid and the three lower edges of each corpus side. The interior of this chest is coated with Asian lacquer with gilded motifs on a red colored ground, figuring two phoenixes and about six more magpies flying between branches of a lotus-like mythical flower with curled leaf tips. The lid's interior, on its turn, is framed by a narrow, undulated frieze with spirals all around (Tab. 7; C).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>738</sup> This writing box belongs to the collection of Álvaro Roquette/ Pedro Aguiar Branco SARL in Lisbon.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>739</sup> Dias (2013, p.84).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>740</sup> Ferrão (1990b, pp.72-73).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>741</sup> Here, leaf shapes with rolled tips are, in turn, very similar to the carved decorations present on the chests and writing boxes addressed earlier on subchapters 2.2.2. and 2.2.3.



Fig. 87 Detail of a tortoiseshell-covered cabinet underpainted with Portuguese figures sitting on high chairs at a table with foldable rack. © Dias (2002, pp.97)



Fig. 88 Detail of an ivory inlayed Indo-Portuguese (Mughal) chest showing Portuguese figures sitting on high chairs at a table with foldable rack. Private collection



Fig. 89 Tabletop 2.4.1., top surface. © Carvalho (2001, p.138)



Fig. 90 Tabletop 2.4.1., a detail of the Chinese motifs in gold edged by a blue coating



Fig. 91 Tabletop 2.4.1., exposed construction method due to shrinkage cracks



Fig. 92 Tabletop 2.4.1., underside decoration with Asian paradise fly catcher on a black background. © Seipel (2000, p.32)



Fig. 93 Tabletop 2.4.2., top surface



Fig. 94 Tabletop 2.4.2., detail with exposed wavy border with spirals

# 2.5. Carved and Lacquered Rectangular Trays

This typology of lacquered trays belongs to a subgroup of modest size objects all destined for private or liturgical use in religious contexts of diverse shapes and decorated with the same fusion of decorative techniques, either in their wood work or in their lacquer decorations – trays, portable oratories (2.6.) and lecterns (2.7.).

Today, many examples of such trays are part of Portuguese private and museum collections. Indicative of their religious and missionary context, several of these specimens were once listed in the inventories of female convents that were dissolved due to the extinction of the religious orders in the scope of the Deployment of Liberalism from 1834 onward. Numerous objects were henceforth transferred from monasteries and convents into public collections, including similar rectangular trays of Portuguese manufacture<sup>742</sup>, thus suggesting that they once had a special purpose in the monastic life. Despite their real use and purpose still remain obscure; it is believed that this type of trays whether belonging to the personnel possessions of the nuns, or were meant for display, or maybe used for the presentation of the well known conventual sweets during special religious holidays<sup>743</sup>.

Representative of a larger group and in the same way as the resting twenty-three known examples of its type, these three trays examined here are all made of a plain rectangular bottom panel of varying dimensions which is attached with hook-shaped wrought iron pins to the undersides of the four sloping sides [Fig. 95], joined to one another through inclined dovetailing.

The majority shows carved decoration on its sloping sides embellished with alternating niches and bulges (2.5.1. - 2.5.3.), zigzag borders<sup>744</sup> or symmetrically arranged flowering scrolls<sup>745</sup>. The top surfaces are either flat or have carved ornaments as for instance a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>742</sup> Such as a 17<sup>th</sup> century Portuguese example of similar dimensions (7 x 41.5 x 69 cm) with gilt and polychrome carved decoration of the pelican that is feeding its youngsters with its own blood that formerly belonged to the feminine Convento de Santo Alberto in Lisbon and now housed at the MNAA in Lisbon (inv. no. 27 band), or another 18<sup>th</sup> century Portuguese tray decorated with *chinoiserie* (MNAA, inv. no. 7 band), cf. Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga (2000, p.60).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>743</sup> Canavarro & Pinto (1989, p.100), Borges (2013, p.45).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>744</sup> Museu Nacional de Machado de Castro (MNMC), inv. no. 1800, M431; or another from a private collection depicted in Moncada (1996, p.8).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>745</sup> See the example depicted in Carvalho (2001b, p.152, cat. no. 76); MNAA, inv. nos. 3 and 26 Band.

central rosette and/ or quarter rosette in the four corners<sup>746</sup>, animals or decorations of a religious character<sup>747</sup>. Some specimens have additional decorative bands in form of beading, diamonds or twisted robes that frame the top surface.

Generally, all surfaces were covered with Asian lacquer and decorated in similar manners. While the bas-relief carvings where completely highlighted in gold and the top surfaces display gilded motifs, all pieces' undersides have a red coating. The lacquer decorations on the smooth surfaces vary from plant and animal motifs of the Chinese decorative repertoire in gold (2.5.1.), same Chinese motifs in gold decor combined with mother-of-pearl inlay (2.5.2. and 2.5.3.)<sup>748</sup>, and simple depictions of flowering branches in gold on a red or black lacquer ground<sup>749</sup>, as in the example from the MNAA in Lisbon [Fig. 96]. These differences in the decoration of each piece may actually reflect a stylistic evolution indicative of distinct phases of manufacture. For instance, the latter type with simple flowering branches in gold appears to be common on 18<sup>th</sup> century *Chinoiserie*, like a polychrome portable case that unfolds into an altar, from a private collection in Cascais, Portugal<sup>750</sup> [Fig. 97], an ornamentation that is likewise present on other liturgical Luso-Asian objects [Fig. 98].

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>746</sup> 2.5.1., 2.5.2., and MNAA inv. no. 3 and 26 Band.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>747</sup> An example from the Museu de Aveiro (Inv. no. F 120) with a double-headed eagle carved in low-relief in the center has belonged to the Convento de Jesus in Aveiro, cf. Polido (2016, p.111). Another one, from the Museu de Évora (Inv. no. ME 1076, 6 x 68 x 43.5 cm), figures the emblem of the Augustinians in the central medallion. On the rear side there are three Chinese *kanji* characters: eye or eyes; knowing, be aware of, notify, or knowledge; and three. There are also two other very good examples displaying the Eucharistic symbol of the pelican in its central medallion. One is housed at the MNAA (Inv. no. 1 Band, 6 x 70.5 x 43 cm), cf. Kreiner (2003, p.117); and the other belongs to a private collection, Dias (2002, p.48).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>748</sup> MNAA, Inv. no. 20 Band (5 x 62.5 x 37.5 cm) in Arakawa (1996, p.211); the lacquer source of the latter has been identified by the scientists of the Meiji University in Tokyo in 1997 as being from the *Rhus succedanea* species and as the origin of the lacquer coating China has been suggested. One lacquered tray of similar dimension (4.8 x 67.8 x 44 cm) belongs to a private collection and is figured in Cunha (1998, p.435). Another similar but small-sized tray is housed in the Casa Museu Nogueira da Silva in Braga (inv. no. DIV301, 3.5 x 41.2 x 27.4 cm, classified as a *Namban* tray).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>749</sup> See for example two trays from private collections in Roque (2009, p.10) and Carvalho (2001b, p.152, cat. no. 76), or examples from museum collections in Lisbon (FRESS, Inv. no. 525; 2.8 x 38.2 x 24.8 cm, and MNAA, Inv. nos. 3 and 26 band).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>750</sup> Depicted in Guedes (1994, p.127).

From the larger group of extant trays very few examples show no low-relief at all, yet they all have the same kind of wooden structure and construction finished with inclined dovetails joining the sloping sides fixed to the bottom by forged iron hooks<sup>751</sup>.

# General Attributions

Lacquered trays of this type are dated between the 16<sup>th</sup> and the 18<sup>th</sup> century, depending on their ornamentation. Given the characteristic combination of gold leaf and mother-of-pearl inlay motifs, along with obvious similarities with nanban decorations, these trays and similar items have been often classified as nanban objects and are thus dated to the 16<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. However, only two of rectangular, originally *nanban* lacquered trays (with no carved woodwork) remain to display different shapes and methods of constructions<sup>752</sup>. And, whereas Pinto and Japanese lacquer specialist Arakawa have proposed, that due to the specific use of gold leaf, these trays may actually be from the Ryūkyū Kingdom<sup>753</sup>, later attributions divided between a Chinese or Ryūkyūan origin<sup>754</sup>. Other scholars, instead, tend for an Indo-Portuguese origin located in Cochin<sup>755</sup> or arguing that Chinese lacquer decorations were possibly imitated by Indian craftsmen along the coasts of Coromandel and Bengal<sup>756</sup>.

The discussion goes on with so many trays of different sorts mentioned in descriptions and inventories, the majority of which lacks any information on exact make-ups, shapes or decorative styles of these pieces. However, attribution merely based on these historic records may lead to premature assignments to the location they were seen, purchased or recorded. For instance, if Dominican Fr. Gaspar da Cruz, travelling between *Portuguese India*, Malacca, Canton (1556) and Ormuz (1548-1565) registers "(...) gilded and silvered trays (...)" among the objects produced in Canton. One may assume that since found in Canton they were likely of typical Chinese built and decoration. Not much later, in early 17th century, French traveler Pyrard de Laval records, on his turn finding trays and lacquered cane trays (typical

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>751</sup> One good example is part of the Jorge Welsh collection in Lisbon, inVinhais & Welsh (2008, pp.336-39), and the other is at the MNAA in Lisbon (Inv. no. 20 Band, 5 x 62.5 x 37.5 cm).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>752</sup> Cunha (1998, p.434), Impey (2001, pp.120, no.64), Impey & Jörg (2005, pp.198, 201, fig. 478), Canepa (2008, p.23), Vinhais & Welsh (2008, p. 336).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>753</sup> Canavarro et al. (1989, pp.100-01), Arakawa (1996).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>754</sup> Canavarro et al. (1990, pp.56-57).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>755</sup> Dias (2013, pp.416-417).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>756</sup> Carvalho (2001b, pp. 152–3).

contemporary lacquerware from southern China and Ryūkyū) among all sorts of lacquered items that were unloaded in Goa from the Great Ship arriving from China and Japan. These, instead, were doubtlessly Chinese made and decorated lacquered goods which specific style and make-up and very much unlike the items examined here. Further examples can be also found on the 1582, 1617 and 1643 inventories of the estate of the important noble family Condes de Basto in Évora, which list: "(...) two trays from China estimated at a value of two thousand reis (...)" and another "(...) three trays from China and another painted one estimated at a value of thousand reis (...)" amongst many other household goods brought from overseas. Or the "(...) four gilded trays from China (...)" listed among the confiscated goods of the inspector of the Indian factory, arrested in 1611. Or the "(...) seven trays (...)" found among the goods left by Simão de Melo Magalhães, former captain of Malacca<sup>759</sup>.

