

Foreword

Tânia Manuel Casimiro and Sarah Newstead

In June 2014, during a hot summer's week, Lisbon welcomed the Medieval Pottery Research Group annual conference. The gathering took place at the Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga addressing the theme 'Medieval and later ceramic development, production and trade along the Atlantic Sea board'. As expected several papers were presented about research undertaken in many areas of Portugal, especially in the Lisbon area. Despite dynamic research happening within the country, Portuguese medieval and early modern pottery is still generally absent from publications outside of Portugal. This special section of *Medieval Ceramics* attempts to address the paucity of Portuguese ceramics research in English-language publications by presenting eight of the papers from the Lisbon MPRG conference.

The volume begins with Peñín *et al.*'s paper on the early medieval Dume monastery in Braga, Portugal. The site's domestic ceramics reveal where Roman influence can still be seen, revealing the long-lasting pottery production traditions in the area. Moving on in time, two papers expand the theme of long-lasting pottery traditions in Portugal by discussing the continuity of Islamic influences on ceramic production and consumption well after the re-Christianisation of Portugal in the 13th century and beyond. The paper by Casimiro *et al.* discusses the cultural encounters between Muslims and Christians in 13th and 14th century Santarém which can be traced through pottery associated with different social groups in the city. In Alho *et al.*'s paper, the continued Islamic presence in Lisbon is discussed in the context of Muslim potters continuing their trade manufacturing tiles in the city throughout the 14th and 15th centuries.

In addition to long-lasting traditions of production and consumption which weathered major religious, cultural and political change throughout the medieval and post-medieval periods, Portugal also developed a range of regional production aesthetics and characteristics in its ceramics. Some of these characteristics gained renown both in Portugal and beyond, and the volume includes a range of papers

addressing the unique attributes of several regional ceramic types. Casimiro and Gomes discuss the distinctive pottery from Montemor-o-Novo in their paper, a highly unique ware embedded with small quartz stones which found fame in several southern European courts. In the next paper, Newstead and Casimiro discuss another unusual regional product, from Estremoz. These ceramics were exported all over Europe during the early modern period, with discerning consumers acquiring fine Estremoz wares for their decoration, colour, and, most interestingly, smell: all combined making Estremoz pottery entirely unique and highly desired. Of course, Portuguese tiles are amongst the most famous and impressive of all the ceramic products from Portugal, covering the inner and outer walls of buildings throughout the country, and the volume finishes with three papers dedicated to tiles. Trindade offers a stylistic study of medieval floor tiles covering a large portion of the Alcobaça convent in his paper. In a fascinating paper connecting post-1755 earthquake religious devotion and tile use, Almeida discusses the depiction of saints on tiles found on a variety of building types in Portugal. Finally, an archaeometric study of 15th- and 16th-century hispano-mouresque tiles from Coimbra and Sintra, some of them possibly produced in Portugal, sheds new light on Iberian tile production.

This volume gives readers of *Medieval Ceramics* a glimpse into the world of Portuguese pottery research. Although the field is quite well-developed within the country, very few results are published outside of Portugal. The papers contained within address a range of salient themes and give the reader an overview of some of the main issues being addressed by researchers today, including production continuity throughout the centuries and unique aspects of regional productions and consumption. It is hoped that the papers in this volume will encourage more interest in Portuguese ceramics internationally and provide a starting point for future cross-cultural research collaboration, an important goal stemming from all international MPRG conferences.

