TOPICAL REVIEW – TEMATICKÁ SYNTÉZA

From foreign prototype to local production: Finds of post-medieval ceramic vessels from Poland as evidence of the continuity of influence networks

Od zahraničního prototypu k místní výrobě: Nálezy postmedieválních keramických nádob z Polska jako důkaz kontinuity sítí vlivů

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The aim of this article is to identify the multi-directional networks of influence that shaped ceramic production in the Modern period within the territory of present-day Poland, and to examine the factors that led to the development of local characteristics. The discussion emphasises the phenomenon of connectivity, understood as the evolving relationships between foreign producers, external sources of inspiration, and indigenous artisans. The analysis focuses on selected groups of vessels – namely slipware, so-called Pomeranian faience, and Stettinware. These types of earthenware became popular for both table use and display during the 16th to 19th century. Drawing on examples of archaeological finds, I aim to demonstrate that while these productions emerged from a shared tradition, they developed distinctive characteristics shaped by a range of local factors.

post-medieval pottery – slipware – Pomeranian faience – Stettinware – ceramics – historical archaeology

Cílem tohoto článku je identifikovat vícesměrné sítě vlivů, které formovaly keramickou výrobu v novověku na území dnešního Polska a prozkoumat faktory, které vedly k rozvoji místních specifik. V diskusi bude zdůrazněn fenomén konektivity, chápaný jako vyvíjející se vztahy mezi zahraničními výrobci, vnějšími zdroji inspirace a místními řemeslníky. Analýza se zaměří na vybrané skupiny nádob – konkrétně na polévanou keramiku, tzv. pomořanskou fajáns a štětínské zboží. Tyto typy keramiky se v průběhu 16. až 19. století staly oblíbenými jak při stolování, tak pro výstavní účely. Na příkladech archeologických nálezů se snažím ukázat, že ačkoli tyto výrobky vzešly ze společné tradice, vyvinuly se u nich odlišné vlastnosti, které byly formovány řadou místních faktorů.

postmedievální keramika – polévaná keramika – pomořanská fajáns – štětínské zboží – keramika – historická archeologie

Introduction

Archaeological finds are the remains of tangible objects and therefore represent a material reality. As such, they serve as direct sources of information about what was actually created, used, and circulated during a given period (see *Gawronski 2012*, 11). In this context, ceramic sherds recovered during excavations at historical sites are particularly significant. They can provide insights into a wide range of general and specific aspects of past life, including changes in practices related to food and beverage consumption, indicators of consumption habits, patterns of international and regional trade, and production technologies (see *Barker – Majewski 2006*, 205; *Gaimster 2006*, 136). Thus, the role of ceramics

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can be seen as complex and multifaceted – both material and non-verbal – encompassing symbolic meanings, behavioural processes, social identity, emotional values, and utilitarian functions (e.g. *Gaimster 2006*, 136–144; *Wilson 2006*, 11–12; *Mullins 2011*, 134–135).

In this paper, I use examples of artefacts belonging to this category to illustrate the issue raised in the title – namely, the continuity of influence networks. To this end, the article shifts focus from the traditional examination of ceramic production and trade in the Early Modern period to the evolution of the networks through which these goods, and the ideas associated with their manufacture, were disseminated. The aim is to demonstrate how such transformations of networks can be identified. The primary source for this study consists of three groups of earthenware produced, used, and popular within the territory of present-day Poland between the 16th and 19th century, i.e. slipware, Pomeranian faience, and Stettinware (*Stettinerware* in German). The analysis is based on archaeological finds and seeks to trace how various foreign models and influences provided the impetus for the differentiation and further development of these wares, which represent an eclectic and innovative style emerging on native soil. The discussion centres on decorative schemes, combined with the technological aspects of production, within the broader context of consumption practices. These issues are presented in a European context, with particular reference to major traditions that shaped Early Modern ceramic production: Italian maiolica and Dutch faience. This paper aims to highlight the potential of such an approach and to encourage further research.

The starting point for this study is relevant Polish and foreign literature, published analyses of archaeological assemblages – including the vessels discussed here – as well as the author's own research and examined finds. Art historical research and literature are particularly valuable in the case of maiolica and faience, as these objects constitute a significant part of many museum collections and are recognised as important examples of historical craftsmanship.

This article constitutes an attempt to approach these products from a perspective different to that traditionally adopted in Polish scholarship – namely, by considering them collectively as examples of related phenomena within Early Modern European and domestic ceramic production, as well as within the broader context of contemporary artistic and cultural transformations. The ceramic groups under consideration have already attracted the attention of researchers, though typically in isolation and to varying degrees. Most publications have focused on identifying vessel forms and describing their appearance.[1] Analytical studies offering broader interpretations are relatively scarce (e.g. *Szetela 1969a*; *1969b*; *Fryś-Pietraszkowa 1970*; *Supryn 1975*; *Meyza 1991*; *1997*; *2017*; *Szetela-Zauchowa 1994*; *Marcinkowski 2009a*; *2011*; *Oniszczuk 2013a*; *Trzeciecki 2016*; *Majewski 2019*; *Szajt 2021*; *Bis 2021*; *2025*). The lack of comprehensive studies and the inconsistent presentation of material hinder comparative research. The least well-studied group to date is Stettinware, for which no comprehensive analysis has yet been conducted (e.g. *Kwiatkowski 2010*; *2011*; *Majewski 2019*; *Szeremeta 2022*; *2025*). The situation is somewhat better in the case of slipware (e.g. *Szetela 1969a*; *1969b*; *Fryś-Pietraszkowa 1970*; *Meyza 1991*;

[1] The number of such publications is considerable. I do not list them all here, referring only to those most relevant to the analysed issues.

1997; *Szetela-Zauchowa 1994*; *Marcinkowski 2009a*) and Pomeranian faience (e.g. *Marcinkowski 2007*; *2009b*; *2011*), although many fundamental issues concerning their production and use remain unresolved – particularly on a broader geographical scale, as current knowledge is largely based on finds from individual centres.

New trends in ceramic production: European and domestic background

In European cultural history, the Early Modern period is generally regarded as a time of transition. Many of the trends traditionally associated with this concept occurred at slightly different times and with varying intensity across different parts of Europe (e.g. *McCabe 2015*, 188). In general, the period was marked by profound socio-economic change and the emergence of a 'consumption society' – understood as the development of more diversified consumer patterns (e.g. *Blondé 2002*, 296; *van Oosten 2009*, 8). This concept rests on the assumption that increasing numbers of people were able to acquire non-essential goods, leading to a growing share of national income being generated through commerce (*Jervis 2017*, 3). This development contributed to the accumulation of personal wealth across various segments of society, improved living standards, and heightened demand for a wide range of material goods (see *Finn 2014*, 3). As a result, many manufacturing sectors flourished, giving rise to a richly material world. The growth of consumerism was also linked to expanding international trade and the influx of new colonial commodities (e.g. *McCabe 2015*, 188–201). These shifts brought about significant changes in dietary habits: new modes of eating reshaped culinary practices, social activities, and everyday lifestyles. Such transformations were reflected in certain types of essential items (e.g. *Gaimster 2006*, 138–141). Thus, the period between the 16th and 18th century in Europe witnessed a radical redefinition of taste, understood as prevailing notions of what was considered correct, attractive, and desirable. By embracing new materials and fashions, consumers expressed emerging preferences that, in turn, influenced their purchasing behaviours (e.g. *McCabe 2015*). These shifts were closely connected to the broader transformation of customs, including table manners.

The most radical shift was the transition from communal dining and the shared use of vessels to individual consumption and the introduction of specialised utensils designed for that purpose. This change led to the development of dedicated tableware and the proliferation of items comprising meal sets, i.e. table services (e.g. *Finn 2014*, 245–246). At the same time, the gradual diversification of diets necessitated the use of specialised equipment for food preparation, resulting in a broader range of cookware. The vessels used for these purposes appeared in increasingly varied forms and qualities. As a result, the Modern period witnessed a significant expansion in the variety of ceramics, accompanied by growing functional specialisation and decorative sophistication. This phenomenon is often referred to as the 'ceramic revolution' (e.g. *Cumberpatch 2003*; *Barker – Majewski 2006*, 20; *Gaimster 2006*, 136–137; *van Oosten 2009*, 9). It was paralleled by the transformation of pottery from a purely utilitarian commodity into a social object. Consequently, these items began to serve not only practical but also symbolic functions within the household (*Gaimster 2006*, 136). The wide range of item standards made ceramics accessible to middle- and lower-class households. Consumers from various social strata could pur-

chase individual pieces based on their tastes and financial means, or acquire complete sets tailored to their needs (see *Courtney 1997*; *Finn 2014*, 3). This civilisational process, often explained through 'trickle-down' or social emulation theory, refers to the imitation of elite lifestyles by broader segments of society. It played a key role in the formation of the modern consumer society (e.g. *Courtney 1997*, 95; *Linaa 2021*, 74). This mechanism manifested in multifaceted changes initiated by the upper classes, which, over time, were gradually adopted and imitated by less affluent groups.

The aforementioned pan-European processes also affected domestic kitchens, larders, and dining tables. In the territory of Poland, the transformations initiated in the Late Middle Ages and continued into the Early Modern period brought increasing diversification in kitchen- and tableware. A key innovation was the gradual emergence and use of vessels specifically designed to accompany food and beverage consumption – particularly for individual use (e.g. *Kruppé 1981*, 51–82; *Marciniak-Kajzer 2020*, 207–217, 248–279; *Szajt 2021*, 21–85). This shift was driven by changing views on hygiene, cleanliness, and propriety. By the 17th century, dining tables had acquired a more formalised array of crockery, with each diner provided with a personal set of utensils. In the 18th century, tableware continued to evolve and diversify. From the 16th century onward, there was a growing distinction between everyday meals – simpler and less ceremonious – and festive occasions marked by elaborate, carefully orchestrated feasts. In the 17th and 18th centuries, exquisite dining became an important social ritual (see *Bogucka 1994*, 119–129; *Bockenheim 1999*, 29–93; *Gajewska 1999*, 77–82; *Oniszczuk 2013a*, 204–210). A well-set table and its accompanying accessories elevated meals to special events and enhanced the sensory and intellectual enjoyment of dining ('tasting with the mind'). The proliferation of coffee and tea also played a significant role in this evolution, particularly toward the end of the period under discussion. The increasing popularity of these colonial beverages was accompanied by the production and use of specialised paraphernalia for their preparation and consumption (see e.g. *Wendland 2008*, 153–187; *Marcinkowski – Pospieszna 2016*, 69–79; *Ceynowa ed. 2020*; *Trzeciecki 2021*). The adoption of new dining habits gradually spread across social groups, beginning with the royal court and its magnate entourage – who set the trends – and eventually reaching the nobility and urban burghers (*Gaimster – Nenk 1997*, 171; *Gajewska 1999*, 82). At the same time, tableware served as a means to express the lifestyle and status of its owner, functioning as a visible indicator of socio-economic position and cultural identity (e.g. *Gajewska 1999*, 77–78; *Dumanowski 2005*, 19, 21; *Oniszczuk 2013a*, 210–213; *Roćko 2013*, 21). Decorative ceramics, beyond their immediate utilitarian role and material value, became objects of communication – conveying messages based on distinctiveness and uniqueness (see *Jervis 2017*, 7).

