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NAMBAN LACQUER FOR THE PORTUGUESE AND SPANISH MISSIONARIES


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The namban liturgical lacquers that have survived to the present day in churches, monasteries and convents in Portugal and Spain, as well as those found in museums and private collections around the world, provide tangible evidence of the cross-cultural interaction that occurred between the East and West, during the so-called ‘Christian century’ in Japan.

These liturgical lacquers, displaying an interesting combination of Western form and Japanese decoration (black lacquered wood richly decorated in gold lacquer and inlaid with mother-of-pearl), were specially commissioned by the Jesuit missionaries and also by missionaries of other religious Orders present in Japan for devotional practices and evangelical work. They were first made by lacquer craftsmen, working in and around Miyako (present-day Kyoto), in about 1580, during the Momoyama period (1573-1615). Lacquers for the Jesuits usually incorporated a medallion enclosing the ‘IHS’ monogram of the Society of Jesus. Other lacquers, possibly for the Jesuits as well as for the Franciscans, Augustinians and Dominicans or even for private individuals, were made with or without Christian iconography. These were most probably commissioned after the proclamation, by the ruling warlord Toyotomi Hideyoshi, of the 1597 anti-Christian edict.

The production of liturgical lacquers must have ended sometime after 1614, when the shōgun Tokugawa Ieyasu issued an edict officially banning Christianity. A few surviving examples decorated in the Transition style demonstrate that despite the severity of this suppression, the Jesuits continued to commission liturgical lacquers during the early Edo period up until about 1639, when the country was closed to all Westerners (sakoku), with the exception of the Dutch, who did not proselytize the Christian faith.

1 This article summarises the information presented in Teresa Canepa, Alexandra Curvelo, Christiaan Jörg, Pedro Cancela de Abreu and Miho Kitagawa, After the Barbarians II. Namban Works of Art for the Japanese, Portuguese and Dutch Markets, exhibition catalogue, Jorge Welsh London-Lisbon, 2008 and includes new research that is part of a Ph.D. thesis at Leiden University, The Netherlands. I am greatly indebted to Prof. Dr. Christiaan Jörg for his suggestions on various points of this article.
Resumo

Os trabalhos litúrgicos lacados namban que sobreviveram até aos dias de hoje em igrejas, mosteiros e conventos em Portugal e Espanha, assim como aqueles que se encontram em museus e coleções particulares espalhados pelo mundo, constituem provas tangíveis da interacção de natureza intercultural que ocorreu entre o Oriente e o Ocidente, durante o chamado “Século cristão” no Japão.

Estes trabalhos litúrgicos lacados que apresentam uma combinação interessante de forma ocidental e decoração japonesa (madeira lacada a preto luxuosamente decorada com lacado dourado e incrustações de madrepérola) eram especialmente encomendados pelos missionários jesuítas e também pelos missionários de outras Ordens religiosas presentes no Japão com o fim de levarem a cabo práticas devotas e trabalho evangélico. Inicialmente eram feitos por artesãos especializados em trabalhos lacados, que trabalhavam em Miyako (hoje em dia Kioto) ou nos seus arredores, cerca de 1580, durante o período Momoyama (1573-1615). Nos trabalhos lacados para os Jesuítas era geralmente incorporado um medalhão, no qual se inseria o monograma ‘IHS’ da Sociedade de Jesus. Outros trabalhos lacados, possivelmente tanto para os Jesuítas como para os Franciscanos, Agostinianos e Dominicanos ou até para particulares, podiam ser feitos com ou sem a iconografia Cristã. Estes terão provavelmente sido encomendados após a proclamação do édito anticristão de 1597, pelo chefe militar reinante Toyotomi Hideyoshi.

A produção de trabalhos lacados litúrgicos terá terminado após 1614, quando o shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu lançou um édito banindo oficialmente o Cristianismo. Alguns exemplos que sobreviveram, decorados no estilo Transição, demonstram que apesar da severidade desta supressão, os Jesuítas continuaram a encomendar trabalhos litúrgicos lacados durante o início do período Edo, até cerca de 1639, quando o país fechou as portas a todos os ocidentais (sakoku), à excepção dos Holandeses, que não pretendiam converter outros povos à fé Cristã que era a sua.
The Portuguese voyages of discovery in the 15th century reinvigorated the Christian missionary movement with its goal of bringing Christianity to the peoples of Africa, Asia and the New World. In Japan the history of Christianity began on August 15th 1549 when Francis Xavier (1506-1552), a missionary from the Society of Jesus, arrived at Kagoshima in the southern part of Kyūshū, bringing with him paintings and other devotional objects. Francis Xavier and his companions began by converting the Japanese elite and then continued with commoners. Within a brief period of time, Christianity had widely spread across the country, and by the beginning of the 17th century there were about 320,000 Christian converts.

2 Francis Xavier, who had recently been appointed Apostolic Nuncio, left Portugal in April 1541 with the East Indian fleet and reached India in May 1542 with two companions. There, he took charge of the Christian missions in Goa and on the Southwest coast. After working for three years among the pearl-fishers of the Fishery Coast, he continued to the East Indies, Malacca and the Indonesian Spice Islands. Finally, he proceeded to Japan.

3 The Society of Jesus, a new order of priests and brothers founded by Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556) in 1534, was officially recognized by Pope Paul III in 1540. King John III of Portugal (r. 1521-1557) ordered missionaries from the Jesuit Order in Rome to go to his domains in Asia.

4 For a brief account on Francis Xavier’s arrival and missionary work in Japan, see João Paulo Oliveira e Costa, ‘São Francisco de Xavier e o Japão’ in Tobu Museum of Art, St. Francis Xavier – His Life and Times, exhibition catalogue, Tokyo, 1999, pp. 37-9. Along with instruments of the Eucharist, vestments, rosaries, bibles and prayer books, Francis Xavier brought with him engravings, paintings and statuettes of the Virgin Mary and Jesus for assistance in preaching and catechizing. For this opinion, see Gauvin Alexander Bailey, Art of the Jesuit Missions in Asia and Latin America, 1542-1773, Toronto, 1999, p. 6.

5 For this opinion, see Kiichi Matsuda, Kirishtan Shijitsu to Bijitsu, Tokyo, 1969, p. 54. An estimate of 750,000 Christians, however, has been given in C. R. Boxer, The Christian Century in Japan 1549-1640, London and Berkeley, 1951, p. 187.
The Jesuit missionaries almost immediately began participating in trade between Macao and Japan. In 1579, an agreement known as the * armação* contract, formalized trade with the city of Macao. This contract granted the Society the right to free transport on Portuguese trading vessels for an annual allotment of raw silk.\(^6\) Trade became indispensable for supporting the Society’s activities in Japan, and continued even after the shōgun Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543-1616) issued an edict officially banning Christianity in 1614.\(^7\) Very little is known about trade in this period.\(^8\) During this so-called ‘Christian century’, a considerable amount of Christian art was produced in Japan, though only a few objects have survived to present day. The vast majority was probably destroyed in iconoclastic practices during the period of persecution.

1. **Namban Liturgical Lacquer for the Jesuits**

Isolated from Europe, as well as from the Portuguese imperial strongholds of Goa, Macao and Malacca, the Jesuit missionaries in Japan required a supply of religious objects for their devotional practices and evangelical work. Captivated by the exotic nature, beauty and intrinsic qualities (smoothness, luminosity and durability) of Japanese lacquers,\(^9\) the Jesuits commis-

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\(^7\) The first anti-Christian edict, issued in 1587 by the shōgun Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537-1598), was not strictly enforced. In 1597, Hideyoshi proclaimed a more serious edict and ordered the execution of 26 Japanese Christians and Franciscan missionaries (twenty Japanese, four Spaniards, one Mexican and one Indian, who were later known as the 26 Martyrs of Nagasaki) for preaching Christianity. Christianity was officially banned in 1637, following a Christian uprising by some Kyūshū peasants due to economic desperation and religious oppression, which ended in the massacre of 37,000 samurais and peasants (many of them Christian) by the shogunate, at Shimabara Fort.

