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# Foreword

Livia Frescobaldi Malenchini

*Vice President Amici di Doccia*

The Doccia collection at the Victoria and Albert Museum is one of the most important in the world, second only to that of the Museo di Doccia in Sesto Fiorentino. This explains our enthusiasm in engaging our strengths towards this project. Not only is the collection important for its quantity but especially due to the wide variety of production represented, from the early beginnings of the manufactory, see the cup and saucer of 1742 (cat. 1), until the more recent history of the firm of Richard-Ginori with a Gio Ponti vase made in 1927 (cat. 115) and two sets, one for coffee (cat. 117) and one for tea (cat. 116), by Giovanni Gariboldi made in 1954. The production of maiolica is also documented by a nucleus of items purchased by the museum during the years of their invention: at the Paris Exhibition in 1855, the famous Freppa plate (cat. 122), directly from the Ginori manufactory in 1859 (cat. 123, 124), at the International Exhibition in London in 1862 (cat. 126) and in 1877 through the art dealer William Campbell Spence (cat. 127-134), based in Florence, to quote only the most significant ones. It is also interesting to point out the presence of maiolica plates by Jafet Torelli (cat. 130-132) and Giuseppe Fanucchi (cat. 133-134), both artists once active at the Ginori factory, who felt ambitious enough to become independent. But the South Kensington Museum also had the chance to host, in 1864, the Gladstone collection, consisting at the time of various Doccia porcelain groups made in the middle of the 18th century (Maritano 2012, p. 14 and note 17). The collection was then scattered and some of the Doccia porcelain can now be seen at the Museo Civico di Palazzo Madama in Turin, at the Poldi Pezzoli in Milan and at the British Museum, but none of them has ended up at the V&A Museum.

A substantial role in the making of the collection has been played by the donors who have contributed more than half of the present collection, amongst them two members of the Ginori family. In 1862 the Marquis Lorenzo Ginori Lisci (1823-1878) gave a blue vase with reliefs (cat. 114) and a plate with arabesque pattern (cat. 125). In 1965 Marquis Leonardo Ginori Lisci (1908-1987) left a sugar bowl (cat. 77) in memory of Arthur Lane (for Lane's role in Doccia studies see in this catalogue J.V.G. Mallet, p. 14-15). The multitude of donors also explains the presence of a more ordinary production, such as sherbet cups (cat. 86-88), or the vinegar and oil cruet (cat. 89), the coffee pot (cat. 93) or the dishes decorated with a tulip (cat. 56-58). The Doccia collection, as Reino Liefkes tells us (p. 13), was already available to admirers and recorded in the electronic catalogue and most of the items had already been studied

by experts on previous occasions; but the uniqueness of having a complete catalogue with in depth entries gave us the determination to inspect all the items with fresh eyes. This had interesting results, as we discovered a beautiful sugar bowl in their store rooms recorded as Cozzi due to its fake mark (cat. 74), we recognized the signature of a painter, Enrico Giusti, on an egg-shell cup (cat. 72), we found the impressed mark “GINORI”, distinctive for pieces made in the 19th century, on a saucer with the Saxony-type decoration (cat. 81), usually known to have been painted during the 18th century but not later. Also some porcelain items previously registered as Doccia have been up-dated with an attribution to other manufactories (p. 155-157). Due to the presence of various categories of decoration and different techniques in sculpture, tableware and maiolica, the sequence of the pieces in the catalogue has been decided first by showing the items that have a documented date. Then each category has been treated separately, each section following a chronological order. This allows us to see the evolution of a technique or of a decorative motif, encouraging the reader to feel more familiar with each piece.

This work would have not been possible without the fundamental collaboration of all the authors in this catalogue. Everybody has contributed with their knowledge and by sharing years of study with each other, grasping the spirit of the Amici di Doccia, which for ten years has inspired our association. We are grateful to Reino Liefkes for his welcome and trust. Of course we have been a “bulky” group of people around the Study Room for quite some time for which we would like to thank Terry Bloxham who has been assisting us during the handling of the pieces. Last but not least we wish to add Rebecca Wallis, always prompt and professional, constantly helpful, an important asset to the whole project.

Our most sincere gratitude goes to our sponsors who have given proof of a great interest and passion by supporting this publication, which aims at the enhancement both of a fascinating Italian story, the Ginori Manufactory of Doccia, still active nowadays, and of the uniqueness of the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum.

This special issue celebrates both the fundamental book on Doccia written by Marquis Leonardo Ginori Lisci in 1963, *La porcellana di Doccia*, remembered in this catalogue by Kirsten Aschengreen Piacenti (p. 16-17), who outlines with graceful precision the essential moments of the Manufactory and its studies, and the 10th anniversary of the Amici di Doccia, created in 2003 by the intuition of John Winter, president of the association. He had the idea of the potential of such an association, he involved academics, scholars and collectors around the world and encouraged further studies believing that the understanding of Doccia porcelain would benefit from this; our work is the result of this engagement.



Gallery Room 139, V&A



# Presentation

Reino Liefkes

*Head of the Ceramics and Glass Section V&A Museum*

The Victoria & Albert Museum holds a small but very interesting collection of Doccia porcelain. It was formed rather slowly and steadily over the 150 year history of the Museum. Many Doccia porcelains came to the Museum as part of larger acquisitions of ceramics and often they were not identified as Doccia at the time. Of the first six pieces of Doccia to enter the Museum in 1853, as part of the acquisition of the huge collection of ceramics amassed by James Bandinel, only one was identified as “probably Doccia”, while the others were thought to be Capodimonte, Cozzi or Le Nove. It was not until the publication of Arthur Lane’s pioneering monograph, *Italian Porcelain*, in 1954 that serious research into the subject commenced, leading to more accurate attributions.