From innovation to diffusion: examples of foreign maiolica, faience, and slipware

For the issues discussed here, it is also essential to highlight the broader processes unfolding between the 16th and 18th century, which may be described under the concept of the 'circle of ceramics'. This term refers to the circulation – that is, the multifaceted interaction, exchange, and adaptation of ideas, traditions, and innovations in ceramic production across Europe over the course of these centuries. These phenomena were the result of com-

plex processes involving the mutual permeation of Eastern and Western cultures, and the blending of native and foreign, progressive and anachronistic elements in pottery-making, with varying pace and intensity. These processes consisted in the appropriation, transformation, and adaptation of know-how, forms, and decorative schemes to local raw material resources, the level of craft development and its traditions, market demands, aesthetic preferences of consumers, etc. The outcome of these complex interactions was an eclecticism, yet also a distinct individualism characteristic of ceramics produced in different regions and countries. In this new form, they in turn influenced subsequent makers and users, local workshops, tastes, and expectations. Thus, certain characteristic elements – such as shapes, motifs, colour schemes, and compositional strategies – were imitated and reworked across various types of ceramics, persisting within a broader productional, social, and cultural circulation. The vessels that bore these traits became not only commodities and material goods, but also agents of change and media for non-verbal communication. This chain of cause and effect is essential for understanding the evolution of networks of influence and cultural transfer.

Maiolica

One of the ceramic types that came into use in the period and gradually transformed the European pottery landscape was Italian maiolica, i.e. Italian faience. Within its regionally and qualitatively diverse production between the 15th and 17th century, the processes that occurred in the development of other ceramic groups are reflected and exemplified – like in a lens focusing the sequence and dynamics of broader change. For this reason, I outline them briefly below. These processes have been the subject of study by art historians (e.g. *Melegati 1997*, 20–49; *Benini et al. 1998*, 4–44, 56–86; *Wilson 2016*; *Glaser 2000*).

From a technological perspective, maiolica is earthenware with a porous body, made from clay with the addition of calcium or levigated chalk, and fired to a light colour (ranging from white to yellowish or pinkish). It features a tin glaze on the front and usually a transparent lead glaze in the exterior, underglaze-painted decoration, and spur marks on the surface. It was possibly derived from Mallorca, the Spanish island through which these wares were traded (e.g. *Rada 1993*, 27–28; *Hume 2001*, 367–368). Its distinctive character lay in an innovative approach to decoration and modelling, using high-quality glaze and elaborate relief and painted ornamentation in a vibrant colour palette (blue, green, brown, yellow, and red) (*Fig. 1–2*). Its production was complex and demanded significant technical and artistic skill on the part of its makers. In many respects, maiolica was the quintessential Renaissance art form (*Campbell 2021*, 11).

These wares bear numerous traces of external influences, to which individual production centres were subject in varied and evolving ways over time. To their local Renaissance and later Baroque traditions, and to the stylistic features characteristic of their respective regions, potters incorporated new techno-stylistic elements drawn from imported ceramics – such as themes, colours, painting techniques, and vessel forms. These were adopted through cultural and commercial contacts, particularly with the Iberian Peninsula (e.g. lusterwares), as well as with the Middle East, and later the Far East (e.g. porcelain). Neighbouring production centres also served as sources of inspiration. Artisans drew primarily from contemporary painting and printmaking, but also from other branches of applied arts, and architecture. Selected features of ceramic prototypes were appropriated,

Fig. 1A. Italian maiolica from Deruta (5–6, 8–9, 10?), Florence or vicinity (12), Gubbio (7, 11), Montelupo (2), Naples (3), Tuscany? (1), and Italy (4) from c. 1470–1540. Selected vessels from the collection of The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the J. P. Getty Museum in Los Angeles, and the National Museum in Krakow (Public domain, *The MET 2025*: Object Nos. 1975.1.1113 (1), 46.85.34 (2), 46.85.27 (3), 32.100.364 (5), 04.9.26 (8), 46.85.41 (9), 1975.1.1056 (12); *Getty 2025*: Object Nos. 84.DE.110 (6), 84.DE.103 (10), 84.DE.111 (11); *MNK 2025*: Inv. Nos. MNK XIII-1771 (4), MNK XIII-1646 (7); computer processing M. Bis and W. Bis).

Fig. 1B. Italian maiolica from Deruta (5–6, 8–9, 10?), Florence or vicinity (12), Gubbio (7, 11), Montelupo (2), Naples (3), Tuscany? (1), and Italy (4) from c. 1470–1540. Selected vessels from the collection of The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the J. P. Getty Museum in Los Angeles, and the National Museum in Krakow (Public domain, *The MET 2025*: Object Nos. 1975.1.1113 (1), 46.85.34 (2), 46.85.27 (3), 32.100.364 (5), 04.9.26 (8), 46.85.41 (9), 1975.1.1056 (12); *Getty 2025*: Object Nos. 84.DE.110 (6), 84.DE.103 (10), 84.DE.111 (11); *MNK 2025*: Inv. Nos. MNK XIII-1771 (4), MNK XIII-1646 (7); computer processing M. Bis and W. Bis).

Fig. 2A. Italian maiolica from Cafaggiolo (8), Deruta (1), Faenza (10, 12), Naples? (6), Urbino (3, 5?, 11), Venice (4, 7, 9), and Viterbo (2) from the 16th–17th century. Selected vessels from the collection of The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the J. P. Getty Museum in Los Angeles, and the National Museum in Krakow (Public domain; *The MET 2025*: Object Nos. 27.97.36 (3), 65.6.7 (5), 20.93.1 (6), 08.59 (10), 46.85.35 (12); *Getty 2025*: Object Nos. 84.DE.120 (4), 84.DE.109 (8); *MNK 2025*: Inv. Nos MNK XIII-1774 (1), MNK XIII-2927 (11); after: *Benini et al. 1998*, 42, 67 (2, 9); *Melegati 1997*, 40 (7); computer processing M. Bis and W. Bis).

Fig. 2B. Italian maiolica from Cafaggiolo (8), Deruta (1), Faenza (10, 12), Naples? (6), Urbino (3, 5?, 11), Venice (4, 7, 9), and Viterbo (2) from the 16th–17th century. Selected vessels from the collection of The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the J. P. Getty Museum in Los Angeles, and the National Museum in Krakow (Public domain; *The MET 2025*: Object Nos. 27.97.36 (3), 65.6.7 (5), 20.93.1 (6), 08.59 (10), 46.85.35 (12); *Getty 2025*: Object Nos. 84.DE.120 (4), 84.DE.109 (8); *MNK 2025*: Inv. Nos MNK XIII-1774 (1), MNK XIII-2927 (11); after: *Benini et al. 1998*, 42, 67 (2, 9); *Melegati 1997*, 40 (7); computer processing M. Bis and W. Bis).

resulting in products that were fusion forms – combinations of local and foreign motifs. These, in turn, influenced further stylistic developments (*Melegati 1997*, 20–49; *Benini et al. 1998*, 4–44, 56–86; *Sani 2012*, 45–111).

During the period in question, maiolica was produced in numerous centres across the Italian Peninsula, including Casteldurante, Deruta, Faenza, Florence, Genoa, Gubbio, Montelupo, Siena, Urbino, and Venice. Depending on their intended use, objects were made in various stylistic modes. In the workshops of leading masters, signed pieces were created on commission and for specific occasions. The refined objects were tailored to the needs of courts and affluent clients. The range of such products was wide, including plates, bowls, serving utensils, and jugs of varying shapes and sizes. Their distinguishing features included painted motifs of a geometric (*Fig. 1*: 3, 8, 12; *Fig. 2*: 6), plant (*Fig. 1*: 1, 3, 10; *Fig. 2*: 9, 11), biblical (*Fig. 1*: 7, 9; *Fig. 2*: 3), mythological (*Fig. 2*: 1), grotesque (*Fig. 2*: 4, 12), heraldic (*Fig. 1*: 11; *Fig. 2*: 7), or portrait nature (*Fig. 1*: 4–6; *Fig. 2*: 5), along with inscriptions (*Fig. 1*: 5–6, 8; *Fig. 2*: 5). Maiolica wares were often named after their dominant decorative style, for example: *istoratio* – 'narrative' pieces, depicting historical, religious, or genre scenes (*Fig. 2*: 1–3); *alla porcellana* – inspired by Chinese porcelain (*Fig. 2*: 7–8); *candiane* – resembling ceramics from Iznik (*Fig. 2*: 9) (*Melegati 1997*, 20–49; *Benini et al. 1998*, 21–45, 60–68; *Sani 2012*, 43–111; *Wilson 2016*, 71–317, 361). These vessels were not only aesthetically appealing, but also didactic, conveying edifying or moralising narratives (*Sani 2012*, 115–151). They became an integral element of elite culture (*Campbell 2021*, 21–23). At the same time, numerous maiolica vessels in vernacular styles were also produced – simpler, primarily utilitarian items, such as apothecary jars (*albarelli*) (*Fig. 2*: 6).

Over time (from the first half of the 17th century), under the influence of imports from the Far East, alongside the characteristic polychrome and often overly ornate decoration, a more restrained colour palette and simpler forms began to appear. Among these were wares known as *bianchi* (with white glaze developed in Faenza in the mid-16th century), featuring decorations in the *compendiario* (sketch-like) style, executed in blue and yellow (e.g. *Benini et al. 1998*, 294–295; *Sani 2012*, 73) (*Fig. 2*: 10–11). These compositions reflect efforts, particularly in regions that had recently led in ceramic production, to respond to shifting aesthetic trends and consumer expectations by adapting workshop practices and product ranges accordingly. It can be seen as a pattern of innovation and diffusion (see *Orton 1985*). During this period, however, the overall quality of maiolica production declined: decorative motifs were increasingly repeated in a formulaic manner, and creative inspiration diminished (e.g. *Szetela 1969a*, 23).

