

COMUNICAÇÃO / PAPER

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Archaeometrical research on 'Mediterranean Maiolica' and Italian pottery found in Britain

In preparation for the British Museum's catalogue of Italian Renaissance ceramics (THORNTON-WILSON 2009), about 230 wasters or finished fragments from about 50 production centres in Italy were analysed chemically. The results showed that the production sites could be distinguished chemically, reflecting the geography of the underlying geology. Samples from the British Museum and from archaeological excavations in Great Britain were then compared statistically with this database of production sites. In most cases identifications were proposed, some of which were in marked contrast with previous assumptions (e.g. BLAKE-HUGHES 1999). The database has since been used for a number of reports of British finds and a comprehensive report of those from Tuscany will appear shortly (BLAKE-HUGHES forthcoming).

Our paper will examine two categories: the green-and-brown painted tin-glazed pottery found in 13th- to 15th-century contexts in England, which came it seems not only from various places in Italy but also from elsewhere on the north-west Mediterranean coasts; and the more numerous slipped lead-glazed and tin-glazed wares imported between the 16th and 18th centuries from Liguria and Tuscany. We will conclude with a discussion of the ways these classes of pottery may have been acquired and with a plea that those undertaking chemical analyses cooperate in order to render their results statistically comparable.

BLAKE, H., HUGHES, M. 1999, 'The introduction of tin-glazed ceramics in north-western Europe: new data from the British Museum neutron activation analysis programme', in *VIIIe Congrès International sur la Céramique Médiévale en Méditerranée*, Athens: Ministry of Culture, 447-54.

BLAKE, H., HUGHES, M. forthcoming, 'The provenance of Tuscan pottery found in Britain: the results of archaeometrical research', *Archeologia Postmedievale*.

THORNTON, D., WILSON, T. 2009, *Italian renaissance ceramics: a catalogue of the British Museum collection*, London: British Museum Press.