\(^8\) In 1591, the Italian Father Alessandro Valignano, S.J. (Father Visitor) established new *Regulations* for the procurador office in Nagasaki and in Macao. Father João Rodrigues, who worked as procurador in Nagasaki from 1598 to 1610 and in Macao from 1622 to 1627, has been ascribed with the authorship of the 1629 *Memorandum (Anno 1629 Couzas que podem server para os Procuradores)*, which provides information on the trade between Macao and Nagasaki, both before and after the Christian missionaries were expelled from Japan. A copy of the Memorandum and a copy of Valignano’s Regulations are included in *Regimento do Procurador que está em Japão, Jesuítas na Ásia*, 49-IV-66, fls. 37-41, which is kept in the Biblioteca da Ajuda in Lisbon. Kōichirō Takase has suggested that the profits of the Society from trade amounted to 12,000-16,000 cruzados per year from the 1590s to 1614. Mentioned in Oka, 2006, p. 82 (note 6).

\(^9\) The raw materials and technical knowledge for the manufacturing process of lacquer objects were unknown in Europe at the time. Several reports by Christian missionaries residing in Japan describe the art of lacquering. Father João Rodrigues in *História da Igreja do Japão...iniciada en 1575* noted that “Throughout the whole kingdom they practise an art which has something in
sioned from lacquer craftsmen various liturgical objects in a new style of lacquer made specifically for export, known as namban.\textsuperscript{10} These lacquers were intended to be used in churches in Japan\textsuperscript{11} or even in the Jesuit mis-

common with painting; this is the art of varnishing, which we call over here urushar from the word urushi, the varnish made from the gum of a certain tree. They tap the trunk of this tree at a certain time of the year a draw off an excellent gum, which is used as varnish; this tree is also found in China, the Caucasus, Cambodia and Siam. But of all of these nations the Japanese stand supreme in this art, for they are so skilful that they can make a varnished object look as if it were made of smooth glittering gold. The art is practised throughout the entire kingdom because their tableware, such as bowls, and tables and trays from which they eat, as well as tables, ornaments and other vessels are all varnished. The varnish is so hard and well applied that water; however hot it may be, falling on these dishes and bowls does not do any damage, just as if the bowls were made of glazed earthenware. They also varnish the scabbards of katana and daggers, the handles of lances and the sheaths of their blades, and a multitude of other things, and for this reason it is the most universal art of the kingdom because it is used practically in everything. It has a certain affinity to the art of painting because among these craftsmen there are some who gild in a special way the finest examples of this kind in the whole world. Using pure gold powder they paint various objects in which they set flowers made of gold and silver leaf and mother-of-pearl. There is nothing more splendid than such things, but they are so costly that only lords and wealthy people can afford them. There is, it is true, a cheaper kind of this work which more or less looks the same, but it is vastly different as regards workmanship, gloss and price; the gentry of the kingdom make much use of this second type. Some escritoires and dishes of this kind were taken to Europe, but they were very inferior to the best sort of this second kind. There are also fakes, which can easily deceive someone who does not know much about it. Although the Chinese have a large variety of gilded things and use a great deal of varnish, they highly admire and value the gilt and varnish work of Japan, for however skilful they may be they cannot equal the Japanese in this art. The tree from which this varnish is taken bears a fruit that the Japanese boil to obtain a kind of wax from which they make their candles and there is great abundance of this in the kingdom.” História da Igreja do Japão... iniciada em 1575, Macao, 1622, vol. II, pp. 21-23. Quoted in Oliver Impey and Christiaan Jörg, Japanese Export Lacquer 1580-1850, 2005, p. 234. The authors give a translation from Michael Cooper, They came to Japan: an anthology of European reports on Japan, 1543-1640, London, 1965, pp. 258-59.

\textsuperscript{10} The term namban, literally meaning ‘southern barbarians’, was used by the Japanese to describe all foreigners except Chinese and Koreans. The Portuguese merchants and their attendants (sailors, African slaves, Indians and Malays) were called namban-jin by the Japanese. The presence of namban-jin in Japan over the course of nearly one hundred years fostered cultural interaction as well as profitable commercial relations. In this period of intercontinental commerce, various sorts of luxury objects were shipped from the West to Japan and vice versa. The main trade articles shipped by the Portuguese merchants to Japan, such as raw silk and ceramics, were manufactured in China, India, and other places in South Asia. In exchange, an enormous amount of Japanese silver was exported. The Japan trade was the most profitable of the enterprises that the Portuguese conducted in Asia.

\textsuperscript{11} Initially, the Jesuits resided in houses that were lent to them, usually by the poor. They were later given some Buddhist temples (varelas), which were transformed into churches. As the situation became progressively favourable, Christian churches were built with a quadrangular plan and with interiors laid out in a similar manner to traditional Japanese houses. A number were built in Miyako (present-day Kyoto). The first was built soon after the daimyō Oda Nobunaga (1534-1582) assumed control of the city, but it burned in a fire in 1573. In 1576, a second church, dedicated to the Assumption of Our Lady was built; another was built by permission of Tokugawa Ieyasu in the Keichō era (1596-1615). One of these churches (with an unusual three-story construction) is depicted on a fan painting in the Kobe City Museum. It forms part of a series of sixty-one fans mounted in an album of famous sites in and around Miyako, which is
sions in Asia, Europe and the New World.  

The exact dating of *namban* liturgical objects proves difficult. It is generally accepted that they were first made in about 1580 during the Momoyama period (1573-1615). Their production, centred in and around Miyako (present-day Kyoto), must have ended sometime after 1614, when Tokugawa Ieyasu issued an edict officially banning Christianity. The Japanese authorities’ fierce determination to destroy Christianity led to the persecution of missionaries and converts, the confiscation and destruction of religious symbols and the demolition or transformation of churches. A few surviving liturgical lacquers, decorated in the later Transition style, demonstrate that despite the severity of this suppression, the Jesuits continued to commission lacquer objects for their Christian practices during the early Edo period (1615-1868) up until about 1639, when the country was closed to all West-


12 The Jesuits arrived in the viceroyalty of New Spain in 1572, and until their expulsion by Charles III (r. 1759-1788) in 1767, they played a crucial role in many aspects of life. The Society focused on missionary work among the indigenous population in remote areas, far from the capital (Mexico City), which had been untouched by the Franciscan, Dominican and Augustinian missionaries who had arrived earlier. It was also dedicated to the education of its own members, and of other young men in the cities. For this opinion, see John W. O’Mailey, S.J. Gauvin Alexander Bailey, Steven J. Harris and T. Frank Kennedy (eds.), *The Jesuits: Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts, 1540-1773*, Toronto, 1999, p. 680.

13 Relevant changes were taking place in Europe at this time. Philip II of Spain (r. 1556-1598), a member of the Habsburg dynasty, became King of Portugal in 1580 after the disastrous battle of Alcácer Quibir in North Africa, where the young King Sebastian of Portugal (1554-1578) was killed, leaving no descendants. From 1580 to 1640, Portugal was under the rule of Spanish kings.

14 It is important to note that Nagasaki – the port city where the Portuguese Black ship (*kuro-fune*) from Macao arrived almost every year during the period in which foreign merchants were allowed to operate in Japan – also had important lacquer workshops. Lacquer production continued in Nagasaki, when the production in Miyako stopped (or partially stopped).

15 A group of missionaries and converts devised ways of secretly continuing their Christian practices with astonishing devotion. They were called *kakure kirishitan* (*kirishitan*, from the Portuguese word, *cristão*), which means concealed or hidden Christians. Under the threat of torture or social shame, a considerable number of converts eventually turned to Buddhism. Although *kakure kirishitan* were spread throughout the country, a great number were concentrated in the Nagasaki and Amakusa regions in Kyūshū.
erners (sakoku) with the exception of the Dutch, who were allowed to stay because they did not proselytize the Christian faith.\textsuperscript{16}

Surviving namban liturgical objects commissioned by the Jesuits include pyxes (seiheibako), folding lecterns (shokendai) and portable oratories (seigan). These objects (made especially according to the missionaries’ requirements) display an interesting combination of Western form and Japanese decoration.\textsuperscript{17} They are made in black lacquered wood richly decorated in gold lacquer (maki-e) and inlaid with mother-of-pearl (raden),\textsuperscript{18} with dense naturalistic compositions of flowering plants, birds and/or animals within geometric borders. They usually incorporate a medallion enclosing the ‘IHS’ monogram of the Society of Jesus\textsuperscript{19} with the initials of the name Jesus in Greek: ΙΗΣΟΥΣ (which may also be read as an abbreviation of the Latin expression ‘Jesus Hominum Salvator’ – Jesus Saviour of Mankind) surrounded by the crown of thorns or combined with the Jesuit symbols of the Passion (the cross and the three Crucifixion nails piercing the Sacred Heart) within a radiant sunburst.\textsuperscript{20}

A considerable number of namban liturgical lacquers are still found today in churches, monasteries and convents in Portugal and Spain, where they were donated in the late 16\textsuperscript{th} and early 17\textsuperscript{th} centuries. These lacquers may have been ordered especially by Jesuit missionaries or even by private individuals, who had never actually served in Japan, as gifts for these reli-

\textsuperscript{16} The Dutch arrived in Japan by accident in 1600 on the Liefde, which was under the command of the Englishman Will Adams (1564?-1620). The Dutch East India Company, VOC, was set up in 1602 and their trading post (or factory) was built on Hirado Island in 1609. Portuguese and Dutch relations at this time increasingly deteriorated because the Jesuits continuously denounced the Dutch as pirates and heretics. In 1641, the Dutch were moved to Deshima, a small artificial island in Nagasaki harbour, which had originally been built to house the Portuguese. The Chinese (with whom the Dutch shared the monopoly of the Japanese trade) occupied a similar, but larger island.