Vessels of the analysed types, originally produced in Mediterranean countries, were also manufactured from the 16th century onwards in the Netherlands – including in Antwerp, and later in Amsterdam, Haarlem, Middelburg, and Utrecht – as well as in other regions such as England and France. This production was initiated by immigrant artisans from Italy or Spain and was continued by subsequent generations of skilled craftsmen (e.g. *Hume 2001*, 367–368; *Kowalski 2018*, 12–13). The earliest objects made in Central Europe using techniques modelled on maiolica originate from German-speaking regions and date to the 1520s (*Glaser 2021*, 74–76). Ceramic workshops established north of the Alps in the 17th century also operated initially under strong Italian influence, with their wares closely imitating the Mediterranean prototypes. Over time, however, the quality of production declined, and the products lost much of the creativity characteristic of earlier phases. As

traditional maiolica came to be seen as outdated, producers began to refresh their offer by modifying and simplifying decorative schemes, adapting them to contemporary national tastes. These adaptations included the incorporation of motifs drawn from local painting traditions, popular literature, contemporary printed landscapes, family coats of arms, medallions, and emblems. This transformation coincided with the growing influence of Oriental styles, particularly after the mid-17th century (e.g. *Benini et al. 1998*, 88–99; *Lahaussois 2008*, 18–21, 30–37).

Faience

In ceramic production, the Netherlands played a role in the period from the first half of the 17th century to the early 18th century comparable to that of Italy in the 16th century. The Delft centre achieved particular renown, with its faience representing a refined and technically improved continuation of the maiolica tradition. The peak of technical and artistic development in these workshops occurred between 1680 and 1700. A distinctive hallmark of Delftware was its rich ornamentation imitating Chinese and Japanese porcelain[2] – particularly motifs from the Ming dynasty, including the Wanli (1573–1619) and Kangxi (1662–1722) periods (e.g. *Piątkiewicz-Dereniowa 1996*, 16–17; *Kilarska 2003*, 10–12; *van Dam 2004*; *Kowalski 2018*, 19). Such wares were even referred to as Dutch porcelain (e.g. *Chrościcki 1989*, 158; *van Dam 2004*, 18–21, 30–31; *Frontczak 2009*, 70; see also *Lahaussois 2008*, 13–15, 46–49) (*Fig. 3*).

The development of local ceramic production was stimulated by competition from these fragile, high-quality imports that began arriving in large quantities in the United Provinces aboard Dutch East India Company ships from the early 17th century (e.g. *Piątkiewicz-Dereniowa 1996*, 10; *Kilarska 2003*, 11, 13; *van Dam 2004*, 11). As a result, Chinese porcelain had a major impact on European material culture and products of the burgeoning European ceramics industry, which replicated porcelain forms and decorations, and attempted to produce porcelain bodies (e.g. *Barker – Majewski 2006*, 223). This influx prompted changes in both manufacturing techniques and the quality of products crafted in local (here: Dutch) pottery workshops. New types of wares appeared, characterised by thinner walls, tin-glazed surfaces on both sides, new vessel forms, and the introduction of innovative decorative styles. These were often based on monochrome designs – most notably cobalt blue painting on a white background (*van Dam 2004*, 11–17; *Kowalski 2018*, 15–17).

Oriental patterns were both imitated and reinterpreted, and when combined with local decorative traditions, they achieved an excellent synthesis in Delftware. Most of the motifs aimed to replicate Chinese designs, which carried specific meanings and symbolic value. European potters drew inspiration from these originals, but their limited understanding of the underlying symbolism often led to inaccurate reproductions – some motifs were altered or transformed into entirely different designs (see *Casimiro 2006*, 116; *Bartels 2016*, 402). Foreign elements were blended with European aesthetic preferences and details drawn from familiar, local contexts, resulting in a hybrid set of motifs that merged two distinct cultural

[2] Portuguese faience also followed this trend (e.g. *Casimiro 2006*).

Fig. 3A. Delft faience from the 17th – first half of the 18th century. Selected vessels from the collection of The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, and the National Museum in Krakow (Public domain; *The MET 2025*: Object Nos. 30.86.3 (1), 1994.218a-c (9), 2014.712.3 (12); *Rijks 2025*: Object Nos. BK-1972-78 (8), BK-NM-8242 (11); *MNK 2025*: Inv. Nos. MNK IV-C-3721 (2), MNK IV-C-1208 (3), MNK IV-C-3734/1-2 (4), MNK IV-C-3738/a-b (5), MNK IV-C-3726 (6), MNK IV-C-1216 (7), MNK IV-C-1218 (10); computer processing M. Bis and W. Bis).

Fig. 3B. Delft faience from the 17th – first half of the 18th century. Selected vessels from the collection of The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, and the National Museum in Krakow (Public domain; *The MET 2025*: Object Nos. 30.86.3 (1), 1994.218a-c (9), 2014.712.3 (12); *Rijks 2025*: Object Nos. BK-1972-78 (8), BK-NM-8242 (11); *MNK 2025*: Inv. Nos. MNK IV-C-3721 (2), MNK IV-C-1208 (3), MNK IV-C-3734/1-2 (4), MNK IV-C-3738/a-b (5), MNK IV-C-3726 (6), MNK IV-C-1216 (7), MNK IV-C-1218 (10); computer processing M. Bis and W. Bis).

Fig. 4. Delftware from England (3–6), France (2), and Germany (1) from c. 1650–1750. Selected vessels from the collection of The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (Public domain; *The MET 2025*: Object Nos. 1995.268.6 (1), 17.190.1779 (2), 38.73.5 (3), 45.12.10 (4), 37.13.3 (5), 41.194.15 (6); computer processing M. Bis and W. Bis).

worlds (*Melegati 1997*, 65; *van Dam 2004*). The Delft product range consisted primarily of tableware, including plates (*Fig. 3*: 1–3, 8, 10–12), bowls, and jugs (*Fig. 3*: 7). Vases (*Fig. 3*: 4–6) and flower holders (*Fig. 3*: 9) were also a notable feature of the Delftware assortment. This was further expanded by the production of apothecary jars and ceramic accessories (e.g. *Chrościcki 1989*, 159–160; *Benini et al. 1998*, 107; *van Dam 2004*, 77–101, figs. 35–55). The variety of forms and decorative schemes, combined with strong craftsmanship, consistent quality, and a lower price compared to Far Eastern porcelain, enabled Delftware to flood the European market after 1650 (e.g. *Melegati 1997*, 78–79; *Benini et al. 1998*, 96–97; *Kowalski 2013*). At its peak, the production of Delft manufactories was widely imitated by almost every European pottery centre operating from the second half of the 17th to the first half of the 18th century (cf. *Frontczak 2009*, 146–153; *Dawson 2010*; *Glaser 2021*) (*Fig. 4*). In Poland, their stylistic influence is evident in the output of two 18th-century *farfurnie* (faience manufactories): Belweder and the Bielino workshop, founded by Bernardi and Wolff (e.g. *Chojnacka 1981*, 26–44; *Chrościcki 1989*, 162). In the Netherlands, in addition to Delft, faience production – including wall tiles (fleis) – also took place in other centres such as Haarlem, Harlingen, Makkum, and Rotterdam (e.g. *Fries Aardewerk 2007*; *Frontczak 2009*, 70; *Ostkamp 2013*).

The popularity of Dutch wares throughout the 17th century was part of a broader cultural shift toward simplicity. As a neutral colour, blue complemented the sober fashions of the time (*van Dam 2004*, 17). These blue-and-white objects became both a reflection and a vehicle of the fashion for *chinoiserie*, which dominated the decorative arts well into the following century (e.g. *Benini et al. 1998*, 97). This phenomenon illustrates a marked change in taste and a growing appreciation for exotic tableware during that period. Another significant shift occurred in the 18th century, when potters resumed working with a broader palette of colours, including red, yellow, and green. This development responded to a new phase in ceramic production, influenced by the emergence and popularity of coloured porcelain.

The decline in the demand for faience and the eventual collapse of the Delft centre were driven by the invention and widespread production of European porcelain beginning in the first half of the 18th century. This development, along with the emergence of numerous faience and porcelain manufactories – including English factories supplying affordable products – created strong competition for Delftware. Another significant factor was the transformation in the applied arts influenced by the rise of Neoclassicism. This stylistic shift began in the second half of the 18th century and continued into the 19th century (see *Chrościcki 1989*, 161–162; *van Dam 2004*).

Slipware

The production of slipware is recorded in Europe between the second half of the 16th century and the 18th century, with the regional continuation in the folk pottery occurring until the 20th century. It peaked at the end of the 16th century and in the first half of the 17th century (*Stephan 1987*). This type of pottery represents a distinctive phenomenon due to its widespread presence across the continent during that period. Compared to the maiolica and faience discussed above, slipware was generally of lower quality.

Slipware is defined as slip-decorated, lead-glazed earthenware (*Fig. 5–7*). The use of slip (engobe) – a refined clay suspension – is fundamental to this ceramic type. Slip can

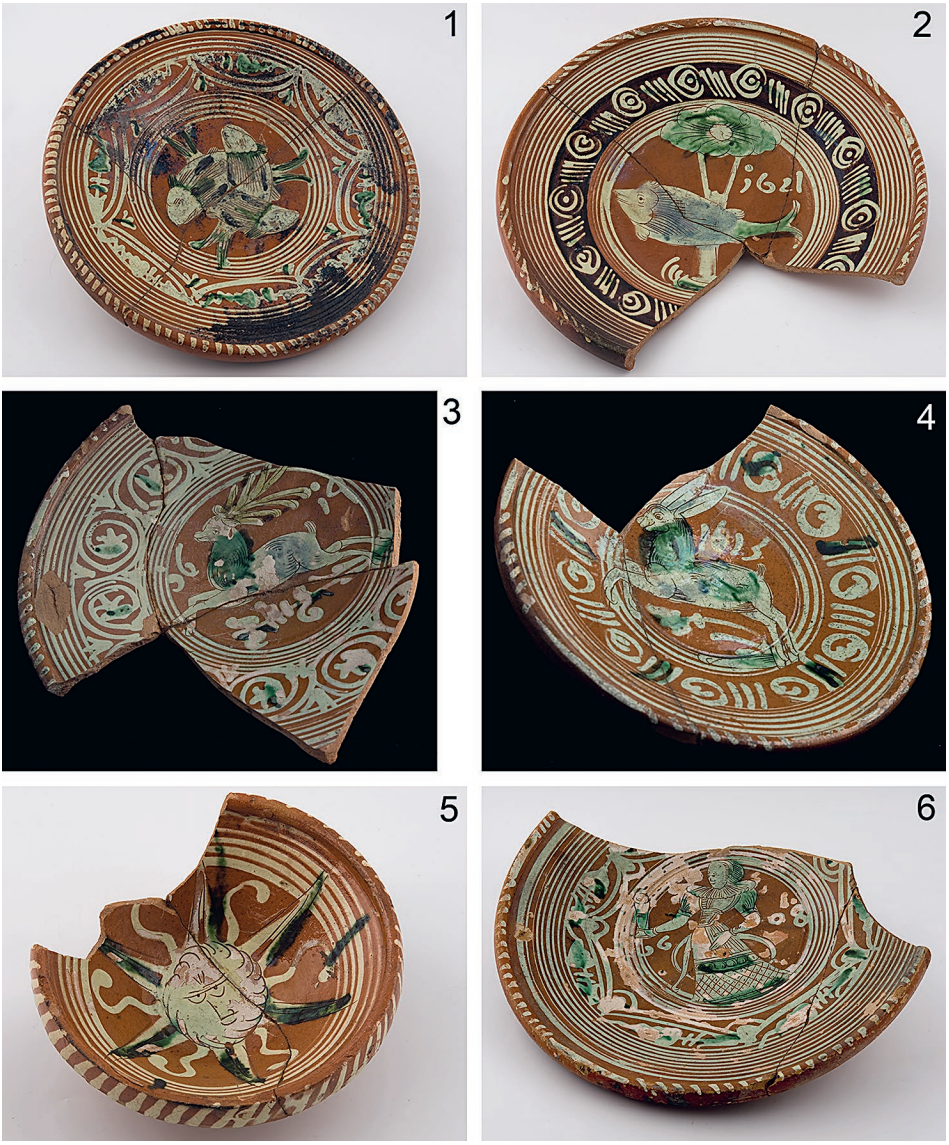

Fig. 5A. Werra- (1–6) and Weser-type (7–12) slipware from the second half of the 16th–17th century. Selected vessels from the collection of the Museum Rotterdam (Public domain; *MR 2025*: Inv. Nos. 19272 (1), 19274 (2), 19220 (3), 19241 (4), 19262 (5), 19302 (6), 6873 (7), 6659 (8), 23676 (9), 14005-47 (10), 23677 (11), 7865 (12); computer processing M. Bis and W. Bis).

