

Faking maiolica in the early twentieth century: the evidence of the Museen-Verband

Timothy Wilson

In his *Keramisk Haandbog*, published in 1919, the well-informed Emil Hannover, Director of the Danish Industrial Museum in Copenhagen, wrote:

The latest forgeries are not yet old enough to unveil themselves, so to speak; many of them, indeed, present the most serious dangers and call for the greatest caution. This is true especially of a group put on the market at high prices during the last year before the War by a great antique business in Rome previously of good reputation. If the owner of this business was dealing in good faith, one might hope that he must feel himself disposed, and be in a position, some time to publish all the forgeries he has disseminated, in order to make amends in this way for the confusion he has already caused in the study of ceramics, owing to the fact that the originator of these forgeries put the names of places and the marks of artists and factories indiscriminately on a number of his productions in the most impudently arbitrary fashion¹.

Hannover avoids naming the dealer involved; but there is no doubt that he is referring to Imbert.

It is evident that the 1911 exhibition of Imbert's collection of maiolica at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris in 1911 included numerous of recent fakes. Particularly odd, to those with experience of Renaissance *istoriato*-painting, was a group of panels painted in the Urbino style of the second quarter of the sixteenth century, of which four are illustrated here (figs 1-6)². To anyone who knew the Mazza collection in the Pesaro museum, it would have immediately been obvious that some of the compositions copied objects in that collection. Some of these copies now seem such obvious fakes that it is surprising that there was no ferment in the Paris press, but despite diligent searches kindly carried out for me by Raymonde Royer in Paris libraries and archives, no press article accusing the Arts Décoratifs of showing fakes has been found; indeed the exhibition seems to have elicited rather little public or specialist interest in Paris.

The main purpose of the present contribution is to present relevant material from the most detailed and fascinating source for what was known in specialist museum circles in the years before and after World War I about faking. This is the series of papers of the Verband von Museumsbeamten zur Abwehr von Fälschungen und unlauterem Geschäftsgebahren (Association of Museum Officials for Defence against Fakes and Improper Business Practices) - understandably, often known for brevity as the Museen-Verband).

This Association of museum directors and curators was founded in 1898 on the initiative of Justus Brinckmann, Director of the Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe, Hamburg, and Heinrich Angst, Director of the Schweizerisches Landesmuseum, Zurich. It met annually, with interruptions during and after World War I, in various cities until 1939. It always retained a majority of German members.

The various printed documents issued to members were marked as confidential and in theory remained the property of the Association. As a consequence of this confidentiality, the Communications (*Mitteilungen*) and Proceedings (*Verhandlungen*)

are now rare; no complete set has been found in any one place and they have hitherto been regarded by their custodians as confidential. The present account is drawn, by kind permission of the curators, from partial sets preserved in curatorial offices in the Victoria & Albert Museum, London, and in the Kunstgewerbemuseum, Berlin³.

From early in the existence of the group, the faking of maiolica was among the issues that concerned them. At the second meeting, in Zurich in 1899⁴, Otto von Falke (1862-1942), then Director of the Museum of Applied Arts in Cologne and author of the most authoritative German publication on maiolica up to that time, the handbook of the Berlin Museum of Applied Art⁵, pointed out the existence of fakes of the Faenza maiolica with blue-ground borders of grotesque decoration then generally attributed to the “Casa Pirota”; he noted that “recently, the fakes have become so good that they are hard to pick out”. In a more detailed talk given at the same meeting⁶, he argued that two recent Christie’s auction sales in London had contained fake maiolica. In the Stefano Bardini sale he identified two early-Florentine-type albarelli as fakes; while, from the sale of the Zschille collection, he claimed as fake a large oval dish with Joseph before Pharaoh⁷, as well as two albarelli of late-Quattrocento type⁸. He went on to doubt the authenticity of two dishes, with portraits of Raphael and Perugino respectively, in the Musée de Cluny⁹ and at South Kensington¹⁰, and a whole category of small Venetian plates painted with grotesques and *alla porcellana* backs¹¹.

At the Cologne meeting the following year, von Falke reported on copies and fakes exhibited at the Paris Exhibition of 1900. He noted the honest imitations exhibited by Cantagalli, remarking that they are always marked with the firm’s cockerel mark, but that “this painter could be dangerous if the marks were left off”¹². He also praised as something new the copies of incised slipware exhibited by Carlo and Giano Loretz. In 1907, Dr Pit of Amsterdam reported that he had visited Giano Loretz in Milan; he described him as a “young and very capable potter”, and noted that he “makes these things as modern imitations, but dealers offer them for sale as old”¹³.