A particular low-table<sup>760</sup> (*mesa de estrado*<sup>761</sup>) belonging to a private collection in Porto that shows a very similar structure, though different typology and obvious South Asian and non-Chinese characteristics, is worth to be compared with the three trays. It is equipped with a much thicker tabletop panel (of a tray-like shape) and fixed legs. Its sloping sides figure geometric and floral carvings adorned by a twisted robe on top. They are carved with a zigzag pattern of triangles, enclosing flowers and a twisted robe on the upper rim. The connected legs, in turn, have carved decorations of scales, flowers and lozenges, non-identical but in full harmony with the whole formal language of the tabletop [Figs. 99, 100]. The top surface presents a carved central rosette and quarter rosettes in each of the four corners. The flat red surface shows vestiges of a lacquer decoration of simple flowering branches in gold. Like on the top surface, the rear of the sloping sides displays vestiges of gilded branches identical to those found on several lacquered trays. The front sides of the cross bars

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>757</sup> My translation of the original: "(...) Dous tavoleiros da china avaliados em dous mil reis 2V000 (...) and (...) Três bandeiras da china e mais outra pintada avaliados em mil reis 1V000 (...)", in Serrão (2015a, p.85).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>758</sup> My translation of the original: "(...) quatro bandejas doiradas da china (...)", in Silva (1993a, p.18).

<sup>759</sup> My translation of the original: "(...) sete bamdejas (...)", in Crespo (2015a, p.260).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>760</sup> Dimensions: 32.5 x 37.5 x 24.5 cm; depicted in Carvalho (2001b, pp.151, cat. no. 75).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>761</sup> The *estrado* was a type of podest or elevated platform within houses equipped with carpets and small-sized furniture used for several purposes and generally by women, for sitting, or as a base for the bed. It is believed that this type of interior design, which was common in the Iberian Peninsula until the 19th century, is an inheritance of the centuries-long Muslim presence, cf. Pinto (1979, pp.43-44).

connecting the four legs figure sets of golden chrysanthemums. As confirmed by its construction in which were employed the same kind of hook-shaped wrought iron nails found on the three trays [Fig. 101], the whole table was initially projected as a single object, contrarily to what has been suggested by Carvalho, that legs have been attached to a former tray<sup>762</sup>.

# 2.5.1. Lacquered Tray, Lisbon

### Provenance

This rectangular tray used to belong to the *Santa Clara* convent in Évora before it became part of the MNAA collection in 1903 (Inv. no. 44 band;  $6 \times 63 \times 36.5$  cm)<sup>763</sup>.

### Description

It has carved decoration with alternating niches and bulges on the sloping sides' interior and, on the top surface a central medallion with a blossom and quadrants with quarter blossoms on each corner [Fig. 102]. The plain top surface displays a scene with magpies and butterflies among tree peonies towards the top, and long-tailed squirrels and jumping carps in a water scene with lotuses towards the bottom, all framed by a double-line border (Tab. 7; A). The gilding is largely worn off, but the remaining red bole layer with traces of gold and the incised lines of the needle drawing make the motifs more visible in oblique light. The sloping sides' exterior has a wavy band of linked and alternating lotus and chrysanthemum flowers (Tab. 7; E) [Fig. 169].

# Attribution

This tray has been generally assumed to be either of Ryūkyūan or Southeast Asian origin<sup>764</sup>.

# Comparison

There are other trays with slightly different carved ornamentation but similar lacquer decorations with flora and fauna motifs in museum or private collections. Some only show

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>762</sup> Carvalho (2001b, p.151, cat. no. 75).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>763</sup> Pinto (1991b), Arakawa (1996, p.212), Kreiner (2011a, p.117), Kreiner (2011b), Frade & Körber (2011, pp.41-44), Körber et al. (2011, Table 1, no. 21), Körber et al. (2016).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>764</sup> Pinto (1991b), Arakawa (1996, p.212).

vestiges of a lacquer coating with motifs of the flora and fauna in gold<sup>765</sup>. Comparatively, the decorative friezes on the rear of the sloping sides (Tab. 7; E) are in fact very similar to the scheme present on the 'Pope's trunk' (2.2.1.) forasmuch as in the interior of the lid of the chest in Sintra (2.2.2.).

# 2.5.2. Lacquered Tray, Lisbon

### Provenance

Like the first one, this tray belongs to the collection of the MNAA (Inv. 2 band;  $6 \times 71 \times 45$  cm) where it was transferred from the convent of Nossa Senhora da Quietação in Lisbon, in  $1887^{766}$ .

### Description

The plain top surface has a carved diamond band frame and a blossom also carved in a central medallion, whilst four-quarter blossoms adorn each corner quadrant [Fig. 103]. Besides the gilded carvings, the lacquer-work features flowering plum branches, speckled deer and magpies alternately depicted in gold and very thin iridescent shell pieces on black lacquer ground, all framed by a single gold line (Tab. 7; A) [Fig. 104].

### Attribution

Both trays (2.5.2. and 2.5.3.) have previously been classified as 17<sup>th</sup> century *nanban* lacquer pieces.

# Comparison

A tray from a private collection shows a similar decorative program and the same techniques<sup>767</sup>. Another tray purchased at auction in London in 1984 by a private collector, worth comparing here, not because of its European influenced ornamental theme, nor for the absence of low-relief carvings, but rather for its close similarities in shape, structure,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>765</sup> For other examples in Portuguese museum collections see: Museu de Aveiro (Inv. 120 F, 121 F, with vestiges of a lacquer coating and gilt floral branches) and MNAA (Inv. no 24 band, gold leaf on black background with a carved emblem of the Augustinians in the central medallion). For another example with a background of gilded dots of different sizes, belonging to a private collection, see Dias (2002, p.48).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>766</sup> Canavarro et al. (1989, pp.100,158, cat. no.74), Pinto & Costa (1990, pp.63-64,104, cat. no.73), Arakawa (1996, p.212), Neuwirth (1998, pp.122–123), Frade & Körber (2011, pp.41-44), Körber et al. (2011, Table 1, no. 22), Körber et al. (2016).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>767</sup> Cunha (1998, p.435).

approximate size, general decorative techniques and gold leaf decor. On its totally smooth panels framed by a Mannerist cartouche and scrolling, it is depicted a scene most probably derived from a European print with a well-dressed gentleman and a lady playing European instruments (guitar, lute) in a garden. In contrast to most of the trays addressed here, this piece's rear side is lacquered black but the back of the sloping sides present flowering branches of the same character in gold and mother-of-pearl within double-line borders (Tab. 7; A)<sup>768</sup> [Fig. 105]. Both trays have previously been classified as 17<sup>th</sup> century *nanban* lacquer pieces and in relation to the latter example it has been suggested as the work of a Japanese lacquerer in Macau<sup>769</sup>.

A further comparable lacquered tray (6 x 68 x 42 cm) from another private collection<sup>770</sup> shows a low-relief carving work of a different character with its sloping sides and top surface filled with geometrically arranged circular medallions, these figuring either carved leaves, or flowering branches in gold leaf decoration and inlayed mother-of-pearl [Fig. 106].

# 2.5.3. Lacquered Tray, Porto

### Provenance

Sharing the same combination of decorative techniques with the former example (2.5.2.) the following tray of comparatively smaller dimensions  $(3 \times 38.5 \times 23 \text{ cm})$  belongs to a Portuguese private collection<sup>771</sup>.

# Description

In this case, only the sloping sides have carved decoration, but its smooth black lacquered top surface is covered with flowering plum tree branches, in between which are scattered pairs of magpies, monkeys, squirrels, and a snake within a double-line border (Tab. 7; A), depicted alternating in gold or shell inlay [Figs. 107, 108]. The red lacquer reverse

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>768</sup> Canavarro et al. (1989, pp.100-101,158, cat. no.76), Canavarro et al. (1990, pp.64,104, cat.no.74), Arakawa (1996, pp.213-214), Impey & Jörg (2005, pp.201, no.479), Vinhais & Welsh (2008, pp.336-339).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>769</sup> Vinhais & Welsh (2008, pp.336-339).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>770</sup> Alves & Barreto (2007, pp.144, cat. no.38), Roque (2009, p.11, cat. no.12).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>771</sup> Canavarro et al. (1989, pp.100-101, 157, cat. no.75), Canavarro et al. (1990, p. 63, cat.72), Arakawa (1996, p.213), Cunha (1998, p.434), Körber et al. (2011, Table 1 no. 23), Körber et al. (2016).

bears an inscription: *Angela dos Seraphins*. This might refer to the religious name of a nun<sup>772</sup> since, in 1673, an abbess by the name of Angela dos Serafins served as mother superior of a Benedictine monastery in Viana do Castelo, thus, suggesting this nun may have been one of its previous owners, as both script and spelling could date from the 17<sup>th</sup> century<sup>773</sup>.

# Attribution

Identically to the former example it has been classified either as Japanese *nanban* lacquer or as a Ryūkyūan lacquer work.

# Comparison

Two other very close and equally small-sized rectangular trays belong to museum collections. One is at the Kyūshū National Museum in Dazaifu (Inv. no. H133; 4 x 39.6 x 25.4 cm) and it was purchased at the antiques market. Its plain top surface depicts motifs of flowering branches and birds, framed by a double line border<sup>774</sup> [Fig. 109]. The other is housed in the Museu Nogueira da Silva in Braga, Portugal (Inv. no. DIV 301; 3.5 x 41.2 x 27.4 cm). Its lacquer coating and gold ornamentation are worn and in a bad condition. Similarily to the previous examples it has been classified as a *nanban* tray.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>772</sup> Körber et al. (2016).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>773</sup> Pinho (2010), Nazaré Escobar and Isabel Vilares Cepeda, Lisbon, are thanked for their comments about the script on the label and for information regarding the existence of the nun with the same name.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>774</sup> Masako Miyasato, Josef Kreiner, and Mr. Dainobu are thanked for this information.



Fig. 95 Tray 2.5.1., rear side, hook-shaped iron nail



Fig. 96 Tray ornamented with flowering branches in gold. Private collection



Fig. 97 Polychrome portable altar, 18<sup>th</sup> century. Private collection. © Guedes (1994, p.127)





Fig. 100 Low-table, detail of structure and joints. **Private collection** 



Fig. 99 Low-table. Private collection © Carvalho (2001b, p. 151)



Fig. 101 Low-table showing hook-shaped iron nail



Fig. 102 Tray 2.5.1. © Luis Piorro, LJF-DGPC



Fig. 103 Tray 2.5.2. © Luis Piorro, LJF-DGPC



Fig. 104 Tray 2.5.2., detail of magpie in plum branches



Fig. 105 Tray with scene of European musicians. Private collection. © Vinhais & Welsh (2008, pp.338)



Fig. 106 Tray. Private collection. © São Roque Antiquidades e Galeria de Arte



Fig. 107 Tray 2.5.3. © Pedro Lobo



Fig. 108 Tray 2.5.3., detail of decoration



Fig. 109 A similar tray in the Kyūshū National Museum

# 2.6. Carved and Lacquered Oratories

Produced for European Christians and native converts in India these small and portable oratories of diverse shapes, combine the characteristics of European Christian art with ornamental and architectonical elements of tabernacles and retable from a Renaissance and Mannerist matrix<sup>775</sup> made in Portugal in the late 16<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. Contemporary Portuguese examples of smaller oratories feature miniature Mannerist *porticos*, with two doors that open to a space for sacred images, flanked by two Doric or helically fluted columns or pilasters. Generally, their lower third (*imoscapo*) is decorated with polychrome and gilt carved decoration of garlands or phytomorphic windings with flowers, resting on a base with carved arabesques in between cornices, and supporting an architrave limited by friezes of also carved phytomorphic decoration or angels heads commonly found in European Christian architecture<sup>776</sup>.