serve both as a surface coating and as a material for decorative painting. It is typically composed of fine clay that fires to a different colour than the vessel's fabric. Slip varies in consistency and methods of application. While designs were most often painted, decoration could also be created by cutting through an overlying slip layer to reveal the colour of the clay body beneath – a technique known as sgraffito – or by using methods such as

Fig. 5B. Werra- (1–6) and Weser-type (7–12) slipware from the second half of the 16th–17th century. Selected vessels from the collection of the Museum Rotterdam (Public domain; *MR 2025*: Inv. Nos. 19272 (1), 19274 (2), 19220 (3), 19241 (4), 19262 (5), 19302 (6), 6873 (7), 6659 (8), 23676 (9), 14005-47 (10), 23677 (11), 7865 (12); computer processing M. Bis and W. Bis).

chattering. The glaze applied to the vessel surface is colourless, transparent, glossy, and composed primarily of lead oxide (*Stephan 1987*; *MPRG 1998*, chapters 12.5–12.6; *Hume 2001*, 371; *Orton – Hughes 2013*, 86–88; *de Groot 2018*, 3–4). It forms a thin layer, usually applied only to the decorated side of the vessel. Production relied on local (usually

ferruginous) clays and natural pigments. The analysed pottery was predominantly wheel-thrown. The range of forms is diverse but primarily includes tableware such as bowls and plates in various sizes – open forms chosen to display the decoration – alongside cups, tankards, jugs, small pots, and lids (e.g. *Stephan 1987*, 268–304; *Gaimster 2006*, 85–87).

Slipware is primarily distinguished by its ornamentation, arranged in various compositions on the vessel walls. The basic repertoire of motifs includes floral designs – typically highly stylised flowers and leaves – arranged individually, in threads, or as bouquets, alongside geometric patterns such as straight, wavy, or zigzag lines, circles, semicircles, dots, rays, lattices, etc. Occasionally, figurative elements also appear, including animals of various species, fantastic creatures, and human figures, as well as, less frequently, dates, inscriptions, or symbols placed in the centre of the composition. Additional decorative techniques included irregularly splashed dots and marbled effects, which formed distinct pattern types. The common colour palette was relatively limited, featuring white, yellow, orange, red, green, and brown, supplemented by a variety of tonal nuances. Slipware decoration relied on contrasting the pattern with the vessel surface–typically light slip (either a full coating or painted design) set against a dark background, such as a bisque-fired reddish-brown body or coloured slip washes (see e.g. *Stephan 1987*, 268–304; *Bis 2025*, 52).

Some of the most important regions in Europe for slipware production were located in present-day Germany, with the best-known examples being Werraware (*Fig. 5*: 1–6) and Weserware (*Fig. 5*: 7–12). The production of these vessels in larger quantities spanned several decades, starting in the 1560s and coming to a halt with the outbreak of the Thirty Years' War. Weserware was manufactured in the area between the Weser and Leine rivers, while Werraware was produced in Hesse, across several centres of manufacture – such as Dörpe, Höxter, and Völksen for Weserware, and Grossalmerode, Hannoversch Münden, and Wanfried for Werraware. The two groups of vessels are distinguishable by the type of slip used for covering and decoration, as well as by their iconography. Werraware is notable for its elaborate figurative sgraffito designs, whereas Weserware is characterised by more restrained, geometric ornamentation (*Stephan 1987*, 85–110, 274–280, 304; *Bartels 1999*, 171–178; *Demuth 2001*, 75–78; *Gaimster 2006*, 84–88; *Dąbal 2013*, 124–133; *de Groot 2018*, 3–6).

The production of these centres was, in many respects, revolutionary. It made maximum use of the potential inherent in commonly available raw materials, well-established manufacturing techniques, basic vessel forms, and simple decorative motifs – elements which were creatively modified and refined. The value of these ceramics lay in their functionality and visual appeal. This effect was achieved through the skilful preparation of ceramic bodies and forming techniques, careful surface finishing, decoration adapted to the shape and structure of each vessel, and the inventive composition of ornamentation using modest elements combined into striking colour schemes. As a result, their attractive appearance and high quality inspired manufacturers in other regions and production centres, serving as influential models of know-how (see *Hurst – Gaimster 2005*, 270–279; *Gaimster 2006*, 84–87; *de Groot 2018*, 9–14). Both ceramic groups were produced in large quantities and widely distributed across northern and north-western Europe (e.g. *de Groot 2018*, 15–20), including present-day Poland (see *Bis 2021*, 53, with further references).

Through archaeological discoveries, many other slipware production sites have been identified across northern and central Europe, including in the Czech Republic (e.g. *Blažková 2019*; *Matějková 2019*), Denmark (e.g. *Knudsen et al. 2023*), France and the Nether-

lands (e.g. *Gaimster 1991*), northern Germany (e.g. *Gaimster 2006*, 84–88; *Schäfer 2007*; *Kröll 2012*; *Witte 2014*), Sweden (e.g. *Johansson 2007*), and Switzerland (e.g. *Heege 2019*, 96). The spread of these techniques in Scandinavia and generally along the Baltic coast was largely the result of German influence and the migration of German potters (*Stephan 1987*, 304–305).

These products share a number of distinguishing features, notably ornamental techniques based on the use of slip, and a similar colour palette. Among other unifying traits are the homogeneous range of raw materials, comparable production quality, and a standardised basic assortment. Nevertheless, as evidenced by published archaeological finds and museum collections, significant differences also exist – particularly in the frequency of specific vessel forms and the layout and execution of decorative schemes. These variations are generally associated with particular workshops or regional production centres (see *Stephan 1987*).

The influence of these ceramic traditions on pottery production in Europe was long-lasting, and their impact can be seen in the types of earthenware discussed below.

The case of slipware, Pomeranian faience, and Stettinware from Poland

Three notable groups of ceramics that emerged during the Early Modern period in the territory of present-day Poland are slipware, so-called Pomeranian faience, and Stettinware. In my opinion, these wares serve as illustrative examples of the continuation process within regional pottery production.

Slipware

Beginning with this type of earthenware – representing the category of earlier origin. A detailed analysis of the quality of slipware production within the territory of present-day Poland, based on archaeological finds, remains difficult due to the limited state of research and publication, as well as the fragmentary condition of most surviving vessels. Nevertheless, a review of the available literature suggests that these wares display the manufacturing standards outlined above. Their chronology also corresponds to the pan-European time framework, with production taking place from the second half of the 16th century through the 18th century. The tradition continued locally in folk pottery until the 20th century (e.g. *Fryś-Pietraszkowa 1970*).

Based on archaeological remains, it can be estimated that there were at least a dozen slipware production sites in the lands of present-day Poland in the 16th–18th century: Brzeg, Bydgoszcz, Gdańsk, Jarosław, Kraków, Lublin, Łańcut, Miechocin, Myślibórz, Nysa, Poznań, Recz, Rzeszów, Śmigiel, Warsaw, and Wrocław (*Fig. 6–7*). This is evidenced by the relics of pottery kilns and/or pottery waste discovered at these locations, or is considered likely based on numerous finds of this type of earthenware in their vicinity (*Bis 2021*, 53–55; *2025*, 52, with further references). In several cases – specifically in the workshops operating in Bydgoszcz, Kraków, Myślibórz, Poznań, Recz, Śmigiel, and Warsaw – it is clearly documented that slipware constituted a secondary branch of broader ceramic production (*Bis 2025*, 55). Given the evident craftsmanship of these vessels, it

Fig. 6A. Slipware from Miechocin from the 17th–18th century: 1 – on the exhibition at the Historical Museum of the City of Tarnobrzeg (photo by M. Bis); 2–4 – reconstruction of selected decoration; 5–6 – dishes found in Miechocin; 7 – dish found in Łańcut (after *Szetela-Zauchowa 1994*, fig. 86: 2–4; fig. 87: 1, 3–4; computer processing M. Bis and W. Bis).

appears that there were no material or technological constraints that would have precluded their production in other workshops as well. The primary impetus was likely market demand, with the potters' ingenuity and manual skill serving as key enabling factors.

Most of the confirmed or potential production centres were concentrated along the course of the Vistula River – the principal conduit for the transmission of goods and ideas in the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth – primarily in the southern and central parts of the country. It is worth noting that these regions had long maintained distinct traditions,

Fig. 6B. Slipware from Miechocin from the 17th–18th century: 1 – on the exhibition at the Historical Museum of the City of Tarnobrzeg (photo by M. Bis); 2–4 – reconstruction of selected decoration; 5–6 – dishes found in Miechocin; 7 – dish found in Łańcut (after *Szetela-Zauchowa 1994*, fig. 86: 2–4; fig. 87: 1, 3–4; computer processing M. Bis and W. Bis).

differing from those of towns in the north and west. During this period, workshops in Western Pomerania and Silesia were located within the borders of neighbouring states and were primarily influenced by German cultural traditions (cf. *Stephan 1987*, 303).

Among the known production centres, the one in Miechocin (Lesser Poland) stands out (*Fig. 6*). Products from its twelve excavated workshops – including both finished vessels and post-production waste – exhibit a range of ornamental compositions and levels of craftsmanship over the course of the centre's activity, which spanned from the late 16th century to the end of the 18th century. The decoration evolved from highly precise, multi-threaded polychrome patterns on a white slip background to simpler, typically two-colour designs. The motifs reflect a regional adaptation that combined local ceramic traditions with Western influences (*Szetela 1969a*; *1969b*, 95–100; *Stephan 1987*, 304; *Szetela-Zauchowa 1994*).

