

## Transferware Images of Latin America Made by British Factories (1830-1930): the Case of Argentina

Daniel Schávelzon  
Centre for Urban Archaeology  
University of Buenos Aires



1. Official sanitarian pottery used during the 19th century in Argentina: the “Insignia” trade mark on all the rest rooms in a country that fights and repels two English army invasions in the same century. Who wins at least? (Archaeological collection of the Centre for Urban Archaeology).

This research project was made possible, thanks to a grant from the Richards Charitable Foundation for the Research of British Transferware through the *Transferware Collectors Club* (2014). The aim is to delve into aspects related to this type of non-local production material which was of paramount importance in the development of Argentinian domestic life all through the nineteenth century and up to the appearance of the local industry.

The basis for this research has been the photographic archive of the Centre for Urban Archaeology (American Art Institute, University of Buenos Aires), from which all the illustrations have been obtained, unless otherwise specified.

## I. Introduction

Why does one country manufacture transferware while another one having the same economic possibilities does not? Why do the manufacturers use one or another motif in their decoration? Why does a society decide to acquire and use certain motifs made abroad and not others when the market offers a very broad range of choices? And, more intriguingly, why did some of the great national figures of their times have their images depicted on their tableware while others, although similarly powerful, did not?

This and many other questions have been arising as work on the pottery of the eighteenth and nineteenth century advances, especially the work done on transferware, due to the speed with which images could be produced in series. These queries came into being with the first catalogue made in Latin America in an attempt to date and define the origin of the pottery fragments found in archaeological excavations<sup>1</sup>. It was first necessary to put together a large sample of objects before hypotheses could be made and investigated.

Perhaps a response was imagined by *Gallopig Head*, a British subject and officer in the Royal Engineers of the British Army, who attempted to open mines in Argentina in 1825, after receiving the Waterloo medal for his services. Years later, he would become Lieutenant-Governor of Canada. His name was Sir Francis Bond Head, Baronet (1793-1875) who was given the nickname for his habit of darting across the wide Argentine pampas<sup>2</sup>. The unusual anecdote in this man's travels is that when he reached a secluded, isolated place a young girl offered him water from a jug which had a well-known English poem written on it:

No power on Earth  
Can make us rue,  
If England to  
Herself proves true.

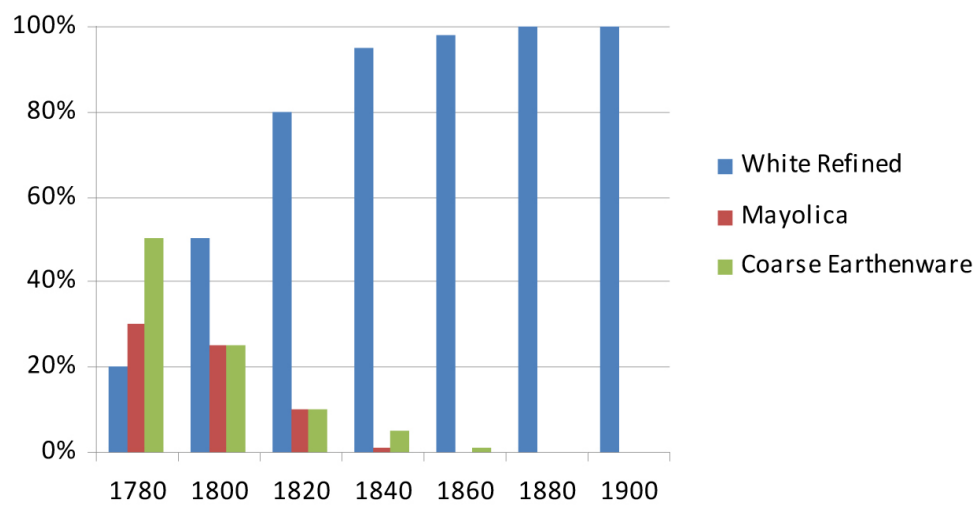
2. Drinking cup similar to that described by Francis Bond Head during his 1826 travels (picture on the archives of the Centre for Urban Archaeology collection, unknown source).



<sup>1</sup> Daniel Schávelzon, *Arqueología histórica de Buenos Aires (I), la cultura material porteña de los siglos XVIII y XIX*, Editorial Corregidor, Buenos Aires, 1991; *The Historical Archaeology of Buenos Aires: a City at the End of the World*, Kluwer/Academic-Plenum Press, New York, 2000.

<sup>2</sup> Francis Bond Head, (1826), *Rough Notes Taken during Some Rapid Journeys across the Pampas and among the Andes*. Reissued by Cambridge University Press, 2009.

This would have puzzled us had we not known that from a short time prior to his trip, Argentina had become one of the great buyers of British ceramics. Buenos Aires, which never produced pottery of any kind, was a fast-growing city, ahead of all the other South American cities, with an economy based on the importation of manufactured goods and the exportation of agricultural produce.



