



DETAILS

Artist	'La Amistad' Ceramics Factory
Place of Production	Cartagena
Place of Origin	Cartagena
Title/ Name of Piece	Serving Dish
Date	c. 1870-1880
Measurements	27.7 x 35.2 cm
Materials/Technique	Printed chinaware
Inventory No.	CE1/11656
Location in the Museum	Second Floor/ Sala del historicismo (Historicism Room) / Display Cabinet LIII

DESCRIPTION

The industrialised and serial production of chinaware was undoubtedly the greatest invention of the 19th century in the field of ceramics. Factories sought to produce high quality pieces suitable for mass consumption while reducing their production costs. This was possible due to the mechanisation of the manufacturing process, the use of moulds to form the shape and printing techniques to decorate the pieces.

The process of printing onto china was first used in England in the mid 18th century. The method was most likely invented by John Brooks or John Sadler and practiced for the first time in Battersea Enamel Factory in 1753. The Royal Factory of Alcora was the pioneer of printed chinaware in Spain, followed by the Factory of Moncloa. In 19th century Spain, various factories were founded specialising in the production of white or printed fine china such as 'La Amistad' of Cartagena in 1842.

To print the design, firstly a copper or tin plate was engraved with flux-free metal oxides diluted in an oily base to aid the application of the design onto the plate. Next, this plate was pressed onto a tissue-like paper and then immediately applied to the piece. Once this process was complete, the piece was varnished and fired a second time.

The design on this octagonal serving dish comes from a print by José Severini, based on an illustration by Alfredo Perea for the book entitled *La Biblia de las mujeres* (The Women's Bible), published in Madrid in 1867.

FURTHER READING

Related Theme

Education and Gender

Further Reading

The most frequent themes found in the products of 'La Amistad' factory were hunting and bullfighting, followed by gender themes with hints of romance, floral themes and figurative motifs which were often found in Chinese-inspired and pastoral designs. In addition, there were a series of less important prints, designed to frame the main image (borders) or decorate the exterior of tall receptacles (vignettes).

'La Amistad' factory workers were in charge of printing the motifs onto the plates. They chose from a broad collection of motifs varying in theme and era which explains the anachronisms of the designs. Figures from scenes printed in journals such as *La Ilustración Ibérica* were accurately copied onto the plates by designers at 'La Amistad'. They often changed the background to one of their own designs. This can be seen in the pieces presented here: the vegetal background of the original illustration by Alfredo Perea has been substituted for a lakeside scenery with boats, buildings and mountains in the background. The same figures could also be used for different scenes on other pieces. The dishes did not contain any sort of thematic or narrative unity.

Contrary to most of the images of women found in printed ceramics from Cartagena, this image shows three women taking part in an intellectual activity. Paz's work is divided into eight books, preceded by a prologue by Manuel del Palacio and concluded by an additional book titled *Libro de las sentencias* (Book of Judgements). This is simply a compilation of quotes about women from famous people.

The work intends to defend women's rights and emancipation, condemn those who disregard and undervalue women and break down male prejudices surrounding women.

Additionally, the second illustration in the publication is a sketch by Marcelo París which comes from a drawing by Perea (Fig. 8) depicting a woman dressed in a Roman fashion with a tunic and cloak. She leans on a gravestone which reads, 'Declaration of the Rights of Woman', alluding to *The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen* (1789) referenced in Chapter 1, book V. The illustration also refers to Olympe de Gouges' response to the declaration, in her work titled: *The Declaration of the Rights of Woman and the Female Citizen* (1791). This was one of the first historical documents to propose the emancipation of women in regards to equal rights and legal equality.

The French Revolution resulted in the advance of human rights but did not necessarily contemplate gender equality. Talleyrand's *Report on Public Instruction*, presented to the National Assembly in 1791 affirmed that women could only receive a 'domestic' education. In 1792, in response to this report, Mary Wollstonecraft published *A vindication of the rights of women: with structures on political and moral subjects*. She insisted on the importance of women having the right to an education on equal terms to men. She equally denounced the double standard in Talleyrand's report, demanding for the same criteria to be applied to both men and women surrounding 'virtue'.

Published over 70 years after the works of De Gouges and Wollstonecraft, Abdón de Paz's work outlines the duties of women as much as their rights. A woman's ten duties reflect the qualities she should possess, according to the image constructed of feminine identity at the time. She should be loyal, hard-working, not flirtatious or vain, discreet, pious but not sanctimonious, educated in the necessary matters concerning society and the family, but never for her own benefit.

Abdón de Paz dedicates the last book, entitled 'El ideal de la mujer' (The Ideal Woman), to women's rights. There are five rights in total, and they concern the right to an education, a lucrative occupation, accessing male-dominated fields of work, choice of spouse and civil equality in marriage.

The work tackles two controversial issues of the time: the education and emancipation of women. In the 19th century, the difference between instruction and education was established. The debate focused on two other pairs of opposites: man and woman and public and private spheres. While 'instruction' referred to intellect, women's 'education' prepared them for a life which society (men) expected of them. This is closely related to the concept of women and femininity at the time, which attributed a series of 'natural' qualities to the female: sensitivity, honesty, modesty, affability, sweetness, and decorum. The purpose of education was to preserve and develop these 'natural' feminine qualities. The author demands that women have the 'broadest possible moral and religious instruction in other branches of knowledge', as well as performing roles within a profession, 'particularly in medicine or business'. In other words, he claims a place for women in the same educational and professional environments traditionally reserved for men.

In the second half of the 19th century, the idea of female emancipation started to gain strength, finding critics among both males and females alike. Emancipatory ideas covered personal and family life, education or work but not politics, an area in which women were totally banned by men. Abdón de Paz declares: 'I desire, I wish that women would emancipate themselves from ignorance leading by example, from servitude through their rights, and from misery by a profession' (Paz, 1867: 657). Additionally, the author praises the status of American women, using the USA as an example for the countries not yet influenced by 'the new idea'.

In the USA, women enjoy freedom, autonomy, rights and independent legal status.

Nevertheless, Abdón de Paz's work is written from an essentialist perspective, it defines gender qualities as 'natural', intrinsic, and invariable. Women by nature are sentimental, maternal and mysterious. Similarly, the author does not escape from androcentricity: women are studied, analysed, and judged, but always by men. If women are a worthy object of study, then why not men?

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Text translated in the context of a Translation Work Experience module by students in the School of Politics, Philosophy, Language and Communication Studies at the University of East Anglia, NR4 7TJ UK <https://www.uea.ac.uk/ppl>; <http://www.uea.ac.uk>