

COMUNICAÇÃO / PAPER

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Ceuta between the Mediterranean and the Atlantic: pottery along different routes.

This paper aims to analyse the role and meaning of the different ceramics production recovered from early Modern archaeological assemblages in Ceuta dating between 1415 (Portuguese conquest) and the siege by Muley Ismail (1694-1727). The role of Ceuta is directly linked to its strategic position, extremely important since the Middle Ages but even more relevant after the Portuguese conquest in 1415, when its “European” role became more evident.

During the early Modern Period, Ceuta was part of a commercial network that goes beyond the relationships between northern Africa and the southern area of the Iberian Peninsula: this network included a wider portion of the western Mediterranean (Italy and southern France), as well as the Atlantic routes. In this respect the pottery that is part of the assemblages excavated over the last three decades should be regarded as an important source for reconstructing the economic and cultural background of this area over the period taken into account.

This paper wishes to analyse the changes occurred in the material culture of Ceuta after the Portuguese conquest from the standpoint of the changes in pottery circulation and use. Thus, the role and the meaning of pottery imported from different areas will be analysed: ceramics from Sevilla (storage jars, Columbia plain, Columbia plain green dipped), imports from Italy (tin-glazed pottery from Motelupo and Liguria), ceramics imported from Portugal, pottery from the Netherlands, and tin-glazed pottery produced in the Iberian peninsula that looks at Italian *maiolica* and delftware as models to be imitated.

It is relevant to note that in many cases it was possible to get a better understanding of the production area and to refine the dating thanks to the comparison with contexts from the other side of the Atlantic. That is shards recovered in early Spanish and Portuguese colonies in the New World, and especially at sites in the Caribbean area and in Buenos Aires.

Ceuta, and more generally the area of the Strait of Gibraltar, was part of a complex exchange network during the early Modern Period.