

The following twelve pages numerically represent the 55th part of the entire volume, whose cover is reproduced on a smaller scale at the side of this page. On the same kind of paper, and using a similar format offered as an example, the volume presents a meticulous reportage of Italian Ceramics from Medieval times up to the 18th century. This work is to be singled out for the originality of its approach: the photographs, to begin with, were all taken by the Author himself, after having placed each item in a patented Spheric Chamber of his own invention which guarantees the two-dimensional high fidelity of the colours reproduced, as well as an apt reproduction of the substances and decorations involved; as far as the third dimension goes, each open shape will have its own section and profile. Here is also presented a scientific yardstick which will be useful in any future research carried out in classification work, since it is based on the harmonious balance between the environment and the perfectly polarized monochromatic light, in conditions of optimal parallelism between the subject and the camera lens. Adhering to such strict, scientific grounds, we have also tried to pay as much attention as possible to all the other phases connected to the reproduction of the items, like the selection of the colours and the printing process itself.

A whole paragraph is dedicated to this subject: it tells the reader what a true reproduction ought to be like: it is based on optics, on sensitive supports, on the electronic scanning in the chromatic selection phase that will eventually lead to the final, decisive reconstruction of the image, where particular inks, a specific kind of paper, photoengraved metals and caoutchouc rubber have also played an important role.

Immediately following are the main characteristics of the volume which will cover both its external and internal features, in that order:

\* Decimosexto sewn with thread, round band binding with band; hard cover in hempen cloth overtooled on the front cover and on the back; plastified book jacket; slipcase.

\* Six colour prints, 710 illustrations, 400 colour-plates; 60 pages of written explanations, 259 file-cards, 300 witticisms and proverbs, 4 indexes. 90% of the vases appear in their natural dimensions. A graphic architecture will give the reader, in each and every instance, a chance to fix the immediate relationship between the photograph and the real dimensions of the object.

\* In this volume, for the very first time, are published an *Archeological Map of Italian Post-Classic Ceramics* and a *World Map of the Museums*. The location of 180 museums and of 500 workshops, whose existence is proven by findings and by documents, is indicated in 27 plates.

\* Each item is correlated by information on its definite place of origin and on the various analogies it shows with other items included in a specific bibliography which was begun in the last century. By comparing the places of origin and the various attributions, we wish to emphasize the existant research work already carried out in this field, as well as the work that is now up to philologists and critics to reconsider. This subject inevitably leads us on to discuss what is meant by «prerequisites» when dealing with an authentic kind of research work which should not be hindered by legal obstacles related to the protection of cultural property (as, unfortunately, it very often is).

\* A brief, historical survey of Italian Ceramics will then try to point out how collectors' taste has been formed through the ages and what it is that determines their choices nowadays. This brief Preface is followed by some essential images pertaining to the *Graffito*, *Plastiche*, *Istoriato* styles and this, in turn, will take us on to the very core of the volume: *Enamelled Tarots*, by which we mean «all kinds of pottery intended for domestic use» and which contained either food or potions; they were valuable decorations and allusive gifts. The material here presented lends itself to a twofold kind of reading: one which is technical and scientific; the other which is as provocative as a labyrinth made up of a multitude of metaphors, almost similar to a game where Humanity places a bet on itself.

\* Another thread is woven into this plot, secondary only in order of appearance but not in its theoretical interest and practical objectives; it will lead us on to ask the thorny question whether one can distinguish a **fake** from an **original** and, what is more, whether a 'true' original, as such, can exist. The Author will present an item in all its seductive integrity, the end-result of many a «virtuous» restoration; then, with cynicism, he will strip it down to its former, 'true' aspect, which often bears no relationship whatsoever with the so-called 'original' and of which it is but a feeble echo.

Such a controversial issue can only foreshadow the foremost problem stemming from Art Criticism: one 'has' to cut a clear line between an original item and its reproduction, in order to distinguish the servile repetition of copies from the more imaginative kinds of limitless imitations. The final objective, attainable only once this slowly-winding and mystifying spiral has been climbed, is to reach that area where fakes rule the day and become material fit for, and dealt by, our Penal Code. For this reason, on the cover of the book and at the side of this page, as a challenge to the reader, is shown a photograph of a famous plate, whose original is proudly claimed by more than one owner.





## THE SPHERICAL CERAMICS OF GIANNI BARTOLOMEI



The completion of a catalogue on antique ceramics which are mainly unknown and offered by various collectors for this particular occasion could only be defined as an original publishing initiative, if the Author had not transformed it into a real scientific work, guided by a very rational artistic inventiveness.