At the same 1907 meeting, in Paris, the group visited the Musée de Cluny. At that time von Falke and several other members expressed doubts about the large portrait albarelli which had been bequeathed to the museum in 1889; uncertainty about the authenticity of these jars and the similar pair in the British Museum has continued ever since: in the recent British Museum catalogue, it is argued that all four are more likely to be right than wrong, but the question remains open¹⁴.

In September 1909, the group met in Prague and the Islamic specialist of the Berlin museums, Friedrich Sarre, discussed an albarello which Wilhelm von Bode had acquired from a Florentine dealer. He commented on it as follows:

The piece, putatively Orvieto ware of the fourteenth or fifteenth century, raises doubts on various grounds. In recent years, in the *pozzi* (waste pits) dug into the tufa below the courtyards of the medieval houses, has come to light a class of medieval pottery that significantly differs from the wares of the same period from elsewhere in Italy. Under these circumstances of discovery, the finds are naturally mostly fragments, only exceptionally whole pieces. The largest groups of Orvieto pottery belong to the dealer Volpi in Florence¹⁵, to the lawyer Arcangelo Marcioni in Orvieto¹⁶, and to Al. Imbert, Via Condotti, Rome. The last-named has published his collection in a lavish volume,

Ceramiche orvietane dei secoli XIII e XIV, dedicating the book to Pierpont Morgan...¹⁷ In summer 1909 I stopped in Orvieto to study these pottery finds and acquired a series of fragments which allow one to know the characteristics of the body material, form and painting of Orvieto pottery. The albarello in question shows significantly different characteristics...¹⁸

The assembled curators indicated agreement with Sarre. Georg Swarzenski of Frankfurt noted that:

Paccini of Florence, who has a quantity of genuine Orvieto pottery, told me during a conversation at the end of 1908 about fakes being made in Orvieto and showed me a whole cupboardful; among these were not only complete vessels but all sorts of fragments and fakes which one would never have suspected. Paccini has set these pieces apart and keeps and shows them as fakes¹⁹.

There is no specific discussion of maiolica recorded from the 1911 meeting in Brussels or the 1912 meeting in Vienna, and the Proceedings make no mention of the Imbert exhibition in 1911²⁰. In September 1913, at a meeting in Saint Petersburg, von Falke, who continued to be the loudest voice warning against maiolica fakes, returned to the subject. He discussed a workshop he believed to be active in Rome, "which has swamped the market in recent years and is especially strongly represented in the Imbert collection". Fakes of this workshop were also, he said, to be found in the two greatest German collections of the time, those of Adolf von Beckerath and of Alfred Pringsheim²¹.

The following month, a few days before the auction in Berlin of von Beckerath's collection, von Falke warned more specifically against the authenticity of several of the pieces in the sale²².

World War I interrupted the meetings of the Association but in 1924, at a meeting in Wroclaw (Breslau), von Falke, by now General Director of the Berlin Museums, returned to the subject with two lectures in greater detail than previously. By now, Imbert was in the forefront of the discussion.

It seems to me appropriate to reproduce [see figs 7, 8²³] a series of photographs of maiolica fakes which appeared on the market around 1910... The photographs were sent by Imbert in Rome. He was at that time, in 1911, putting on the exhibiton in the Paris Musée des Arts Décoratifs of his fake-rich collection and probably still believed in the genuineness of the pieces or was inadequately aware of the fertility and skill of Italian fakers... The pieces are completely fake and from a single workshop... That they are not genuine is betrayed in the weak or decidedly modern drawing of the profiles, the unskilled drawing of the hair, the incongruous representation of the head-coverings, and the inadequate drawing of the gothic leaf ornament...²⁴

By this time, von Falke knew who was responsible for at least a proportion of the fakes Imbert had offered for sale. He entitled a second lecture in 1924 "The maiolica fakes of Ferruccio Mengaroni"²⁵. He referred back to his talk in 1913, when he had reported a new type of maiolica fake spreading rapidly from Italy, copying not the previously fashionable primitive maiolica of the type found in the Orvieto fragments

and Florentine Quattrocento wares, but High Renaissance wares of the first half of the Cinquecento:

