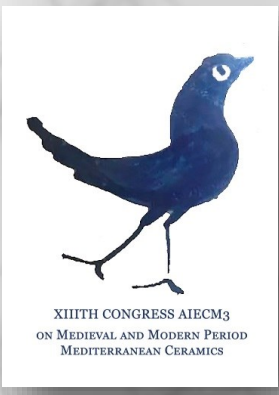


# CERAMICS FROM AN URBAN PALACE IN A FISHING VILLAGE IN THE NORTH-WESTERN PART OF THE IBERIAN PENINSULA: LA CASA DEL CERCÁU IN LLANES (ASTURIAS, SPAIN)



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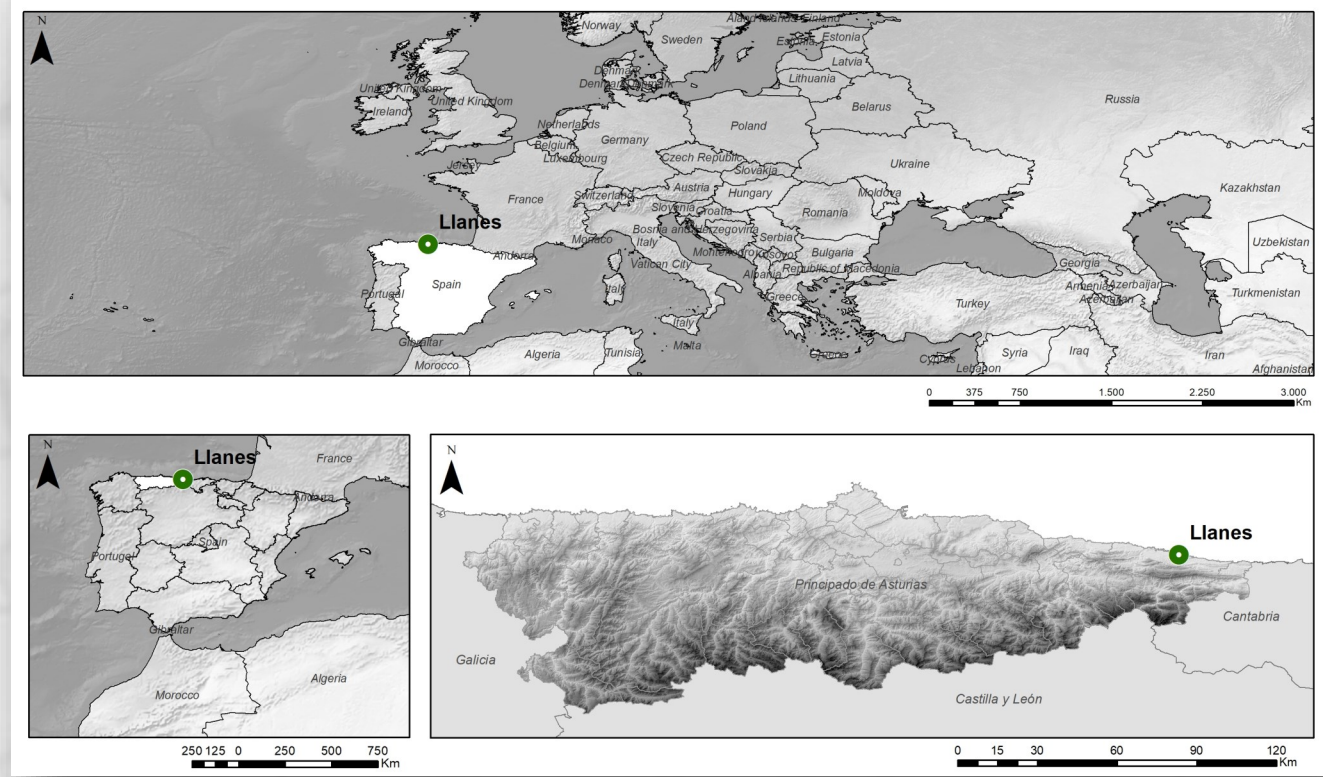
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## 1. INTRODUCTION

During 2020 and 2021, MSarqueo Estudio de Arqueología S.L. has been working to document and excavate in the Casa del Cercáu (declared BIC in 1991), located in Llanes (Asturias, Spain). A study of the evolution of the whole complex has been carried out from a constructive point of view, using archaeological and architectural techniques, together with the execution of archaeological surveys. Archaeological excavation brought to light an interesting ceramic assemblage that begins in the 13th century and continues until the present.