We feel so inadequate in presenting this book that we will attempt to synthesize it and, above all, to add something more human, a narration of everything done «behind the scenes» of the printed page: the bringing together of three keen amateurs of artistic pieces (each one with a different profession) and of a ceramic scholar. We met Bartolomei when we presented one of our published works, three years ago, in the framework of a convention at Valentano (near Viterbo) in which many historians and archeologists took part. We had already heard about him and he explained to us how some friends had driven him out of his den with «an invitation he couldn't refuse»; they had convinced him to leave his isolated nest in the cliffs, at Talamone, in Uccellina Park. Bartolomei is an extrovert; he has diverse interests and is involved in many different activities; he is an esteemed connoisseur of antique ceramics, always present at specialized auction sales all over the world, an active «loafer», as it were, wandering in and out of museums and private collections everywhere, eager to know «everything about everything» and to decide what, and where, is to be bought for remarkable and precious collections in his own country. One of his «pearls», the only entirely public and accessible one, is the collection of antique ceramics belonging to the «Wine Museum» in Torgiano, near Perugia. Someone told us that in his house in Uccellina Park he was experimenting with various kinds of opalescent cubes in which he placed the items he meant to photograph, taking data for a computer which can recognize ceramics better than any expert in the field.

Gianni Bartolomei does not like to be defined as a «ceramic scholar», but rather as a «ceramic dog», much like a truffle dog, he adds; his real job has to do with classification and computer information, from which he can make some hypothesis to verify in the field of research he enjoys most: the one concerning ceramics.

At the convention in Valentano, Bartolomei spoke about his research for the very first time in front of an audience, surprising everyone with his familiarity with the subject matter and with the jargonless language he used as he presented «his» majolica, involving a heterogeneous audience in his everyday storytelling where the past and the present seemed like an endless repetition of combination games, always the result of an unchanging matrix.

We proposed to him at once to write something for us; he gave us his answer only a long time afterwards; he had designed and tested a small model of the Sphere for, whose development and experimentation he accepted to publish this book. He asked for «carte blanche», so we gave him a free hand. In a short time he had realized his Katarochromatic Sphere (from the Greek 'Katharos' = pure) and in order to obtain the ceramic pieces he wished to photograph, he had arranged for collectors he knows everywhere to supply him with a few pieces of their collections. After a while, he had collected about 400 pieces, chosen from various collections from all over Italy. Out of these, he chose his own «ideal» collection.

At the risk of sounding reductive or too rethorical, we would like to share with our readers the sensations we felt on that day when Bartolomei invited us to visit him among so many collections, so he could show us the 'architecture' of the work he had prepared for us. He had, in the meantime, moved to a house in the woods of the Casentino Valley (not far from Arezzo) which he had transformed into a laboratory.

Here he collected the best pieces of Italian Medieval and Renaissance Ceramics: relief «zaffere» from the 15th century, rare pharmaceutical vases from Tuscany and Faenza, some pieces signed «Ca' Pirota» or by Xanto Aveli and Mastro Giorgio: a great museum, indeed.

The pieces are first placed on special shelves, then moved into an old billiard table, in a kind of «stand-by» list, as they wait their turn to be photographed within the Sphere. Bartolomei appears to project himself, by means of the camera lens, into the large machine while his collaborators, Patrizia Bubboloni and Rosalba Dindelli, make sure that another plate or vase is ready to be photographed. They speak to each other in numbers which refer to a particular piece of ceramics or by saying things like: «pass me the rooster wife», meaning a jug decorated with the portrait of a woman accompanied by a similar jug of the same dimensions, another handmade artwork manufactured in a Latial workshop in the 1400s which is decorated with a rooster. In this way, between their hands pass *Lucia*, *Lucrezia*, *Eiama*: the Sphere, with the noise of the hydraulic lift, keeps on opening up, «welcoming» its guests, one by one, like an incubator or a planetarium.

It was here, in such an environment, that we encountered once again the Bartolomei



we had met at the Valentano convention: he talked to his ceramics, quoting many a proverb, an ancient language which is nonetheless still comprehensible, as it is unchanging. That occasion was for us a «guarantee of authenticity»: we were watching Bartolomei away from the limelight where he had projected many slides and there he was again, dealing with a projector, this time enlarging each reproduced object with meticulous care, correcting any possible fault. It was in this manner that the Bartolomei «team» realized the photographs that adorn the present book. We mustn't forget to mention (but it's another story altogether) their striving for perfection in checking the various phases following the photographic sessions, from the selection of the colours to the printing process.

Other specific devices have been designed and made to find the shape of the plates and vases, to check the authenticity of the colours employed. The only commercial, or semi-commercial, items used at a highly professional level were the cameras, the films used and a micro-computer for the checking of data concerning the temperature of the light. Bartolomei, as he electrically activates a bar by which the micro-computer mentioned above is put into the Sphere, complains about the changes in energy supplied by the electrical company, he talks about a generator of his which has broken down, about a faulty stabilizer, about gelatinous supports for the films, and about the difficulties that arise when reproducing blue and certain ranges of green. He seems to be even concerned about offending his ceramics by handling them.