\textsuperscript{17} For a discussion on European models and construction techniques of namban lacquers, refer to Abreu in After the Barbarians II, 2008, pp. 52-68 (note 1).

\textsuperscript{18} Unless stated, the Jesuit liturgical objects discussed in this article are all made of black lacquered wood decorated with gold lacquer and inlaid with fragments of mother-of-pearl, sometimes cut in random shapes. For further information on the techniques and materials used on namban lacquer, refer to Miho Kitagawa in After the Barbarians II, 2008, pp. 75-88 (note 1).

\textsuperscript{19} The ‘IHS’ monogram (with the horizontal bar of the H supporting the Latin cross) had already been popularised by a Franciscan Friar named St. Bernardino of Siena (1380-1444). Its use rapidly spread throughout Italy, before St. Ignatius of Loyola chose it as the official monogram of the Society and ordered it to be placed on the doors of the Jesuit Houses.

\textsuperscript{20} The ‘IHS’ medallion is often found on contemporary printed works concerned with the Christian doctrine, as well as on letters and reports of Jesuits who lived in Japan. For an example published by Iean Bogart in 1589, see Adriana Boscaro, Sixteenth Century European Printed Works on the First Japanese Mission to Europe. A Descriptive Bibliography, Leiden, 1973, pp. 144-45, pl. 69.
igious institutions or for members of the European nobility. It is not possible to ascertain exactly how these liturgical lacquers arrived at their destinations in Europe. Undoubtedly, some were carried by the Portuguese Black ship (kurofune) to Lisbon,\(^\text{21}\) from where they were subsequently sent to other parts of Europe. Others were possibly carried by Spanish galleons via Manila in the Philippines, to Acapulco in New Spain. These would either have been kept within the Spanish viceroyalties or carried by mules to Veracruz and loaded onto Spanish ships that sailed to Seville. The examples housed in museums and private collections around the world suggest that a number of liturgical lacquers were taken by Christian missionaries and converts who sought refuge abroad.

Pyxes or ciboria (seiheibako), made after European silver and gold models, were commissioned to contain the Holy Host used in the Eucharist. They are made of cylindrical form with a hollow base and a flat tightly-fitting lid,\(^\text{22}\) which bears a large medallion enclosing the ‘IHS’ monogram, surrounded by a crown of thorns within a geometric border.\(^\text{23}\) Their sides are decorated with dense floral designs, depicting blossoming camellia (tsubaki or wabisuke), Chinese bell-flower (kikyo) and Japanese bush-clover (hagi or yamahagi) (Fig. 1),\(^\text{24}\) or with geometric designs.\(^\text{25}\) These pyxes originally may have had a black lacquer inner tray.\(^\text{26}\) A pyx decorated with a design of grape

\(\text{21}\) Until 1597, there were only six exceptions to the annual trip of the Black ship: 1573, when Antonio de Vilhena was shipwrecked off the Amakusa Islands; 1582, when the ship ran aground off the Taiwan coast; 1587 as a result of Toyotomi Hideyoshi’s first decree banishing the missionaries; 1589 due to the death of the Captain-major; 1592 probably due to the instability of the entire region as a result of the Japanese invasion of Korea; and 1594 due to a shipwreck off the coast of Sumatra. For this opinion, see C. R. Boxer, *The Great Ship from Amacon. Annals of Macao and the Old Japan Trade, 1555-1640*, Lisbon, 1963, pp. 21-60.


\(\text{23}\) A pyx with a plain black lacquered lid is recorded. The lid may have had the ‘IHS’ monogram removed sometime after 1614, when lacquer objects bearing Christian iconography were destroyed by the authorities. See, Canepa in *After the Barbarians II*, 2008, pp. 266-67, no. 31 (note 1).

\(\text{24}\) A few examples are known in Japan, including those in the Suntory Museum of Art in Tokyo, Namban Bunkakan and Museum of Art Itsuo de Ikedo, both in Osaka. In Europe, examples are found in the Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga in Lisbon and the British Museum in London. For a discussion and bibliographical references on these examples, see Canepa in *After the Barbarians II*, 2008, p. 264.

\(\text{25}\) Surviving pyxes with geometric designs appear to be rare. For an example in the Namban Bunkakan Museum in Osaka, see Hickman (ed.), 1996, p. 253, pl. 123 (note 11).

vines in the Kanagawa Tōkei-ji Temple in Kamakura is the only known example kept secretly in Japan during the anti-Christian period.\textsuperscript{27} A box in the Castelo Branco collection in Lisbon, with the ‘IHS’ monogram and similar floral decoration, but of oval form, may have been used to hold the Holy Oils rather than the Holy Host.\textsuperscript{28}

\textsuperscript{27} For this opinion, see Meiko Nagashima, ‘Japanese Lacquers Exported to Spanish America and Spain’ in \textit{Asia & Spanish America. Trans-Pacific Artistic & Cultural Exchange, 1500-1850}, Papers from the 2006 Mayer Center Symposium at the Denver Art Museum, Denver, 2009, p. 115. The pyx is illustrated in Impey and Jörg, 2005, p. 169, no. 385 (note 9).

\textsuperscript{28} For this box, showing traces of three interior divisions, see Europália 91 Portugal, \textit{Via Orientalis}, exhibition catalogue, Brussels, 1991, p. 197, pl. 168.
Lecterns (shokendai), also called missal stands or book-rests, were most likely commissioned by the Jesuits to be used on church altars for holding the text of the Catholic Mass. The shape and construction of these lecterns almost certainly derives from Goanese carved wood examples. Although their folding system, formed by two crossed boards, however, originally may have been based on Islamic prototypes. These lecterns bear a large medallion enclosing the ‘IHS’ monogram reserved on a floral or geometric ground.

Lecterns with floral designs are decorated with various flowering plants, forming either dense or loose compositions, framed by one border (either geometrical or scrolling karakusa), or by a narrow mother-of-pearl band. In Portugal, examples can be found in the Igreja Matriz in Castelo de Vide and the Fundo Jesuítico. This latter lectern is the only one surviving of a group of four mentioned as “quatro estantes da China” in the church’s inventory of 1620. A further example is in the Archdiocese of Évora. A lectern that appears to be one of only two namban lacquers in Spain that bear the ‘IHS’ monogram is in the Monasterio de las Descalzas Reales in Madrid.

29 The wooden structure of namban lecterns, as well as that of coffers, cabinets and chests, was constructed using joints (shashimono). These objects were described as “Saximono. Box, or container; or any similar object that trunk makers and some carpenters commonly manufacture”. Vocabulario da Lingoa de Iapam, fl. 433 v. Quoted in Leiria, 2002, p. 14 (note 22).

30 Compare, for instance, a late 16th century rahl made to hold a Qur’an and an Indian 17th century carved wood example in the Church of S. Roque. See Stuart Cary Welch, India Art and Culture 1300-1900, exhibition catalogue, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1993, p. 284, cat. 189; and Nuno Vassallo e Silva (ed.), No Caminho do Japão. Arte Oriental nas Coleções da Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Lisboa, exhibition catalogue, Lisbon, 1993, pp. 54-5, pl. 11, respectively.

31 Examples are in the Namban Bunkakan Museum in Osaka, Suntory Museum of Art in Tokyo, Museu Municipal in Portalegre, Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga and Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo in Lisbon, Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, Massachusetts and a private collection. For a discussion and bibliographical references, see Canepa in After the Barbarians II, 2008, p. 270 (note 1).

32 For the reverse of this lectern, see Europália 91 Portugal, 1991, pp. 196 and 199, pl. 167 (note 28).

33 Vassallo e Silva (ed.), 1993, pp. 84-5, no. 32 (note 30).

34 At the time, it was common to refer to Japanese objects as “from China”. This inventory is now housed in the Archivo Histórico da Santa Casa da Misericórdia in Lisbon.