Location of Llanes (Asturias, Spain).

## 2. CASA DEL CERCÁU (LLANES, ASTURIAS, SPAIN)

The Casa del Cercáu is an urban palace located in the village of Llanes, in the north-eastern area of the Principality of Asturias. Llanes originated from the lands granted by the king of León Alfonso IX around 1228. This came as a response to the founding of San Vicente de la Barquera (Cantabria) by the Castilian king Alfonso VIII. The origin of the Cercáu is in the last quarter of the sixteenth century, although the palace reached its prominence at the end of that century and the beginning of the next. During this period, Pedro Junco de Posada y Valdés, Bishop of Salamanca, Counselor of Inquisition, and President of the Chancillería de Valladolid inherited the house. He turned it into a palace-mausoleum, and was buried in his chapel in 1603. The Casa del Cercáu is a two-storey plus attic building, with a chapel attached. Later, a sacristy and a bell tower were added to the complex. The whole complex is surrounded by a wall that abuts the city wall. The complex remained largely unaltered until the late 19th century.

## 3. METHODOLOGY

The applied methodology classified the pottery by different workshops of origin, ceramic productions, functional groups, series, types, and subtypes. This methodology also involved a technical, morphometric, and chronological analysis of each of the vessels, checking for parallels from other archaeological studies of potteries. As a result of these analyses, we have been able to recognize ceramic productions from different chronologies and workshops.

## 4. ANALYSIS OF POTTERY PRODUCTIONS

The pottery sample analysed in this study consists of 4729 sherds. This research is divided into two chronological periods: *Medieval Wares* and *Early Modern Wares*. Within each of this main groups, several subgroups can be distinguished, based on basic technical characteristics and production centres.



Casa del Cercáu (Foto Asturias S.L.).

## 5. DISCUSSION & CONCLUSIONS



Ceramic consumption (Early Modern Wares)

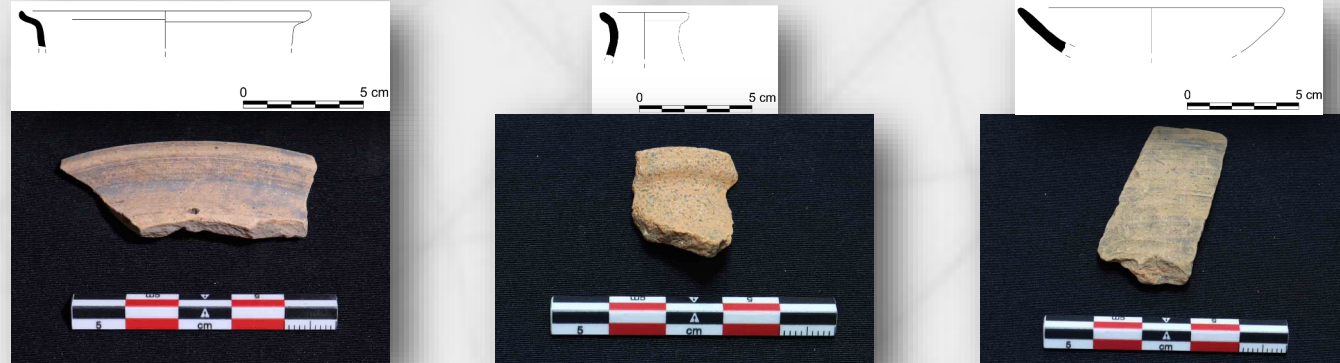
The medieval assemblage probably formed in the 13th and 14th centuries, in relation to the foundation of Llanes (1228) or the construction of the city wall (before 1340). In fact, the archaeological contexts indicate that many of the pieces are earlier than the construction of the city wall, and may perhaps be related to an earlier occupation of the space. The early modern assemblage is very varied in terms of production centres, especially in the 16th century. Although the volume of material for the 17th and 18th centuries remains substantial, it is significantly less varied than in the 16th century. The medieval assemblage is clearly dominated by local wares, chiefly from the workshop of Faro de Limanes. The provenance of the fine wares fired in oxidising conditions is unclear, but it must be in the area of Asturias or nearby. These local wares coexisted with imported wares, such as the French green glazed wares and northern European wares. These imported wares are common in the Atlantic facade during the Middle Ages. In addition, a piece of "green and manganese" points to Andalusí imports. In the Early Modern Age, local wares are still found in significant numbers, including productions from Faro de Limanes and now also Miranda de Avilés. In addition to these kitchen wares, we find a substantial assemblage of local enamelled pieces. Concerning imported ceramics, the 16th-century assemblage presents a wide variety of wares, including pieces from Seville, Talavera de la Reina, Beauvais, Liguria, Werra and Jingdezhen. In the 17th century, in addition to production centres already represented in the 16th century, such as Talavera de la Reina and Seville, we find productions from the Basque Country (Eguileta, Hijona and Erentxun), Portugal (Lisbon, Coimbra and Vila Nova), Germany (Westerwald and Frechen), and Holland (Delft). The assemblage includes 16th century wares from very distant production areas, which are probably related to Pedro Junco de Posada y Valdés.

