

DESCRIPTION FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC

The aim of the project is the research on unpublished oil lamps from the area of Nea Paphos in Cyprus. During the Late Hellenistic and Roman Periods (between the end of the 3rd c. BC and 350 AD), it has served as the capital of the island. The localization on the south-west coast, made the city one of the most important centers at the intersection of major trade routes. As a result, the material culture of Cyprus was shaped in a unique way, very interesting from an archaeological point of view. The richness and variety of objects is enormous, and cosmopolitanism of the island is reflected even in basic everyday objects, such as ceramics. One of the categories of ceramic objects are oil lamps, used in antiquity as the basic source of light in the Mediterranean. Despite many potential pieces of information they can provide, this group of finds is often overlooked or treated very briefly in publications. As their forms have changed relatively often, lamps could be very helpful for dating particular structures at the site. The large variation in their shapes makes it quite easy to classify them properly. Clay, from which they are made, along with decorative motifs and form, could be good indicators of the place of production. Although the lamps couldn't be treated directly as an object of trade and most of them were produced for local markets, the fact that they often reached very long distances is undeniable. Their presence could show the flow of goods and people between particular centers. Creating maps showing the distribution of lamps in the Eastern Mediterranean is an innovative idea. It will combine the study of unpublished materials from excavations in the area of ancient capital with already published objects. The subject of the study will concern sites of different character of settlement (the theater district with Fabrika hill, Roman villas, Agora of the city) and Hellenistic-Roman tombs. The macroscopic analysis will be carried out on the basis of clay characteristics and with use of basic measuring tools. It will be completed with specialized analysis of clay, based on the XRF method, which will confirm or exclude the local origin of oil lamps and determine the number of 'imports' in the material. Due to the fact that oil lamps are not often analyzed by using archaeometry, the project will be an opportunity for creating a research standard and to show oil lamps as an important group of archaeological material which bring various information. Ultimately, the data collected will allow for a better understanding of the role of Cyprus and its capital as a port city and a bridge between different areas in the Eastern part of the Mediterranean.