3. Percentages of imported pottery in relation to other potteries in the archaeological records of Buenos Aires during the nineteenth century<sup>3</sup>.

Although the story told above is just an anecdote, it shows the speed with which these objects spread throughout the country, and their acceptance by people who had no idea of what the text said. Thus, a road is open for exploration: the meaning of the pottery and its messages –textual, images, colours, shapes and manufacture techniques– in the furthest country from England this side of the Atlantic. There were no other countries to the east; it was, literally, the World’s End. Except that there were people here who used and interpreted those products and acquired them paying for them of their own free choice. A key example has been the evidence that as of the beginning of the nineteenth century, transferware was used as an ornamental motif on walls and domes of churches, proving that beyond the symbolic significance of entering the international market after Argentina left behind its colonial past, the images represented were mere anecdotes and did not represent anything that might be interpreted, beyond flowers or pastoral and bucolic subjects<sup>4</sup>. A Chinese pagoda might not seem to be the best ornament for a Catholic church, but nobody understood what it was about: nobody had ever seen a pagoda.

<sup>3</sup> Daniel Schávelzon, “Argentina and Great Britain: Studying an Asymmetrical Relationship through Domestic Material Culture”. *Historical Archaeology, Society for Historical Archaeology*, vol.47 n° 1, pp. 10-25, 2013.

<sup>4</sup> Daniel Schávelzon and Francisco Girelli, ‘China-ware in the skies’: overlapping identities in the ornamental use of plates in Uruguay, *Post-Medieval Archaeology*, vol.49, n° 1, 57-71, 2015.



4-5. China, the Far East, an incomprehensible world to the Argentinian working classes, who were not interested in these decorations (Centre for Urban Archaeology collection)

Likewise, this opens another pathway to analyse the meanings behind the images included in the foreign transferware, besides the economic point of view regarding the trade that existed between Argentina and Great Britain.

But before we go into this, we must consider that the uses of pottery, whether decorated by transfer or by any other means, led to unusual ways of use. This was the result of imported objects manufactured for a precise context (Great Britain and Occidental Europe) but used in another part of the world. The most unusual use of pottery in the Americas, bearing a female image, is the spittoon in the study, preserved in his own house, now a museum, of the great Peruvian Ricardo Palma, a journalist, writer and founder of universities, whose image appears even on paper bills. What is unusual, and what everybody was unaware of, is that the spittoon bears the image of Palma's own wife.





6-9. Spittoon in the study room of Ricardo Palma, bearing the photo of his wife (Courtesy *Casa Museo Ricardo Palma*, Lima)

## II. Building a hypothesis

In 2012, Argentinian archaeology and history of pottery witnessed a series of events which for the first time suggested that a widespread custom might have existed in this country: that of printing local images on plates and dishes be it in British factories or in local factories. Or, better still, that there might have been a local factory, such as the one that existed in Colombia and Mexico in the nineteenth century, producing and marketing ceramics bearing their own drawings. As of 2012, there was no such information available in Argentina.

The hypothesis was based on several empirical facts:

- 1) Information about the (previously unknown) existence of an almost complete set of tableware with engravings by travelling artist León Palliere, depicting *gaucho* motifs and illustrations of memorial monuments<sup>5</sup>.
- 2) The archaeological find of a plate including the depiction of a popular dance (“El Gato”) from the nineteenth century, which only a year later was identified as “Keramis” from Boch Freres, La Louviere. Later it was found on two more fragments.
- 3) The unusual find, in private pottery collections, of pieces with allegorical motifs referring to the celebrations of the 1910 Centennial of the Independence of Argentina, without any mark.
- 4) The habits presidents and governors developed from the 1830s onwards of having their tableware decorated with their own portraits or phrases related to their governments; after 1983 (end of the military dictatorship) several museums start to exhibit their collections dealing with political events.
- 5) The finds made both in archaeological excavations and in collections, of tableware bearing seals, flags or allegories on the Independence of Argentina or the country itself.
- 6) The existence of trademarks and seals of local pottery importers, as well as commercial advertising not noticed before 1991, which were made abroad under specific request.
- 7) The beginning of academic studies on the iconography of the Nationalist period from 1900 to 1930 in Argentine history, especially by the so-called Historical Revisionist group from 1983 onwards.

---

<sup>5</sup> León Palliere, *Escenas argentinas*, Librería L’Amateur, Buenos Aires-Paris, 1967.



10-11. Trademarks belonging to importers of tableware and sanitary pottery, printed in Great Britain on request of the local merchant (Centre for Urban Archaeology collection).