## 4.1. MEDIEVAL WARES:

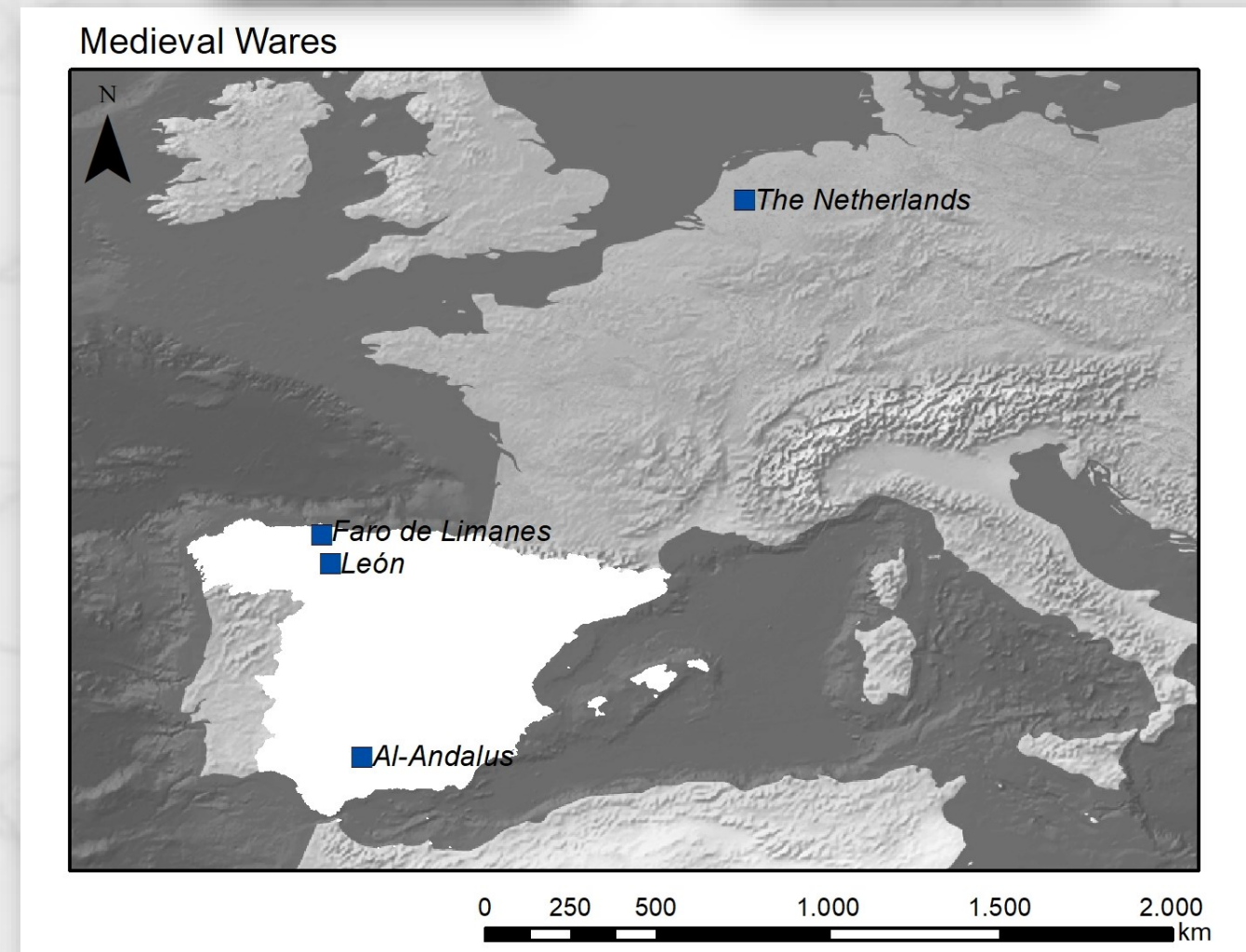
**LOCAL POTTERY FIRED IN REDUCING CONDITIONS:** the production area must be situated in Asturias or nearby, probably Faro de Limanes (Oviedo). 13th-15th centuries.