While Bartolomei works, he talks to himself, rather than to us; he mutters something about an old label, and then goes on to talk about some gummy traces on the back of a plate, about residuals which are not simply «dust», but «presences», proofs of the life of the «object» in its «journey» started in the pottery workshop centuries ago where it entered the world of human beings. The environment in which Bartolomei works seems to us to be like a metaphor, in its apparent contradiction. Antique handmade ceramics in contrast with sophisticated technology; outside all this: an orchard and a forest. They are, however, the proper «allies» with which to unmask all that is false out of the dimensions of humanism, even in our present age. The Author was then always to be found at the printers, like a watchful sentry, where he followed each different phase of the project with a similar attention.

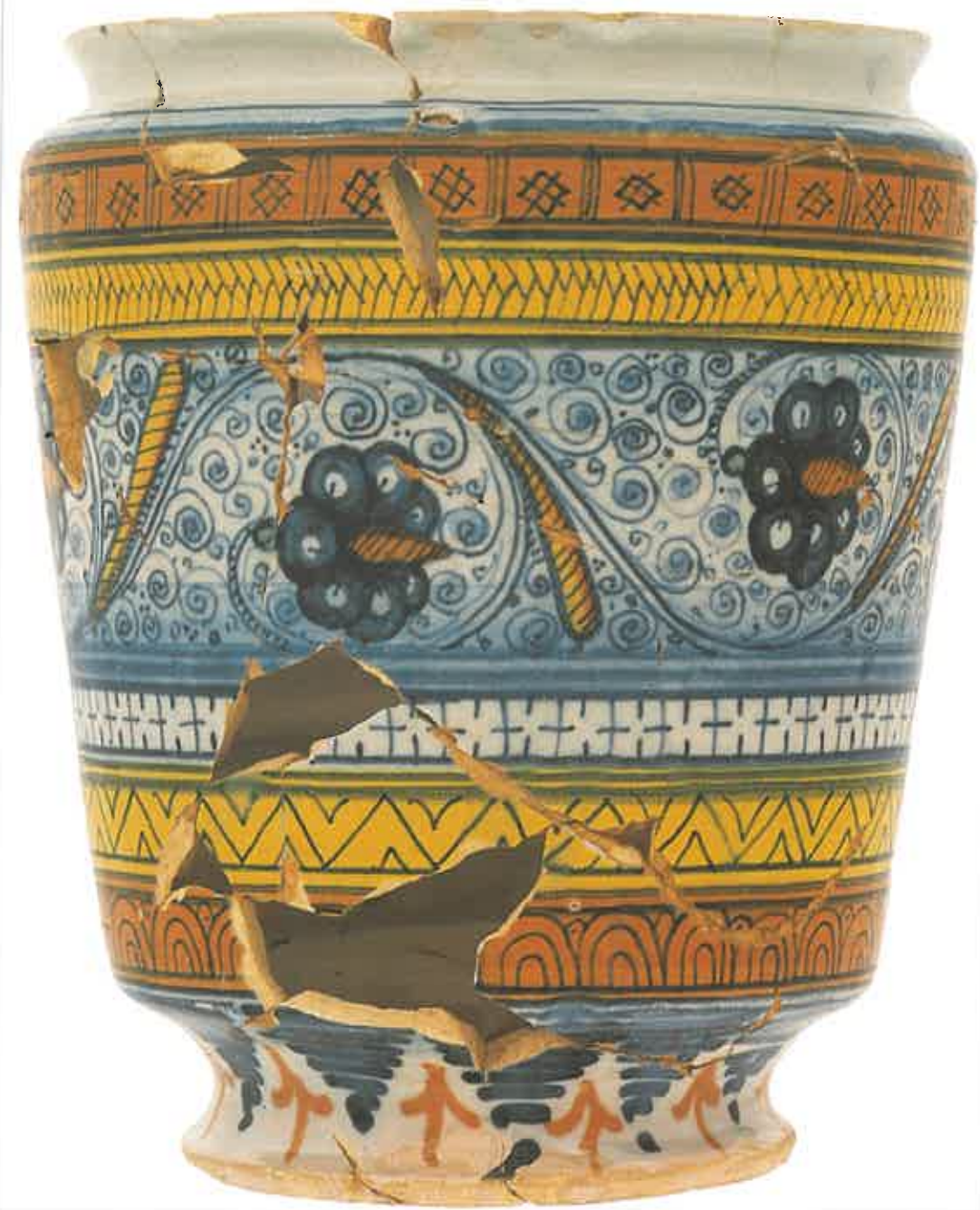
It is our turn, now, to verify just how much our enthusiasm for the project can be shared and understood: we are more than confident of its worth.