There are numerous ecclesial, museum and private collections in Portugal and abroad<sup>777</sup> carrying a manifold of examples of rather rectangular shaped (with bases and architraves), or in triptych or polygonal form, embellished with wood carvings produced in India's former Portuguese territories, either by Portuguese, European, Hindu or already half-castes' artisans. Shapes are either of a rectangular tabernacle form with triangular or broken pediments, two side doors which open to a central interior space with a niche often flanked by single or double columns and covered by either a semi-spherical conch-shape, fluted baldachin<sup>778</sup>, trapezoid<sup>779</sup>, hexagonal or octagonal shapes with multiple articulated door panels<sup>780</sup>. The back of the niche, which used to house a sacred statuette or crucifix, is usually decorated with an oval sunburst or a Tree-of-Life, either sculptured or painted, or a representation of the iconic firmament with painted stars, instead (2.6.2.).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>775</sup> The main altars in the church or Our Lady of Grace of the College of Grace in Coimbra, or the cathedral of Miranda do Douro, Ferrão (1990a, p.416).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>776</sup> Ferrão (1990a, pp.414-17), Moncada (2010).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>777</sup> Dias (2013, pp.160-178).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>778</sup> An Indo-Portuguese oratory of rectangular shape is in the Museu de Arte e Arqueologia, Viana do Castelo. It has two doors and houses an ivory statue of Our Lady (Inv. no. MAAVC 1043), Pinto (1983c).

As for example the one depicted in Pinto & Garcia (1998, p.137).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>780</sup> Compare for example the one depicted in Guedes (1994, p.261).

These pieces show typical characteristics of the confluence of autochthonous Indian (Hindu and Muslim) and European formal languages and architectonical elements, highly comparable to late Renaissance, Mannerist or Baroque altarpieces, retable and oratories at Christian churches throughout the regions of Goa, Daman and Diu, or Cochin<sup>781</sup>.

The two-specimen examined here are representative of a larger number of pieces, extant in various ecclesiastical and museum collections (and even more at private collections). These are of prismatic, hexagonal or polygonal shapes crowned by a dome, and showing either its bare tropical wooden surface<sup>782</sup>, or its polychromatic decoration. Overall, only a few specimens present a coating with Asian lacquer.

In many churches in the state of Goa there are still comparable polygonal structured tabernacles that are placed in front of the altars, dating from the late 16<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries<sup>783</sup>. That same domed shape might actually come from an indigenous influence, perhaps derived from the *chhatris* – or domed pavilions common to Hindu and Mughal architecture – original from Rajasthan royal mausoleums. These were usually composed by a platform with a set of ornate pillars and crowned by a stone canopy or umbrella. One woodsighted oratory of ebony, with geometrical carvings and of polygonal section, adorned with typical 17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> century Indo-Portuguese architectonical elements belongs to a private collection<sup>784</sup> [Fig. 110].

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>781</sup> For examples see the main chapel and altarpieces in the cloister of the monastery of Santa Monica, cf. Dias (2008a, p.15), Lameira & Reis (2016); the altarpiece of St. Peter or of Our Lady of Hope in the Goa's cathedral; lateral retable of the Rosary Priory Church, Dias (2004, pp.301-311); or the altar retable from the sacristy of Our Lady of Hope in Vypeen, near Cochin, with typical niches and conch shaped baldachins destined to house sacred images or crucifixes, that are flanked by Mannerist fluted columns which *imoscapo* is adorned with festoons and foliage, Pinto (2011b, pp.32-37).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>782</sup> Cunha (1998, pp.320-323), Dias (2013, pp.164-168).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>783</sup> For images of various altar retables of churches in the state of Goa (Fondem, Santa Cruz, Monte Sacro, Rachol, Divar, Panelim, Cabo Raj Bhavan, or Velha Goa, among others) with comparable temple-like tabernacles/reliquaries placed on them, see Meco (2010, p.309), Lameira & Reis (2016).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>784</sup> Cf. Cunha (1998, p.320).

# 2.6.1. Temple Form Lacquered Oratory with Missing Dome, Lisbon

### Description

From a private collection<sup>785</sup>, this piece (ca. 87 x 48 x 33 cm) made of teak wood, incomplete and of a rather irregular hexagonal shape, represents a very common type of Indo-Portuguese oratories. Its polygonal layout creates a facade of five vertical sides – two laterals, two semi-laterals and one frontal – with two and a half doors articulated through inserted iron hinges that give access to an open space in the form of a *temple* with four columns [Fig. 111]. All exterior surfaces are carved and gilded. Like in each section of the base and top of the oratory, the exterior of the lateral doors is carved with wavy flowering branches with multipetal-leaves emerging from a vase in the bottom, the Vase-of-Plenty, with fruits and birds in between [Fig. 112]. The middle panels show a symmetrical arrangement of branches with a crowning cartouche with the holy dove. On the right, the IHS monogram of the Jesuits [Fig. 113] and, on the left, the monogram of the Virgin Mary with its intertwined letters *A* and *M* for *Auspice Maria*<sup>786</sup>. When doors are opened, four pillars<sup>787</sup> of originally six emerge from winged angel heads, with their lower part adorned with carved floral decoration ending in bell-shaped capitals with acanthus leafs. The space in-between likely housed a statuette of the Virgin Mary. The central part of the base houses a little drawer.

As rectangular gouges and traces of bamboo pins on the wood-sided top do evidence, it was originally topped by a dome, equally segmented like the rest of the structure and just as on the following example (2.5.2.). At the time of the sampling job, this oratory was disassembled with its backside missing, and almost all of its interior lacquer decoration worn out. The carved exterior of the whole oratory is all gilded over a black lacquer ground. The flat interior surface of the door panels presents remains of a lacquer decoration in gold leaf on a black background in combination with mother-of-pearl inlay with traces of gilded foliage and a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>785</sup> Körber et al. (2011, Table 1, no. 15), Frade (2011, pp.153,178).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>786</sup> Latin for "Under the protection of Mary".

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>787</sup> Although differing, their shape resembles that of the pillars of barrows used for the transport of Hindu deities that where adopted by the Christians in India, cf.: Sousa (1994, p.11).

revolving zigzag-like-frieze composed of square shell pieces lined up and gold lined triangles, all within golden lines<sup>788</sup> [Fig. 114].

### Attribution

This oratory was, with no doubt, produced by Indian or multi-cultural craftsmen in India. If only traces of the interior lacquer decoration remain, they do express notwithstanding the same characteristics as the ones found on other Luso-Asian liturgical implements with the same fusion of craftsmanship.

# Comparison

Two important examples with polychromatic decoration based on natural resins or oils are housed in Portuguese museums. The first, from the 18<sup>th</sup> century is now housed at the National Museum Frei Manuel do Cenáculo of Évora (Inv. no. M.E.484; 89 x 105 cm opened, 89 x 45 cm closed)<sup>789</sup> [Fig. 115]. Of similar polygonal shape and resting on four spherical feet, it bears elaborate carving work in low-relief and a very rich iconography, housing a wooden statue of Our Lady with the Child, which is connected to the base through a big spike of bamboo. On the oratory's top surface is a balustrade surrounding the dome, which is crowned by the Dominicans' coat-of-arms. Made of three different species of tropical wood, including teak, the corpus' sides and the base are joined together by simple dovetails, whilst other parts are essentially joined with bamboo pins of various sizes. In some cases, there were also used iron nails, probably to better stabilize the joints<sup>790</sup>. Generally, for furniture produced on the Indian subcontinent bamboo pins of a straight shape were employed for wood joints contrasting to the conic shaped pins generally present on nanban furniture<sup>791</sup>. The second, housed at the MNAA in Lisbon (Inv. no. 1521 mov; 60 x 35 x 25 cm), is likewise an oratory made of polychrome teak wood, attributed to the 17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> century. Its exterior surfaces are all decorated with similar phytomorphic low-relief carving. The doors are divided into an

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>788</sup> This oratory was on sale in an antiques gallery in Lisbon in the fall 2017. The oratory has undergone some changes in the meantime, which blurred the original decoration and added details that were not present in the original, unfortunately a common practice.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>789</sup> Silva (1966, p.69), Vanhaecke (1991b, pp.120-21), Cunha (1998, pp.322-323), Ribeiro (2007), Frade & Körber (2011, p.33), Dias (2013, p.164).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>790</sup> Ribeiro (2007, pp.5-6), Pereira (2007, p.31).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>791</sup> Abreu (2008, p.54).

upper and a lower part, both presenting the Vase-of-Plenty motif, each framed by a narrow diamond border<sup>792</sup>.

In turn, two other lacquered oratories, though of a rectangular tabernacle form, have similar low-relief carvings originating to the Indo-Portuguese context and Indian subcontinent. One, housed at the Real Monasterio de la Encarnación in Madrid (Inv. no. 00620040; 43.3 x 12.8 x 5.8 cm)<sup>793</sup> has a base with symmetrically carved foliage – a central flower from which grows symmetrical curled foliage onto both sides – in-between cornices, and a richly sculptured triangular pediment figuring the dove of the Holy Spirit flanked by pinnacles [Fig. 116]. In the middle, two wood-hinged doors open to a central interior space with a niche covered by a semi-spherical conch-shaped baldachin. The niche originally destined to house a religious image, which is now missing, presents a carved flowering stem with flowers and foliage growing from the bottom and is flanked by two columns with Corinthian capitals and twisted upper parts. Identically, the doors' interior is carved in lowrelief curled foliage growing from a vase from top to bottom of the door panel – apparently, the Vase-of-Plenty motif turned upside-down<sup>794</sup> [Fig. 117]. All interior and exterior carvings and cornices are gilded on a greenish polychrome background, but all flat exterior surfaces and doors display gold leaf ornamentation of flowering branches (plum/ peaches) and magpies with irisident mother-of-pearl on a black lacquer ground, all framed by a double-line border (Tab. 7; A) [Fig. 118]. Additionally, a band of interlinked consecutive spirals adorns the top surfaces of the base surrounding the corpus and top of the upper cornice surrounding the pediment (Tab. 7; B). Thanks to its uninterrupted monastic provenance this oratory is in very good condition. Despite, simultaneously to similar decorated trays (2.5.2. and 2.5.3.) this oratory has been attributed to nanban lacquerware, further assumptions identified its lacquer decoration as of Indian origin<sup>795</sup>. The underside of the oratory displays East Asian inscription - four kanji characters written by a quick hand [Fig. 119]. Experts from both China and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>792</sup> Silva (1966, p.68), Kraus & Ottomeyer (2007, p.133).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>793</sup> Kawamura (2003, p.112; 2013, pp.42-44), Dias (2008b, p.106).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>794</sup> Maybe the oratory was assembled mistakenly, since the typical carved motif is turned upside-down.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>795</sup> For earlier descriptions and attributions see: Kawamura (2003, p.112; 2013, pp.43–4), Dias (2008b, p.106), and Canepa (2009, pp.288-89).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>796</sup> I am grateful to Kobayashi Koji for sharing this image with me.