35 I am grateful to Paulo Valente from the Fundação Eugénio de Almeida, which studies the artistic heritage of the Archdiocese of Évora, for providing me with information and images of three namban lecterns, a coffeer and a box.

36 The convent was founded in 1559 by Joan of Austria (1535-1573) – daughter of the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V and Isabella of Portugal, sister of Philip II and widow of the crown Prince of Portugal – who in 1554 is reputed to have been accepted into the male-only Society of Jesus under certain carefully stated stipulations. She used the pseudonym Mateo Sánchez. Isabella is said to have remained a Jesuit, a secret known only by a few other members of the Society, until her death in 1573.
Fig. 2 – Namban Lectern (shokendai)
Momoyama period (1573-1615)
Late 16th century
Monasterio de las Descalzas Reales, Madrid
Patrimonio Nacional (00613189)
It bears a medallion enclosing the monogram and radiant sunburst reserved on a ground of wisteria (huzi) painted in gold.\textsuperscript{37}

Lecterns with geometric designs are typically decorated with endless pearl (shippōtsunagi) or square latticework (ishitatami), framed by narrow geometric borders, as seen in an example in a European museum collection (Fig. 3).\textsuperscript{38} There are slight variations in the decorative elements of these

![Fig. 3 – Namban Lectern (shokendai)](image)

Momoyama period (1573-1615)
Late 16\textsuperscript{th}/early 17\textsuperscript{th} century
European Museum collection

\textsuperscript{37} The Monasterio de las Descalzas Reales has another namban lectern, which is constructed with two doors from a former oratory. Illustrated in Patrimonio Nacional (ed.), \textit{Oriente en Palacio: tesoros asiáticos en las colecciones reales españolas}, exhibition catalogue, Palacio Real de Madrid, 2003, p. 122, no. VI.3.

\textsuperscript{38} For a discussion and illustrations of this lectern, see Canepa in \textit{After the Barbarians II}, 2008, pp. 268-73, no. 32 (note 1). For an example in a private collection decorated with square lattice-work framed by a border of scrolling karakusa, all painted in gold, see Oliver Impey and Teresa Canepa, \textit{After the Barbarians. An exceptional group of Namban works of art – Depois dos Bárbaros. Um excepcional conjunto de obras Namban}, exhibition catalogue, Jorge Welsh London-Lisbon, 2003, pp. 38-41, no. 3.
lecterns. For instance, three examples in the Santa Clara-a-Nova Convent in Coimbra and one in the Museu Nacional de Machado de Castro, also in Coimbra, and another example in the Church of Sta. María in Aguilar de Campos, have leafy stems growing from the ‘H’ letter of the ‘IHS’ monogram and the Sacred Heart. This particular version of the Society’s emblem also occurs on pyxes. Another example, in the Igreja Matriz in Tavira, has the mother-of-pearl ‘IHS’, cross and Sacred Heart reserved on a linear geometric ground painted in gold. Two examples in the Senior Seminary in Évora have the ‘IHS’ monogram within an oval medallion, reserved on diaper grounds of stylized four-petalled flowers painted in gold or with accents of mother-of-pearl. A closely related lectern in the Church of Santiago el Real in Medina del Campo (a former Jesuit convent of St Peter and St Paul) has the ‘IHS’ reserved on a bracket-lobed medallion flanked by rows of family crests (mons) painted in gold (Fig. 4). The lower panels of one of the examples in Évora and the example in Medina del Campo are similarly decorated with cherry branches. All three are framed by a lozenge-shaped border with four-petalled flowers.

Lecterns bearing the ‘IHS’ monogram were also decorated in the Transition style, which was characterized by a more restrained use of mother-of-pearl inlay and the addition of painted borders, as evidenced in an apparently unique example in the Colégio da Companhia de Jesus, in Coimbra. This

39 Two of these lecterns are illustrated in Fundação Oriente, Arte Namban, os Portugueses no Japão, exhibition catalogue, Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga, Lisbon, 1990, p. 49, nos. 36 and 37.
40 This lectern came from the Palace of the Count Bishop. See Fundação Oriente, 1990, p. 48, no. 35 (note 39).
41 I would like to thank José Manuel Casado Paramio from Fundación Museo de las Ferias for providing me with images and information of the namban objects in the Church of Sta. María in Aguilar de Campos and the Church of Santiago el Real in Medina del Campo, both in Valladolid, Spain.
42 This emblem may have been copied from the title page of one of the Society’s printed works, such as De Institutione Grammatica – Libri Tres, published in 1594. See Europália/89, Art Namban: Les Portugais au Japon, exhibition catalogue, Musées Royaux d’Art et d’Histoire, Brussels, 1989, p. 40, no. 8.
44 Illustrated in Maria Helena Mendes Pinto, Namban lacquerware in Portugal, the Portuguese presence in Japan (1543-1639), Lisbon, 1990, pp. 62-3.
45 See note 35.
46 See note 41.
48 Illustrated in Mendes Pinto, 1990, p. 63 (note 44).
lectern, dated ca. 1620-1640, illustrates a transitional phase between the earlier namban style and the black and gold pictorial style. Its decoration can be stylistically related to lacquer of the Kōdaiji maki-e style. It is decorated in gold with the ‘IHS’ monogram and the Marian monogram (Avé Maria) – which replaces the heart and crucifixion nails of the Passion – within a floral scroll. Its lower panel is decorated with a hare crossing a river.

49 The term Kōdai-ji maki-e is generically applied to lacquer objects decorated with large flowers and the Seven Grasses of Autumn in flat metallic dust (hiramaki-e) and with delicate details incised by needle drawing (harigaki) on black grounds. This lacquer style was originally created for Fushimi Castle, the final residence of Toyotomi Hideyoshi, built between 1594 and 1597. It was later moved to the shrine at Kōdaiji in Miyako, which was created by Hideyoshi’s widow as a mausoleum for both herself and her husband in 1606. Kōdai-ji maki-e lacquers presented a new fresh vitality with their simpler, less time-consuming manufacturing techniques. Large quantities were produced by workshops in Miyako to satisfy the enormous demand. For images of this interior, see Mizuno Katsuhiko, Kodaiji Zen Temple, Osaka, 2004, pls. 44, 50, 51 and 56.
Oratories (seigan), also called retables or travelling shrines, were made after 15th and 16th century European portable triptychs, which themselves were originally influenced by Byzantine icons. These oratories framed and protected a sacred oil painting – mostly representing the Madonna and Child, the Crucifixion, saints and apostles – produced in wood or copper, by seminary painters, to the specifications of the Jesuits. Their form and proportions\(^{51}\) relate to wooden Indo-Portuguese oratories of the 16th and 17th centuries. Even though there is limited contemporary documentation concerning these lacquer oratories, there are a few namban folding paper screens that depict altars ornamented in a similar manner.\(^{52}\) They are made of shallow rectangular form with a pair of hinged half-width doors and a triangular pediment that may be either low (Fig. 5)\(^{53}\) or tall.\(^{54}\) Low triangular pediments sometimes overhang the sides, as seen in an example in the church of Santa Casa da Misericórdia in Sardoal.\(^{55}\) The pediment may also be of scalloped (Fig. 6)\(^{56}\) or arched form (Fig. 7).\(^{57}\) They bear a medallion enclosing the ‘IHS’ monogram, within a radiant halo or the ‘IHS’ monogram reserved on a floral or geometric ground, painted in gold or with accents of mother-of-pearl.\(^{58}\) The doors of the oratories are horizontal and fit tightly below the

\(^{50}\) It is beyond the scope of this article to discuss the sacred paintings enclosed within the oratories. For more information and bibliographical references on this subject, see Canepa in *After the Barbarians II*, 2008, p. 253 (note 1).

\(^{51}\) The oratories range from 45 to about 69.5 cm in height.

\(^{52}\) Examples include two screens painted by Kano Naizen (1570-1616) in the Freer Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. and another in the Kobe City Museum. See Canepa in *After the Barbarians II*, 2008, p. 16, fig. 1 and p. 251, ill. 1 (note 1) and Kobe City Museum, *Namban Arts Selection*, Kobe, 1998, pp. 9-10 (fold-out page) and 15, pl. 2, respectively.

\(^{53}\) This example appears to be the largest oratory recorded. For a detailed discussion and illustrations, see Canepa in *After the Barbarians II*, 2008, pp. 246-53, no. 28 (note 1).