As long as one bumped into isolated examples here and there, the matter was opaque. It became obvious and well-known, however, when the dealer Imbert, then based in Via Condotti, Rome, in his attempts to assemble a large maiolica collection in a short time, acquired many of these new fakes, in the beginning probably in good faith. In addition, the imposing Gothic-style albarelli of Tuscan and Florentine type (as previously discussed) were to be seen with him in notably large numbers and similar execution. The Imbert collection, containing about 500 pieces, was exhibited in the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in the Louvre and provided with a printed catalogue. Alongside the archaic maiolica - both old and new - and among many genuine pieces, were several dozen of the most curious imitations of Renaissance maiolica, mostly in Urbino and Castel Durante style. Many of them bore notable signatures, especially relating to Pesaro. We had, for example, always supposed - and still do - that the best-known (thanks to countless signed pieces) Urbino maiolica-painter Francesco Xanto Avelli of Rovigo had no workshop of his own in Urbino, since he never signs as *Maestro*, that is workshop-owner, but only with his name or initials. In the Imbert collection and thus in the official catalogue of the 1911 exhibition were two pieces that indicate the opposite. Cat. no. 463 was marked *Fata in Botega di F.X.R. d'Urbini 1532*; and no. 505: *Facta in Botega di Xanto Avello da Rovigo d'Urbini 1527* (Incidentally, Xanto never signed *Avello* but always *Avelli*, and never *d'Urbini*). There was also a new "Pietro Durantino 1545" (no. 466, 523) and especially many curious signatures from Pesaro (no. 382)²⁶ that the rather hurriedly-prepared catalogue did not record.

It may be inferred from the fact that these fakes were exhibited in the Pavillon Marsan and described in the catalogue that they were technically and stylistically well-made. The models were probably provided by the large maiolica collection in the Ateneo Pesarese, while in the sometimes foolish inscriptions and marks the faker let his fantasy run wild. It was to be noted in the whole group that:

1. the figural compositions in the style of Urbino *istoriato* plates were often painted on a smaller scale than is usual;
2. that, alongside bowls and plates, plaques were very common, in most cases smaller than the genuine maiolica plates which were used for wall decoration;
3. that the painting seemed in general paler and thinner, without richness and sheen, because the fakes were fired without *coperta*, the brilliant lead glaze over the tin glaze.

I had supposed that after the highly instructive 1911 exhibition of fakes of this type, of which the origin was then unknown, museums were warned and prepared, although the fakes circulated in the art trade and still turn up. I was therefore amazed to see, in the lavish work on the *Accroissements des Musées Nationaux*²⁷, that the Louvre, which should have been best warned by the 1911 exhibition, had acquired in 1920²⁸ one of the most conspicuous examples of the type. This is a panel with the Resurrection of Christ after Dürer, of which a false example with a meaningless signature and date, *GN Faenza 1537*, was already in the Imbert collection. The new Louvre publication notes that the

Victoria & Albert Museum possesses a duplicate of the panel, referring to the illustration in Argnani, *Rinascimento delle Ceramiche di Faenza*, where the London example is illustrated in colour... But the London panel is not a duplicate, but the original. It was acquired in 1865 from the Pourtalès collection for £126, is marked *TB*, and can thus be dated about 1510-15²⁹...

What is important is that the maiolica workshop where these fakes, and, I do not doubt, the albarelli already mentioned, were made is now identified. I thank Bernard Rackham, Head of the Ceramics Department at the Victoria & Albert Museum for the information that he visited the workshop of Ferruccio Mengaroni in Pesaro and saw there another replica of the Resurrection plaque and also a copy of the Saint Sebastian plaque in the Bargello (which is also by *TB*).

Ferruccio Mengaroni of Pesaro (1875-1925) was the greatest artistic genius both in the revival and in the faking of Renaissance maiolica. On his death, in an accident while installing a huge ceramic sculpture of a Gorgon in an exhibition at Monza, he was lavishly praised by such eminent authorities as Gaetano Ballardini³⁰ and Luigi Serra³¹. There is little doubt that von Falke was right and that many of the works in the 1911 Paris exhibition, and probably all or nearly all of the plaques, were his work and that they had been made very recently.

So vivid a light is shed on the sort of relationship that Mengaroni had with other dealers in Rome (Imbert is not mentioned) by an anecdote in the *Antiquaria* of the dealer Augusto Jandolo (1873-1952), published in 1947, that I quote it here. The starting point was a *bianco sopra bianco* plate which was circulating in the art trade as a real and exceptional piece of Renaissance maiolica, but which was by Mengaroni. A friend undertook to introduce the teller of the anecdote to this *ragazzo pieno di talento*.

Nel desiderio di poter chiarire il mistero, puntuale a mezzogiorno, mi reco a Palazzo Borghese. Ferruccio Mengaroni era allora un bel giovanotto dagli occhi vivissimi, dalla testa scarmigliata. Aveva un po' l'aria provinciale, era nervoso, parlava affrettato e a scatti. Dopo i primi convenevoli si venne a discorrere del piattino.