Japan find them indecipherable. Yet all concur that the writing does not seem to be a copy made by Westerners, but rather of a native Asian hand<sup>797</sup>.

The other oratory (25.3 x 22.8 x 12.7 cm) belongs to a Lisbon's private collection. It is made of different tropical hardwoods and a very similar structure, but with its base, pediment and pinnacles missing with top and base surfaces exposing traces of originally applied elements. Amazingly, this specimen still houses an image of Our Lady with the Child in its niche [Fig. 120]. Plus, it still preserves the remains of an Asian lacquer coating on the exterior of the two doors (equally wood-hinged) with clear traces of a golden single-line border along the edges (Tab. 7; A) [Fig. 121]. Again, the interior doors' surfaces show a carved and gilded likely Vase-of-Plenty motif against a gilded background. At its interior, a niche flanked by two fluted columns with capitals with gilded carved foliage at the lower part (*imoscapo*), still displays remains of greenish polychromy consisting of drying oil, lead white, and malachite<sup>798</sup>.

Yet another oratory also made of teak and featuring the arms of the Dominican order, same type and similar shape, is housed at the Museu de Arte e Arqueologia in Viana do Castelo (Inv. no. 1043; 73.5 x 64 x 16 cm), but with the exterior of the doors now covered with red velvet<sup>799</sup> [Fig. 122]. Likewise, it presents similar bas-relief carvings with a Tree-of-Life in the back of the interior niche highlighted in gold, and in its exterior mother-of-pearl squares, and perhaps traces of the same kind of lacquer decoration as well.

# 2.6.2. Temple Form Lacquered Oratory, Porto

# **Description**

Identically to the first oratory, this example of slightly bigger dimensions (74.5 x 71 x 19 cm, when open) is from a Portuguese private collection and displays the same hexagonal

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>797</sup>According to Julie Chang (Taiwan), Kam Wah Chan (Hong Kong) and Kobayashi Koji (Tokyo), one can say that it is definitely not Japanese and probably not a signature, which was also not common for contemporary craftsmen, but it could be the name of the owner for whom it was destined. However, to be more specific more research is needed. All three I thank for their time and kind support.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>798</sup> Cf. Körber et al. (2011, Table 1: no. 16). For the report of the study and analyses performed at LJF-DGPC, see: Processo 24-09, in Körber (2012a).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>799</sup> Pinto (1983c), Vanhaecke (1991b, pp.118-19), Canepa (2009, pp.285,287)...

prism shape still crowned by a segmented dome<sup>800</sup>. Likewise, on an equally segmented base there are floral carvings in each of the sections framed by cornices with carved petal borders. Two one-and-a-half doors, articulated by two inserted iron hinges, expose four Mannerist pillars that support the architrave of the segmented dome. The doors give access to an open space, now empty, originally meant to house a sacred image or crucifix, with full view to the rear black wall filled with eight-pointed golden stars all over. Both, base and the architrave's sections decoration feature a central flower from which grows curled foliage into both sides, symmetrically. Similar central flower and foliage carvings adorn the segments of the dome, vertically. On the exterior, the doors are framed by twisted robes, while on the interior they are adorned in low-relief carvings displaying four groups of three circular medallions with multi-petal flowers [Fig. 123].

Both, outside and inside surfaces of the doors are lacquered black with flowering branches and foliage in red and gold, but unlike the other examples referred to earlier, there's no use of mother-of-pearl. More peculiarly, on the left-side door interior panels there are depicted *nanban*-style flowers that resemble wisteria<sup>801</sup>. Finally, the front edges of the lateral corpus display traces of a decorative band of consecutive spirals (Tab. 7; C). Here, the lacquer decoration appears quite unusual compared to the one found on the other items studied. Especially in the exterior, but also in many interior areas, the gold has worn out, thus exposing the red bole layer. Existing vestiges of a green polychromy must result from a later intervention that has been removed as roughly as traces are still extant in depressions.

#### Attribution

Carvalho has already noticed the resemblance between the lacquer decoration on this piece and certain *nanban* objects, and while wondering if the lacquer is of vegetal or animal origin, he suggested that it was most likely manufactured in an area on the Indian subcontinent which was overseen by the Portuguese, but abandoned before the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century<sup>802</sup>. Dias attributes the low-relief carving to Cochin, bearing witness to the East Asian

<sup>800</sup> Carvalho (2001b, p.153), Dias (2002, pp.46-47; 2004, p.358; 2013, p.166).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>801</sup> This creeping plant and flower motif is typically depicted on *nanban* objects (See Chapter 1.3.2.). In China, its depiction, however is rare in earlier periods, was used in artifacts in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and more frequently from the 17<sup>th</sup> century onward, see Appendix II.

<sup>802</sup> Carvalho (2001b, p.153).

character of the lacquer decoration when compared to the decorations found on the lacquered trays (addressed on Chapter 2.5.). Dias suggests that both woodwork and lacquering were probably executed there, and if so, the lacquering would have had to be done by local artisans living in a Chinese colony<sup>803</sup>.

# Comparison

Oratories with a very identical shape and carved decorations have been attributed to Goa. More precisely, when compared to the wood-carved ornaments found on pulpits and retable of Indo-Portuguese churches in the Goa region these, however, present polychrome revetments and not Asian lacquer coatings, just like the other two examples housed in Portuguese museums, mentioned earlier. For example, a 17<sup>th</sup> century sacred ornament of polychrome and gilded wood (69 x 28 cm) from the Rachol Seminary presents very similar structure and carved decoration, closely related to 17<sup>th</sup> century liturgical items like monstrance, tabernacles and other objects of religious context and architecture<sup>804</sup>. Its complex vegetal low-relief carving on is a good example of to the kind of woodwork found on so many oratories and tabernacles in Goa's old churches like St. Mary of the Rosary in Monte Santo, a Dominican priory.

The painted stars in the interior back panel point to an Indo-Portuguese manufacture origin too. And, though it may not be there from the beginning, this star-light backdrop is common in retable, ceilings or niches in Indo-Portuguese churches. Comparatively, the carved multi-petal rosettes on this oratory's doors' interior are very similar to the central blossoms present on the lacquered trays (2.5.), chests' lids (2.2.) and on an Indo-Portuguese table<sup>805</sup>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>803</sup> Dias (2002, pp.46-48). This colony Dias refers to, did exist in the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and it was composed of southern Chinese merchants coming from Macau, cf. John (1998).

<sup>804</sup> Pinto (2003a, p.139).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>805</sup> Dias (2013, p.188).



Fig. 110 18<sup>th</sup> century polygonal oratory. Private collection. © Cunha (1998, p.320)



Fig. 112 Oratory 2.6.1., detail of gilded exterior carvings. © Conceição Ribeiro



Fig. 111 Oratory 2.6.1. © AR-PAB



Fig. 113 Oratory 2.6.1., detail of gilded exterior carvings with IHS monogram. © Conceição Ribeiro



Fig. 114 Oratory 2.6.1., detail with remnant gold leaf and mother-of-pearl decoration. © José Carlos Frade



Fig. 115  $18^{\rm th}$  century oratory. © Museu Nacional Frei Manuel do Cenáculo



Fig. 116 Madrid oratory ornamented with motifs in gold and mother-of-pearl. © Parimonio Nacional



Fig. 117 Madrid oratory open, with conchshell covered niche to house a religious statue. © Parimonio Nacional



Fig. 118 Madrid Oratory, detail of decoration



Fig. 119 Madrid oratory, undecipherable *kanji* characters on the underside. © Kobayashi Koji



Fig. 120 Lisbon oratory with missing base and pediment. Private collection



Fig. 121 Lisbon oratory, exterior door edge with remnant black lacquer and gold line



Fig. 122 Oratory with the coat-of-arms of the Dominicans. © Museu de Arte e Arqueologia Viana do Castelo



Fig. 123 Oratory 2.6.2. © Dias (2013, p.166)

# 2.7. Mass Book Lecterns

Although not within the nucleus of this thesis, there are some other examples of yet another type of liturgical furniture, widely used by Catholic missionaries in Asia, that need to be considered here. Specimens of this particular typology offer important technical and stylistic matches and evolve patterns worthwhile to relate with some of the nineteen objects under study that share similar lacquer decoration.

Depending on their origins (India, China, Japan, among other possible ones), the methods of building and assembling missal stands may vary as well as its dimensions, but they all seem to have adopted the shape of Muslim *Q'uran* stands<sup>806</sup>. Commonly these foldable missal stands were placed on altars holding the Bible or other religious textbooks and were common portable items among missionaries. Numerous *nanban* lacquered lecterns<sup>807</sup> produced in the scope of the Japanese mission are still extant in collections around the world<sup>808</sup>. On the Indian subcontinent were produced lecterns with either geometric of vegetal carved decoration, instead<sup>809</sup>. Several examples with identical carvings additionally adorned with an Asian lacquer coating exist, and many of them display the same type of *nanban*-style decoration with motifs in mother-of-pearl and gold as already observed on some trays and oratories, inspired by the Japanese *makie* and *nashiji* decorations.

Otherwise, Luso-Asian lecterns are usually composed of three individual wooden pieces with slightly differing constructions – some may be produced in India and others may

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>806</sup> In contrast to Islamic models which hold the *Q'uran* horizontally, the Luso-Asian lecterns have shorter feet and the front flaps are cut so that the lower front flap and the high backrest can support the missal in a vertical position, cf. Ferrão (1990b, p.284), Flores (1998, p.34), Moreira & Curvelo (1998, pp.543-44), Canepa (2009, pp.262-266), Kobayashi (2016).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>807</sup> Nanban lecterns' wooden boards usually present a transversal wooden bar fixed with conic bamboo pins to the upper end of the book support to avoid the warping of the same, Abreu (2008, p.59). Indo-Portuguese lecterns in turn are of rougher structure and display geometrical and vegetal carvings. Yet another type of lectern with the same kind of lacquer decoration and composed of thinner, whole wooden boards without carvings may be Chinese examples, entirely produced in southern Chinese centers after Indo-Portuguese or Namban models.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>808</sup> Impey & Jörg (2005) or Kobayashi (2016), the latter scholar gathered a group of 46 *nanban* lacquered mass book lecterns with Jesuits heraldic devices extant in Portuguese, Spanish, Italian and Japanese collections. This group also includes some of the Luso-Asian specimens discussed here as their ornamentation and lacquer techniques share certain *nanban* characteristics.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>809</sup> Indo-Portuguese or southern Asian lecterns are consistent of thicker boards, are adorned with carved ornamentation and their construction differs.

be Chinese adaptations – and have polychrome or Asian lacquer coatings. In some specimen the front panels are adorned with symmetrical vegetal carvings depicting floral scrolls and medallions with flower buds in a manifold of compositions, often highlighted with gilded decoration. These same carved motifs are again quite similar to 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century carved fixtures found in Indian churches<sup>810</sup>.