\(^{54}\) For an example in the Wolverhampton Art Gallery, see Impey and Jörg, 2005, p. 186, no. 444 (note 9).

\(^{55}\) The altar of the church, where the oratory is currently placed, bears an inscription that reads: “This Lady of Hope with her oratory did have placed here by order of Gªr (Gaspar de Souza) de Lacerda on this altar as he is buried beside it and was placed here by his wife D. Hyeronima de Parada on the 17th September 1670.” For this translated quotation and an illustration, see Mendes Pinto, 1990, pp. 64 and 66, respectively (note 44). For the original text in Portuguese, see Maria Helena Mendes Pinto in *Peregrinações de Portugal ao Japão: Artes Decorativas entre os Séculos XVI e XIX*, exhibition catalogue, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon, 2003, p. 106.

\(^{56}\) For a further example in the Museu-Escola de Artes Decorativas in Lisbon, see Mendes Pinto, 1990, p. 67 (fold out page) (note 44).

\(^{57}\) For a discussion and illustrations of the Museu do Oriente example, see Canepa in *After the Barbarians*, 2003, pp. 52-5, no. 6 (note 38). For further examples in the Nagoya City Museum and Suntory Museum of Art in Tokyo, see Impey and Jörg, 2005, p. 187, ill. 448 (note 9); and Paula Ferreira Santos, *Namban, Memórias de Portugal no Japão. A Memory of Portugal in Japan*, exhibition catalogue, Instituto Português do Oriente, Macao, 2005, p. 82; respectively.

\(^{58}\) See the previously mentioned oratories in the Wolverhampton Art Gallery, Museu-Escola de Artes Decorativas, Santa Casa da Misericórdia, Museu de Oriente and Nagoya City Museum.
Fig. 5 – Namban Oratory (seigan)
Momoyama period (1573-1615)
Late 16th century
Jorge Welsh, London-Lisbon
Fig. 6 – Namban Oratory (seigan)
Momoyama period (1573-1615)
Late 16th century
Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Massachusetts
(inv. no. AE85752)

Fig. 7 – Namban Oratory (seigan)
Momoyama/Edo period
Late 16th/early 17th century
Museu do Oriente, Lisbon
(inv. no. FO/0637)
lower edge of the pediment. They are decorated with dense compositions of flowering trees, animals, birds and butterflies, which fill the entire surface or are framed by geometric and/or scrolling *karakusa* borders. Occasionally, the compositions are roughly divided in the middle into two different areas by a rock or an outcropping of land.\(^\text{59}\) They may also be contained by bracket-lobed or rectangular panels, reserved on black lacquered grounds, as seen in an example in the Museu do Oriente in Lisbon (Fig. 7).\(^\text{60}\) The doors are kept closed with a latch. Some oratories still preserve a removable rectangular frame that was intended to secure the sacred painting. These frames are decorated with geometric and/or scrolling *karakusa* borders, painted in gold or inlaid with mother-of-pearl.\(^\text{61}\)

2. **Namban Liturgical Lacquer with Christian Iconography**

There is a small group of *namban* lacquer oratories bearing Christian iconography, which would have not been immediately recognizable by the Japanese authorities (Tokugawa shogunate), such as a cross with fish-like arms or doves (single or pair), which symbolize the Holy Spirit. A few lacquer oratories, lecterns and boxes, made to hold the Holy Host or Holy Oils, have no Christian iconography at all. It seems reasonable to believe that some of these liturgical lacquers were commissioned by the Jesuits, most probably after the anti-Christian edict of 1597, which caused missionaries to be executed for preaching Christianity.\(^\text{62}\) Documentary evidence suggests that liturgical lacquers with or without Christian iconography were also commissioned by missionaries of other religious Orders present in Japan at the time – Franciscans, Augustinians and Dominicans\(^\text{63}\) – or even by private individuals.

59 As seen in the Wolverhampton Art Gallery example. See note 54.


61 Oratories with such frames include the examples in the church of Santa Casa da Misericórdia, Museu-Escola de Artes Decorativas, Nagoya City Museum, Gifu City Museum and Wolverhampton Art Gallery.

62 See notes 7 and 15.

63 Until 1624 a small trade was conducted between the Japanese and the Spanish, who were based in the Philippines. Spanish ships sailed every summer from Manila to New Spain. On their way, a few ships entered Japanese ports. In 1593 (regardless of the 1587 edict expelling Christian missionaries) Franciscan friars from Manila were sent with a diplomatic embassy to Hideyoshi. The Franciscans were allowed to stay as missionaries and began to build churches and hospitals in Miyako and Osaka. Their arrival meant the end of the Jesuit mission monopoly in Japan,
There appear to be only two surviving oratories (both with triangular pediments) bearing a Christian cross with fish-shaped arms. The cross of one is painted in gold; the other is inlaid in mother-of-pearl. The first example, dated ca. 1580-1620, is in the Musée Guimet in Paris.\(^{64}\) It was originally owned by a Spanish family related to a former Governor of the Philippines. This oratory may have arrived in Europe via the Spanish trade route through Manila and Acapulco, in New Spain (present-day Mexico). The other example, dated ca. 1600-1620, is in the Staatliches Museum für Völkerkunde in Munich, and was part of the Wittelsbach family collection before 1789.\(^{65}\)

An oratory, dated ca. 1580-1620, and bearing a dove of the Holy Spirit within a circle, is in the Museum Catherijneconvent in Utrecht.\(^{66}\) Its form varies slightly from the rectangular pediment oratories, as it has a low, overhanging pediment and a base with a drawer. An example of a similar date, bearing a pair of confronted doves reserved on a ground of scrolling foliage finely painted in gold, is in the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, Massachusetts (Fig. 6).\(^{67}\)

3. **Namban Liturgical Lacquer without Christian Iconography**

Oratories of shallow rectangular forms that bear no Christian iconography are known with triangular, arched or scalloped pediments. One example with a low, triangular pediment, dated ca. 1580-1620, has a European crucifix attached to its black lacquered interior.\(^{68}\) An example with an arched pediment, which is concealed by a pair of hinged doors, is decorated in gold with four flowers on a diaper ground.\(^{69}\) Two related oratories have doors

which had been consecrated as an exclusive area for the Jesuits of the Portuguese Padroado by the brief *Ex pastoralis officio* issued by Pope Gregory XIII in 1585. This, together with the fact that the Jesuits were sponsored by the Portuguese crown, whereas the Franciscans came to Japan under the patronage of Spain (both countries under the reign of Philip II since 1580) aggravated their mutual antagonism. The Franciscans were followed by two other Mendicant Orders, the Augustinians and the Dominicans. The first Augustinian friars reached Japan in 1602. They built the Church of the Holy Spirit in Nagasaki, and soon after more churches. In 1636, the Dominican friars from the Philippines organized a missionary expedition to Japan, but were arrested and condemned to death by the tribunal of Nagasaki.

\(^{64}\) Illustrated in Impey and Jörg, 2005, p. 186, ill. 443 (note 9).

\(^{65}\) Impey and Jörg, 2005, p. 189, ill. 453.

\(^{66}\) Impey and Jörg, 2005, p. 186, ill. 442.

\(^{67}\) Impey and Jörg, 2005, p. 187, ills. 449 a and b.

\(^{68}\) Impey and Jörg, 2005, p. 188, ills. 451a and b.

\(^{69}\) The whereabouts of this oratory is unknown. For an illustration, see Impey and Jörg, 2005, p. 186, ill. 445.
which fit tightly under the top curved edge of their scalloped pediments.\textsuperscript{70} One example, dated \textit{ca}. 1580-1620, is in a private collection in Japan.\textsuperscript{71} The other, of smaller size and decorated in the Transition style, has doors with an overall design of chrysanthemum (\textit{kiku}), autumnal grasses and mahonia (\textit{hiiragi-nanten}), painted in various shades of gold.

A few oratories, dating from the Momoyama period, are surmounted by a slightly convex horizontal panel, instead of a pediment.\textsuperscript{72} The largest recorded example is in the Tokyo National Museum.\textsuperscript{73} A smaller example of wider rectangular form is in the Museu do Oriente (Fig. 8).\textsuperscript{74} They are simi-

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{Fig_8.png}
\caption{Namban Oratory (\textit{seigan})}
Momoyama period (1573-1615)
Late 16\textsuperscript{th} century
Museu do Oriente, Lisbon
(inv. no. FO/0636)
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{70} Both oratories enclose oil paintings on copper depicting the Virgin Mary with Christ Child, St Joseph and the infant St. John the Baptist, which have a gilt inscription written in Roman script that reads: "\textit{EGO DORMIO ET CORMEV VIGILAT}".