Fig. 7A. Miechocin-type slipware from the 17th–18th century: 1–6 – dishes found in Gdańsk (after *Oniszczuk 2013b*: 93–95, Catalogue Nos. 443 (1), 442 (2), 438 (3), 431 (4), 430 (5), 425 (6)); 7–13 – dishes found in Warsaw (drawing by U. Skwara-Niecuła; after *Meyza 2017*, 20–23, pl. 1:1 (7); 2:3 (8); 2:7 (9); 4:4 (10); 3:7 (11); 3:4 (12); 4:2 (13); computer processing M. Bis and W. Bis).

The Miechocin material is documented best among Polish slipware finds, and knowledge about it is already well established within the scholarly community. As such, it serves as a key reference point for identifying and analysing similar finds from other sites across Poland (see *Fig. 7*).

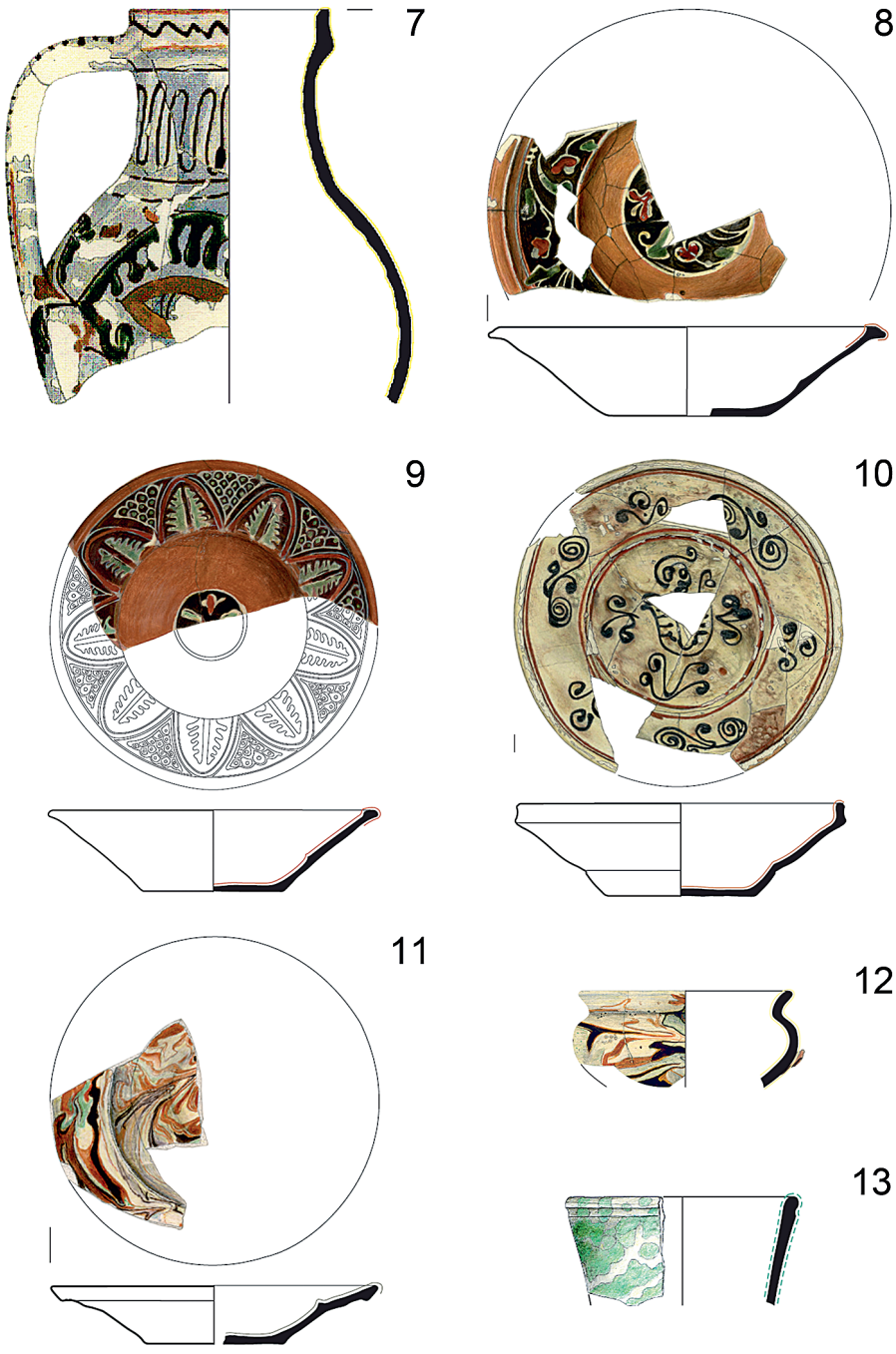

Fig. 7B. Miechocin-type slipware from the 17th–18th century: 1–6 – dishes found in Gdańsk (after *Oniszczuk 2013b*: 93–95, Catalogue Nos. 443 (1), 442 (2), 438 (3), 431 (4), 430 (5), 425 (6)); 7–13 – dishes found in Warsaw (drawing by U. Skwara-Niecuła; after *Meyza 2017*, 20–23, pl. 1:1 (7); 2:3 (8); 2:7 (9); 4:4 (10); 3:7 (11); 3:4 (12); 4:2 (13); computer processing M. Bis and W. Bis).

Equally important is the discovery of the workshop in Myślibórz (in Western Pomerania, in former Brandenburg), which operated from the late 16th to the early 18th century. Its products are distinguished by the originality of their ornamentation, including the use of the chattering technique, vibrant colours, and a wide variety of forms (e.g. *Kałagate – Kościukiewicz 2004*; *Majewski 2019*, 206–209). These finds have not yet been thoroughly investigated or fully published. This observation also applies to the other workshops mentioned above, as well as to many existing collections of artefacts.

It can be observed that the features of vessels discovered at each of the recorded sites – particularly in terms of colour schemes and decorative motifs – exhibit general, and at times even striking, similarities. This suggests that some of the production centres may have functioned as regional leaders, exerting considerable influence on the development of slipware production in smaller neighbouring towns. For instance, Miechocin likely influenced pottery production in other centres of Lesser Poland, such as Jarosław, Łańcut, and Rzeszów (*Bis 2021*, 54). Poznań may have played a similar role for Śmigiel and broadly for the whole of Greater Poland, while Myślibórz appears to have affected centres in Western Pomerania and beyond. Verification of this hypothesis appears feasible through further comparative studies. In this context, archaeometric methods now offer significant potential for accurately determining the provenance of ceramic finds. The implementation of a comprehensive programme of such analyses for slipware discovered in Poland is an urgent research priority, as such studies have so far been conducted only sporadically (*Trąbska et al. 2019*).

The decline of slipware production was driven by its loss of status in the face of the growing availability of factory-made faience from the 17th century onwards, and, from the 18th century, of European porcelain. In domestic contexts, such ceramics were increasingly replaced in kitchens by metal utensils (*Fryś-Pietraszkowa 1970*, 77).

Pomeranian faience

Similar observations and conclusions may be drawn in relation to another type of post-medieval earthenware – so-called Pomeranian faience (*Fig. 8–9*). Its production began approximately a century later than that of slipware, most likely in the late 17th century, and continued into the early 19th century. It was concentrated in centres located in northern Poland, specifically in Gdańsk Pomerania (formerly Royal Prussia). In addition to Gdańsk, the region included Elbląg, Malbork, and smaller nearby localities such as Chełm (Stara Wieś), Frombork, Młynary, Pasłęk, and Tolkmicko (*Marcinkowski 2007*; *2009b*; *2011*). Within this category of ceramics, the output from the Elbląg region stands out for its better quality and value. Products from this centre are also the best documented and most thoroughly studied. However, earthenware similar in terms of technology and ornamentation is found in various parts of Poland (conclusion based on the review of literature). It does not necessarily originate exclusively from the coast of the Baltic Sea. The average quality of these vessels does not preclude their production in other regions (e.g. in Mazovia), in numerous pottery workshops. Nonetheless, in Polish publications, pottery of this tape is universally described as ‘Pomeranian faience’. This ceramic tradition was continued by folk potters in the 19th and 20th centuries in the other centres (*Kwaśniewska 2006*, 63–97).

This group of Early Modern ceramics is characterised by a reddish body, resulting from the use of ferruginous clays, and a surface coated with lead-tin glaze – typically applied

only to the decorated side. The vessels are adorned with schematic ornaments painted in shades of blue, green, yellow, and purple-brown on a light background, most often white with a slightly bluish or greenish tint. Although the patterns were polychrome, the prominence of specific colours varied over time (*Marcinkowski 2009b*, 44–45). These vessels were intended primarily as decorative items for interior display, as indicated by a pierced base for suspension and the absence of glaze on the reverse side (*Kilarska 2003*, 147).

The established range of forms is dominated by plates and bowls of varying depth. Also produced were jugs of different heights and capacities – with or without tubular spouts – as well as vases, small bowls, and tankards (*Marcinkowski 2009b*, 44; *2011*, 39–52). A distinguishing feature of Pomeranian faience was the presence of a ring at the base and painted decoration depicting stylised plants (*Fig. 8*: 1–7, 9–10; *Fig. 9*: 3, 4, 12) and geometric patterns (*Fig. 9*: 9), sometimes accompanied by human figures (*Fig. 9*: 7–11), birds (*Fig. 8*: 8–9, 11–12), dates (*Fig. 9*: 5), architecture (*Fig. 9*: 1–2) or landscapes (*Fig. 9*: 3, 6), heraldic motifs, or inscriptions (*Marcinkowski 2011*, 53–96). The similar arrangement and colour scheme of the ornamentation found on various examples may suggest a common provenance (*Marcinkowski 2009b*, 45). The quality of craftsmanship varied over time (see below), but was generally average, as evidenced by production flaws visible on many pieces, such as cracked glaze, uneven application, spilled pigment, as well as chipping and craquelure in the painted decoration (*Marcinkowski 2011*, 102–105).

Stettinware

Stettinware (German: *Stettiner Ware*) is the conventional term used to describe a type of pottery characteristic of the broader region of Western Pomerania, which was exported via the port of Szczecin. These wares were also produced in Denmark, southern Sweden, Mecklenburg, and Schleswig-Holstein from the early 18th century until the end of the 19th century. As such, they represent the most recent development among the ceramic groups discussed here – particularly as production in the Szczecin area likely began only in the second half of the 18th century and continued into the early 19th century. The periodisation of this pottery tradition, despite more than a century having passed since the foundational study on the subject, remains largely valid (*Kwiatkowski 2010*, 40, footnote 5; 43; *Szeremeta 2022*, 100; after *Secker 1915*). Known production centres along the southern Baltic coast include Greiffenberg, Greifswald, Lübeck, and Stralsund, as well as sites within the borders of present-day Poland, such as Chociwle, Czaplinek, Gryfino, Koszalin, Krosno Odrzańskie, Police, Słupsk, and Trzebiatów (e.g. *Karwowska 2010*, 17, 20; *Kwiatkowski 2010*, 42; *Szeremeta 2022*, 99–100; see also *Möller 1999*, 4–12).