The printing of the volume is limited and its price has been fixed without any previous marketing-research: the high cost of a project like this would have forced us to quote a much higher price.

The special discount reserved to our subscribers is an act of good faith for those who really have at heart the accomplishment of culture in its true manifestation.

*The publishers*

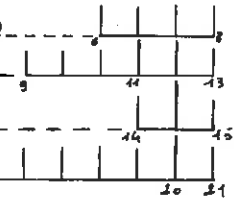




SCHEDA DESCRITTIVA N°



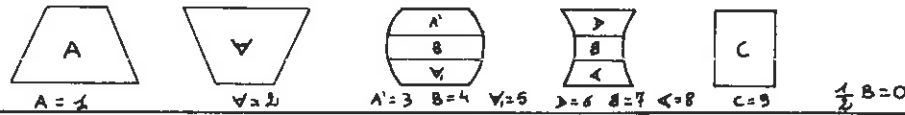
LUOGO DI RITROVAMENTO



CORPUS REALE - FOTOGRAFICO

GRADO DI LEGGIBILITA'

N° REPERTORIO

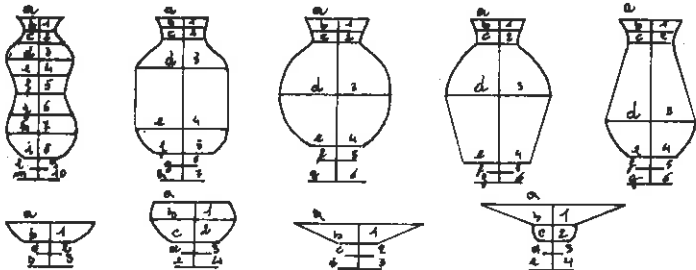


ALFABETO DELLA FORMA

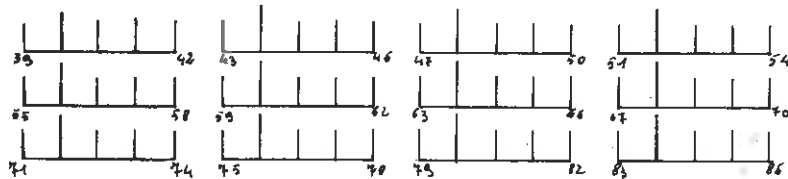


ZONA DI CURVATURA

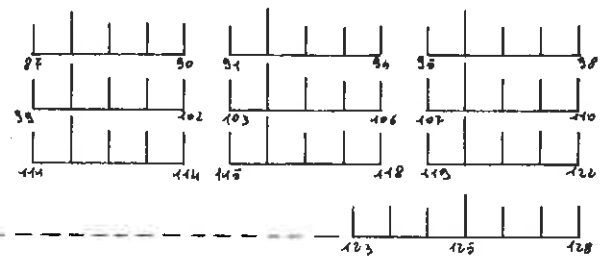
CODICE DEI RAPPORTI



DIAMETRI



ALTEZZE



CODICE MISURE

SOVRASTRUTTURE

CODICE QUANTITATIVO

MANICO chiuso m°d-m=1-3 MANICO aperto m°d-m=1-3 LINGUETTA m°d-m=1-3 PASSANTE m°d-m=1-3 BECCUCCIO m°d-m=1-3 COPERCHIO m°d-m=1-3 TAPPO m°d-m=1-3

MANCANZA SOVRASTRUTTURE GIÀ ESISTENTI

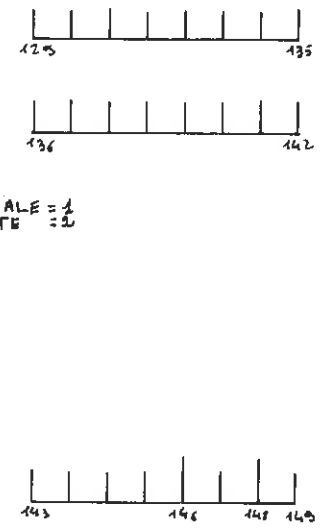
MANICO chiuso m°d-m=1-3 MANICO aperto m°d-m=1-3 LINGUETTA m°d-m=1-3 PASSANTE m°d-m=1-3 BECCUCCIO m°d-m=1-3 COPERCHIO m°d-m=1-3 TAPPO m°d-m=1-3

