

Palmyra, city located in the Middle of the Syria desert was one of the most important trade centres of the Roman Empire, involved in the long distance trade with the distant regions of Asia. It is also one of the very rare archaeological sites dated to the Roman period where abundant organic materials survived, including a big group of fabrics. These unique archaeological finds are all dated to the period between the 1<sup>st</sup> and late 3<sup>rd</sup> c. AD. Among fabrics found in Palmyra, pieces of over 500 diverse textiles were documented, including local products and imported cloths. Such an abundant group have not been found on any other Mediterranean site from the Roman period yet. In the same time, archaeological research in Palmyra brought to light numerous iconographic representations, mostly funerary sculpture but also some wall paintings which allow a multi-aspect analysis of clothing and fabrics worn by Palmyreans.

The main objective of this project is an analysis of iconographic material from Palmyra, aiming in the identification of textiles represented in paintings and sculpture. Similar analysis is not possible on any other site of Mediterranean region. Even if some of them yielded numerous textile finds, like Berenike on the Red Sea, the lack of iconographic representations does not allow for any comparative studies. In this context, comparative studies on extant archaeological textiles and Palmyrean iconography constitute a unique chance for analysis of numerous problems concerning Palmyrean costume, art and craft as well as society and economy of this ancient city.

A complex analysis of textiles and their iconographic representations in the Palmyrean art will help in research on the development of textile production at Palmyra and shall also bring new data on the importance of the city as a weaving production centre. The proposed study will constitute a basis for further studies on production, economy and trade in the Eastern Mediterranean as well as on aesthetic trends and clothing of Palmyra.

In the first stage of the project a catalogue of iconographic representation which allow textile identification will be created. The catalogue will be composed, using published material and catalogues of museum's exhibitions as well as documentation done by the members of the research team during the previous works at Palmyra. After identification of textiles represented in Palmyrean relief and painting, a multi-aspect analysis of the obtained data will be performed in order to understand the development and importance of textile production in Palmyra and its influence on the local aesthetic. The final goal of this research is an analysis of the outcomes in broader cultural, social and economic context.

Proposed project is an innovative initiative, similar research has never been performed in the Mediterranean region. To date, no site from this region yielded equally abundant material in both categories: archaeological textiles and iconographic representations from the chronologically homogenous period. Similar approach had not been applied in research on Palmyra either.

Now, when the research at Palmyra had been stopped by the tragic political events and a big number of Palmyrean artefacts was irreversibly destroyed by the DAESH troops, study on art and culture of Palmyra shall be seen as a duty of all scholars involved in the past in archaeological projects at this site. Only the complex research on the objects, of which a big number survived only in photographic documentation, can preserve the knowledge about the culture of this unique site for the future generations.