‘Ah, il piatto faentino?! - rise un po’. - Quella fu una majolica indovinata! A Roma specialmente ha avuto un gran successo. Circa un anno fa, bighellonando per Via Babuino vidi il mio piatto nella vetrina del negozio di L... Chiesi per curiosità il prezzo. “Cinque mila” mi rispose quel furbacchione del proprietario. Alla mia meraviglia espressa per la richiesta, oppose ch’era un pezzo assai raro che valeva un occhio. “Quante dozzine ne volete?”, domandai, ridendo, “Quel piatto l’ho fatto io”. “Voi?”. “Proprio io!”. Sul principio fece una faccia incredula, ma gli mostrai, allo scopo di persuaderlo, due piccole mattonelle che avevo con me, ispirate da una stampa di Dürero. “E se io vi ordinassi un certo numero di piattini come questo?” - domandò l’antiquario dopo aver pensato un po’ - “mi faresti un prezzo conveniente?”. “Quanti?” - domandai subito. - “Anche una mezza dozzina” - rispose lui. - “Ebbene”, considerando il numero, ve li metto centocinquanta lire l’uno”. “Affare fatto. Pagamento immediato sulla consegna” - concluse. Eseguiti ch’ebbi i sei piattini glieli mandai. Li deve avere venduti tutti - aggiunse il giovanotto - perchè ieri me ne ha ordinati altri sei.’

The crisp *exposé* of Mengaroni at the 1924 meeting was Falke's last substantial contribution on maiolica to the proceedings of the Association³². Bernard Rackham of the Victoria & Albert Museum, London, was elected a member of the Association in 1925 and after the retirement of von Falke in 1927 became its principal maiolica specialist³³. In 1930, at Stockholm, Rackham gave a lecture on maiolica fakes. Among the pieces he then condemned as fakes were at least three objects which are, in my opinion, perfectly authentic - a Gubbio lustred dish with *Hercules and the Hydra* in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford³⁴, and two dishes from the Rothschild, Sassoon, and Cholmondeley collections, which I have recently published as genuine early examples of Pesaro *istoriato*³⁵. He also admitted to having caused the Victoria & Albert Museum to acquire a plaque by Mengaroni in the belief that it was early Faenza maiolica³⁶. He concludes as follows:

Shortly before his tragic death I visited Mengaroni in his workshop and found there several works copied from chromolithographic illustrations. I do not know whether he deliberately worked for the trade in fakes. I can only say that I saw on boards in the workshop many broken and restuck bowls and plates.

This fact perhaps speaks for itself. In any case Mengaroni was one of the most dangerous of all copyists of old maiolica.

The contributions to the Association between 1909 and 1930 here quoted stop short of unequivocal accusations of dishonesty against either Mengaroni or Imbert. It is however, fairly clear that the best-informed curators of Europe's museums after World War I were, to say the least, sceptical of the good faith of both the artist and the dealer.

Appendix: The Verband von Museumsbeamten zur Abwehr von Fälschungen und unlauterem Geschäftsgebahren.

The Association was founded in 1898, in response to increasingly intense concern that museums were being deceived into buying fakes, on the initiative of Justus Brinckmann of Hamburg and Heinrich Angst of Zurich³⁷. Its prime purpose was to share information about fakes. Membership was by invitation and limited to Directors and senior museum curators. It remained centred in Germany, meeting mainly in Germany but sometimes abroad, with a preponderance of German members; the proceedings and lectures were always mainly in the German language.

A list of members issued in 1908 listed 54 Germans; 11 from the Austro-Hungarian Empire; 11 from France; 7 from Great Britain and Ireland; 5 each from Denmark and the Netherlands; 4 from Norway; 3 each from Belgium, Russia, Switzerland, Sweden, and the United States; and one each from Italy, Spain, and Romania. The paucity of Italian members is striking, since much of the discussion concerned fakes of Italian art; the only Italians recorded as members were Angelo Scrinzi, Director of the Correr Museum in Venice, who was a member from 1905 to 1913, Giulio Bariola, Director of the Galleria Estense in Modena, a member from 1908 to 1910, and Giovanni Poggi, Director of the Bargello in Florence, elected a member in 1909; I have not noted any record that any of these three Italians ever attended a meeting. Corrado Ricci, Soprintendente at Ravenna, and I. B. Supino, then Director of the Bargello, were invited in 1906-7, but both declined to join.

The scope of the group was specifically *Kunstgewerbe* (applied art) and antiquities. Paintings were marginal; though a continual cause of concern in the early years was the faking of the painted medieval Sienese book covers known as *biccherno*³⁸. In the years before the First World War the focus of the Group's discussions was on ancient, medieval, and oriental works of art, mainly sculpture, metalwork, and ceramics. Discussion of paintings became a more common part of the meetings in the 1920s, but members were never much concerned with drawings and prints.