\textsuperscript{71} Illustrated in Sezon Museum of Art and Shizuoka Prefecture Museum of Art (eds.), \textit{Via Orientalis – Portugaru to Namban Bunka ten} (Via Orientalis – Exhibition of Portuguese and Namban Culture), Tokyo, 1993, pp. 204-06, no. 184.

\textsuperscript{72} The oratories range from about 21 to 49.5 cm in height.

\textsuperscript{73} Illustrated in Miyeko Murase, \textit{Bridge of Dreams. The Mary Griggs Burke Collection of Japanese Art}, New York, 2000, p. 232, fig. 43.

\textsuperscript{74} For a discussion and illustrations of this oratory, see Canepa in \textit{After the Barbarians}, 2003, pp. 46-51, no. 5 (note 38); and Museu do Oriente, 2008, pp. 127-28, cat. 100 (note 60).
larly decorated with dense designs of flowering and fruiting trees and birds or animals framed by geometric bands. Three other comparable oratories, dated ca. 1580-1620, are in the British Museum in London,\cite{75} in the Kyoto National Museum\cite{76} and in the Tsukumi City Collection, in Oita Prefecture.\cite{77} They are decorated on the exterior with various simpler all-over designs of large-scale flowering plants (with or without birds), and on the interior with scrolling grape vines (a symbol of the Eucharist), gourds (hyotan or hisago) or deer standing among maples (momizi), all painted in gold with accents of mother-of-pearl. Normally, lacquer oratories would enclose a removable sacred image; however, in the aforementioned examples in the Kyoto National Museum and the Tsukumi City Collection, the sacred image is painted directly onto the black lacquered surface.\cite{78} The grape vine design on the interior of the doors of these two examples relates closely to that seen in the pyx decorated with the 'IHS' monogram in the Kanagawa Tōkei-ji Temple.\cite{79} Another oratory surmounted by a slightly convex horizontal panel is in the Namban Culture Museum in Osaka.\cite{80} Its original sacred painting has been removed and replaced by a fitted mirror. The doors of this oratory are decorated on the exterior with large-scale pine and cherry tree branches (sakura) and on the interior with wisteria (huizi). A further oratory with similar wisteria decoration on the interior of the doors is in the Monasterio de las Trinitarias Descalzas in Madrid.\cite{81} Its black lacquered interior, which still

\begin{itemize}
\item \cite{76} Illustrated in Tobu Museum of Art of Art, 1999, p. 164, no. 196 (note 4).
\item \cite{77} This oratory, discovered in Puerto Rico by Chisaburo Yamada, was recently acquired by the Taiheiyo Cement Corporation. It is now kept at the Tsukumi City Collection. Illustrated in Jō Okada, *Namban Kōgei*, Tokyo, 1973, pls. 51 and 52; and Impey and Jörg, 2005, p. 188, ill. 452a and b (note 9).
\item \cite{78} The interior black lacquered panel of the Kyoto National Museum oratory is painted with the Holy Trinity (represented by three figures with similar facial features). It has been suggested that this sacred image of the Holy Trinity may have been painted in the Spanish viceroyalty of New Spain, where this particular image was widely produced in the beginning of the 17th century. See, Keizo Kanki, ‘Iberia-kei-seiga Kokunai-ihin ni miru Chiho-yoshiki (Regional Styles of Painting Which Can Be Seen in Sacred Images with Iberian Influence in Japan)’, *Bijutsushi* (Journal of Art and History), Bijutsushigakkai (The Japan Art History Society), no. 126, 1989, pp. 151-72. The black lacquered panel of the oratory in the Tsukumi City Museum is painted with an unidentified crowned saint flanked, on either side, by an angel.
\item \cite{79} See note 27.
\item \cite{80} Illustrated in Yamazaki Tsuyoshi, *Nihon no Bijyutsu No. 426 Umi wo Watatta Nihon Shikki I, 16-17th century*, Shibundo, 2001, p. 33, no. 41.
\item \cite{81} I am greatly indebted to Yayoi Kawamura from the Universidad of Oviedo for providing me with copies of her articles on namban lacquers in Spain. For this oratory, see Yayoi Kawamura, ‘Obras de laca del arte namban en los Monasterios de la Encarnación y de las Trinitarias de Madrid’, *Reales Sitios*, vol. XXXVIII, No. 147, 2001, p. 6.
\end{itemize}
preserves a frame painted with geometric and scrolling *karakusa* borders, has attached a silver crucifix inlaid with coral that was made in Sicily. This oratory is the only *namban* object in the Trinitarias Descalzas and was most likely donated to the monastery by the benefactress María de Villena y Melo, or by a family member of Juana Manuel de Portugal.

Two oratories dated *ca.* 1630-1635, made of shallow rectangular form surmounted by a low, arched pediment, appear to be the only examples recorded with a distinctive flat gold and silver lacquer (*hiramaki-e*) decoration. One of these examples is part of the Wittelsbach collection at the Staatliches Museum für Volkerkunde. Its doors are painted in gold with birds flying amongst peony branches (*botan*) on the exterior, and with wild geese standing among water reeds on the interior. The original sacred painting of this oratory was removed and replaced by a mirror. The other example is decorated in gold and silver with an overall design of large-scale chrysanthemums (*kiku*) and autumn grasses. The interiors of the doors are decorated in gold with a sparse design of meandering kudsu vine (*kuzu*). The gold and silver lacquer decoration of these two latter examples is closely related to the Kôdaiji *maki-e* style.

Lecterns without Christian iconography include an example, dated *ca.* 1580-1620, in the convent of Santa María Magdalena in Medina del Campo, that is decorated with large-scale Japanese camellia (*tsubaki* or *wabisuke*) within a border of scrolling *karakusa* (Fig. 9). It may have been donated...
to this convent of Augustinian nuns by a chaplain, who was from the Philippine Augustinian Order. Another lectern in a private Japanese collection that dates from the early 17th century is decorated with a large lozenge-shaped panel, enclosing a roundel with two butterflies on a ground of stylized flowers, all within an endless pearl border (Fig. 10). A Transition style example

89 Illustrated in Sezon Museum of Art and Shizuoka Prefecture Museum of Art (eds.), 1993, p. 208, no. 187 (note 71). I am grateful to Katsura Yamaguchi, Christie’s International Director, Japanese and Korean Art, for providing me with an image of this lectern and of a standing shrine or retable from this private collection.
in the Casa Colombo-Museu do Porto Santo in Madeira, dated ca. 1620-1640, is decorated with autumnal foliage, long grasses and two butterflies on the upper panel, with a spray of morning glory (asagao or asagaro) on the lower panel (Fig. 11).90

Two oval shaped boxes without Christian iconography that were most likely intended to hold the Holy Host or Holy Oils are known. One of almost identical proportions to that bearing the ‘IHS’ monogram in the Castelo

90 See Canepa in After the Barbarians, 2003, pp. 42-5, no. 4 (note 38).
Branco collection is in the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford.\textsuperscript{91} The other, in a private collection in Japan, is the same width, but slightly taller.\textsuperscript{92} Both are decorated with dense designs of flowering tree branches within geometrical borders.

There are also three surviving \textit{namban} low tables (ranging from 36 to 50.4 cm in height) without Christian iconography dating from the Momoyama

\textsuperscript{91} Illustrated in Impey and Jörg, 2005, p. 109, ill. 193, (note 9).
\textsuperscript{92} Impey and Jörg, 2005, p. 109, ill. 194.
period.\textsuperscript{93} Tables such as these were most likely used by the Jesuits in Japan as portable altars in liturgical services.\textsuperscript{94} Although all three tables have rectangular tops, the form and construction of their bases varies.\textsuperscript{95} They have either two pairs of legs and stretchers that dismantle, or two pairs of legs joined by stretchers that fold inwards. Low tables of this type would have been easy to transport by the Jesuits, who were constantly travelling from one congregation to another. It is likely that a considerable number of such tables were made for the Jesuits, as implied in an account of August 1616, where the Jesuit Father Manuel Bento lists 130 tables among the goods he is leaving in Japan for his successor, Father Manuel Borges.\textsuperscript{96}

4. Unique Namban Liturgical Lacquers

There are seven namban liturgical lacquers that are unique examples of their types. The earliest example, dating from the late 16\textsuperscript{th} century, is a small hanging oratory enclosing an oil painting on copper of St. Dominic, in a private collection in Oporto (Fig. 12).\textsuperscript{97} This oratory, of shallow almost square form, has an opening at the top for inserting the painting. It also has a sliding panel that opens to the right, which is decorated with chrysanthemums and Chinese bell-flowers.\textsuperscript{98} The reverse of the oratory and the sliding

\textsuperscript{93} Only one other namban table of the Momoyama period is known to exist. This table, in the National Museum in Warsaw, is a full-size table of European proportions. It was formerly in Wilanów Castle, Poland and was included in the 1993 exhibition Japan und Europa, 1543-1929 in Berlin. Illustrated in Impey and Jörg, 2005, p. 195, ill. 467, a, b, c and d (note 9).