**LOCAL FINE WARES FIRED IN OXIDISING CONDITIONS:** the provenance is unclear, but a production centre in Asturias or nearby is suggested. Most pieces are undecorated, except for a few examples which are lightly combed. 13th-15th centuries.



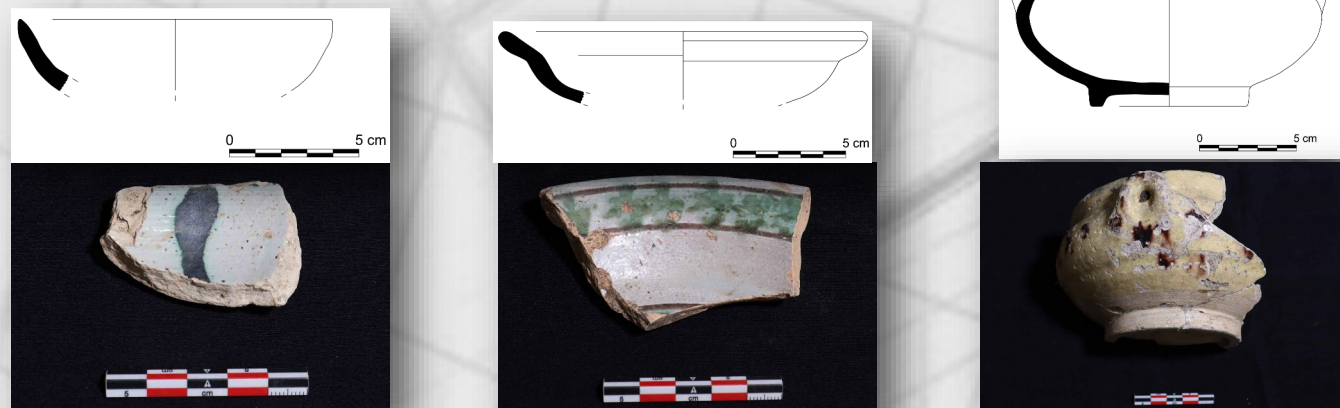
**STAMPED REGIONAL WARES:** the provenance is unknown, but a local production centre is suggested, in Asturias or the neighbouring regions. The stamped decoration has parallels in Visigothic wares from the region of León. 13th-15th centuries.



Ceramic consumption (Medieval Wares)

## 4.2. EARLY MODERN WARES:

**FARUCA LOCAL WARES FIRED IN REDUCING CONDITIONS:** local production, probably Faro de Limanes (Oviedo). 15th-18th centuries. **FARUCA ENAMELLED AND GLAZED WARES:** local production, probably Faro de Limanes (Oviedo). They can be undecorated or decorated with green, yellow or black motifs over a white stanniferous white. One of the pieces is yellow-glazed with black decoration. 16th-18th centuries.