The group met once a year before the First World War, as follows:

1898: Hamburg
1899: Zurich
1900: Cologne
1901: London
1902: Copenhagen
1903: Berlin
1904: Nuremberg
1905: Amsterdam
1906: Dresden
1907: Paris
1908: Frankfurt am Main
1909: Prague
1910: Munich
1911: Brussels
1912: Vienna
1913: Saint Petersburg
Meetings were then suspended because of the War but resumed again in Stuttgart in 1917, Würzburg in 1918, and Berlin in 1921. They then resumed regularly until World War II terminated its activities in 1939.
1924: Wroclaw (Breslau)
1925: Ulm
1926: Zurich
1927: Hamburg
1928: Budapest
1929: Leipzig
1930: Stockholm
1931: Augsburg
1932: Salzburg
1933: Mainz
1934: Danzig
1935: The Hague
1936: Freiburg-Basel
1937: Vienna
1938: Kassel

From the First World War until 1927, the dominant figure in the group was Otto von Falke, who became Director of the Berlin Museum of Applied Arts from 1908 and was General Director of the Berlin Museums 1920-1927³⁹. After him the management was taken over by Max Sauerlandt (1880-1934) of the Hamburg museum; and in 1934 by Robert Schmidt (1878-1952), Director of the Schlossmuseum in Berlin.

The rules of the Association were strict in the requirements for confidentiality. The papers were marked as confidential and as property of the Association. Members were enjoined not to deposit them in their libraries, to return them on leaving the Association to the Secretariat; and at all costs to keep the material secret from dealers. Museums that hold partial sets have tended to continue to regard them as confidential, but now that seventy years have passed since the last meeting, this material can now be unveiled systematically for the first time⁴⁰.

The present account is based on the set kept in the Department of Sculpture of the Victoria & Albert Museum, which was issued to Sir Eric Maclagan (1879-1951), sculpture scholar, Director of the Museum from 1924; this incomplete set is supplemented by material in the Kunstgewerbemuseum and Kunstbibliothek in Berlin. The range of the publications issued was as follows:

1. *Mitteilungen* (Communications), summaries of papers given at meetings; between the Wars these become longer and were often illustrated. The last issue was in 1939.
2. *Verhandlungen* (Proceedings), minutes of the meetings and what was discussed and decided, with short notes on some of the discussions and papers.
3. *Verzeichnis der im Archiv des Museen-Verbandes bewahrten Abbildungen falscher Altsachen* (List of the illustrations of false antiquities in the Archive of the Museen-Verband).
4. *Abbildungen aus dem Archiv des Verbandes von Museumsbeamten* (Illustrations from the Archive). There were six sets of these portfolios, each containing thirty printed photographs selected and reproduced from the main Archive, the first issued in 1907, the sixth in 1927.
5. *Notizen*, practical administrative papers for the conduct of the Group and for the election of new members.
6. Draft of a bibliography on fakes prepared by Brinckmann in 1911 as a supplement to the *Mitteilungen*.
7. Occasional notes to members reporting the theft of works of art from German museums and churches between 1920 and 1943.
8. *Satzungen* (Statutes). I have seen issues of 1909 and 1935.
9. Lists of members. I have seen issues of 1908, 1912, 1913, 1931, and 1936.
10. Summaries and indexes of the printed matter.

A major activity of the Association, especially under Brinckmann's management, was the creation of an archive of photographs of allegedly fake objects. A listing of this in 1910 already amounted to 1154 photographs and it no doubt continued to expand. The six portfolios mentioned above (no. 4) constitute a selection from it, but contain only five photographs of maiolica⁴¹. The Photographic Archive, together with the administration of the Association, was transferred in 1934 from Hamburg to the care of Robert Schmidt in Berlin. No surviving trace of it has been found and it is assumed to have been destroyed when the Schlossmuseum was disastrously hit by Allied bombs in 1944⁴².

Captions

1-2. Front and back of a panel, *The Assumption of the Virgin*, copied after a panel in the Pesaro Museum (C. Giardini, *Pesaro. Museo delle Ceramiche*, Bologna 1996, no.

302). Falsely marked *Faenza 1531*. 26.7 x 20.5 cm. Exhibited at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris, 1911 (A. Dubrujeaud, *Faïences italiennes de la Collection Al. Imbert*, Paris 1911, no. 495). Probably by Ferruccio Mengaroni (1875-1925), Pesaro. Present location unknown.

3-4. Front and back of a panel, *The Last Judgement*, after Michelangelo. Inscribed with the words *Guidus Ubaldo d'Aragona Duchae Urbinatis*. 38.4 x 28.1 cm. Exhibited at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris, 1911 (Dubrujeaud, *op. cit.* 1911, no. 500). Probably by Ferruccio Mengaroni. Present location unknown.

5. Front of a panel, *Latona and the Lycian peasants*, copied after a *tondino* in the Pesaro Museum (Giardini, *op. cit.* 1996, no. 109). Falsely dated 1532. 30.5 x 20.5 cm. Exhibited at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris, 1911 (Dubrujeaud, *op. cit.* 1911, no. 501). Probably by Ferruccio Mengaroni. Present location unknown.