CODICE TIPOLOGICO

MANICO A STRISCIA =1  
CON ANNO =2  
A DOPPIA CONVERGENTE =3  
CON UGGIO =4  
A DOPPIA CONVERGENTE =5  
CILINDRICO =6  
A DUE ELEMENTI =7  
A TRE ELEMENTI =8  
A QUATTRO ELEMENTI =9  
DOPPIO RINFORZATO =10  
TORCIGLIONE =11  
ZOO MORFO =12  
ANTROPO MORFO =13  
ANTROPOZOO MORFO =14  
VEGETALE =15  
ALTRO TIPO =16

BECCUCCIO A LOBO =1  
A NASO =2  
A GRONDA APERTA =3  
A GRONDA CHIUSA =4  
"PIPPIO" CILINDRICO =5  
CON BASE A STRISCIA =6  
CON BASE CILINDRICO =7  
CON BASE A TORCIGLIONE =8  
"PIPPIO" CONICO =9  
CON BASE A STRISCIA =10  
CON BASE CILINDRICO =11  
CON BASE A TORCIGLIONE =12  
"PIPPIO" ZOO MORFO =13  
COLLEGATO =14  
"PIPPIO" ANTROPO MORFO =15  
ALTRO TIPO =16

TAPPO NORMALE =1  
A VITE =2



ORIENTAMENTO E POSIZIONE

A) MANICO: verticale = 1 Orizzontale = 2 Superiore = 3

B) 0° = 1 90° = 2 180° = 3 270° = 4

CODICE NOMENCLATORE

PIATTO

COPPA =1  
CIOTOLA =2  
BACINO =3  
DISCO =4  
CATINO =5  
SCODELLA =6

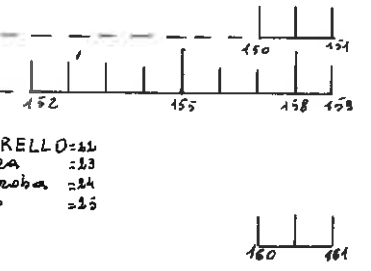
TONDELLO =7  
TONDINO =8  
ALZATA =9  
TAZZA =10

VASO

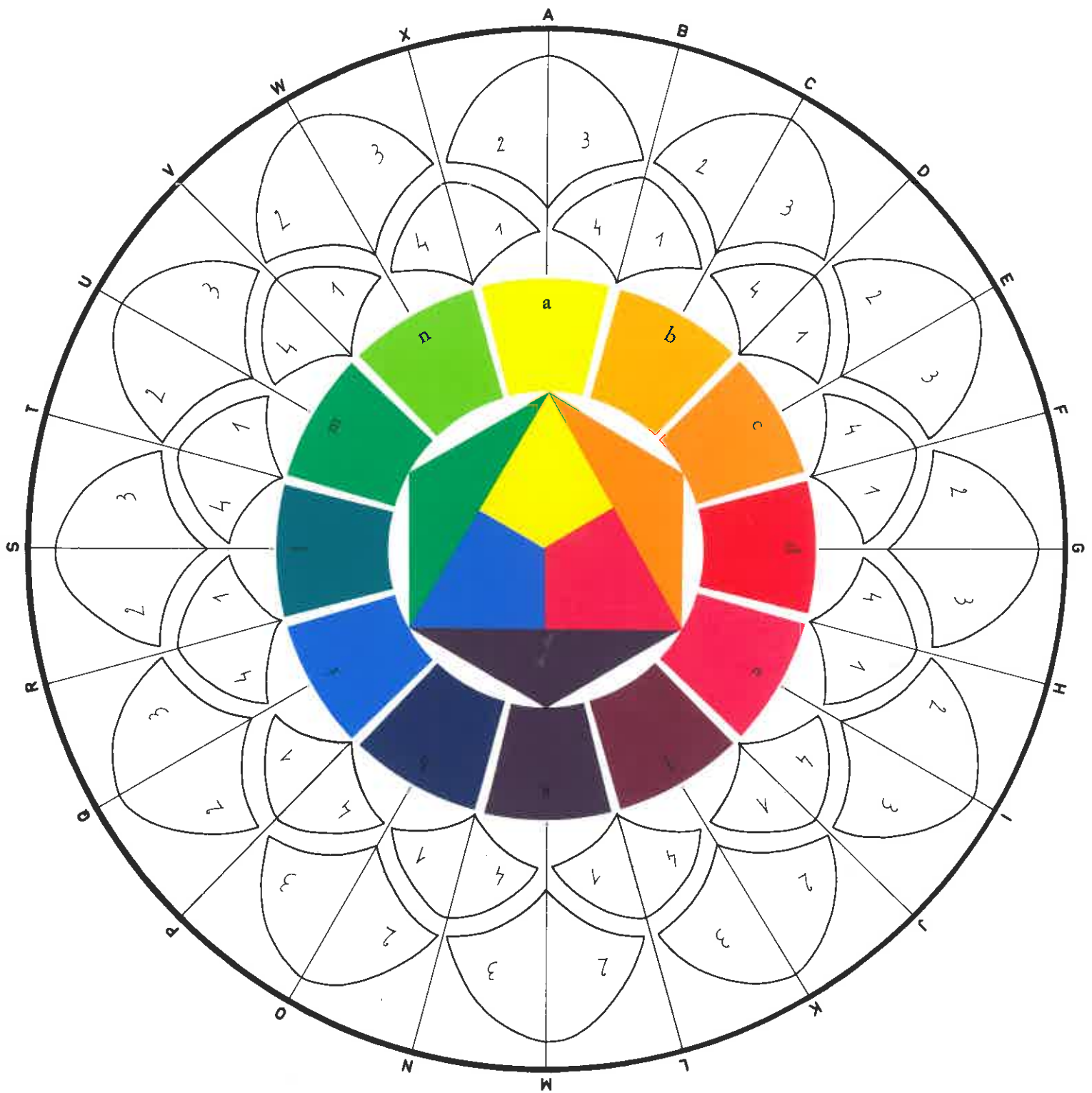
BOTTIGLIA =11  
mesetorio =12  
boceia =13  
Verzaroba =14  
otcio =15