This was a distinctive and individual type of Pomeranian ware combining simple, utilitarian forms with a limited range of decorative motifs. Technologically, it belonged to the category of faience, featuring a porous body typically in shades of yellow-brown or yellow-grey. It can be thought that, compared with the faience from Gdańsk Pomerania, Stettinware was of comparable quality, i.e. made of similar ceramic fabrics, but with slightly different colours, equally fairly well fired. A characteristic feature of these vessels was the absence of a foot ring. The plain ceramic core was concealed beneath a coating of white lead-tin glaze. The decoration was dominated by compositions of stylised plant motifs (*Fig. 10*: 1–8) – either as single elements or arranged in tendrils, branches, or bouquets – often combined with other elements such as linear, architectural (*Fig. 10*: 10, 12), or

Fig. 8A. Pomeranian faience from Elbląg from the 18th century. Selected vessels from the collection of the Archaeological and Historical Museum in Elbląg (photo by A. Czuba, M. Marcinkowski, and L. Okoński; after *Marcinkowski 2011*, Catalogue Nos. 29 (1), 119 (2), 21 (3), 133 (4), 211 (5), 250 (6), 68 (7), 81 (8), 32 (9), 22 (10), 41 (11), 189 (12); computer processing M. Bis and W. Bis).

Fig. 8B. Pomeranian faience from Elbląg from the 18th century. Selected vessels from the collection of the Archaeological and Historical Museum in Elbląg (photo by A. Czuba, M. Marcinkowski, and L. Okoński; after *Marcinkowski 2011*, Catalogue Nos. 29 (1), 119 (2), 21 (3), 133 (4), 211 (5), 250 (6), 68 (7), 81 (8), 32 (9), 22 (10), 41 (11), 189 (12); computer processing M. Bis and W. Bis).

Fig. 9A. Pomeranian faience from Elbląg from the 18th century. Selected vessels from the collection of the Archaeological and Historical Museum in Elbląg (photo by A. Czuba, M. Marcinkowski, and L. Okoński; after *Marcinkowski 2011*, Catalogue Nos. 213 (1), 79 (2), 62 (3), 223 (4), 33 (5), 66 (6), 166 (7), 95 (8), 20 (9), 252 (10), 138 (11), 209 (12); computer processing M. Bis and W. Bis).

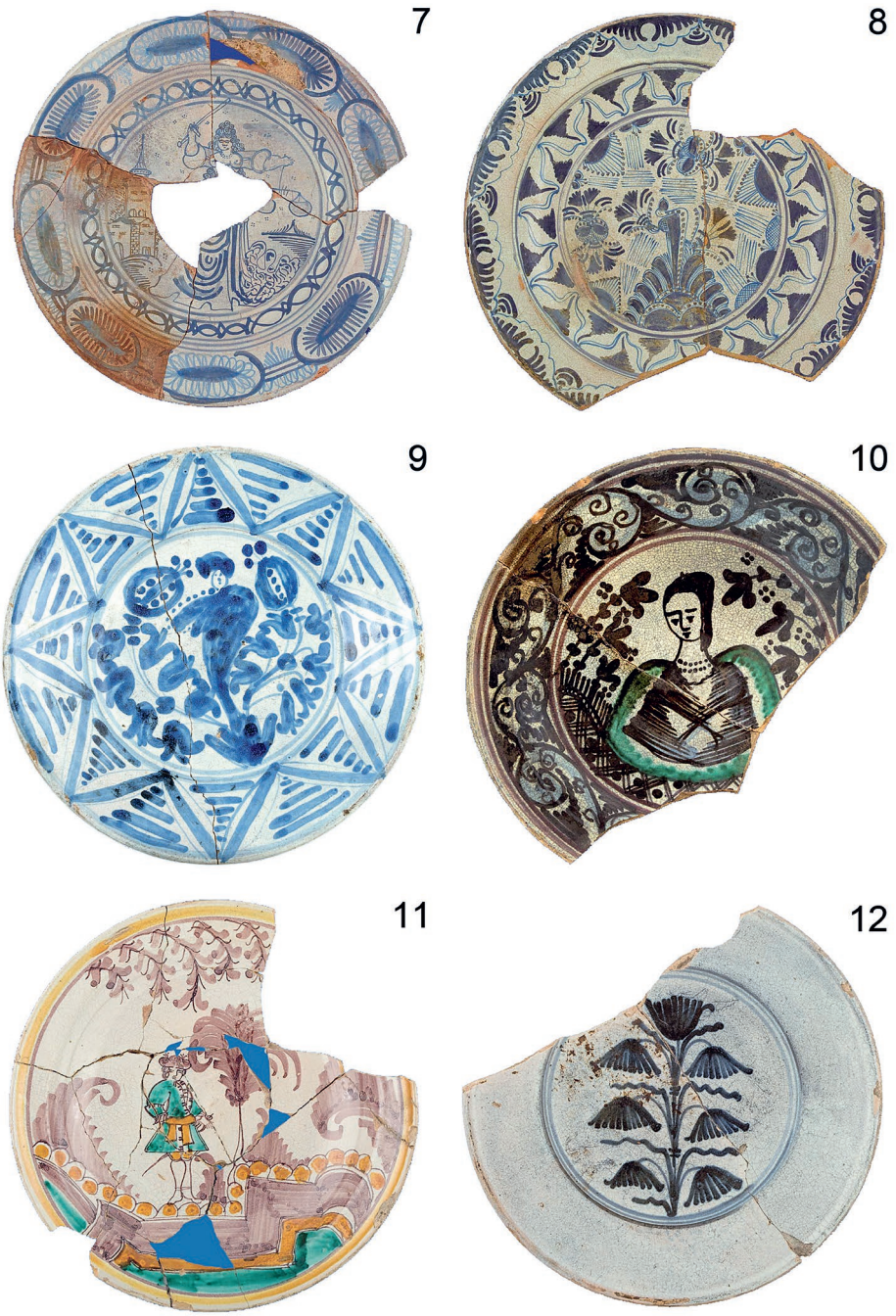

Fig. 9B. Pomeranian faience from Elbląg from the 18th century. Selected vessels from the collection of the Archaeological and Historical Museum in Elbląg (photo by A. Czuba, M. Marcinkowski, and L. Okoński; after *Marcinkowski 2011*, Catalogue Nos. 213 (1), 79 (2), 62 (3), 223 (4), 33 (5), 66 (6), 166 (7), 95 (8), 20 (9), 252 (10), 138 (11), 209 (12); computer processing M. Bis and W. Bis).

Fig. 10A. Stettinware (*Stettiner Ware*) from the 18th – beginning of the 19th century. Selected vessels from the collection of the Archaeological and Historical Museum in Stargard (2–6, 8) (photo by M. Szeremeta; after *Szeremeta 2022*, 106, fig 6: 1; 108–109, figs. 8: 1, 9:1–2; 116, fig. 14: 1) and the National Museum in Stettin (Public domain; *MNS 2025*: Inv. Nos. MNS/E/5970 (1), MNS/E/606 (7), MNS/E/6348 (9), MNS/E/6350 (10), MNS/E/568 (11), MNS/E/6349 (12); computer processing M. Bis and W. Bis).

Fig. 10B. Stettinware (*Stettiner Ware*) from the 18th – beginning of the 19th century. Selected vessels from the collection of the Archaeological and Historical Museum in Stargard (2–6, 8) (photo by M. Szeremeta; after *Szeremeta 2022*, 106, fig 6: 1; 108–109, figs. 8: 1, 9:1–2; 116, fig. 14: 1) and the National Museum in Stettin (Public domain; *MNS 2025*: Inv. Nos. MNS/E/5970 (1), MNS/E/606 (7), MNS/E/6348 (9), MNS/E/6350 (10), MNS/E/568 (11), MNS/E/6349 (12); computer processing M. Bis and W. Bis).

cartouche-like designs. The ceramic repertoire consisted primarily of plates and bowls in various sizes and depths, slender handled pots, lids, and tankards. In terms of ornamentation, the commonly used blue dye was gradually supplemented by turquoise, green, yellow, and purple-brown (*Möller 1999*, 4–8, 14, fig. 1; *Karwowska 2010*, 19–20; *Kwiatkowski 2010*, 38–40; *Szeremeta 2022*, 104–115). Archaeological finds from Stargard show that most of these vessels were carelessly made: they are crooked, have a thick body, and the quality of paint and decoration is poor (*Kwiatkowski 2010*, 41).

The decline of this pottery tradition was driven by the growing demand for cheaper porcelain (from the mid-18th century), the narrowing of the market to a primarily rural clientele, and eventually by the advent of industrial production in the early 20th century (*Karwowska 2010*, 18).

Discussion: from determinants and influences to their dissemination in domestic ceramic production

Influences and adaptations

The origins of the discussed ceramic groups within the territory of present-day Poland remain uncertain and have yet to be definitively explained. Based on technological features and decorative elements, various factors have been identified as potential influences shaping their production. It appears that these developments resulted from the convergence of multiple impulses, emerging through simultaneous, multidirectional interactions triggered by the broader socio-economic conditions and cultural transformations occurring between the 16th and 19th centuries (as outlined above). These changes were driven in part by technological advancements, which enabled the creation of wares with previously unattainable forms and ornamentation. A key stimulus came from the influence of foreign ceramics – originating both from distant Asia and nearby European regions – which were of higher quality and often introduced stylistic features unfamiliar to local production. Their visual appeal created consumer demand, which in turn influenced patterns of trade and local manufacturing practices.