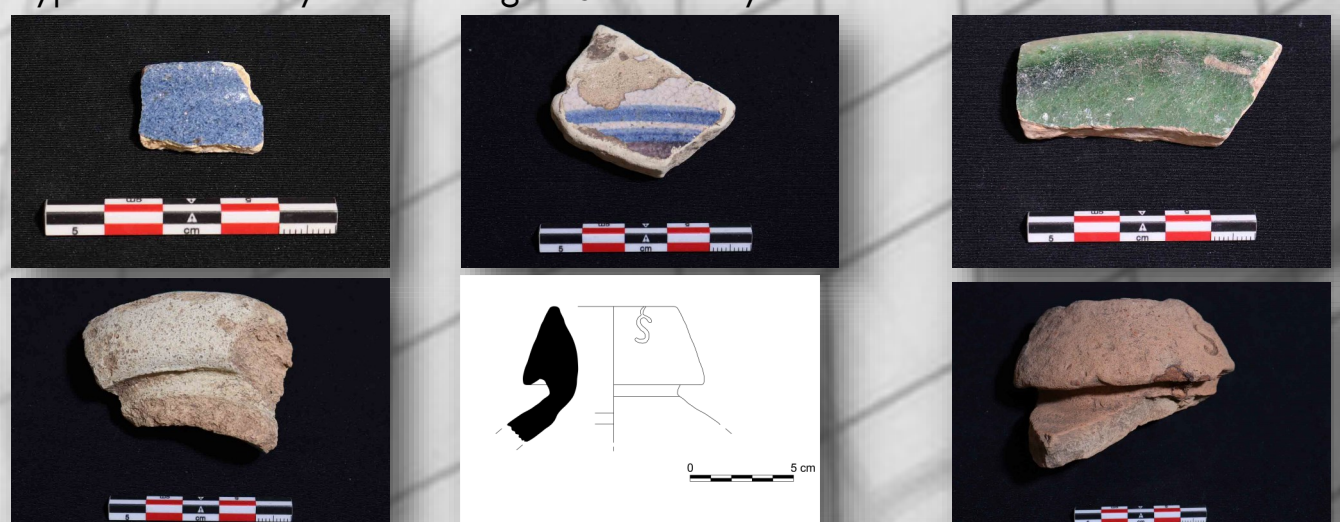


**MIRANDA LOCAL WARES FIRED IN REDUCING CONDITIONS:** local production, probably Miranda de Avilés (Avilés). 16th century. **MIRANDA ENAMELLED WARES:** local production, probably from Miranda de Avilés (Avilés). They present blue decoration over a white stanniferous background. 17th-18th centuries.



**FRENCH BEAUVAIS WARES:** one piece was identified as a Beauvais plate, belonging to the Beauvais monochrome glazed series. They are technically complex, and were made for the international markets. 15th-16th centuries.

**SEVILIAN BLUE WARES:** produced in Seville, blue glazed with spots on both faces. 15th-16th centuries. **SEVILIAN BLUE AND PURPLE WARES:** produced in Seville, enamelled and decorated in blue and black. 16th century. **SEVILIAN GREEN PLAIN WARES:** Sevillian production, finished in green. 16th century. **SEVILIAN OLIVE JARS:** produced in Seville, this is one of the most characteristic transport types in the Early Modern Age. 18th century.



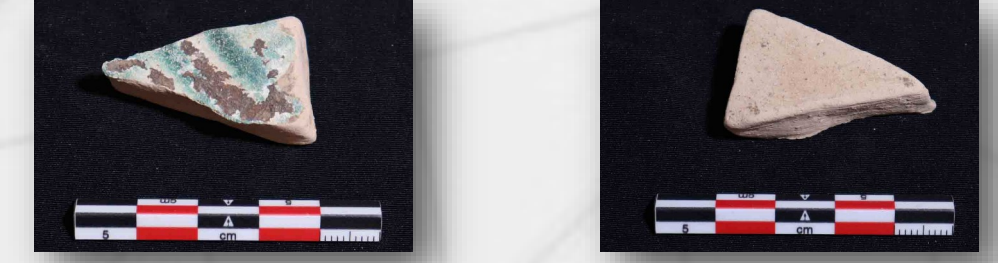
**ITALIAN LIGURIAN WARES:** Ligurian wares, probably made in Genova, Savona or Albisola. Enamelled in berettino blue. 16th century.