6. Front of a panel, *Dante and Virgil in Limbo*, copied after a *tondino* in the Pesaro Museum (Giardini, *op. cit.* 1996, no. 112). Falsely signed *fata i[n] pisauri d[a] Lanfranco d[i] G.* and dated 1522. 26.5 x 20.5 cm. Exhibited at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris, 1911 (Dubrujeaud, *op. cit.* 1911, no. 502). Probably by Ferruccio Mengaroni. Present location unknown.

7, 8. Photographs probably sent by Imbert to Wilhelm von Bode in Berlin, April 1910. From the *Mitteilungen des Museen-Verbandes*, item 515. Mostly early twentieth-century, attributed by Otto von Falke to Ferruccio Mengaroni.

Notes

¹ E. Hannover, *Keramisk Haandbog* (Copenhagen, 1919), I, p. 155, in the accurate translation of Rackham (*Pottery and Porcelain. A Handbook for Collectors*, I, London 1925), pp. 166-7. Hannover was elected a member of the Verband in 1903 and attended meetings regularly. Ulla Houkjaer has kindly checked his diary in Copenhagen for me and it does not appear that he visited the Paris exhibition of the Imbert collection in 1911.

² These four objects were among a group of *plaques et plaquettes* oddly gathered together in the catalogue in an Appendix, but with no indication that they were of any questionable authenticity. The catalogue was by André Dubrujeaud, who is not otherwise known as a writer about maiolica, though he did collaborate the same year on another exhibition at the Arts Décoratifs, on Turquerie. It had a preface by the Louvre curator, Gaston Migeon, but it is not clear whether Migeon had actually seen the pieces when he wrote it. I have been unsuccessful in tracing the present owner of the panels illustrated, which were submitted to the London art market in 2006.

³ I am most grateful for assistance in the search and for making material available to me: in London, Paul Williamson, Elisa Sani, and Norbert Jopek; in Berlin, Susanne Netzer and Volker Krahn; in Hamburg, Johanna Lessmann and Angela Graf; in Zurich, Hanspeter Lanz; in Copenhagen, Ulla Houkjaer; in Paris, Raymonde Royer and Françoise Barbe; in Perugia and New York, Lucio Riccetti; in Modena, Paola di Pietro; and in Florence, Marco Spallanzani. I thank Bridget Allen for collating illustrative material. I am grateful to the History Faculty of the University of Oxford for funding a visit to Berlin at short notice.

⁴ *Mitteilungen*, item 31.

⁵ O. von Falke, *Kunstgewerbe-museum. Majolika* (Handbücher der königlichen Museen zu Berlin, Berlin, 1896). On von Falke and maiolica, see T. Hausmann, "Otto von Falke: una personalità di spicco tra gli studiosi della ceramica", in the amplified trilingual reprint of O. von Falke, *Die Majoliksammlung Alfred Pringsheim* (Ferrara, 1994), II, pp. 7-16.

⁶ *Mitteilungen*, item 33.

⁷ Zschille sale, Christie's, 1-2 June 1899, lot 134 (bought by "Johnson" for £240 guineas). In his own catalogue of the Zschille collection published the same year (*Sammlung Richard Zschille. Katalog der*

italienischen Majoliken, Leipzig 1899, no. 134), von Falke had coyly described the dish as “in the style of the Ducal service in the Bargello”, without proposing a dating

⁸ Zschille sale, lots 4 and 5. In his catalogue, von Falke had not questioned the authenticity of these.

⁹ A. Darcel and H. Delange, *Recueil de faïences italiennes* (Paris, 1869), no. 73; bequeathed by C. Fayet to the Musée de Cluny in 1889; excluded, presumably as inauthentic, by J. Giacomotti, *Catalogue des majoliques des musées nationaux* (Paris, 1974).

¹⁰ J.C. Robinson, *Catalogue of the Soulages Collection* (London, 1856), no. 9; B. Rackham, *Victoria and Albert Museum. Catalogue of Italian maiolica* (London, 1940), no. 956.

¹¹ The type is exemplified by two described in T. Wilson, *Italian Maiolica of the Renaissance* (Milan 1996), nos 163-4; though von Falke’s statement that these do not occur in older collections gives cause for thought, I have not been able to convince myself that these two objects are not authentic.

¹² Von Falke returned to this subject in 1910 (*Verhandlungen der dreizehnten Versammlung* (München), p. 37, noting in addition that dangerously deceptive reproductions of Faenza maiolica were being made by the Società di Ceramiche Faentine in Brussels.