These pieces made it possible for a grant to be requested of the Richards Charitable Foundation for the Research of British Transferware, through the Transferware Collectors Club, in order to search in archives and collections for a possible local manufacturer and to find the reason for the numerous motifs which had not been recorded before, in order to ascertain whether it was a trend or just a casual occurrence. Between 2013 and 2015 the Centre for Urban Archaeology went over the following sources within the country searching for antecedents or objects which might be connected to the hypothesis:

- 1) Existing archaeological collections obtained from excavations, consisting of nearly 400,000 objects deposited in the Centre for Urban Archaeology and in the Dirección General de Patrimonio del Gobierno de la Ciudad (General Heritage Department of the Government of the City of Buenos Aires).
- 2) The photographic archives available in both institutions, both on paper and digitalized, which are considered complete as far as pottery is concerned.
- 3) Private collections (9), Internet, antique shops specialising in pottery (16), and national museum storage depots (12).
- 4) The *Archivo General de la Nación* (General National Archives) as a source on the existence of unidentified local manufacturers.

### III. The structure of analysis of the collections and bibliography

The following classification of transferware appearing in national collections was proposed, to aid in the development of this research:

1. Transferware manufactured abroad with motifs related to external world.
2. Transferware manufactured abroad with motifs for internal markets, related to the different Latin American countries, indeed Argentina.
3. Locally manufactured transferware, produced in Latin America, with local Argentinian motifs.
4. Transferware manufactured abroad but ordered by local merchants, with motifs or only trademarks of the importer or merchant.
5. Transferware manufactured in local factories decorated with motifs from the external world.



12. Cup bearing fragment of the transferred image of the May 25 Square (*Plaza 25 de Mayo*) found in excavations in Buenos Aires probably made by Shaw & Co. (Excavations: 755 Defensa Street, Centre for Urban Archaeology collection).

III. 1. Transferware manufactured in Great Britain or Europe with locally appreciated ornamental motifs.

Nineteenth-century Argentina was an agricultural country, with a fledgling industry developing towards the end of the century. Most of its population resided in the countryside and were employed in agricultural tasks. The country's income was based on exports of leather, animal fats and, later on, beefs. This may have defined the buyers'



aesthetics and tastes when choosing regularly from two types of printed decorations: bucolic and rural, often including cattle or horses, and neutral flower motifs. Flowers, fruits and all types of vegetation are more common than exotic or oriental motifs or depictions not familiar to the population at large. A hypothesis has been developed that blue *Pearl ware* transferware was more often found in well-off households, where members had the opportunity of travelling abroad, than in working-class households. It was not just a question of prices but a decision to select topics close to their everyday lives; either geometric or colourful or simply white ware was chosen. It has been proven that the blue border line was chosen for its similarity to the national flag. Thus, the selections were made on the grounds of decisions not taken into consideration by the manufacturer.

Basically, we can assume that there were two situations: those who appreciated the incomprehensible, or little-understood, motifs on the grounds of status, social standing and belonging to a class and those who rejected the motifs, choosing instead undecorated ceramics or geometric and flower decorations. Archaeological excavations support this trend.



13-14. Cows: the animals which supported the national economy; ornamental motif understood by the rural classes, around 1910 (Courtesy of Ana Igareta, excavations at J. D. Perón's house in Roque Pérez).



15. Flowers as a decoration motif for all times and places (Photograph and collection: *Museo de la Ciudad*, Buenos Aires).

### III. 2. Transferware manufactured abroad for the local market

Great Britain's potteries produced ceramics with motifs related to Latin America (and indeed Argentina), although it has only been studied in depth in very particular cases such as that of Peru. We are unaware of the reasons that brought about the possibility of including these new illustrations, but we believe that independence from Spain was reason enough to produce interesting goods in order to obtain new markets. It is known that these markets suffered a glut of products, which the merchants found hard to sell, but the idea was good. Books written by the first travellers to go around the continent after the fall of Spanish colonial power, show landscapes and customs which were considered "exotic" elsewhere. Once printed, they would be acquired by the very same countries which had inspired the images, whose inhabitants were unwittingly purchasing their own landscapes under the guise of exotic images. But it was not the countries' own view; it was as someone from outside saw the country.

One of the analysed cases is interesting as it deals with pottery manufactured by Bell & Co. related to neighbouring Paraguay. The ceramics were possibly produced for sale in Paraguay and portray scenes of the Paraguayan countryside. What is noteworthy is that they went into fashion in Buenos Aires during the times when the two countries were at war, between 1864 and 1870. And it is interesting that such pottery has been found in four archaeological excavations in Buenos Aires. Was it known that there was a war going on between the two countries? Did the manufacturers search for

internationally relevant countries and produce pottery for them intentionally?<sup>6</sup> Although it cannot be proven, it looks like the questions may have affirmative answers.

What has most caught our attention and is the answer to our central hypothesis is that no such motifs and images could be found from Argentina, nor were there landscapes or complex scenes beyond the *gaucho* motifs. This implies a great difference with countries such as Peru, Mexico and others which Britain produced for, although they were lesser buyers of this type of goods.

