

Ceramic found during excavations is crucial to the study of Mediterranean archaeology for several reasons. First, it was the most commonly produced and transported material in the ancient times. Second, plenty of it survives to this day due to its resistance to taphonomic processes. Third, it is a good indicator of chronology because it breaks easily, needs to be replaced quite often and it is sensitive to change.

Interdisciplinary study of ceramic recovered during excavations lends new perspectives on understanding ancient societies. This approach combines archaeological examinations, using the naked eye and feel in hands as tools (macroscopic analysis), with scientific analysis, utilising equipment and techniques of physical and natural sciences (chemical and petrographic analyses). This allows researchers to learn where and how ceramic was produced, and consequently to trace human choices in order to reconstruct people's mobility, economy as well as changes in culture and technology.

The proposed project focuses on the interdisciplinary study of ceramic found during the French and Greek excavations on the island of Delos (UNESCO World heritage site). The island located in the Aegean, in the centre of the Cyclades, was a sacred place, the birthplace of Apollo and Artemis. The studied ceramic dates to the Hellenistic period (late 4<sup>th</sup> to 1<sup>st</sup> c. BCE) which was the most significant time in the history of the island. The beginning of the Hellenistic period brought the fall of the Athenian domination and independence for the island (314-167/166 BCE). This was a time of political, economic, religious, administrative, and cultural transformation, and establishing its position in the Aegean as the self-controlled island. But in 167 or 168 BCE, the Romans ceded the island to the Athenians and converted it to a 'duty-free' port. This is the beginning of the Late Hellenistic period or the Second Athenian Domination (167/166-88/69 BCE). In this century, the island played a key role in the trade between the western and the eastern Mediterranean. Despite the paramount significance of the island not only in the Aegean but in the entire Hellenistic world, there is still a gap in understanding the economic, social and cultural transformation, which took place on Delos during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE as well as relations between Delos and the neighbouring islands in both phases of the Hellenistic period.

The ceramic recovered on Delos dated to both phases of the Hellenistic period is plentiful and includes a wide variety of categories, table wares, cooking wares, and oil lamps, building material, which are represented by different forms, types and fabrics. This is a vital source of information, which in case of Delos has been overlooked. Previous research was mostly focused on far-distance imports, and only a limited number of studies have been done on the potential local/regional material. This is mostly due to the lack of Hellenistic pottery workshops and because comprehensive macroscopic and laboratory studies have yet to be performed. This causes a gap in our knowledge of pottery production, distribution and circulation on Delos and in the Cyclades. Ignoring this vast resource of information complicates efforts to gain an understanding of the ancient economy, as well as social and cultural relations in region. The proposed research aims to provide the missing in our knowledge through the answering the following research questions:

- Was ceramic produced on Delos or on its dependant territory of Rheneia during the Hellenistic period?
- Which regional production centres were supplying Delos in ceramic material?
- How did the patterns of the regional supply, technology, and possible local production change through time?

The answers to these research questions will provide new data allowing for the investigation of the economic, social and cultural transformation, which took place on the island by providing particular insight to these complex processes. Moreover, it will illuminate the relations between Delos and the neighbouring islands and discuss their nature and changes.