\textsuperscript{94} The use of namban tables as altars was first suggested by Oliver Impey in After the Barbarians, 2003, pp. 14 and 82 (note 38). Their use as altars was again mentioned in Impey and Jörg, 2005, p. 196 (note 9).

\textsuperscript{95} For a detailed discussion on these three namban tables, see Canepa in After the Barbarians II, 2008, pp. 284-91 (note 1).

\textsuperscript{96} It reads: “seven maki-e coffers...9 urushi [lacquer] chalice boxes...130 Japanese tables.” Quoted in Mendes Pinto, 1990, p. 32, note 65 (note 44).

\textsuperscript{97} For a discussion and illustrations of this oratory, see Canepa in After the Barbarians, 2003, pp. 56-9, no. 7 (note 38); and Museu Quinta das Cruzes, Um Olhar do Porto. Uma Coleção de Artes Decorativas, exhibition catalogue, Museu Quinta das Cruzes, Funchal, 2005, pp. 130-31, no. 37.

\textsuperscript{98} There appear to be only two other namban objects, both of secular use, with related sliding systems. One is a comb case or toilet box with a mirror inventoried in the Royal Danish Kunstikammer in 1690, now housed in the Nationalmuseet in Copenhagen. The other is a backgammon board in a private collection, which has a small compartment with a sliding panel (possibly to hold dice) at either side of the frame. See, Bente Dam-Mikkelsen and Torben Lundbaek (eds.), Etnografiske genstande I Det kongelige danske Kunstkammer 1650-1800. Ethnographic Objects in The Royal Danish Kunstkammer 1650-1800, NationalMuseet, Copenhagen, 1980, pp. 226-30, cat. EAc139; and Canepa in After the Barbarians, 2003, pp. 72-7, no. 10 (note 38), respectively.
Fig. 12 – Namban Oratory (seigan)
Momoyama period (1573-1615)
Late 16th century
Private collection, Oporto

panel are lacquered in black. The top has a metal suspension ring that is intended both for hanging the oratory and for securing the painting.

In the Franciscan convent of San Juan de la Penitencia (better known as Las Juanas), in Alcalá de Henares in Madrid, a reliquary or Holy Host receptacle is preserved, dated ca. 1580-1620 (Fig. 13). Its hybrid form, between cabinet and tabernacle, is neither European nor Japanese. It is simply a cabinet of rectangular form with a fall front door, with additions of a crown-like support for a cross (formed by four C-shaped bands of rectangular section) at the top and four square bases at the corners, as well as

99 It was founded by Cardinal Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros (1436-1517) in 1508 as a convent for Franciscan nuns and a school and hospital for women. The existence of this reliquary or Holy Host receptacle came to public knowledge on the occasion of the first centenary of the Dioceses of Madrid-Alcalá. It is now exhibited, along with other artistic treasures, in a small museum adjacent to the convent.

100 This reliquary or Holy Host receptacle, as also occurs with the cabinets of this form, has a space below the front door to allow the downward folding door to open completely without lifting it.
Fig. 13 – Namban Reliquary or Holy Host receptacle
Momoyama/Edo period
ca. 1580-1620
Convent of San Juan de la Penitencia, Alcalá de Henares, Madrid
a protruding candlestick holder on either side, near the base. It is decorated
with panels enclosing landscapes with tigers, long-tailed birds, peacocks and
cranes amongst flowering plants, within borders of roundels, endless pearl
and triangles. The silver lock-plates and hinges of the door, the red and green
semi-precious stones, and the silver mounts with stone insets of the arms of
the cross are later additions made in Spain.\textsuperscript{101} The interior of this reliquary –
contrastively to fall front cabinets of this form – is not fitted with small drawers.
The interior sides, top and back (the original back lacquered panel is now
replaced by a simple wood panel) are lined with European fabric.\textsuperscript{102} There
are no contemporary documents that make reference to the arrival of this
piece at the convent.\textsuperscript{103} It may have been commissioned by a Franciscan mis-
sonery who subsequently donated it directly (or indirectly) to the convent,
or it may have been donated by a noble family, related to a member of the
congregation.

The oriental collection of the Peabody Essex Museum includes a hex-
agonal domed tabernacle that would have originally held a sacred statuette,
dated \textit{ca. 1580-1615} (Fig. 14).\textsuperscript{104} It is constructed after an Indo-Portuguese
form with a panelled base and six angled plinths on which stand pairs of
pillars, all supporting a hexagonal dome surmounted by a tall finial.\textsuperscript{105} The
panels of the hexagonal base and dome are decorated with flowering tree
branches; those of the dome are divided by vertical twisted bands. The plinths
are decorated with stars carved in low-relief; the pillars with herringbone
and fluted patterns.

A \textit{namban} crucifix with an ivory figure of Jesus Christ is in the con-
vent of San Esteban in Salamanca (Fig. 15).\textsuperscript{106} This crucifix, dated \textit{ca. 1600-1630}, is formed by two crossed bars of rectangular-section, decorated with a
dense design of flowering plants and framed by a scrolling \textit{karakusa} border,

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{101} For this opinion, see Yayoi Kawamura, ‘Apuntes sobre el arte de Urushi a propósito de un
\item \textsuperscript{102} It is possible that the interior of the cabinet was originally fitted with drawers that were later
removed and that their traces are covered with fabric.
\item \textsuperscript{103} Unfortunately, the archives of this convent, founded in 1509 by Cardinal Cisneros, were
burnt during the Spanish wars.
\item \textsuperscript{104} Impey and Jörg, 2005, p. 194, no. 466 (note 9).
\item \textsuperscript{105} For an ebony and ivory Indo-Portuguese oratory of related form, dated of the 17\textsuperscript{th} century,
see Mafalda Soares da Cunha (ed.), \textit{Os Construtores do Oriente Português}, exhibition catalogue,
Comissão Nacional para as Comemorações dos Descobrimentos Portugueses, Oporto, 1998,
p. 322, no. 88.
\item \textsuperscript{106} This Dominican convent was constructed between 1524 and 1610 under the patronage of
Cardinal Fray Juan Álvarez de Toledo.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
Fig. 14 – Namban Tabernacle
Momoyama period (1573-1615)
Late 16th/early 17th century
Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Massachusetts
(inv. no. E76704)
Fig. 15 – Namban Crucifix
Momoyama/Edo period
c.a. 1600-1630
Convent of San Esteban, Salamanca
(inv. no. SA.E.50)
painted in gold. The top and horizontal ends of the crucifix have copper (originally gilt) mounts engraved with stylized floral designs. It is not known if this crucifix was commissioned by a Dominican friar, or if it was donated to the convent by a benefactor. The supposed Hispano-Philippine origin of the ivory figure of Christ would suggest that it arrived at the convent via the Spanish trade route through Manila and New Spain.

A Host receptacle is in the Museo de Arte Sacro Santiago de los Caballeros (Parish of Santiago Apóstol), in Gáldar, Gran Canaria (Fig. 16). It was given to the Parish by Doña María de Quintana, a benefactress who sent it

with other objects from New Spain, probably in 1626. It is made of a deep, almost square form, surmounted by a triangular pediment with a hinged front door that opens to the right. The pediment bears a Christian cross-inlaid in mother-of-pearl on a black lacquered ground. The door is decorated

110 According to the inscription on a silver lamp, also used for the Eucharist, this Holy Host receptacle was given to the parish in 1626. It reads “ESTA LÁMPARA DA DONA MARYA DE QVINTANA A LA YGLESYA DE LA PARROQVIA DE SANTIAGO DE LA VYLLA DE GVALDAR [sic] AÑO DE MYLL Y 626.” It appears documented for the first time during the pastoral visit that Bishop Cristóbal de la Cámara y Murga made to Gáldar on 31st December 1628, as a “caja da china.” Years later, on 22nd September 1639, Luis Ruiz de Alarcón wrote that it had been donated
Namban Lacquer for the Portuguese and Spanish Missionaries

with a panel enclosing overlapping branches of Japanese camellia within a border of half endless pearl; the sides, with branches of tachibana orange; and the top of the pediment, back and interior side of the door, with scrolling morning glory. The tall, protruding base is a later addition.