¹³ Carlo and Giano Loretz, the most brilliant exponents of the nineteenth-century revival of incised slipware, are the subjects of a series of recent articles by E. Venturelli, for instance, “L’artista e il museo: una relazione feconda tra Ottocento e Novecento. Il caso dei ceramisti lombardi Carlo e Giano Loretz”, *Faenza* 93, nos 1-3, pp. 119-139.

¹⁴ D. Thornton and T. Wilson, *Italian Renaissance Ceramics. A catalogue of the British Museum collection* (London, 2009), I, no. 32; for the Cluny albarelli, which are now at Ecoenen, see J. Giacomotti, *op. cit.* 1974, nos 94, 95. Falke expressed the view that British Museum albarelli are not genuine, but also noted that Bode believed the Cluny ones to be authentic, in *Verhandlungen der zwölften Versammlung des Verbandes von Museums-Beamten* (Prag), p. 7.

¹⁵ For Volpi (1859-1938), see R. Ferrazza, *Palazzo Davanzati e le collezioni di Elia Volpi* (Florence 1994); and for his Orvieto pottery, A. Satolli, *Vascellari. Rivista di storia della tradizione ceramica. Numero speciale. Le vecchie collezioni di ceramica orvietana medievale* (1997), pp. 24-7.

¹⁶ Satolli, *op. cit.* 1997, pp. 28-35.

¹⁷ *Ceramiche Orvietane dei secoli XIII e XIV*, reprint of the Rome 1909 edition, edited and with a *postfazione* by L. Riccetti (Foligno, 2005).

¹⁸ *Verhandlungen der zwölften Versammlung* (Prag), pp. 5-7.

¹⁹ At almost exactly the same time Henry Wallis, who visited Orvieto in November 1908, warned C.H. Read of the British Museum against Orvieto fakes: see T. Wilson, “A Victorian artist as ceramic-collector. The letters of Henry Wallis. Part 2”, *Journal of the History of Collections* 14, no. 2 (2002), pp. 249-50.

²⁰ It may be relevant that Otto von Falke was not at the Brussels meeting of the Association in September 1911.

²¹ *Verhandlungen der sechzehnten Versammlung* (St. Petersburg), pp. 17-18. Marquet de Vasselot commented that the Louvre had bought “five or six years ago” a piece of the same group. At the same meeting von Falke expressed doubts about the two drug-jars in Hamburg which are illustrated and discussed by Wilson, *op. cit.* 2002, p. 234.

²² *Mitteilungen*, item 411. The items von Falke doubted were lots 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 20, 44, 68, 342, and 356 in *Die Majolika-Sammlung Adolf von Beckerath*, Lepke, sale no. 1691, Berlin, 4-5 November 1913. There were, in my opinion, more fakes than these mentioned by von Falke in this pioneering collection of early maiolica. Von Falke had himself written an introduction to the sale catalogue. See also Netzer in this catalogue; V. Krahn and J. Lessmann, *Italienische Renaissancekunst im Kaiser Wilhelm Museum Krefeld* (Krefeld 1997); *Kunstsinn der Gründerzeit. Meisterzeichnungen der Sammlung Adolf von Beckerath*, exhib. cat., Kupferstichkabinett, Berlin, 2002; Thornton and Wilson, *op. cit.* 2009, II, p. 638.

²³ These are presumably some of the 61 photographs of “primitiven Fayencen” which Imbert sent to Wilhelm von Bode in April 1910 (SMPK Archive, Berlin, Nachlass Bode, 2716, letter from Imbert, 19 April 1910). For this correspondence, see L. Riccetti, “La ceramica medievale orvietana: la pista americana ed alcune precisazioni”, *Faenza* 87 (2001), nos 4-6, pp. 26-9

²⁴ *Mitteilungen*, item 515 (dated July 1923); *Verhandlungen der zwanzigsten Versammlung* (Breslau), p. 8 (4 October 1924). Some of the albarelli illustrated are related to the genuine type which G. Donatone (*Maioliche napoletane della spezieria aragonese di Castelnuovo*, Naples 1970; *La maiolica napoletana del rinascimento*, Naples 1993) has identified as production associated with the late-fifteenth-century Neapolitan court. For doubts about the authenticity of some of this group, see also J. Rasmussen, *The Robert Lehman Collection. X. Italian Majolica* (New York, 1989), nos 153-6. The two albarellos lower right on fig. 8 are apparently those now in the Fitzwilliam Museum, convincingly catalogued by J. Poole,

Italian Maiolica and Incised Slipware in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge (Cambridge, 1995), nos 352 and 353, as genuine.

²⁵ *Mitteilungen*, item 523.