Multiple examples bear a central circular field with the IHS monogram of the Society of Jesus<sup>811</sup> or emblems of other religious orders either in low-relief, painted or inlayed into the plain surface. While the tropical hardwood carvings clearly allude to the Indian subcontinent, other lecterns consist of plain soft wooden surfaces and are composed of thinner boards, indicating distinct locations or traditions of manufacture. However, both types share the same lacquer decorations (gold leaf or shell gold, or the combination of the latter with mother-of-pearl inlay) and the same variety of poly-lobed cuttings in the lower parts of the stands<sup>812</sup>. Whether many of these lecterns are part of museum and private collections, it seems likely possible that many others still lay hidden, unanalyzed or incorrectly classified in collections around the world<sup>813</sup>.

### 2.7.1. Jesuit Lectern with Carved Decoration, Osaka

One missal stand (43 x 27 cm folded; 1.5 cm thick) resembling Indo-Portuguese examples, featuring the Jesuit monogram in low-relief, is now housed at the Namban

<sup>810</sup> Issar (1997), Pereira & Pal (2001), Reis (2009a; 2009b; 2012; 2015).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>811</sup> See a small-sized example from a private collection in Körber (2015b, p.222). In a central medallion this lectern presents the IHS monogram, the holy cross and a heart pierced by three crucifixion nails underneath. Here, the Jesuit monogram appears mirror-reversed (2HI), evidently having been erroneously copied from a model.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>812</sup> Kobayashi in his research of *nanban* and lacquered Luso-Asian lecterns tried to establish a chronology based on the evolution of the stand's lower ends shape, cf. Kobayashi (2016). Indo-Portuguese, *nanban*, and also the lacquered Luso-Asian lecterns present the same variety of poly-lobed cuttings in the lower ends of the stand. These may derive from different influences in the locations they were produced in (Muslim, Hindu, European), as well as from the fact that these same models were copied in other regions.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>813</sup> Very much alike, several examples bearing traces of polychromy or original Asian lacquer coatings still exist either in Portuguese private collections, cf. Körber (2015b, p. 222); the antiques market, cf. Roque (2009, p.10, cat. no.011); ecclesiastical collections (Museu de São Roque in Lisbon, cf. Silva (1993a, pp.54-55); or in museum collections (Museu Municipal Portalegre (inv. no. 321), cf. Pinto & Garcia (1998, pp.134-35); Museu do Oriente Lisbon, inv. FO/0843, cf. Gorjão (2008, p.77); Museu Grão Vasco in Viseu (Inv. nos. 133, 2051, 2052, 2053). For an example extant in India, cf. Dias (2013, p.158). Small-size Indo-Portuguese lecterns with similar carved decorations and lacquer coatings can be equally found at the Museum of Macau, cf. Cadete (1999, p.50), and another example is housed in the Kyūshū National Museum of Fukuoka (inv. no: zz5409), cf. Nagashima (2008, pp.304, cat. no.60).

Bunkakan in Osaka. It was purchased at auction<sup>814</sup> after it belonged to a Portuguese private collection<sup>815</sup> [Fig. 124]. The book rest bears the straight-lettered IHS insignia and the surrounding sunburst carved in low-relief and later decorated with mother-of-pearl in the center and quadrants with stylized quarter multi-petalled flowers in the four corners in the same manner as found on other objects under study here, such as various trays (2.5.) or oratories (2.6.). The lacquer coating depicts auspicious motifs of bamboo, plum, pomegranate and other flowering branches among which fly pairs of magpies and butterflies in gold and irisident shell-inlay, and on the lateral edges a decorative band of consecutive spirals (Tab. 7; B). Moreover, its rear side presents the same type of stylized Chinese flower frequently used on interior sides and drawers' interiors of some cabinets and chests described earlier (2.2.3. and 2.2.4.) [Fig. 125].

# 2.7.2. Jesuit Lectern with Plain Panels, Singapore

Another important example is a lacquered lectern (48 x 28.5 cm folded; 1.3 cm thick), some years ago sold by a Lisbon antiquarian to a private collector and recently acquired by the Asian Civilizations Museum in Singapore [Fig. 126]. There are no wood carvings here but the upper panel presents an ornamentation of shell inlay and gold with a central medallion and quadrants in the four corners, all arranged very similarly to the style of the previous Osaka lectern. In a central medallion there is a straight-lettered IHS monogram inlayed in mother-of-pearl, framed by an aureole before a background of small six-pointed stars. In the four corners the quadrants depicting different flowering branches are framed by a frieze of diagonally lined up shell squares wherein flanked by triangles filled with gold lines (the same frieze as in 2.6.1.). The space in between the medallion and the corner quadrants is filled with different flowering branches of probably plum and cherry (partially rubbed off and unidentifiable), bamboo and magpies; and, while the entire upper front panel is framed by a frieze in mother-of-pearl, the lower front panel depicts squirrels playing in branches.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>814</sup> Christie's London, 27<sup>th</sup> of November 1984, Lot 18, Christie's (1984).

<sup>815</sup> Arakawa (1989, pp.187, 201-203; 1996, pp. 208–10), Neuwirth (1998, p.120), Impey & Jörg (2005, pp.175, fig. 407).

Curiously, before it was last sold on the antiques market, the lacquer decoration was partly worn out, though afterwards a *nanban*-style *karakusa* scroll, which was not there previously, was painted onto the narrow edges [Fig. 127].

# 2.7.3. Jesuit Lectern, Viseu

At the Museu Grão Vasco in Viseu, Portugal, there is another example (Inv. no. 2085 mob; 49 x 30 cm folded, 1.3 cm thick) identically decorated in gold and shell-inlay [Fig. 128]. Although very much worn, still perceivable is a central medallion with the Jesuit monogram in curvy and segmented letters on a background with small dots in gold framed by a single gold line and over a sunburst, all surrounded by a set of flowering plum branches and magpies. The entire front of the lectern is framed by a band of geometric pattern formed by lozenges with enclosed stylized water caltrop. The upper rims of both panels depict decorative bands, the higher backrest a *karakusa* scroll [Fig. 129] rather common in *nanban* lacquerware and the lower panel shows vestiges of a decoration of diagonally lined up shell squares. When open, the top-surfaces of the wood hinges show stylized chrysanthemums. Rear sides' decoration is very much worn, but still remain glued circular shell pieces, indicating flowering plum branches, as present on the front. Although the overall decoration of this lectern is similar to that of the Namban Bunkakan in Osaka, it still differs in detail due to the absence of carved decoration and to its wooden structure composed of thinner softwood boards.

# 2.7.4. Jesuit Lectern, Loreto

In the Basilica Pontificia della Santa Casa of Loreto, Italy, a mass book lectern has been passed down, together with a slightly bigger *nanban* lectern, since 1633, as proven in the inventories. Nothing is known about the circumstances under which both lecterns arrived to Loreto. They have been stored at this cathedral in a built-in shelf in the treasure room since its construction was completed in 1615, which is now preserved at the Museo - Antico Tesoro Santa Casa in Loreto (Inv. no. C.N. 1220; 50 x 31.2 cm folded; 1.3 cm thick)<sup>816</sup> [Fig. 130]. Although its decorative scheme is of the same nature of the previous lecterns, with regard of the use of gold and mother-of-pearl inlay, a further evolution seems to be apparent on the overall palette, pattern and artistic affiliation. Here, not only there are additional motifs and

<sup>816</sup> Koyama (2008).

features not observed on other examples but the decoration itself follows a complete different chromatic scheme, presenting a distinct combination of additional decorative techniques. For instance, in the central circular field of the Jesuit IHS monogram, in straight-shaped letters with a curvy cross, surrounded by a sunburst in mother-of-pearl and gold, there is a background of orange-red lacquer mixed with gold fragments, as if it was to mimic the Japanese *nashiji* technique. Additionally, Chinese clouds, grasses, camellia-like flowers, bamboo and flying birds painted in gold, all surround the monogram [Fig. 131]. Outlying the emblem, twenty-four eight-pointed stars with a circular mother-of-pearl inlay in the center and four smaller stars painted in gold, amidst orange-red Chinese clouds of different sizes with the same gold-mixed orange-red lacquer filled with forms similar to the hash sign (#).

The entire upper front panel is framed by a golden line and a border in pearl shell while the lower parts and the backside of the lectern are decorated with flowering branches (likely peach or plum) in gold, mother-of-pearl inlay and red lacquer, whereas the elements in both are lined with gold [Fig. 132]. In this example the mother-of-pearl pieces do not seem to be glued to the wooden but perhaps to the lacquer surface, as they protrude from the surrounding black lacquer. The board's rims are adorned with a decorative band of consecutive spirals and dots (Tab. 7; B). Its lacquer coating has been studied and examined at the Vatican Museums in Rome<sup>817</sup>. Aside from stylistic affinities, the analyses performed in Rome revealed similar techniques and the same kind of materials used as on the studied Luso-Asian objects. Both, gold leaf and shell gold were used in its decoration.

# 2.7.5. Jesuit Lectern, Évora

An outstanding example of a lectern belonging to the possessions of the Seminário Maior of Évora, Portugal, is now on display at the Museu da Arte Sacra (Inv. no. EV.SE.4.011 mob; 48.5 x 33.5 cm folded, 1.5 cm thick), in the royal church of São Francisco in the same city<sup>818</sup> [Fig. 133]. It is very probable that it was originally owned by the Jesuit College (*Colégio-Universidade do Espírito Santo*) founded in 1559, from where many artifacts came from that are now in the processions of the Seminário Maior de Évora.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>817</sup> Pandozy et al. (2014).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>818</sup> Borges (2003, pp.88-89, cat. no.20), Canepa (2009, p.256). I very much thank Father Manuel Ferreira for providing the opportunity to examine this lectern in detail in September 2016.