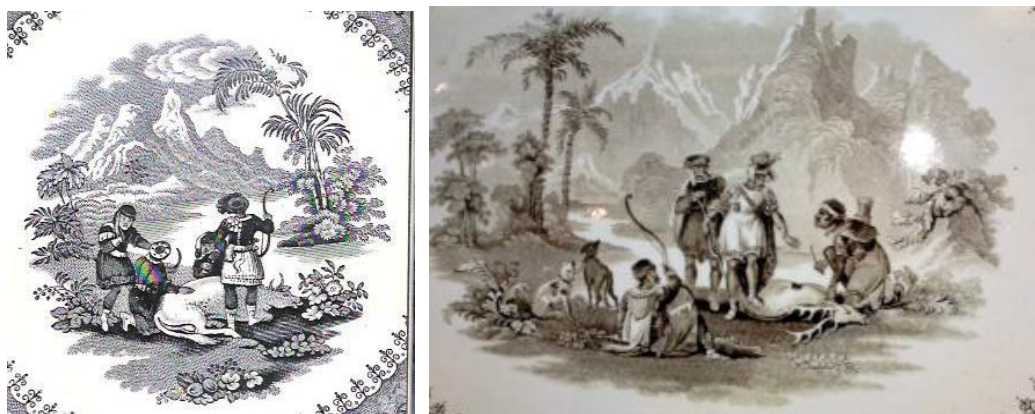


16. Serving dish with Paraguayan image manufactured by Bell & Co. (DGPeIH collection).



17-18. Transferware made by Anthony Shaw showing scenes from the history of Peru (Picture collection of the Centre for Urban Archaeology collection)

<sup>6</sup> Daniel Schávelzon, *Consumo, guerra y arte en la arqueología de Buenos Aires: las fuentes del Paraguay* <http://www.iaa.fadu.uba.ar/cau/?p=2783>



19-20. Transferware manufactured by Shaw & Co. and by Goodwin & Co. on Peruvian rural topics. Artists may have used the same original engraving in their reconstructions.



21-22. Serving dish with a traditional Mexican boulevard manufactured for a local merchant by Lily of Davenport (Courtesy Museo Frantz Mayer, México).

### III.3 Transferware produced in Latin America

Only two countries (as we can prove today), have produced transferware pottery in Latin America in the nineteenth century: Mexico and Colombia. At least, that is the information currently available. Other countries have a much later production, generally after 1930 or even 1950.

The case of Mexico is noteworthy since a factory was already in existence in Puebla in 1841. It started by employing an expert potter in Berlin and then Englishmen were brought to produce fine chinaware exactly like the European one. They were so

successful that to this day it is impossible to tell the European and Mexican ware apart if it were not for the seal or trademark<sup>7</sup>.



23-24. Dishes made by the Compañía Poblana headed by Brindley, showing local motifs and later trademark (Courtesy Museo Frantz Mayer, México)

The second continental case is that of the city of Bogotá, where a transferware factory was opened, dealing with local topics, cities, heroes, urban and rural life and countryside topics. Its production in the second half of the nineteenth century was so important that it successfully competed with importers both in quantity and quality<sup>8</sup>



25. Decorated detail of a plate manufactured by the Colombian factory (Courtesy Mónica Therrien, Bogotá).

Unlike the above mentioned cases, transferware in Argentina is modern and dates to after 1930 when the local industry starts. Up to that time ceramics were ordered

<sup>7</sup> Oliva Castro Morales, La fábrica de loza fina de Puebla, En: *Cerámica inglesa en México*, pp. 39-48, Museo Frantz Mayer, México, S/f.

<sup>8</sup> Mónica Therrien, Patrimonio y arqueología industrial: investigación vs. Protección? Políticas del patrimonio industrial en Colombia, en: *Apuntes: Revista de Estudios sobre Patrimonio Cultural*, vol.21, n° 1, Bogotá, 2008.

abroad, as we shall see next. Therefore, their decoration almost always uses DeKalb prints and scarcely ever transfer prints (see Point V). It is surprising that a country with a development parallel to that of Mexico and, most certainly at that time, superior to that of Colombia, did not present the necessary conditions to open such a factory and had to wait for nearly a century for the first one to operate. This project's hypothesis centred on finding a factory of this kind, but none has been found to our present knowledge.



26-27. Argentine pottery produced around 1930 by transfer and Dekalb print (Archaeological collection of the Centre for Urban Archaeology).

In Argentina, ceramics bearing local motifs and produced on order has shown so far three topics:

- 1) Significant historical monuments: the Cabildo or government building, the May Pyramid, the House of Independence, the Cathedral and the heroes of the first independent years such as José de San Martín or Juan Manuel Belgrano.