²⁶ Compare the evidently fake dish with Latona and the Lycian peasants and a spurious Pesaro inscription illustrated in *112 pièces de la collection de faïences Paul Gillet* (1956), figs. 80, 81, with a note questioning the authenticity of the supposedly Pesaro pieces in the Imbert collection.

²⁷ *Les Accroissements des Musées Nationaux Français, III, Le Musée du Louvre en 1920. Dons, legs et acquisitions* (Paris, 1921), planche 43.

²⁸ Louvre OA7358.

²⁹ B. Rackham, *Victoria and Albert Museum. Catalogue of Italian maiolica* (London, 1940), no. 275. What was probably the Imbert version, and presumably by Mengaroni, was sold at Bonham's, London, 13 May 2009, lot 24.

³⁰ G. Ballardini, *Mastro Ferruccio Mengaroni maiolicaro di Pesaro*, *Collana di studi d'arte ceramica* 5 (Faenza, 1929).

³¹ L. Serra, "In memoriam: Ferruccio Mengaroni", *Emporium* 61 (1925), pp. 309-321.

³² In item 555 of the *Mitteilungen*, von Falke reproduced three more fakes, attributed to Mengaroni, in the Hermitage and sent to him by its curator A. Kube: a *Rape of the Sabines* with a figural border and an *Apollo and Pan*, both after originals in the Pesaro museum; and a *Judith* after the famous Cafaggiolo dish in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

³³ Apart from his Stockholm lecture, *Mitteilungen*, item 656, Rackham gave an interesting account of the misleading restorations of the "Deruta plate" in the V&A (Rackham, *op. cit.* 1940, no. 430), *Mitteilungen*, item 767 (1937).

³⁴ T. Wilson, *Maiolica. Italian Renaissance Ceramics in the Ashmolean Museum* (second edition, Oxford 2003), no. 8; compare Thornton and Wilson, *op. cit.* 2009, II, no. 297; Rackham seems to consider fake the British Museum dish, as well as the Ashmolean one and one from the Schiff collection (S. De Ricci, *A Catalogue of the Early Italian Majolica in the Collection of Mortimer L. Schiff*, New York 1927, no. 102). The British Museum dish, however, was acquired by that Museum in 1851, before the rediscovery of lustre in Italy. Rackham was certainly right to classify as fakes the Papal ceremony dish in the Schiff collection (De Ricci, *op. cit.* 1927, no. 99; now Metropolitan Museum of Art, 46.85.36); and a dish in the Fitzwilliam, Poole, *op. cit.*, 1995), no. 263.

³⁵ T. Wilson, "Some *incunabula* of istoriato-painting from Pesaro", *Faenza* 91 (2005), nos 1-6, pp. 8-24. The dish in Plate I of that article has since been acquired by the Ashmolean Museum.

³⁶ V&A, C.84-1926; B. Rackham, "Recent Accessions to the Maiolica at South Kensington", *Burlington Magazine* 50 (1927), pp. 259-261, fig. B. The panel was identified as Mengaroni by Gaetano Ballardini.

³⁷ An account of the first years was written by H. Angst, "Der Verband von Museums-Beamten zur Abwehr von Fälschungen" in *Das Hamburgische Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe. Dargestellt zum Feier des 25jährigen Bestehens von Freunden und Schülern Justus Brinckmanns*, Hamburg 1902, pp. 421-436. See also chapter 19 of R. Durrer, *Heinrich Angst. Erster Direktor des Schweizerischen Landesmuseums Britischer Generalkonsul* (Glarus, 1948); C. Lafontant Vallotton, *Entre le musée et le marché. Heinrich Angst: collectionneur, marchand, et premier directeur du Musée national suisse* (Bern, etc, 2007), pp. 116-7. An attack on the group as being useless because so rigorously secretive was written by G. Koch, *Kunstwerke und Bücher am Markte* (Esslingen, 1915), pp. 106-8.

³⁸ An accomplished faker of *biccherne* about this time was Icilio Federico Joni of Siena (1866-1946); see his *Le memorie di un pittore di quadri antichi* (reprint, Siena, 2004).

³⁹ A. Jandolo, *Antiquaria* (Milan, 1947), pp. 229-34. I am indebted to Lucio Riccetti for this reference.

⁴⁰ As a by-product of the present essay, it is intended to exchange copies of material between Berlin and London, so that as nearly-complete as possible a series of Verband publications is available in both places.

⁴¹ The third portfolio (1910) included a medieval jug, two Renaissance-style jugs, and an albarello with a woman's head - all of them, in my opinion, rather unconvincing fakes. The fourth portfolio (1911) included some tiles of fifteenth-century Naples type.

⁴² T. Hausmann, "Maioliche italiane dello 'Schlossmuseum' di Berlino perdute nella seconda guerra mondiale", *Faenza* 60 (1974), pp. 24-40.