Another unique example is a standing shrine or retable in a private collection in Japan (Fig. 17). This shrine, dated ca. 1600-1630, is of particular interest because it is a hybrid example, combining namban lacquer with carved Indo-Portuguese decoration. As with the tabernacle in the Peabody Essex Museum, this shrine would have originally held a sacred statuette. It is of deep rectangular form, surmounted by a tall triangular pediment. Its construction follows that of oratories, having two side doors in the lower section that close over the central interior space. This section, however, is proportionally much taller and has an additional low base and frieze that are framed above and below by a cornice. The exterior and interior of the doors and the sides of the shrine are in namban lacquer, decorated with overlapping flowering trees divided roughly in the middle by rocks or an outcropping of land, within endless pearl borders. The front and top of the pediment are decorated in gold with a sparse design of kudzu vine. This contrasts with the interior, which is fitted with an arched frame supported on fluted columns, with leaf capitals and high dados with vases of stylized flowers in Mughal style, all carved in relief and painted in gold on a blackish ground. The base and frieze are similarly carved in relief and painted with thin leafy tendrils, flanking a stylized flower. The cornices are carved with dart ogee. The back panel is painted with an oval sunburst surrounded by eight-pointed stars in gold on black. The carved decoration of the interior frame, frieze, base and cornices is almost identical to that of a 17th century Indo-Portuguese oratory or shrine made in teak, lacquer and mother-of-pearl, in the Museu de Arte e Arqueologia, in Viana do Castelo (Fig. 18). This example bears the emblem of the Dominicans on the interior of the doors. The gold oval sunburst on the

by María de Quintana. This information was added in 1655 by canon Marcos Verde de Aguilar to the 1638 inventory: "Un Sagrario nuevo que puso en dicha Iglesia el Sr. Canónigo, grande y otro de carey en la sacristía." In the inventory of 18th September 1658 it is mentioned as a "sagrario pequeño de carey." In those of 1821 and 1830, it is described as being used as a "Sagrario de carey para el Jueves Santo." After this Holy day (that commemorates the last Supper of Jesus Christ with the Apostles and falls on the Thursday before Easter) it is kept in the sacristy for the rest of the year.

111 See note 89. Illustrated in Sezon Museum of Art and Shizuoka Prefecture Museum of Art (eds.), 1993, pp. 204-05, no. 183 (note 71).

112 Compare the stylized flowers on the dados of the shrine with those on the concave niche of the Indo-Portuguese oratory or shrine, and the leafy tendrils on top of the arches of their interior frames. Published in Mendes Pinto, 2003, p. 82, no. 22 (note 55). I am grateful to Salomé Abreu, conservator of the Museu de Arte y Arqueologia in Viana do Castelo, for providing me with an image of this oratory.
Fig. 17 – Namban Standing Shrine or Retable
Momoyama/Edo period
ca. 1600-1630
Private collection, Japan
back panel of this hybrid shrine may also be an Indo-Portuguese decoration. Similar sunbursts were frequently carved or painted on 17th-18th century Indo-Portuguese oratories to serve as the background for a sacred statuette or a crucifix, as seen in an oratory in the Museu de Évora and in another example, formerly in the collection of Commander Ernesto Vilhena.  

The last of these unique liturgical objects is a small oratory in the Real Monasterio de la Encarnación in Madrid. This oratory is another hybrid example that combines namban lacquer with carved Indo-Portuguese decoration, dated ca. 1620-1630 (Fig. 19). It has a shallow rectangular body, surmounted by a triangular pediment and two front doors made of namban lacquer. The doors, sides and top of the pediment are decorated with a small-scale design of birds in flight or perched on blossoming tree branches (possibly tachibana orange). The frieze on the base is carved in relief with thin leafy tendrils, flanking a stylized flower. The cornices are carved with dart ogee; the shaped pediment is carved in relief with a dove in a medallion surrounded by stylized grape vines, all painted in gold on an olive-green ground. The interiors of the doors are similarly decorated in relief with grape vines. The interior of the oratory is crudely decorated with plaster, gilt and a greenish pigment. The relief carved decoration of this hybrid oratory relates closely to that of the Indo-Portuguese example in Viana do Castelo (Fig. 18).

The arches interior frame, frieze and base of the hybrid standing shrine in the private Japanese collection, as well as the base, cornice, shaped pediment and tall pyramid-shaped finials of this latter hybrid oratory, are all later additions possibly made in Goa.

5. Secular Namban Lacquers used for Christian Devotional Practices

The considerable number of namban lacquer coffers, chests and cabinets preserved in monasteries and convents in Spain and Portugal indicate that objects of secular function were also used for Christian devotional practices in Europe. Namban coffers and chests, containing the relics or holy remains of saints, were housed in special rooms called ‘reliquaries’. 

114 The monastery was founded in 1616 by Margaret of Austria – Queen Consort of Spain and Portugal (1584-1611) – and King Philip III (r. 1578-1621) for the ecclesiastical order of the Agustina Recoleta nuns. This follows the tradition of the monarchy and the Spanish nobility of sponsoring religious buildings. The monastery (with the exception of its façade) was rebuilt in 1767 after a disastrous fire in the Alcázar (a 9th century Muslim fortress rebuilt by Charles I and Philip II) to which the building was attached.

115 For a discussion of this oratory, see Kawamura, 2001, pp. 8-9 (note 81).

116 The leafy grape vine scrolls of the shaped pediment are particularly close to those on the interior doors of the Indo-Portuguese oratory.

117 This may also have occurred in Japan. No documentary evidence, however, has been found so far that indicates this particular use in Japan.

118 The Counter-Reformatory cult of saints gave a renewed impetus to the production and veneration of the Holy vessels that would store, protect and sometimes also display the bodily relics associated with the intercession, the votive offering, the annual calendar and other ecclesiastical functions.
Fig. 19 – Namban Oratory (*seigan*)
Edo period (1615-1868)
ca. 1620-1630
Real Monasterio de la Encarnación, Madrid
Patrimonio Nacional (00620040)
The reliquary of the Monasterio de las Descalzas Reales has a well-known namban coffer containing the relics of San Valerio, which was a gift of the Dowager Empress Mary of Austria (1528-1603), who was the eldest daughter of Charles V and Isabella of Portugal and sister of King Philip II (Fig. 20). In 1616, Friar Juan de Carrillo wrote that when Empress Maria returned to Spain from Germany in 1581, she brought four reliquaries with six heads of saints and a large coffer containing the body of Saint Valerio de Tréveris. Recent research suggests that this coffer, inventoried in 1616, arrived at the monastery shortly before the death of the empress in 1603 and that it already contained the relic of Saint Valerio. For an extract of the text by Friar Carrillo, see Patrimonio Nacional (ed.), 2003, pp. 132-33 (note 37). In Spain, other coffers can be found in the Monastery of Santa María de Guadalupe in Cáceres, the Monastery of Santa Paula in Seville, the Church of Lorenzana in Lugo (a former Benedictine monastery), the Convent of Corpus Christi in Murcia, the Church of San Antolín in Medina del Campo, the Convent of la Purísima Concepción in Toro, the Church of Artajona in Navarra and the Diocesan Museum in Pamplona (formerly in the Church of Cortes). A chest, not containing relics, is in the reliquary of the Monasterio de la Encarnación. For a discussion on these pieces and images of a ‘reliquary’ room, see Kawamura, 2009, pp. 92-105, nos. 2, 4, 11-13 (note 109). A further coffer is in the Milles de la Polvorosa Church in Zamora. I am grateful to José Manuel Casado Paramio for providing me with images of this example. For a coffer in the Church of Nossa Senhora dos Mártires in Arraiolos, Portugal, not containing relics, see Paulo Valente, “Cofre”, Arte Sacra no concelho de Arraiolos: Inventário Artístico da Arquidiocese de Évora. Évora, Fundação Eugénio de Almeida, 2007, pp. 84-5.

A cabinet decorated in early namban style is in the Convent of Santa Maria de Jesus, and two others, decorated in Pictorial style, are in the Convent of Espíritu Santo and the Monastery of Santa Paula, all in Seville. For a discussion on these cabinets, see Kawamura, 2009, pp. 92-105, nos. 5-10 and 14 (note 109).