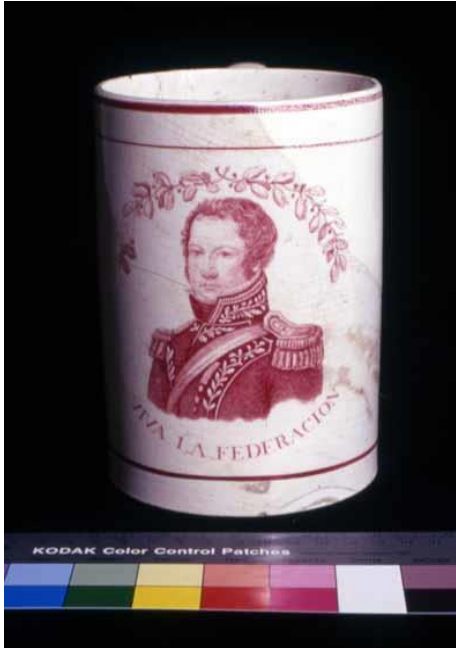


28-29. Manuel Belgrano and José de San Martín, heroes of Argentinian national Independence, transferware, ca. 1910 (Courtesy Rosatto collection).

- 2) Important politicians who used decorations on ceramics to consolidate their own images: from Juan Manuel de Rosas in the 1830s to Julio A. Roca in 1900. The presidents whose images we were able to identify are, not surprisingly, the most renowned and famous in Argentine history, although it is interesting that none has yet been found bearing the image of the first president: Bernardino Rivadavia (1826-1827). After 1900 the images of politicians grew with the celebrations on the Centennial of Independence in 1910 as historical ones, but the most common ones were images of the nation and of progress, which is what was being celebrated. Later on, the custom was replaced by the images of photographs and printed illustrations. Most images belong to Juan Manuel de Rosas, who held power between 1835 and 1852 and whose period is characterized by the manipulation and use of his own image<sup>9</sup>. In an attempt to re-establish his reputation--he was considered a traitor during the Nationalist period—Rivadavia ordered between 1900-1910 tons of pottery from British factories to support his political ideas.

---

<sup>9</sup> John Lynch, *Juan Manuel de Rosas 1829-1852*, Editorial Emece, Buenos Aires, 1984



30-31. Juan Manuel de Rosas on a mug (restored) found in excavations in the city of Buenos Aires, transferware made in basis of an engraving made by Alois ca. 1840 (Collection of the Center for Urban Archaeology).



32-33. A mug of Rosas, one of the hundred ordered by him, and a rare dish that was in a private collection half century ago (Collection of the Center of Urban Archaeology).



34-36. Three Argentinian presidents: Pellegrini, Mitre and Roca (Courtesy Rosatto collection).



There are printed images of the following Argentinian presidents:

Juan Manuel de Rosas (1835-1842)

Justo José de Urquiza (1854-1860)

Domingo Faustino Sarmiento (1868-1874)

Nicolás Avellaneda (1874-1880)

Carlos Pellegrini (1890-1892)

Julio Argentino Roca (1880-1886 and 1898-1904)

We have been unable to identify pottery images of presidents Santiago Derqui (1860-1861), Miguel Juárez Celman (1886-1890), Luis Sáenz Peña (1892-1895) and José Evaristo Uriburu (1898-1904) or later. Plates bearing these images have no seals or trademarks. Those presidents whose images are portrayed in the tableware are those who stood out throughout many years of political activity in Argentinian history.

Research has shown that most of these representations of heroes or presidents were made in later years, possibly between 1900 and 1910. During these decades the historical movement known as Nationalism idealized certain politicians discarding others. For example, Rosas and Urquiza, belonging to the Federal faction in the internecine struggle for power, were chosen over Rivadavia, Sarmiento or Mitre, the Liberal presidents, which led to the decision to fashion again many dishes and objects bearing their images or allegorical images. A three-volume book was published containing the iconography of Juan Manuel de Rosas<sup>10</sup>, showing dozens of dishes and vases extolling his figure.



37-38. “Viva la Federación” [Long live the Federation] plate and tureen cover bearing the inscription “Viva el gobernador Urquiza, soy de Francisco Silva” [Hail to Governor Urquiza, I belong to Francisco Silva] (Urquiza Museum, Entre Ríos)

<sup>10</sup> Fermín Chávez, *Rosas: su iconografía y la Federación*, Editorial Oriente, 3 volumes, Buenos Aires, 1970-72.



39. Justo José de Urquiza's original chinaware. Urquiza Museum, Entre Ríos (Photograph in the Centre for Urban Archaeology collection)



40-41. Latin American heroes: Bolívar's House in Colombia and General Iturbide in Mexico. Both were manufactured locally, in their home countries (Photographs Patricia Frazzi and Centre for Urban Archaeology collection).



42-43. Transferware with oriental decoration bearing the name Braulio Costa, around 1840 (Private collection, Buenos Aires).



44-45. Detail from the Braulio Costa dish and British trademark (Private collection, Buenos Aires).