In the case of slipware, two principal directions of influence can be identified – one originating from the south, the other from the west (*Bis 2025*). For vessels featuring a white background and richly polychrome decoration, close analogies have been drawn with 16th-century Italian maiolica, particularly from centres such as Deruta, Gubbio, and Faenza. This connection has been confirmed for certain finds from Łańcut, Rzeszów, and Miechocin (see *Szetela 1969a*, 24–33, figs. 90–96, 112–121; *Fryś-Pietraszkowa 1970*, 76), in the latter case specifically for vessels produced during the initial and peak phases of the workshop's activity, i.e. from the late 16th to the mid-17th century. The affinity lies in the range, types, and compositional layout of decorative motifs, while the differences are evident in their modification and schematisation. The designs tend to be graphic and restrained – still representational, but lacking the refinement of their Italian prototypes (*Szetela 1969a*, 25, 28). Typical maiolica motifs such as heraldic emblems, grotesques, and *istoratio* scenes were not adopted. Human figures appear only occasionally (see *Fig. 6*: 7). Animals (e.g. birds or deer) and fantastical creatures are likewise rare. Instead, the ornamental schemes incorporated indigenous elements (*Szetela 1969a*, 24, 30–31). Designs

inspired by the plant world came to dominate, particularly on light slip coatings (see *Fig. 6*: 1, 4–6; *Fig. 7*: 1, 2, 4, 7). These included rosettes, petals, and leaves of various forms and species (e.g. oak, vine), either arranged individually, in bouquets, or as floral bunches, along with palmettes, bulbs, acanthus, and laurel wreaths. These were frequently accompanied by geometric ornaments (see *Fig. 6*: 2–3) – typically set against dark backgrounds – such as dots, spirals, zigzags, concentric circles, rays, knots, and wavy bands (*Szetela-Zauchowa 1994*, 48–65, figs. 4–81). The motifs were arranged in a variety of compositions: radially, in segments, in loose compositions, or in the form of so-called fish scale or floral spray patterns (*Szetela 1969a*, 13–19).

This gave rise to speculation that production may have been initiated by migrants from the aforementioned Italian centres, possibly arriving directly from the Apennine Peninsula (cf. *Szetela 1969b*, 80; *Fryś-Pietraszkowa 1970*, 76). Alternatively, the transmission of decorative models could have occurred via potters of Italian descent who migrated from neighbouring Moravia, where such traditions were already established. One such group may have been the Haban community. Although no written sources confirm this hypothesis, similarities between Haban pottery – in terms of ornamental layout and motif selection – and the decorative schemes found on slipware from Miechocin have been recognised and demonstrated (*Szetela 1969a*, 24–28; *Szetela-Zauchowa 1994*, 56). This type of ceramic was produced by Anabaptists (Protestant immigrants), who probably originated in the northern part of the Italian Peninsula or in Switzerland, South Germany, and Tyrol. They settled in the region of present-day southern Moravia (from 1526; the heyday of the Anabaptist community spans between 1565 and 1592). Due to re-Catholicisation, after 1620 most of them moved to Hungary, to neighbouring west Slovakia. Anabaptists brought to these territories progressive procedures, advanced technologies and production methods, which they continued to improve. They mastered all the important crafts, including ceramic production. Their wares developed based on the model of Italian maiolica, especially *bianchi di Faenza*, characterised by painted, polychrome decoration – albeit in a limited colour palette (typically blue, yellow, purple, and green) – applied over a white tin glaze, often outlined in a dark contour (as seen in maiolica and Miechocin products). In most cases, decoration was applied only on the front side of a vessel. Stylised floral motifs predominated, occasionally accompanied by initials, dates, craft emblems, monograms, or coats of arms. Over time, the range of motifs expanded (e.g. *Kalesný 1994*; *Pajer 2006*; *2011*; *Kalinová 2017*, 59–66; *Bis 2025*, 58, 59, fig. 7).

In Polish slipware, stylistic references to Italian originals are also evident in other decorative techniques. One such method is marbling, which was a standard decorative practice in Tuscan slipware production between 1550 and 1650. It was certainly employed in Pisa and in other towns along the Arno River, such as Montelupo and Pontorme (*Moore Valeri 2012*; see also *Meyza 2017*, 127–128). This ornamental effect was achieved by mixing liquid slip on the vessel's surface, resulting in flowing, smooth lines, as well as in spots and irregular blotches (*Rada 1993*, 151–153; *MPRG 1998*, chapter 13.2). Two marbling variants have been noted on red-bodied sherds: a monochrome version (in white) and a polychrome version combining white, red, black, and green (*Moore Valeri 2012*, 20–21, 25–26). The use of marbling has also been confirmed in Lombard pottery in the second half of the 16th century (*Stephan 1987*, 301). A similar decorative effect, executed in a comparable colour palette, appears on wares from Miechocin dated to the late 16th to mid-17th century (*Szetela 1969a*, 18; *Szetela-Zauchowa 1994*, 64). Marbling was used

either as the sole ornament on the vessel's surface or in combination with geometric patterns (see *Fig. 7*: 6, 11, 12).

Its version was splashing. This effect was created by splashing the liquid on the surface of a vessel and took the form of irregular spots, splashes or streaks (*MPRG 1998*, chapter 13.2). Typically, one pigment (green or brown) was applied over a light slip coating. This primitive method was used on the vessels from Miechocin from the 18th century (*Szetela-Zauchowa 1994*, 67) (see *Fig. 7*: 3, 13).

Another ornamental technique – sgraffito – may also trace its origins to Italy in an earlier period. This decorative tradition was developed in various Italian centres, notably in Tuscan workshops, including Pisa, from the 15th to the 17th century. The most common types were *a punta* and *a stecca* (in addition to *a fondo ribassato*). Incised patterns were filled with paints in several colours and then covered with a lead glaze. The underlying body remained yellowish or brown (e.g. *Giorgio 2019*, 15, 18–19, figs. 6–7). Other Italian centres known for sgraffito ware included Bologna, Cremona, Ferrara, Lodi, Padua, and Venice (*Stephan 1987*, 301). However, the dissemination of this technique in Early Modern ceramics across Central and Western Europe did not occur through maiolica, but rather through Werra-type slipware (cf. *Gaimster 1991*; *2006*, 36, 87; *Hurst – Gaimster 2005*; *de Groot 2018*). On the surfaces of these vessels, selected design elements were outlined through incision and then filled with colouring agents (see *Fig. 5*: 1–6). This method enhanced the three-dimensional effect of the motifs and increased their decorative impact. These wares introduced both technical and aesthetic innovations, making them attractive models for imitation. In the territory of present-day Poland, this style of decoration may have first appeared in pottery workshops in Silesia (see *Szajt 2021*, 76–77, 236–242, pls. 113–119; *Duma 2025*).

A similar function was served by the use of contour lines (outlines) around painted motifs across all of the discussed ceramic groups. This feature often resulted from transferring the design onto the vessel surface using a stencil (e.g. *van Dam 2004*, 44). It reflects both an attention to detail in the depiction of motifs and a deliberate effort to achieve a controlled and planned visual effect. On Italian maiolica, contour lines were typically brown or blue (e.g. *Sani 2012*; *Wilson 2016*), while on Dutch faience, they were usually blue or black – referred to as 'trek' (e.g. *Piątkiewicz-Dereniowa 1996*; *Kilarska 2003*; *van Dam 2004*; *Kowalski 2013*). Outlining was also a characteristic feature of slipware from Miechocin dating to the period up to the mid-17th century: brown contours were used for motifs painted on light backgrounds (see *Fig. 6*: 1, 4–7), while bright outlines were applied to elements painted on dark slip grounds (see *Fig. 6*: 2, 3) (*Szetela-Zauchowa 1994*, 63–66). Contour lines are also found around certain ornaments on Pomeranian faience from Elbląg produced in the first half of the 18th century (*Marcinkowski 2011*, 55–69) (*Fig. 8*: 1, 4; *Fig. 9*: 4, 7, 10–11). However, this feature disappears in wares with more schematic and carelessly executed motifs, such as Elbląg faience from the second half of the 18th to the mid-19th century (*Marcinkowski 2011*, 69–96), and in Stettinware from the latter half of the 19th century (*Karwowska 2010*, 28–37).

In the case of Miechocin, as well as of Jarosław and Rzeszów wares, influences from Eastern cultural traditions – particularly those associated with the Ottoman Empire (Turkey) – have also been noted in connection with İznik ceramics. This influence is believed to have been transmitted through the Armenian diaspora (*Supryn 1975*, 260–262; *Szetela-Zauchowa 1994*, 53). İznik pottery was produced from the last quarter of the 15th century

until the end of the 17th century, with the main output consisting of tableware and decorative tile wall panels. The defining features of this ceramic group include a white body and glaze, which provided an ideal base for vibrant designs in red, blue, and green. The decorative repertoire represented a creative synthesis of traditional Turkish motifs, especially arabesques, combined with stylistic elements derived from Chinese art. Floral motifs predominated, often covering the entire surface of the vessel, and were frequently accompanied by zoomorphic elements (mainly peacocks), as well as the 'dollar' pattern (e.g. *Iznik Pottery 2025*; *Kralj 2016*; *Bis 2025*, 58).

Another technique introduced in Early Modern times and documented in Polish slipware finds is chattering, although it originated from the opposite geographical direction. It was likely invented in Mecklenburg–Western Pomerania – possibly in Myślibórz – or in Sweden before 1600. The technique was subsequently adopted in various pottery traditions across the continent, including in the Lower Rhine region (c. 1660), the Probstei region in Schleswig-Holstein (c. 1706), and the German-speaking part of Switzerland (shortly before 1700). Chattering was achieved using a chattering tool or a roulette to incise concentric patterns – typically rows of small hollows – into the slip layer. It usually appeared on the interior surfaces of vessels and was often combined with slip-trailed colour designs, as well as incised or combed decoration (*MPRG 1998*, chapter 12.6; *Gaimster 2006*, 56; *Heege 2019*, 95–108).

Based on costume analysis and the depictions of men and women painted on vessels from Miechocin, additional possible sources of inspiration for these images have been identified – namely local visual culture, including contemporary woodcuts and painting. Certain details may have been drawn from the decorative arts, such as carving, embroidery, or manuscript illumination, including illustrated prints that gained popularity in Poland from the late 16th and early 17th century onwards (*Szetela 1969a*, 32–33; *1969b*, 82–86). A distinctive example of the inventiveness of local potters – likely influenced by the picaresque literature – can be seen in the inscriptions found on Miechocin vessels. In addition to male and female names, these include explanatory captions related to illustrations, as well as fragments of proverbs, sayings, and moral maxims (*Szetela 1969a*, 32–34, 40–41, figs. 145–149). To the author's knowledge, such inscriptions have not been identified on slipware from other sites in Poland. The most common inscriptions on similar wares are dates, which appear infrequently – for instance, on vessels produced in Silesian centres (see *Szajt 2021*, 76; *Duma 2025*, 42). Given the cultural connections of these regions, such practices may be regarded as imitative of Werra-type wares.