BORBOLA =16  
boceale =17  
Pamata =18  
borbola =19  
Verzaroba =20  
otcio =21

ALBARELLO =22  
broceta =23  
Verzaroba =24  
Orlo =25



Shape — Card used for the sorting out and the processing of data.



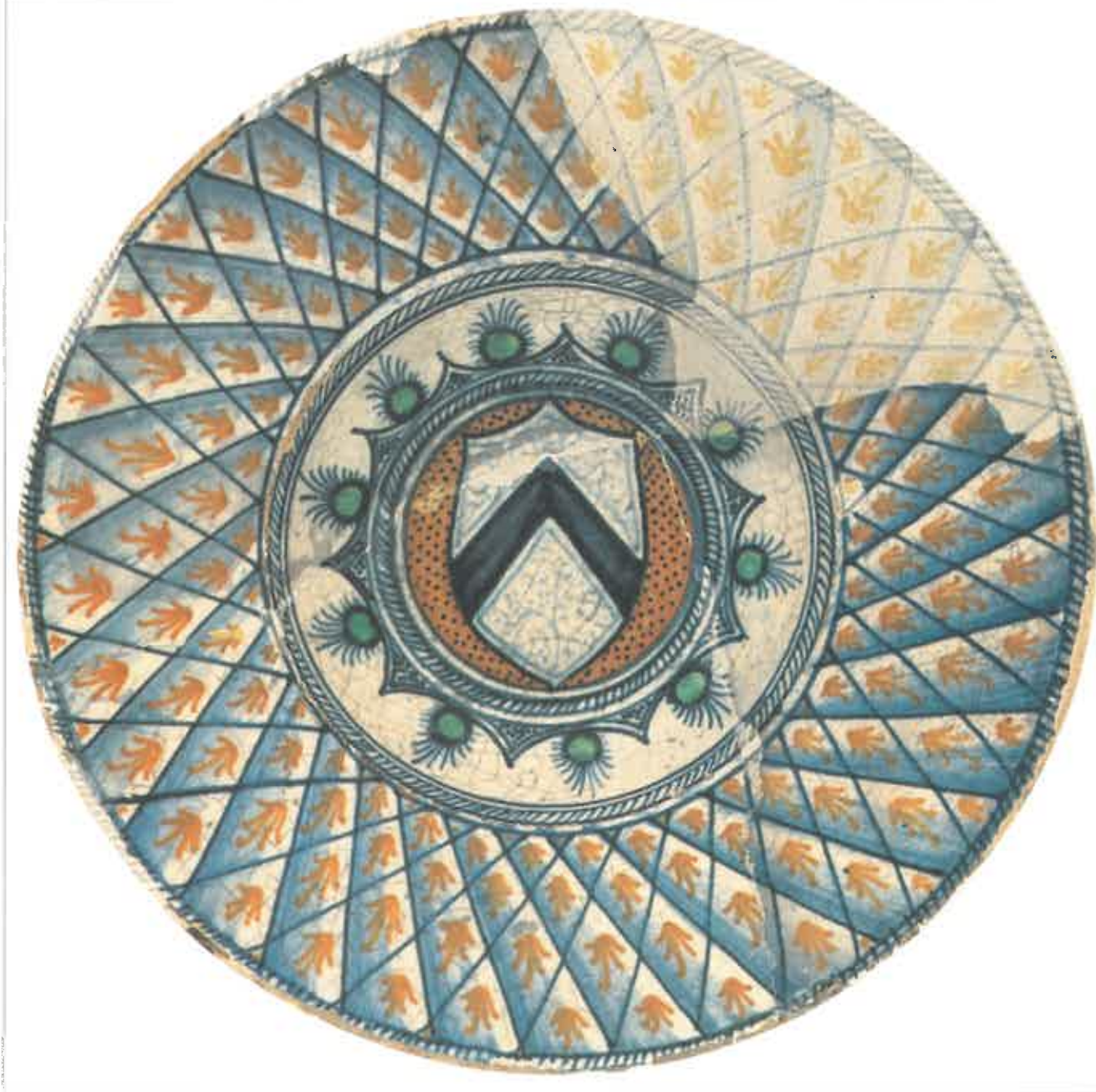
**Colour** — THE PEACOCK SPREADS ITS TAIL: a model of the palette, or colour-range, of the ceramics printed in the book; it precedes the inventory.