### III.5 Images and symbols of the Nation or of national progress

The celebrations of the First Centennial of the Independence in 1910 were the pageantry of a modern, liberal and industrial generation which had taken power and constructed a modern State. With it came an educational model centred on providing an Official History, with heroes and important monuments, for the future generations. Tableware or plates to be hung on walls were chosen mediums for displaying images of important presidents or their favourite phrases. In like manner, some prominent and wealthy citizens asked manufacturers to include their names on their tableware.



46-47. National seals of Argentina and Uruguay, 1870 and 1930 (Excavations at Paraná by C. U. A. and Private Collection).



48-49. Symbols of Independence: a *mate* bearing the figure of the Republic and the seal of Argentina; an image of the National Congress (1910).

## 6. *Gaicho* motif

The image of the *gaicho* and his customs in the so-called *pampas* has certainly prevailed in what is today Argentina as seen by Argentinian art and the general European view. The *gaicho* is an exotic individual due to his attire, to his habitual ingestion of beef in quantities unimaginable to a British traveller, living in geographically special landscapes characterized by their flat surface and almost treeless characteristic. This is the *gaicho*'s habitat, a complex social creation, portrayed by countless draftsmen and artists in his daily activities<sup>11</sup>. Argentina, and especially its *pampas*, was the ideal landscape for the prevailing Picturesque and Romantic art movement of the times<sup>12</sup>.

There is practically not a single traveller who did not illustrate his books with images of the *gaicho*. Anthony Shaw, the potter who settled in Burslem between 1851 and 1882 and who produced so much tableware on the life of almost all the countries in Latin America, also made at least one series depicting him. Although it is not complete, it contains significant moments in the history of Buenos Aires, like the equestrian statue of Manuel Belgrano and the creation of the national flag, the central archway of the Recova [covered food market building] on 25 of May Square and some *gaicho* illustrations. His sources were pre-existing engravings and in this case he used one by

<sup>11</sup> Roberto Amigo, *Beduinos en la Pampa: apuntes sobre la imagen del gaicho y el orientalismo de los pintores franceses*, manuscript on file, Buenos Aires, 2007.

<sup>1212</sup> Sidney Robinson, *Inquiry into the Picturesque*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1991; Christopher Hussey, *The Picturesque. Studies in a point of view*, Frank Cass & Co. London, 1967; Nigel Leask, *Curiosity and Aesthetics of Travel Writing 1770-1840*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2002; C. Jackson, On Picturesque Description in Books of Travels, In: *The Journal of the Royal Geographical Society* vol.5, pp. 381-387, 1837; David Marshall, The problem of the picturesque, *Eighteenth-Century Studies* vol.35, n° 3, pp.413-437, 2002; D. Dabney, The picturesque, *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, vol.55, n°4, pp. 365-376, 1997.

León Palliere depicting a wooden *corral* to enclose horses. They are not exact reproductions and, in this case, the gaucho positioned in the centre of the scene, seen from behind entering the corral. Shaw showed his gaucho facing the viewer in a way that looks unnatural and his garments somewhat ridiculous, but it helped to single him out as the other characters are portrayed in profile. To this day it is the only existing or identified tableware with this representation.



50-52. Transferware decorated with rural and urban images of Buenos Aires, made by Anthony Shaw, who specialized in goods for importation into Latin America (Photographs from the Centre for Urban Archaeology collection).



53. León Palliere (1823-1887), *The Corral*, lithograph, 1858, with the original image of the decorated dish (Library of the Instituto de Arte Americano courtesy).



54-55. Plate with the image of the popular dance called “La Huella”, misspelled as “La Hueya”, manufactured by Boch Freres, La Louviere, Belgium (Collection of the Centre for Urban Archaeology).



56-57. Gauchos riding a horse or dancing, taken from engravings around 1880, unknown manufacturer (Pictures Archive Center for Urban Archaeology).

#### IV. Domestic life in Buenos Aires and selection of transferware

Transferware is scarce when compared to the whole quantity of tableware found in archaeological excavations in Buenos Aires and in the rest of the country, but where it does appear it is associated with wealthy households. The choice does not depend on a time given trend but rather on a deliberate choice made when purchasing the goods: most of society's consumers preferred lineal ornaments, like the *Mocha* tableware, or stamped, or with flowers, or alternatively, plain white. The higher the purchasing power of the family, the greater the proportion of transferware. Our position is based on the fact that it was the consumer's choice and not an effect of the price, basically because of consumer rejection of designs which were considered exotic by the local population: Rome, the Greek antiquities, China or the Mediterranean world are as strange to us as we were to those who manufactured the tableware<sup>13</sup>.