**FRENCH GREEN GLAZED WARES:** the production centre is likely in northern Europe, probably the French centre-southwest, in the workshops of Saintonge, although England and Holland cannot be ruled out. 13th-15th centuries.



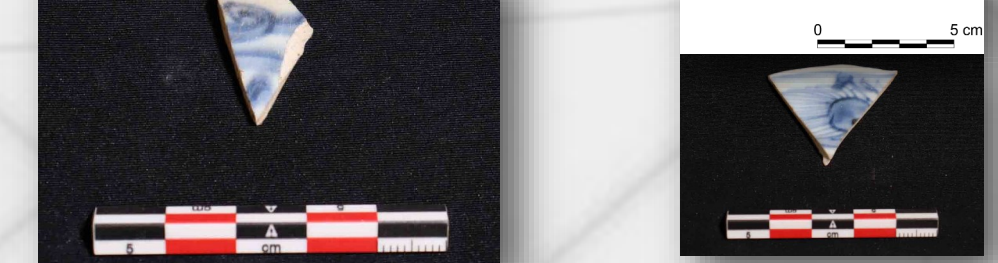
**ANDALUSI GREEN AND MANGANESE WARES:** from the south of the Iberian Peninsula, probably in al-Andalus. The inner face is enamelled in white, decorated with thick green and black strokes. 15th century.



**DUTCH LIDS:** these wares were produced in western Holland. They are unglazed and decorated with sgraffito. They are lids also used to extinguish cooking fires. 14th-15th centuries.



**CHINESE JINGDEZHEN WARES:** a small number of specimens correspond to Chinese porcelain, probably produced in Jingdezhen during the Ming period. 16th century.



**GERMAN GLAZED WARES:** produced in central Germany, in the region of Werra. This is the first time these wares are found in Asturias. 16th-17th centuries.

**GERMAN STONEWARE:** produced in Germany (Westerwald and Frechen). They are salt glazed in grey, with blue to highlight the moulded decorations (Westerwald), or covered in a speckled brown salt glaze (Frechen). 17th century.

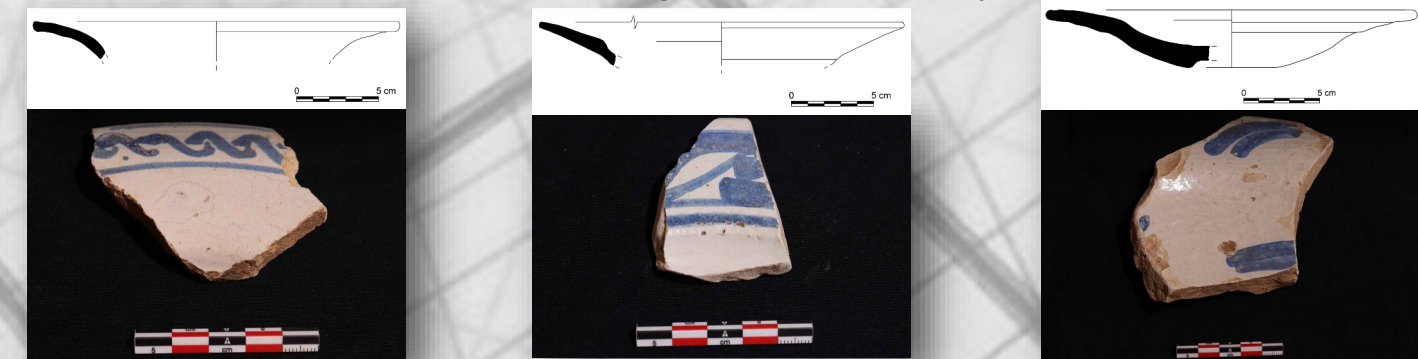


**TALAVERA TRICOLOUR WARES:** produced in Talavera de la Reina and decorated with the typical band in blue, orange and black. 16th-17th centuries.

**TALAVERA FERN-DECORATED WARES:** produced in Talavera de la Reina and decorated with blue fern leaves. 17th-18th centuries.



**BASQUE BLUE WARES:** produced in Álava (Basque Country), probably in the workshops of Eguileta, Hijona or Erentxun. It presents a characteristic blue geometric decoration on a white background. 17th century.