This magnificent lectern is still in exceptionally good condition and shows a very different decorative program on an even closer link to *nanban* decorations present on other liturgical items, thus further embodying notable signs of an evolving cultural and artistic fusion. Decorated in mother-of-pearl inlay and gold, this work was exclusively executed using shell gold. In contrast to the other Jesuit's lecterns, this specimen presents an oval sunburst with the monogram in segmented letters with curved lines framed by beading, all in motherof-pearl [Fig. 134]. According to the script it must date from later 17<sup>th</sup> century or even early 18<sup>th</sup>. While its backside shows the typical *nanban*-style rear motifs – here using only gold décor and shell inlay framed by a single gold line – the decoration on the front sides differs a great deal from the aforementioned specimens. In the four corners surrounding the Jesuit's insignia are placed oval cartouches framed with beading in mother-of-pearl and filled with a diaper pattern in gold so typical of Chinese decorations (See Chapter 1.3.2.). The surrounding background is filled by a grid with enclosed karahana<sup>819</sup> stylized four-petal flowers in gold; and the lower front panel is decorated with cherry blossoms. Both upper and lower front panels are framed by a frieze composed of the same kind of flowers in gold, lined up and enclosed by triangular shell pieces with waved edges [Fig. 135]. A similar variety of this same frieze in the form of a vertically bisected version is present on the *nanban* lectern in Loreto mentioned earlier (Inv. no. C.N. 1221) [Fig. 136]. The backside decoration shows branches with foliage and six-petal clematis flowers (the Japanese motif tessen) alternately depicted in mother-of-pearl inlay and shell gold, thus alluding to the typical rear sides' decoration of nanban lacquerware, but in contrast to nanban style here all is framed by a single gold line [Fig. 137]. The lateral edges of both panels are adorned with the typical nanban karakusa scrolls and on the frontal rim of the lower book-rest are four-petal karahana flowers line up in gold. Along the edges and the lower feet, it is visible that fabric has been applied to the wooden substrate. Overall, this lectern was produced in a high-quality work on softwood, and both its overall decrative scheme and uncomparable state of preservation suggest it to be of a younger date.

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The "Chinese flower", a traditional Japanese motif imported from China, is a stylized flower of four or five petals which often appears enclosed in a background grid of designs of many possible different shapes: diamond, hexagons, turtle shell etc., cf. Bairs (2001, p.86), Kawamura (2013, p.50).

For curiosity, there is a part of a lectern (from a Portuguese private collection) only preserved fragmentary but enough to show an almost identically decorated upper part of the book-rest [Fig. 138], and another example which shows the same formal characteristics has been published by Moncada as a *nanban* lectern<sup>820</sup> [Fig. 139].

# 2.7.6. Gold Decorated Lectern of the Augustinian Order, Lisbon

At last, from another Portuguese private collection, an outstanding example (42 x 29 cm folded, 1.5 cm thick)<sup>821</sup> of a distinct decoration displays the arms of the Order of St. Augustine in a medallion held by a crowned double-headed eagle, within another circle [Fig. 140]. In each of the four corners there are depictions of pomegranate. Although its gold decoration is very worn out, there are still detectable traces of several Chinese decorative friezes – few of which can also be found on other studied items (Tab. 7; A, B, C, E). In this example the motifs are exclusively executed in gold, both in form of leaf and powder [Fig. 141]. The wood-hinge segments' top surfaces are decorated with chrysanthemums [Fig. 142]. Yet the rear sides of the panels were left undecorated. Except from the emblem of the Augustinians, the decorative program on this piece resembles to be of purely Chinese origin. Finally, missing lacquer fragments expose in several areas the tropical hardwood it is made of.

<sup>820</sup> Moncada (2008, p.164).

<sup>821</sup> Cunha (1998, p.339).



Fig. 124 Lectern 2.7.1. © Yoshiro (2009, Plate 19)



Fig. 125 Lectern 2.7.1., rear side with Chinese stylized flowers and magpies. © Kobayashi Koji



Fig. 126 Lectern 2.7.2. as photographed for auction catalogue. © Aquetuto, Avaliadores & Leiloeiros



Fig. 127 Lectern 2.7.2. after purchase and restoration with retouched ornamentation and nanban karakusa scroll applied to the front edge of the bookrest



Fig. 128 Lectern 2.7.3.



Fig. 129 Lectern 2.7.3., detail of original *karakusa* scroll on the upper rim



Fig. 130 Lectern 2.7.4. © Kobayashi Koji



Fig. 131 Lectern 2.7.4., detail of upper panel with IHS monogram. © Kobayashi Koji



Fig. 132 Lectern 2.7.4., rear side





Fig. 134 Lectern 2.7.5., Jesuit emblem



Fig. 135 Lectern 2.7.5., cherry blossom and lateral frieze with karahana flowers



Fig. 136 Detail of Nanban lectern in Loreto with a vertically bisected version of the same frieze



Fig. 137 Lectern 2.7.5., rear side with typical nanban decoration of clematis flowers



Fig. 138 Fragment of lectern. © Pedro Lobo



Fig. 139 Comparative lectern. © Moncada (2008, p.164)



Fig. 140 Lectern 2.7.6.



Fig. 141 Lectern 2.7.6., detail showing contrast between the use of gold leaf and powder



Fig. 142 Lectern 2.7.6., detail showing traces of chrysanthemum and lotus flowers on the hinges' top surface and a wavy band with spirals

# 2.8. Hindustani or Indo-Portuguese Low Chairs

This group of low chairs of solid short legs and a broad woven cane seat (four-way cane type served for bamboo or relative plants) is autochthonous to the Indian subcontinent and regions of today's Pakistan and Bangladesh, and can be compared to the thrones originally reserved for kings and deities served, often reproduced in Mughal miniatures or on furniture with inlaid decoration from the Muslim Northern part of the subcontinent, featuring individuals sitting on short-legged chairs, as for example on the 17th century cabinet in a private collection in Lisbon [Fig. 143]. Since both Hindu and Muslim people used to seat down on shallow stools or on floor cushions, when arriving in India, the Portuguese used to higher seating had to quickly find an alternative to floor cushions, thus chairs became commonly used at official receptions thrown by the Vice-King or any other official occasions. European-style chairs and stools also furnished palaces, churches and seminaries alike, that a larger production of chairs was necessary to ensure the daily commodities of Portuguese settlers and other Europeans in colonial territories.

Seating furniture was therefore widely commissioned in almost all areas of *Portuguese India*, later to appear amongst the goods arriving in Lisbon. And even if there are also chairs mentioned to have been shipped from Macau or Canton (and in these cases they likely had distinctive characteristics) most of them were produced in centers throughout India to be exported amongst other related furniture, such as bare or lacquered wooden beds or low bed stands, as reported in numerous travel accounts and descriptions which, however, do not refer anything about Asian lacquer coatings on the pieces<sup>824</sup>.

<sup>822</sup> Umney & Rivers (2003, p.105).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>823</sup> In the V&A for example are several examples that illustrate thrones used by kings or deities, such as sandstone sculpture figuring a founder of the Jain religious community sitting on a wooden structure from the 9<sup>th</sup> century, Uttar Pradesh (Inv. no. IS.12-1996). Mughal miniatures and other Indian paintings are another source where Hindu deities, emperors or kings are depicted sitting on broad short-legged thrones (Cf. Inv. nos. IS.2-1977, IS.147-1955, or IM.8-1925). For further bibliography on this see Auboyer (1949), Pinto (1994, p.44), Pandit & Mascarenhas (1999, pp.95-96), Carvalho (2008, p.31), Boyce (2013, p.147).

<sup>824</sup> Ferrão (1990b, pp.33-46).

In fact, chairs appear depicted on a variety of artifacts illustrating the Portuguese presence in India<sup>825</sup>. For example, Europeans sitting in high as well as in Indian low chairs are figured in the polychrome northern Indian tortoiseshell covered cabinet that is decorated with daily-life scenes of Portuguese settlers in European fashion<sup>826</sup>. Here, a model of low chair is figured in the bottom of drawers no. 2 and no. 6, both figuring a Portuguese lady holding a child (with a cross pendant around the neck) sitting on a similar short-legged chair [Fig. 144], while the exterior of the latter drawer displays higher chairs in European fashion<sup>827</sup>.

Colonial furniture of similar elements and characteristics produced in subsequent periods of Dutch and British presence share comparable floral and figurative carvings. Ebony furniture, like low chairs produced along the Coromandel Coast or in Ceylon for the Dutch in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries are prime comparable examples of floral and figurative woodwork carvings<sup>828</sup>. Overall, only a few of the remaining carved Indo-Portuguese low chairs show an Asian lacquer coating, with distinctive compositions.

#### 2.8.1. Low Chair, Porto

#### Description

This low chair (61.5 x 57 x 46 cm, seat height 22.5 cm) is composed of a frame structure of turned and carved elements. Its short legs stand on cubes with a carved flower in the center of each side, followed by a flat sphere with gadroons, resembling flower petals, ending at last in cubic corner blocks with a carved flower on top. These blocks receive the seat rails that house the wickerwork of the seat. The rear stiles are of the same built as the front legs until reaching the corner blocks and sitting level. From there evolving into a fluted cylinder (for the lower back rail) developing acanthus leaves into which the upper back rail is inserted. From here, it is followed by yet another fluted cylinder and flattened sphere to end up in pinecone-like shapes with stylized iris-like finials [Fig. 145]. The backrest (made of

Ferrão (1990b, pp.31-32, 46-61). Chairs appear depicted in a variety of artifacts of Indo- or Singhalese-Portuguese art, as for example on two ivory caskets from Southern India or Ceylon (MNAA, Inv. no. 66 cm; KHM, Inv. no.P.4744) and on a coverlet (Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga, Inv. no. 3413 tec.), cf. Pinto (1994, p.45). For another presentation of a low chair used by a Portuguese see the detail on the lid of an ivory writing box (*escritório*) housed in London (V&A inv. IS 41-1980), in Schwabe (2000, pp.100,243).

<sup>826</sup> MNSR, inv. no. 2689 Mob.

<sup>827</sup> Dias (2002, pp.117,126-127).

<sup>828</sup> Veenendhal (1985, pp.23,24,25) and Van Gompel (2014, p.44).

both lower back and top rail connected by five balusters) has a poly-lobed upper edge with a conch-shell in its center top, under which is a multi-petal flower in the middle of two superposed cartridges with rolled edges filling the central area. This one is, in turn, flanked by two mythical creatures, resembling *makaras*, standing on their forelegs of a long snake-like scaly body covered with fins and dragon-like heads with widely open mouths with strong teeth that seem to gasp for birds [Fig. 146].

Even if invisible at first sight, a fine lacquer coating remains throughout the whole object. Hence, the legs' carved surface shows a thick coating of once totally gilded black lacquer while on the backrest; front and rear are apparently of light brown color, now craquelé due to multiple applications of coatings (shellac). In detail, there are visible signs of earlier red lacquer underneath the additional coatings at the front of the top rails and a decorative band of consecutive spirals and dots detectable on the rear side of the lower back rail (Tab. 7; B) [Fig. 147]. It was, in fact, because of these remarkable vestiges of lacquer decoration that this particular chair was added to the studied objects.