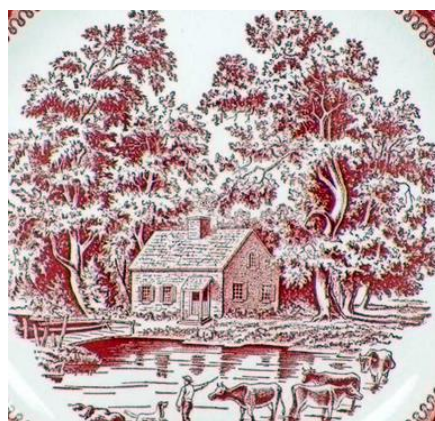
Upon review of the prices of these objects, it should be noted that pricing variations were not due to decoration but rather to quality, type of ceramics or scarcity in the market. For example, take earthenware plates ("platos de loza") in three different

<sup>13</sup> Regarding the consumer attitudes, see: Susan L. Henry. Consumers, Commodities, and Choices: A General Model of Consumer Behavior *Historical Archaeology*, Vol.25, n°2, pp. 3-14, 1991; Terry H. Klein, Nineteenth-Century Ceramics and Models of Consumer Behaviour, *Historical Archaeology*, Vol.25, n° 2, pp. 77-91, 1991; Penny Crook, Shopping and Historical Archaeology: Exploring the Contexts of Urban Consumption, *Australasian Historical Archaeology*, Vol.18 (2000), pp. 17-28; Pedro Funari, Archaeology, History and Historical Archaeology in South America, in: S. M. Spencer-Wood (ed.), *Consumer Choice in Historical Archaeology*, Plenum Press, New York, pp. 121-137, 2013; S.M. Spencer-Wood (ed), *Consumer Choice in Historical Archeology*, Plenum Press, New York, 2013.

years: 1787 (under a stable economy but smuggled), 1812 (when independence produced inflation) and 1841 (during the Federal war when there was a restriction in imports). The prices, regardless of the decoration were \$1, \$1.10 and \$12 per dozen plates, all kind at the same price. In other words, the variations were only caused by accessibility to the market<sup>14</sup>. An earthenware dish in 1812 cost \$1. In 1834 a dozen “white cups” cost \$3.4 while a “white earthenware plates” in 1837 cost \$0.4. Earthenware mugs cost between \$1 and \$3 in 1785. Thus, the variations were great although the cost of these products was significantly low: a locally manufactured broom cost between \$0.8 and \$2, as a consequence of the same variations, which was much more expensive and less hard-wearing or as long-lasting as a glass cup, which was also imported



58-59. Kitchen and home: notice the preference both in 1890 and in 1935 for white tableware.



60. Dish centre decoration printed in red: the recognizable rural design made the tableware acceptable to the working classes, especially in rural areas.

<sup>14</sup> Fernando Barba, *Salarios en Buenos Aires desde fines del siglo XVIII hasta 1860*, Universidad Nacional de La Plata, La Plata, 1999.



## V. Potteries and china factories in Argentina

Fine pottery is a late arrival in Argentinian industry. Although the prehispanic inhabitants, long before the arrival of Spain, produced varied pottery, the impact the conquest had soon transformed all of the local life. From that moment on, there was a large quantity of Spanish and European ceramics, until the late eighteenth century it began to be replaced by English earthenware and chinaware. Due to several different economic causes, which would take a long analysis, pottery industries did not appear, as they did in Colombia and Mexico, until well into the twentieth century.

To this day we know that these goods began to be produced around the 1930s, while prior to that decade potteries only produced floor and roof tiles, bricks and simple terracotta goods<sup>15</sup>. The best known one was *Cattaneo*, a factory which was set up in 1881 but never manufactured tableware. The first factory of this kind was *Cerámica del Plata*, which from 1923 produced mostly refractory materials. There are few references to production of tableware but no evidence supporting it. That same year saw the opening of another factory: *Fábrica Argentina de Mayólicas del Divino Rostro* but it also manufactured floor tiles. The first tableware was produced by *Tanagra* (also with the seal *Buenos Aires Tanagra*), in 1933. *Cerámica Sevilla* started operating in 1936, *La Riojana*, belonging to the Tisi brothers, in 1938, and Vetromile and May (*Mavetro* trademark) opened a company which produced the first chinaware in 1939. In 1940 *Forestier*, *Cypa*, *Cerámica Industrial Haedo* and *Porcelana Americana* went into business<sup>16</sup>. To sum up, there was never local production of transferware in the country: when the industry developed other mechanical systems of printing were used.

---

<sup>15</sup> Guillermo Furlong, *Artisanos argentinos durante la dominación hispánica*, Ediciones Huarpes, Buenos Aires, 1946

<sup>16</sup> Graciela Scocco, Información sobre la actividad industrial. Homenaje a los pioneros de la primera mitad del s. XX, *Revista Cerámica*, s/n, 2012-13.