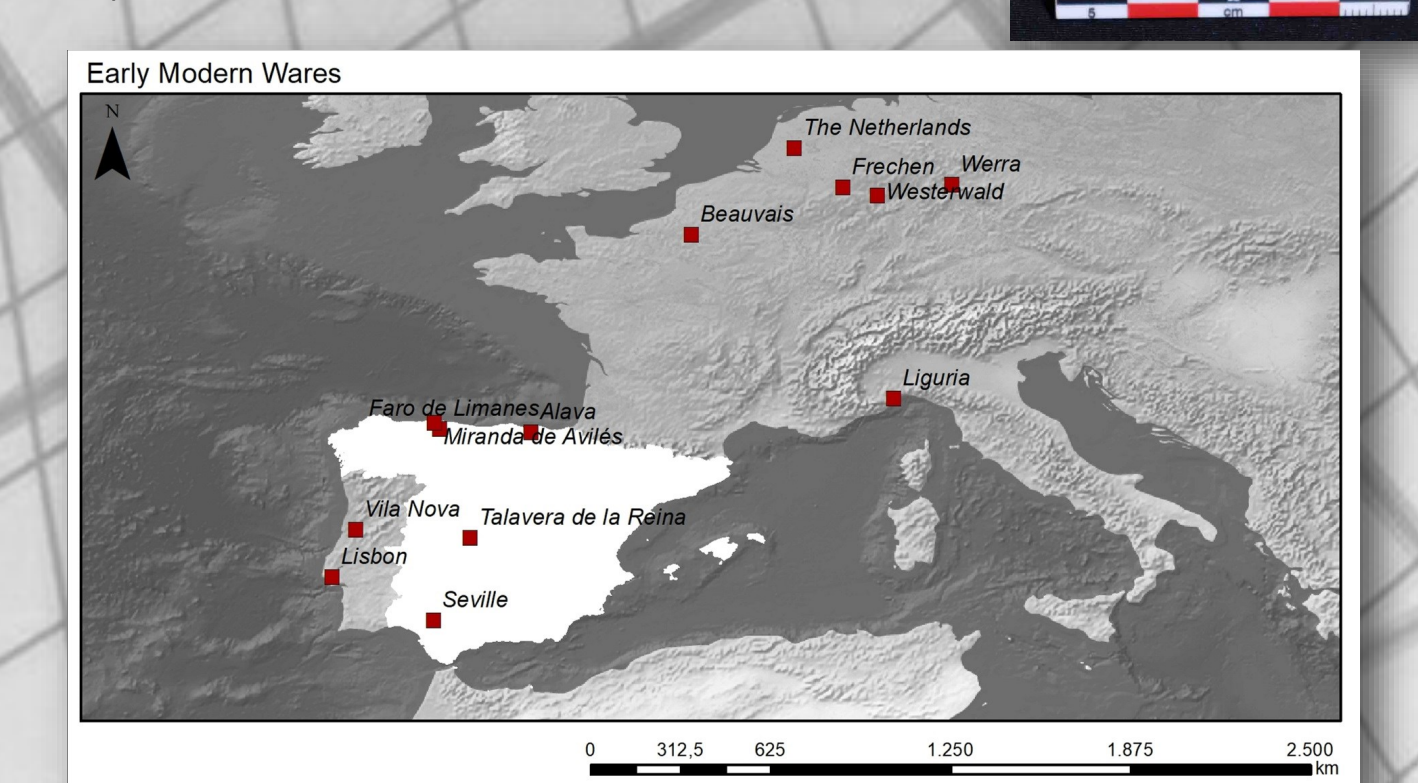
**DUTCH FAIENCE WARES:** produced in the Netherlands. The characteristics point to the Delft workshops. Blue and polychrome decoration on a white stanniferous background. 17th century.



**PORTUGUESE WARES:** produced in Portugal, probably Lisbon, Coimbra or Vila Nova. Some of them present the arhaeles motif. 17th century.



**PIPES:** a small assemblage of smoking pipes was found. They include clay pipes produced in Holland and England, and a ceramic pipe probably produced in the centre of the Iberian Peninsula, probably for the consumption of hashish. 15th-17th centuries.



Ceramic consumption (Early Modern Wares)