While slipware production was largely shaped by adoptions from Mediterranean pottery traditions, the other two ceramic groups – Pomeranian faience and Stettinware – belong to the broader phenomenon of Dutch faience production and its consumption across the Baltic Sea countries. They represent a regional repercussion of the popularity of this ware in Early Modern Europe, albeit produced far from its place of origin in the Low Countries and typically in localised, often lower-quality variants (see *Fig. 8–10*). The tonality – as well as the content and compositional layout of key motifs – clearly resonates with the Dutch prototypes, though these were frequently simplified or rearranged (e.g. *Przeździecka 1954*, 220–222; *Marcinkowski 2009b*, 42, 46–47; *Szeremeta 2025*). Such designs may also be interpreted as echoes of the fashionable *chinoiserie*. It is also possible that the transmission of decorative models occurred through faience produced in German-speaking countries, which themselves imitated Dutch wares (e.g. *Glaser 2021*) (see *Fig. 9*: 6, 11). These

ceramics evoked the exoticism of the Orient while in practice representing a hybrid amalgamation of disparate stylistic elements. The tendency to 'Europeanise' the decoration of Pomeranian faience became more pronounced around the mid-18th century (*Marcinkowski 2011*, 55–69).

Archaeological evidence indicates that certain motifs from Delftware were frequently copied and reinterpreted in Pomeranian faience. These likely included the elements most strongly associated – by both producers and consumers – with Far Eastern culture and with the prestigious Delft tradition. Among them were plates decorated with so-called 'Chinese motifs' (symbols of good fortune), vases of flowers, bouquets, figures of Chinese people in landscape settings, floral sprays, and stylised architectural elements (see *Fig. 8–9*). These central motifs were often accompanied by lambrequins and decorative floral or linear designs (cf. *Kilarska 2003*, 147–152; *Marcinkowski 2011*; *Kwiatkowski 2011*; *Szeremeta 2025*). Some of the decorative features and vivid colour combinations found on specific vessels also evoke associations with late 16th- and early 17th-century Dutch maiolica (cf. *Kowalski 2018*). The ceramic output of that region thus found in Pomerania both imitators (among local potters) and admirers (among the clientele).

Routes of transition

Ceramic wares from Mediterranean countries, Western and Northern Europe reached the territory of present-day Poland primarily by sea, entering through the ports of Gdańsk (e.g. *Kilarska 2003*, 18–24; *Marcinkowski – Pospieszna 2016*, 60–69) and Stettin (e.g. *Karwowska 2010*, 18) and were subsequently distributed inland – mainly via river routes.

In addition to the direct influx of imported goods, another important stimulus for the dissemination of stylistic and technological influences in Early Modern Polish pottery was the mobility of journeymen. Techniques, vessel forms, and decorative patterns observed during their travels or acquired in foreign workshops were gradually integrated into local craft traditions by returning native apprentices (*Kwapieniowa 1966*, 104–108; *Fryś-Pietraszkowa 1970*, 77).

At this stage of research, it is also possible to mark the participation of foreign pottery makers in shaping local manufacture. It seems that the crafting was started by newcomers, accommodating their needs, quality standards and designs. Nevertheless, local pottery tradition – raw materials, techniques, etc. – was at least partly incorporated into the new production (cf. *Hume 2001*; *van Oosten 2009*, 14). The involvement of non-local artisans (innovators) resulted in the manufacturing of higher-quality goods with eclectic features. It can be assumed that during the transition period, several following generations of potters worked to meet the changing expectations of the local market. As a result, foreign decorative elements tended to fade over time, giving way to simpler, more restrained forms. Richly decorated wares were progressively supplanted by plain dishes with modest ornamentation. This was related to the gradual economic decline of pottery (see below).

What motivated people to purchase and use these goods? In this context, the varied constraints and motivations of individuals are particularly significant (*Blake 1980*, 5–9; *Courtney 1997*, 104). The concept of the desire to acquire things may help explain such behaviour (*Jervis 2017*, 13–14). There was likely a widespread aspiration to emulate the lifestyle of the better-off by acquiring similar possessions – provided they were financially attainable (*Blake 1980*, 6). This was accompanied by a desire for distinction and for

owning aesthetically pleasing objects – a sentiment shared not only by elites but also by members of other social strata. Among the lower classes, consumption was shaped by the transformation of luxury items into everyday goods (*McCabe 2015*, 212). This process unfolded through the gradual replacement of expensive, high-quality, and sophisticated originals with more affordable and simpler versions (*Blondé 2002*, 299; *Cumberpatch 2003*). The production of the ceramic types discussed here fulfilled this specific functional and social niche within the regional market (cf. *Gaimster 2006*, 85), offering more accessible forms of tableware. These wares were intended for consumers with refined tastes but of only moderate means (e.g. *Marcinkowski 2009b*, 50–51).

According to a preliminary evaluation of Polish finds, it can be assumed that the quality and status of slipware, Pomeranian faience, and Stettinware were broadly comparable to one another – albeit significantly lower than those of more luxurious, and typically less frequently recovered, ceramic categories such as faience (whether imported or produced in domestic manufactories), as well as maiolica, stoneware, and porcelain (cf. *Gaimster 2006*, 145, Diagram 7).

Phases of transition

Across all the ceramic groups under consideration, similar developmental trajectories can be observed – though differing in intensity and timing – including a phase of flourishing, followed by stagnation, and ultimately a decline in production. These processes led to a two-pronged evolution of production and a wide range of wares, from attractive, well-crafted vessels to those characterised by simplified forms and the most schematic decoration. This gradual decline in quality unfolded over the course of approximately two centuries.

One of the discussed categories comprises meticulously and precisely crafted items, presumably produced by skilled artisans (ceramicists and painters) – often with a notable degree of creativity. These vessels were probably intended for more demanding customers. They were produced at a time when the centres had reached the peak of their development. During this period (which we can call ‘time of imitation’), there was a discernible effort to replicate motifs with fidelity and to preserve the colour schemes of the ceramic prototypes.

In the case of the Miechocin workshops, this top phase occurred between the late 16th and the mid-17th century. Characteristic features of this period included expressive and precise painting with contour lines, adherence to zonal decoration and specific ornamental layouts, e.g. the use of figural compositions, the flower-in-vase motif, and the marbling technique (*Szetela-Zauchowa 1994*, 63–66) (see *Fig. 6*).

Pomeranian wares from Elbląg reached a comparable level of development in the first half of the 18th century, when decorations in several stylistic variants imitated Dutch and Frisian faience. Chinese figural motifs combined with floral patterns (mainly flower baskets) dominated. These vessels retained a monochromatic palette – primarily blue, occasionally supplemented with yellow – along with careful execution and a generally acceptable level of quality (*Marcinkowski 2009b*, 46–47; *2011*, 55–58) (*Fig. 8*: 1, 8, 10; *Fig. 9*: 1, 7, 9).

Early-phase Stettinware (c. 1695–1750, after *Marcinkowski 2009b*, 42) also exhibits skilled craftsmanship, with decoration comprising a greater number of individual elements, executed with a confident hand (*Karwowska 2010*, 19) (*Fig. 10*: 1, 9).

By contrast, a second category consists of more rudimentary wares, which merely reference certain stylistic tendencies seen in earlier production phases. These vessels were produced in a simplified manner by potters of average skill and reflect a gradual impoverishment of the decorative repertoire, and the simplification of motifs. They were intended for sale to a less affluent clientele. The ceramics contained more indigenous elements ('time of individuality'). An appreciable decline in craftsmanship is evident in this group, marking a regressive stage in production. This final phase ('time of simplification') is particularly characterised by a reduction in the colour palette, the progressive primitivisation of vessels and their transformation into folk pottery.

In the slipware from Miechocin, this decline becomes apparent as early as the second half of the 17th century. Italian maiolica patterns were no longer replicated; instead, single, enlarged motifs – often occupying the entire surface of the vessel – came into use, including highly stylised floral sprays. The colour scheme of the designs changed; green and blue dominate instead of red and brown. Throughout the 18th century, the decoration grew increasingly modest, for example, employing spotted patterns, while the use of contour lines was gradually abandoned (*Szetela 1969b*, 98–101; *Szetela-Zauchowa 1994*, 66–67).

In the case of faience production in Gdańsk Pomerania, changes included a shift in compositional structure and the disappearance of Chinese motifs arranged in reserves, around the mid-18th century (*Fig. 8*: 3, 5, 12; *Fig. 9*: 5, 8). From the second half of the 18th century onwards, decoration often covered the entire surface of vessels, motifs were frequently applied using stencils, native floral designs were introduced, cartouches surrounded by a laurel wreath, a lambrequin ornament and a running wave pattern were used, and the colour palette included green and brown hues (*Marcinkowski 2009b*, 47; *2011*, 58–78) (*Fig. 8*: 2, 4, 6, 9, 11; *Fig. 9*: 2–4, 6, 10–11). By the late 18th and early 19th century, continuing into the mid-19th century, decoration became increasingly limited and simplified, with additional motifs eliminated in favour of a central element (*Marcinkowski 2011*, 78–92) (*Fig. 9*: 12).

The decline of Stettinware, initiated c. 1790–1820 (*Fig. 10*: 2–8, 10–12), occurred during the second half of the 19th century and continued into the early 20th century. Over time, the decoration became smaller in scale, more delicate, and more schematic, with a noticeable increase in the use of geometric motifs. In later phases, when decoration was still applied, it was often executed with stamps or stencils, and many vessels were left undecorated (*Karwowska 2010*, 19–20).

Conclusion

The manufacturing of slipware, Pomeranian faience, and Stettinware was initiated as a number of the discussed factors occurred, particularly the combination of various dynamic, multidirectional cultural influences, technological advancements, and Renaissance and Baroque stylistics. These ceramics were shaped by inspirations drawn from pottery of diverse origins. Imports from the Far East, such as Chinese porcelain, played a pivotal role in transforming European pottery production. Simultaneously, different models were provided by products from Italian maiolica. Additionally, Dutch faience and regional manufacturing traditions also had a significant impact on the development of new ceramic styles, and they were an integral part of these complex processes.

Thus, using their examples, we can explore how ceramic styles were juxtaposed, repeated or transformed over time. This circulation ('circle') of ceramics and ideas is key to understanding their development (see *Barker – Majewski 2006*, 226). In these categories of products, the described influences, primarily in decorations, are more or less evident, as indicated above. However, their subsequent development significantly diverged from the mainstream of ceramic evolution. It was fixed at a regional or even local level and determined by available resources as well as the abilities and artistic sensibility of pottery makers. It proceeded in three phases: from the time of imitation, through the time of individuality, to the time of simplification.

The presented evolution of pottery production was a result of the growing demand for more sophisticated goods serving as substitutes for their expensive counterparts. This process was fuelled by the aspirations of the lower classes to imitate the lifestyle of the well-off. As a result, local craftsmen were encouraged to produce a range of relatively cheap and lower quality vessels, which were inspired by luxury goods (including the most impactful Italian maiolica, Dutch faience, as well as foreign slipware).

From the 16th to the early 19th century, the analysed ceramics formed an integral part of table culture. They embodied and reflected contemporary notions of what was fashionable and desirable from the perspective of the user – with distant origins, continually reinterpreted and adapted by local producers. This process unfolded as a journey from foreign, refined, and elite prototypes to modest, locally produced wares of average quality, tailored to the means and expectations of consumers in the remote Polish countryside.

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