This is not to say that the Museum in its early years had no specific interest in the products of Doccia. Henry Cole, the Museum’s founding director, visited the Ginori shop in Florence as well as the factory at Doccia early in 1859 (WAINRIGHT 1999, p. 173). Cole’s strong interest in modern manufacturing led him to purchase six works by Ginori during this trip including a lustre-decorated ewer (cat. 124) for just over £ 3. On 19th February 1859, during the same Florentine trip, Henry Cole and C.D.E. Fortnum visited the art dealer Rusca. There, Cole purchased “an excellent specimen of old Genoris (sic) ware a Venus” (WAINRIGHT 1999, p. 177 and note 20; MARITANO 2012, p. 14). He paid a very modest price of £ 5 for what is now regarded as the Museum’s most important piece from Doccia, the *Crouching Venus* (cat. 3). When the Ceramics Galleries at the V&A re-opened in 2009-2010, after a complete refurbishment and reorganisation, most of the Doccia porcelain found its place in the Study Collections in Room 139. There it is available for everyone to study and inspect. All 31,500 ceramic objects on display in the galleries are now also available on ‘Search-the-Collections’, the V&A’s electronic catalogue. Every piece has been photographed and the curators have revised many old attributions reflecting, as much as possible, the latest developments in attribution research. However, with such a huge number of objects to catalogue, it was impossible to be completely up-to-date in every area of the collection. For this reason we were very excited by this project of the Amici di Doccia to conduct a thorough investigation and re-evaluation of our Doccia collection by the leading experts in this field. This project, which has fed into our on-line database, has now culminated in this beautifully illustrated, authoritative publication.



# *The Victoria and Albert Museum and the Study of Doccia Porcelain*

J.V.G. Mallet

*Former Keeper of the Department of Ceramics and Glass, Victoria & Albert Museum*

During the seven years I spent as a cataloguer at Sotheby's, between 1955-1962, I recall being shown by Tim Clarke, one of my two bosses in that firm's Department of Ceramics and Works of Art, a large white Doccia porcelain relief after a model by Massimiliano Soldani Benzi. Clarke, a man of perceptive good taste, remarked: "It's a wonderful thing, but these hardly fetch enough to be worth selling." This reminds me just how little esteem the porcelain of Italy enjoyed in the years that followed the Second World War.

This neglect had begun to be remedied in 1954 when Arthur Lane published, in the Faber Monographs series, his book *Italian Porcelain, with a Note on Buen Retiro*. This, and the Italian translation of 1963, transformed perceptions of its subject. Giuseppe Morazzoni's 1935 book, *Le Porcellane italiane*, had till then been the standard general work on Italian porcelain, but to modern eyes its treatment of Doccia porcelain appears hopelessly confused. It must indeed have been hard to classify Italian porcelains at a time when a Derby bust of the poet, Matthew Prior, could be illustrated in Angelo de Eisner Eisenhof's book of 1925 on Capodimonte. Both those inter-war books perpetuated a long-standing error concerning Capodimonte and Doccia.

Lane's brief discussion of the category of wares with figure-subjects in relief fits seamlessly into his chapter on Doccia, but it was a last minute insertion and the late Marchese Leonardo Ginori Lisci told me how, after a long evening spent with him searching the Doccia archives at the Palazzo Ginori, Lane had telegraphed his publishers in London to hold his book's proofs, which he had already signed off before leaving England. Linking archival evidence with a passage in Marryat's book of 1857, Lane had realised that the relief-moulded wares had nothing to do with Naples and the Capodimonte factory, but were products of Doccia. This discovery not only threw new light on Doccia, it also removed confusion as to whether the Naples factories had made hard-paste porcelain as well as soft.

Despite the somewhat haphazard manner in which, as described here by Reino Liefkes, the V&A's collection of Doccia porcelain was accumulated, it has turned out to be surprisingly representative of the earlier wares. Lane had ample opportunity to handle this collection, but his busy museum career was tragically terminated before its time, and he left much to be discovered by others about the Doc-

cia porcelain he had had in his charge. For instance, he failed to spot the technical difference between two pieces he took to be painted in underglaze blue and illustrated on plate 45 of his 1954 book: the teapot with precocious transfer-printing disguised as painting; the plate with a dog-rose painted in the style of a print.

Today we are blessed with a quantity of literature on Doccia that was unavailable to Lane's generation. Leonardo Ginori Lisci and many others after him have provided monographs and articles dealing in a detailed manner with the history and products of the factory. Klaus Lankheit published a comprehensive study of the sculptural models now in the factory's museum, and other scholars have extended that line of enquiry. The intellectual ambition, the technical inventiveness of the factory under the guidance of its founder, the Marchese Carlo Ginori (1702-1757), have been underlined in many publications, among them studies by Antoine d'Albis and Alessandro Biancalana concerning Doccia's uniquely versatile kilns. Besides, we are lucky to have, not far from Florence and close to the site of the old and the modern factories, the wonderful Museo di Doccia whose preservation and enhancement is part of the noble mission of the Amici di Doccia.