*The basic colours used to reproduce this model have been prepared on purpose by the Baglini Inchiostri laboratories. The Litografica Faenza has then printed them through single passages by machine «pure application» of each ink. Such work, which in the book is part of an entire chapter about the colour, gives the idea of the engagement the work is rising from, of which this brochure is just a mention.*

**In the preceding page:** part of a tracing which also includes a decoration. Invented by the Author while carrying out his research work (which, since 1970, has brought him to investigate the fields of statistics and of applied logic), it holds a deep «historical» value to him. This file-card, unpublished so far, contains nonetheless all the main features of a well-tested and functional instrument of knowledge and it represents, even today, an excellent approach towards far more sophisticated techniques pertaining to computer science.







122

**Shape:** Bowl

**Dimensions:** D. mm 170

**Source:** Viterbo

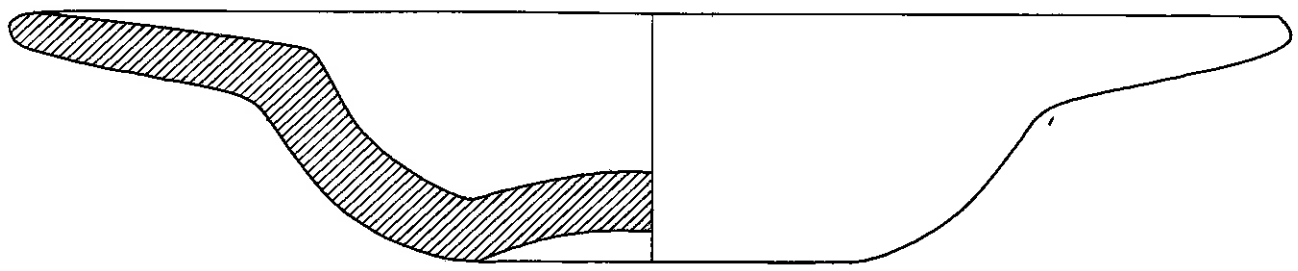
**References:** to a series of items attributed to Faenza and Siena, where they appear to have been made in the XVI century. We have noticed, though, that through the years similar items have been steadily produced in the Lazio region as well.

**From the seal to the coat of arms:** *The Aristocrats are those who can piss in bed and then say it was sweat* (the roman proverb)





