Switzerland has a rich ceramic tradition that reflects the country's pluralism and cultural diversity. But we're not very aware of the fact. In the world of ceramics, Switzerland is perceived as a peripheral area of the European environment. At best, we may have heard of both porcelain factories operating in Zurich and Nyon in the 18th century. It may also be known that at that time, various factories produced painted faience tableware, or that the Bernese region was particularly famous for its glazed earthenware, or that in the 17th century the city of Winterthur was renowned for its faience. But what else do we know? And what did the ceramics that were made in these various places look like?

The collections of Swiss museums give a good idea of the richness of the ceramics produced in Switzerland or imported. This heritage of national and international importance is largely unknown, not only to the general public but also to professionals. Most of these ceramics are no longer on display today or have never been documented. The CERAMICA Foundation in Basel therefore launched the "CERAMICA CH" project in 2009, the aim of which is to establish a national inventory of modern ceramics (1500-1950) in publicly accessible collections. Three cantonal inventories (Neuchâtel, Solothurn and Vaud) have been compiled and published to date.

With the fourth inventory covering the canton of Graubünden, the national ceramic inventory comes as a breaking innovation. From December 2019, an image database as well as all collected data and descriptive texts will be freely accessible and searchable on the Internet from a bilingual homepage (French and German, final expansion by 2022). By the end of 2020, the three printed cantonal inventories will also be transferred into the digital version so that the image database would contain around 10,000 data records. Additional information on the museums involved and their ceramic collections, on manufacturers and factories as well as on the shapes of the vessels complete the picture. An extensive bibliography and a glossary on ceramics supplement the ever-expanding documentation.

Previous publications:

Roland Blaettler, CERAMICA CH III/1 : Vaud (Inventaire national de la céramique dans les collections publiques suisses (1500-1950), Sulgen 2017. ISBN 978-3-7165-1830-4