## VI. Conclusions

1. Far from what had been anticipated as a probability, that is, the presence of a local pottery producing transferware, it has been impossible to find evidence, material or documentary, proving its existence.
2. Transferware bearing national designs and manufactured abroad in Britain or in the rest of Europe, is not present in great quantities and does not even seem to have been an important local consumer item during the nineteenth century.
3. There is a clear preference for transferware with easily recognisable designs, which can be interpreted by illiterate groups, or which are associated with practices common to local society, such as agricultural or rural or floral or geometric designs. This can be interpreted as a conscious selection marked by consumer tastes rather than a conditioning by market's offer.
4. The resulting idea is that the absence of traditional blue transferware, especially in mid nineteenth century, and its replacement by hand-painted flowers (Dutch), decorated rims or Mocha wares, is a conscious attitude of the consumer.
5. The appearance of tableware decorated with exotic designs such as Greek and Roman classical antiquity or oriental landscapes worked as social class markers: only those who could understand (or to look as they understand) the images on their tables bought them.
6. Other Latin American countries developed their own pottery industries not only as an economic achievement but also as a cultural one, characterised by the successful replacement of a complex imported technological product by a national one. Conversely, a society characterised by massive importation such as the Argentinian one was not able –or chose not to- replace foreign imports with locally produced technology until well into the following century. Was it a matter of the construction of the national identity in each country? Probably it was.

## Bibliography:

Amigo, Roberto

2007 *Beduinos en la Pampa: apuntes sobre la imagen del gaucho y el orientalismo de los pintores franceses*, manuscript on file, Buenos Aires.

Barba, Fernando

1999 *Salarios en Buenos Aires desde fines del siglo XVIII hasta 1860*, Universidad Nacional de La Plata, La Plata.

Castro Morales, Oliva

S/f La fábrica de loza fina de Puebla, En: *Cerámica inglesa en México*, pp. 39-48, Museo Frantz Mayer, México.

Chávez, Fermín

1970-72 *Rosas: su iconografía y la Federación*, Editorial Oriente, 3 volumes, Buenos Aires.

Crook, Penny

2000 Shopping and Historical Archaeology: Exploring the Contexts of Urban Consumption, *Australasian Historical Archaeology*, Vol 18, pp. 17-28.

Furlong, Guillermo

1946 *Artesanos argentinos durante la dominación hispánica*, Ediciones Huarpes, Buenos Aires.

Funari, Pedro

2013 Archaeology, History and Historical Archaeology in South America, in: S. M. Spencer-Wood (ed.), *Consumer Choice in Historical Archaeology*, Plenum Press, New York, pp. 121-137; S. M. Spencer-Wood (ed), *Consumer Choice in Historical Archeology*, Plenum Press, New York.

Head, Francis Bond

1826 *Rough Notes Taken during Some Journeys across the Pampas and among the Andes*. Reprinted by Cambridge University Press 2009.

Hussey, Christopher

1967 *The Picturesque. Studies in a point of view*, Frank Cass & Co. London.

Klein, Terry H.

1991 Nineteenth-Century Ceramics and Models of Consumer Behavior, *Historical Archaeology*, Vol. 25, n° 2, pp. 77-91.

Leask, Nigel

2002 *Curiosity and Aesthetics of Travel Writing 1770-1840*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Lynch, John

1984 *Juan Manuel de Rosas 1829-1852*, Editorial Emece, Buenos Aires.

Marshall, David

2002 The problem of the picturesque, *Eighteenth-Century Studies* vol 35, n° 3, pp. 413-437.

Palliere, Leon

1967 *Escenas argentinas*, Librería L'Amateur, Buenos Aires-Paris.

Robinson, Sidney

1991 *Inquiry into the Picturesque*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Schávelzon, Daniel

1991 *Arqueología histórica de Buenos Aires (I), la cultura material porteña de los siglos XVIII y XIX*, Editorial Corregidor, Buenos Aires.

2000 *The Historical Archaeology of Buenos Aires: a City at the End of the World*, Kluwer/Academic-Plenum Press, New York.

2012 *Consumo, guerra y arte en la arqueología de Buenos Aires: las fuentes del Paraguay* <http://www.iaa.fadu.uba.ar/cau/?p=2783>

2013 Argentina and Great Britain: Studying an Asymmetrical Relationship through Domestic Material Culture. *Historical Archaeology, Society for Historical Archaeology*, vol.47 n° 1, pp. 10-25.

Schávelzon, Daniel and Francisco Girelli

2015 'China-ware in the skies': overlapping identities in the ornamental use of plates in Uruguay, *Post-Medieval Archaeology*, vol.49, n° 1, 57-71.

Scocco, Graciela

2012-13 Información sobre la actividad industrial. Homenaje a los pioneros de la primera mitad del siglo XX, *Revista Cerámica*, s/n.

Therrien, Mónica

2008 Patrimonio y arqueología industrial: ¿investigación vs. Protección? Políticas del patrimonio industrial en Colombia, en: *Apuntes: Revista de Estudios sobre Patrimonio Cultural*, vol.21, n° 1, Bogotá.

Verbroomen, Monique and Roger van Schoute

2006 *Dictionaires de motifs de la faience fine imprimee en Belgique*, Editions Racine, Bruseles.