### **Attribution**

This chair was recently sold as an example of Southeast Asian furniture probably produced in the Kingdom of Pegu (today's Myanmar)<sup>829</sup>. Not only its wooden structure appears to be of the same South Asian origin, but this attribution also derives from being recorded as "one gilded chair and cot/ camp bed from Pegu"<sup>830</sup> amongst a considerable amount of Asian furniture in the inventories of the already mentioned Third Count of Linhares, Fernando de Noronha (1540-1608) and his wife Filipa de Sá.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>829</sup> On sale by Álvaro Roquette/ Pedro Aguiar Branco SARL at the *Feira de Arte e Antiguidades* in Lisbon, May 7th to 15<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>830</sup> My translation of the original: "(...) hũa cadeira e catre do Pegum dourado (...)" and "(...) catre do Pegũ todo dourado Com seis peis e cabiseira (...)", in Crespo (2015a, p.123; 2017, p.170).

#### Comparison

The backrest of a 16<sup>th</sup> century arm-chair manufactured for the Portuguese and housed in the Museum of Goa, Daman and Diu in Panjim, figures two similar mythical creatures (likely *makara*), which flank a central flower<sup>831</sup> [Fig. 148].

A closely related example from a private collection in Porto (66 x 53 x 46.5 cm, seat height: 23.5 cm) shows an identical frame structure only differing in its decorative details<sup>832</sup>. Backrest, front legs and rear stiles are built in analogous fashion: with corner blocks (here with a carved flower in each side) to receive the seat rails and carved acanthus leaves and cone-shaped finials off the rear stiles. Not only is the backrest like the one on the chair under scrutiny, ergo divided in an upper and a lower back rail with five balusters in between. But again, like the Lisbon's chair, the top rail has a central conch-shell flanked by two crescent volutes on which stand two creatures with fully teethed mouths wide opened; and, the way the backrest is structured and decorated in low relief carving with volutes and the space in between filled with vegetal motifs, are all indicative of a kinship between pieces. However, this Porto chair also includes another different type of wood-carving on the backrest, resembling a central flower or fruit with a bud from which evolve four bulgy members<sup>833</sup> and a manifold of other finely carved branches and curled twigs, while the legs are composed of very similar carved elements [Figs. 149, 150]. Yet this chair is covered with thick and partly still glossy lacquer coating. Its original gilding for the most part worn out except for a few areas must have embellished the carvings before.

Another very similar example used to belong to the Royal Monastery of Santa Maria de Pedralbes and now housed at the Museu d'Història de la Ciutat de Barcelona (Inv. no.

<sup>831</sup> Pinto (1994, p.47).

<sup>832</sup> This chair is depicted in Jordan Gschwend & Lowe (2017, pp.226-227, cat. no. 246).

This same type of quadrinominal central flower or fruit carving resembles the style found on a cabinet recently attributed to a Chinese manufacture, cf. Crespo (2016d, pp.288-302), Jordan Gschwend & Lowe (2017, pp.226-227, cat. no. 246). Moreover, this classification is based on the fact that the Chinese motifs on a red lacquer ground found on the interior of its compartments are identical to the one studied here, forasmuch as on the presence of *kanji* characters on the underside of the same compartment. This cabinet shows as many similarities in structure as in its red lacquer coating and decoration with stylized Chinese flower in gold in the drawer's interior like the chests mentioned before. The presence of *kanji* characters in both drawers individual compartments and underside might not solely refer to the assembly line process common in the Chinese joinery, but instead have suited the lacquer craftsman (foundation, sanding, lacquer layers with drying times in between, gold decoration) to easily reassemble the cabinet after finishing the lacquering procedure, since, neither method of construction, wood-carving nor metal mounts show any Chinese characteristics at all.

115.170; 65 x 75.5 x 60.5 cm, seat height 30.5 cm) reveals the same kind of frame structure as the Lisbon one, still having its caned seat, though instead of cubic corner blocks, the seat rails enter in cylindrical prisms that are decorated with carved vegetal scrolls [Fig. 151]. The backrest is defined by two large S-scroll volutes carved in the front and painted in gold with a band of alternating I-shapes and flowers on the plain backside. Likewise, in the front lower part of the backrest emerge two large S-shaped volutes from the center merging onto the end of the upper scrolls in a single volute at the joint with the back stiles, the latter figuring a band with floral motifs in gold. The space in between the volutes is, in turn, filled with a symmetrical composition of two large hanging festoons with blossoms and a central grapelike fruit in low-relief, resembling the prints of Renaissance pattern books. Moreover, the way the legs and back stiles depict acanthus leaves and fluted parts ending in conic floral finials is very close to the way decorative elements are set on this chair under study. The backrest is equally composed of a top and a lower back rail connected through balusters in this case symmetrically developing from the middle. Its black and lustrous lacquer coating and the gilded decoration in the back appear to be rather from a Southeast Asian production center than anywhere else<sup>834</sup>.

Albeit the slightly different design of certain individual elements, both chairs have seemingly frame structure and Asian lacquer coating in common. Meaning that, in one hand, the carved motifs evidence European but also Muslim Indian effects, and the lacquer decoration shows Southeast Asian influences (especially when compared with other motifs in gold lacquer decoration applied in the lacquer art of previous centuries in today's Myanmar), on the other hand the carving woodwork seems of South Asian origin, instead<sup>835</sup>.

Additionally, Carvalho also mentions two other low chairs apparently very similar to the Barcelona example, but even closer to the *Lisbon's* chair under scrutiny here and the Porto's comparative example afore mentioned<sup>836</sup>. These two low chairs are housed in the Loseley Hall in Surrey where they flank a large chimney in the drawing room<sup>837</sup>. Especially

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>834</sup> Most likely this chair was lacquered according to Southeast Asian traditions, with thitsi lacquer and decorated with the respective gilded decoration in *shwei zawa* technique.

<sup>835</sup> Felgueiras (1999, pp.175-177), Carvalho (2008, pp.30-33), Dias (2013, pp.216-218).

<sup>836</sup> Carvalho (2008, p.32).

<sup>837</sup> http://www.loseleypark.co.uk/house/.

the one on the right side of the chimney seems to be almost identical in shape and structure<sup>838</sup> to the example in Lisbon [Fig. 152]. In terms of their construction and carved decoration, these five examples – Lisbon, Porto, Barcelona and Surrey – show identical characteristics of both European Mannerist and Indian (Hindu and Muslim Indian) influences, most likely originating in the same region, knowing that their lacquer coatings are nevertheless from two distinct traditions at least.

Noteworthy that this same kind of carved motifs and adornments as present on these chairs has also been found either on a headboard front from a 16<sup>th</sup> century lacquered low bedstead bearing the coat-of-arms of the Sousa de Arronchos with a plain back surface, showing traces of original floral motifs in gold decoration<sup>839</sup>. It is unknown what kind of lacquer was used, but when compared to a number of examples with a Southeast Asian lacquer coating (and gilded decoration) this headboard evidences a very close type of lacquering tradition present on the small writing boxes early addressed on 2.3.; or, on a carved chair<sup>840</sup> from a later period (between the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century) slightly higher seat and richly carved backrest, aprons, stretchers, twisted feet and back stiles with floral and figurative woodwork that resembles the wooden furnishings on Indo-Portuguese churches; or even, on a

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<sup>838</sup> Watkins (2007, p.52).

<sup>839</sup> Ferrão (1990b, pp.44-45), Felgueiras (1999, pp.176-177), Dias (2002, p.56), Dias (2013, p.181). This headboard is fully described as having an all carved low-relief poly-lobed upper edge defined by massive volutes, with the whole surface filled with flowers growing out of a central vase with curled twigs, semi-column shaped leafs, flowers and branches with birds sitting on. The inferior part is decorated with a carved frieze of sprouts coming out of the tails of fantastic birds with their wings opened and their heads turned back in alternating S-shaped sections. Similar to the low chairs, the four posts are richly carved with acanthus leafs and petal rings in the lower part and a complex program composed of birds, flowers, fruits and scales on the upper one, all ending in cone or grape shaped finials. The rich Indo-Portuguese carving work presents a Muslim influence and a surface that promotes a sense of horror vacui. Other possible examples of this same carving work noteworthy to compare here are the backrests of two 17<sup>th</sup> century Indo-Portuguese chairs made of teak wood. On both chairs backrests are carved emblems of religious orders. On the first the symbol of the Dominican order (MNAA) and on the second (belonging to a church in Daman) the monogram of the Jesuits. And, whereas on the first the rear stiles end with finials, the second end with a cubic shaped low-relief carving, cf. Dias (2013, p.216). Other comparison could be also done with 16<sup>th</sup> century carved seating furniture from the Goa region, cf. Pinto (1994), or other kinds of furniture produced along the Coromandel Coast, especially ebony low-chairs of Indo-Portuguese origin and specimen produced later during Dutch or British periods. A prestige example of the latter is a late 17<sup>th</sup> century Dutch colonial ivory inlayed ebony armchair displaying figurative carvings and corner blocks with carved flowers, now housed at the Rijksmuseum (Inv. no. BK-1976-79), cf. Veenendhal (1985), Van Gompel (2014, p.44).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>840</sup> This chair was on sale in Lisbon by Manuel Castilho Antiguidades at *Feira de Arte e Antiguidades* in Lisbon, Abril 14th to 21st 2013. http://www.manuelcastilho.com/pt/actividades.html.

# THE JOURNEY OF ARTIFACTS: THE STUDY AND CHARACTERIZATION OF A NUCLEUS OF LACQUERED LUSO-ASIAN OBJECTS FROM THE $16^{\rm TH}$ AND $17^{\rm TH}$ CENTURIES

richly carved Indo-Portuguese teak bed<sup>841</sup> which decorative work combines a number of similar characteristics found on all lacquered trays (2.5.); oratories (2.6.) and low chairs (2.8.), described earlier<sup>842</sup>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>841</sup> Of unknown provenance, it is now at the Palácio da Pena in Sintra, after being transferred from the Palácio Nacional da Ajuda in the course of the restructuring of court furniture in the 1930s.

<sup>842</sup> Pereira & Carneiro (1999, pp.91-92).