122a





187

*«Arzdore» from the Italian region of Romagna*



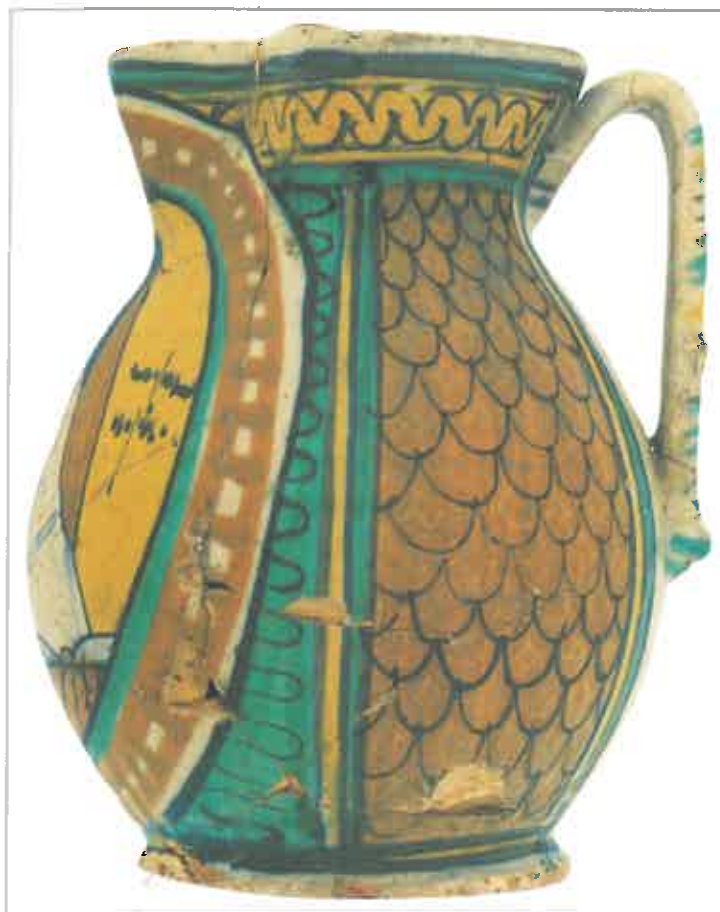
**Shape:** Jug

**Dimensions:** H. mm. 188

**Source:** Cesena

**References:** Vases and plates attributed to Faenza, XV-XVI century. The index card which appears in this volume has been omitted since, without a codified bibliography, it would have no meaning.

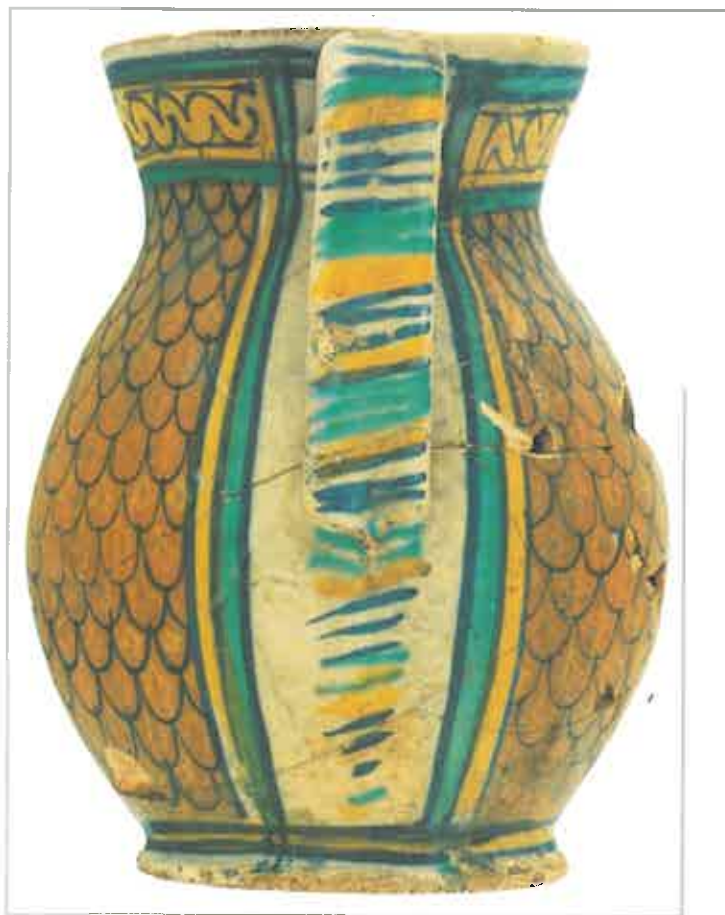
By «arzdóra» (o «azdóra») one means a matron, or housekeeper, who bears the whole weight of the household. It was best for her to stay at home, for «whenever a housekeeper goes a-roaming through the plain, she's likely to lose more than she can ever regain».



187a

The face of the jug in the table at the left is reproduced in its natural size as indicated by the axis of a Cartesian plane; here to the right, in both rotations, the length of the interrupted side of the frame is to the height of the piece as the latter is to that of the piece in its natural size. This means that in the book, the vases that can be contained in a frame of a maximum of 25 x 20 cm. appear in their natural size while those that are larger are inserted in a frame the side of which is interrupted proportionally according to the reduction made on the piece. Such a reduction, by photolithography, slightly produces a size deviation. Similarly, plates are provided with two frames measuring 20 x 20 cm. and 12 x 12 cm.

The frame that encloses the figure is in every way similar to measurement by sight and underlines the asymmetries of artisan work (just as photographic images emphasize certain small details such as variations in color as can be seen in the flat tiles set into the sides of the jug). In this way the author transforms the pages into true and proper partitions on a hypothetical shelf, in a «Paper Museum», that unrolls for 110 meters to form the central part of the book.



187b





217

**Shape:** Bowl

**Dimensions:** D. mm. 390

**Source:** Viterbo

**References:** Deruta's kiln, beginning of XVI century.

\* Medical herbs = physical health \* Naked Venus = beauty \* Column = moral strength, virtue \* The game of the Ball (the eight on the rim) = grace

THE IDEAL WOMAN is healthy, beautiful, virtuous, graceful