Fig. 143 Detail of a cabinet of Mulsim Indian manufacture displaying low seated individuals



Fig. 144 Tortoiseshell-covered cabinet, drawer interior showing a European woman nursing her child on a low chair. © Dias (2002, p. 126)



Fig. 145 Low chair 2.8.1. © AR-PAB



Fig. 146 Low chair 2.8.1., detail of the backrest



Fig. 147 Low chair 2.8.1., detail of the lower bar of the backrests rear side ornamented with consecutive spirals



Fig. 148 Indo-Portuguese chair with crowned backrest carved with central blossom flanked by *makara*-like creatures. © Pinto (1994, 47)



Fig. 149 Similar low chair. Private collection



Fig. 150 Low chair, detail of backrest



Fig. 151 Low chair in Barcelona. © Carvalho (2008, p.30)



Fig. 152 Low chair in Surrey. © Watkins (2007, 52)

# 2.9. Contemporary East Asian Lacquer Vessels

Becoming a rage in the 16<sup>th</sup> and centuries to follow, mounted vessels of peculiar things such as coconuts, seashells, rhinoceros' horns, and all sorts of exotic materials<sup>843</sup>, including of course lustrous Asian lacquer or Chinese porcelain<sup>844</sup>, were amongst the finest exotic collectibles widely sought by European aristocrats. Made of precious metals, these mountings were therefore done by gold and silversmith either in Goa, other places in *Portuguese India*, Lisbon or other cities in central and northern Europe where artisans specialized in adding elaborate silver or gold mounts to precious objects, thus turning them into the symbolic *artificialia* collected and displayed in European *Kunstkammer* collections<sup>845</sup>.

# 2.9.1. Red Lacquered Bowl, Innsbruck

#### Provenance

In the collection of Schloss Ambras, near Innsbruck, in Austria this red lacquered bowl<sup>846</sup> is part of the old imperial possessions (KHM, Inv. no. PA543; 8 cm x 12.7 cm ( $\emptyset$ )). Apparently, its provenance is less questionable since the 1596's estate inventory of Archduke Ferdinand II of Tyrol mentions an "East-Indian bowl of red earth [clay]" remaining in his collection at Schloss Ambras till this day believed to be the same exact piece studied here [Fig. 153].

#### Description

This bowl was turned off thin softwood as suggested by the close-fitting grows rings visible on the lacquer surface on the bottom<sup>848</sup>. It is all covered with cinnabar red lacquer. The overall shape is apparently uncommon compared to other bowls of porcelain, wood or lacquer

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>843</sup> See examples in Seipel (2000) and Trnek & Silva (2001).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>844</sup> See a porcelain bowl mounted in silver, cat. no. 94, in Trnek & Silva (2001).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>845</sup> For a variety of examples see Seipel (2000), Trnek & Silva (2001), Jordan Gschwend (2004), Kraus & Ottomeyer (2007), Levenson (2007), Jordan Gschwend & Lowe (2015).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>846</sup> Garner (1979, pp. 206, 208, Plate 157), Kreiner (1992, p.cat. no. 2; 1996b, p.275), Arakawa (1996, pp.214-216), Kopplin (1998, p.74; 2002b, p.73), Neuwirth (1998, p.119), Geschwend (1998, pp.207-208), Wieninger (2000; 2001), Carvalho (2001a, pp.248-249), Seidl (2012).

<sup>847</sup> My translation of the original: "(...) Ostindische Schale aus roter Erde (...)", in Wieninger (2000; 2001).

However, according to the bibliography no lathe has been used in China (See Chapter 1.2.3.), thus questionable is the turned wooden structure of the so-called Ryukyu cup, or was it produced elsewhere and just lacquered in southern China?

used in East Asia as daily life recipients for tea, food or other purposes. The walls are almost vertical, only bulging in the lower area towards the wide and low foot. The gold leaf decoration on the steep walls depicts several plant species, such as grasses, goosefeet, ferns, millet or corn-ears, evolving continuously around its exterior, while two different types of birds in flight (magpies and other), a butterfly and a bee, are lined by a single gold line on the upper rim and two gold lines near the foot (Tab. 7; A). All around the foot, a ribbon of single three-leaf pattern in the shape of goosefeet or stylized bamboo leaves and on the underside, a chrysanthemum with the same three-leafs in the four sides [Fig. 154]. Details of the motifs such as the bird's feathers and eyes are drawn with a needle, exposing the lacquer underneath. Both, the presence of the gold leaf technique and the unique style the motifs distributed around the piece, has led to classify this bowl as one of the oldest examples of Ryūkyūan lacquerware with gold leaf decoration extant in Western collections, dated to between the mid-15<sup>th</sup> to mid-16<sup>th</sup> century<sup>849</sup> (See Chapter 1.3.2.). This bowl shows a strictly Asian design of a common daily life item. The way the gold decoration (or the lacquer painted motif underneath) is partially smeared, suggests that it was apparently executed under time pressure [Fig. 155]. Kreiner had already mentioned its execution as elementary, also referring to the unique style depicting floral and bird motifs typical of Ryūkyūan objects<sup>850</sup>. Assuming this is the bowl listed in Ferdinand's estate inventory this would have probably entered his collection as a present or as a souvenir, and it is quite possible that it has not been used neither before nor after it joined the collection given the actual good conditions of both lacquer coating and gilt decoration.

#### <u>Attribution</u>

The combination of red cinnabar lacquer and gold leaf decoration must have led to its attribution to the Ryūkyūan Kingdom. However, it hasn't been proved whether this bowl comes from a direct order placed by Queen D. Catarina of Austria via one of her agents to Southern Chinese merchants on the Ryūkyūan, nor the circumstances under which it reached the Ambras collection, but there are several possibilities. Neither it has been proved the suggested Ryūkyūan provenance of this bowl, since the technique has been simultaneously

<sup>849</sup> Garner (1979, p.208), Kreiner (1992, cat. no 2), Arakawa (1996, pp.214-216).

<sup>850</sup> Kreiner (1992, cat. no. 2), Miyasato (2000).

used in China, and only turned into common practice in Ryūkyū by the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century<sup>851</sup>.

# Comparison

As mentioned before in Chapter 1.3.2., this gold leaf decoration technique was also applied to porcelain, which is thought to be derived from. In European Renaissance collections are several porcelain bowls decorated with gold leaf (*kinrande* technique)<sup>852</sup> and some also received metal mounts to turn them in something even more precious<sup>853</sup>. In a private collection, there is a similar cinnabar red lacquered bowl (8.1 cm high, 13.7 cm wide) that has also been attributed to a Ryūkyūan provenance especially because of its lacquer décor. It is of a more conic shape with an outwardly curving lip and a well-rounded full bottom. Ornamentation depicts a pair of deer, two types of birds and a squirrel scattered among rocks, flowers and grasses, limited by double-line borders (Tab. 7; A). Besides the gold leaf designs, green lacquer was occasionally applied. An encircling band of double lotus petals decorates the foot of the bowl<sup>854</sup> [Fig. 156].

Comparatively, a 16<sup>th</sup> century Chinese wooden cup from the Victoria & Albert Museum in London<sup>855</sup> shows marbled red, yellow, green and black lacquer with its interior and base coated in silver, presenting a shape of vertical walls bulging in the lower part towards the low foot. Hence, apart from its outwardly curving upper rim, its shape is very similar to the Ambras bowl.

<sup>851</sup> Garner (1979, p.206), Arakawa (1996, p.204), Kopplin (2002, p.73).

<sup>852</sup> Chinese porcelain cups with *kinrande* decoration in: Seipel (2000, pp.279-283, cat. nos. 208, 209, 210-214, and 216) or Trnek & Silva (2001, pp.207-210, cat. nos. 89-92), Jordan-Gschwend (1998, pp.206-207).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>853</sup> An example is in the collection of the V&A which is a cup (Inv. no. M.16-1970) from Jingdezhen (1522 to 1566) with underglaze blue in its interior, red enamel and floral motifs in gold leaf decoration (*kinrande*), was purchased in the Ottoman Empire and received silver-gilt mounts in Germany in 1583 (http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O109106/cup-unknown/).

<sup>854</sup> Sōsei & Kanemasa (1989, pp.238, cat. no.42).

<sup>855</sup> Inv. no. W.65-1925, Dimensions: 11.4 cm x 21.9 cm.

## 2.9.2. A Pair of Chinese Cups with Metal Mounts, Porto

A pair of two cups (7 x 7.7 cm ( $\emptyset$ ); width of metal handles: 11 cm) on gilt silver mounts is now in a private collection in Porto.

#### Description

Both cups show a well-preserved lacquer coating. Though, it is difficult to understand if the substrate is made of turned wood or fabric (a common technique for vessels). These cups of a more conic shape, growing wider towards the upper edge, are totally covered with red cinnabar lacquer. The exterior is fully decorated in gold (shell gold) with auspicious animal and plant motifs with a pair of quails sitting among rocks and chrysanthemums lying down among grasses, a message "wishing peace and prosperity" (See Appendix II). Details such as the quails' eyes and feathers, as well as certain shades of the rocks, are drawn with black lacquer. A frieze of foliage scrolls within two thin lines in gold trim the upper outside rim of the bowl and the inside decoration comprises a chrysanthemum within a double line placed at the bottom and a double line border around the upper rim [Fig. 157].

## Comparison

A group of twelve cups with similar shape and dimensions (11 cm high with lid, and without 8.1 cm, 6.6 cm Ø) are part of a set of plates all additionally mounted by silver filigree, that belonged to the Schatzkammer des Deutschens Ordens of Schloss Mergentheim (today Bad Mergentheim), where they are documented since 1721<sup>856</sup>. These cups are lacquered black and present gilded decorations of floral motifs and symbols of the Eight Immortals. Their rich silver filigree mounts include a stand, two handles and a lid. The plates present a distinct lacquer decoration of brownish iron-red lacquer ground figuring at the bottom either floral motifs with birds, or landscapes with architecture and human figures, all framed by a single golden line, while the rim features dragon and cloud motifs in colored lacquer and gold.

Finally, there are also other early 17<sup>th</sup> century bowls (4.5 - 6.5 cm high, 9 - 10.5 cm wide) of exterior wicker work and Asian lacquer interiors equally part of the Ambras

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>856</sup> Wood, lacquer, and silver: Ming China (1620-1630); mounts: Goa, 17th century. Museum und Schatzkammer des Deutschen Ordens (Inv. no. DO 88), Vienna, Austria, in Wieninger & Silva (2000), Silva (2001b).

collection, or other collections in Vienna and Copenhagen<sup>857</sup>. These are all of distinctive shape, being the interior of one the examples painted with flowers and carps and, an upper frieze, with lotuses and other flowers in gold and red<sup>858</sup>.

#### Attribution

These undoubtedly Chinese lacquered cups, which were retroactively provided with metal mounts, were recently attributed to Southern China, and in particular to the period between 1580 and  $1620^{859}$ .

The formal classification and detailed descriptions of the heterogeneous individual objects are now followed by the presentation of the technological investigations and their results.

<sup>857</sup> Seipel (2000, cat. nos. 188-190,191-193).

<sup>858</sup> Garner (1979, Plate 146), Seipel (2000, cat. no.188).

<sup>859</sup> Crespo (2017b).



Fig. 153 Bowl 2.9.1. © Ambras Castle



Fig. 154 Bowl 2.9.1., chrysanthemum flower and three-leaves at the bottom



Fig. 155 Bowl 2.9.1., partly smeared motifs in gold



Fig. 156 Bowl. © Sōsei & Kanemasa (1989, p.238)



Fig. 157 Mounted cups 2.9.2., one of two cups with the detail of a quail, chrysanthemums and rocks