

It is now almost certain that the Roman economy resembled a modern market economy, but certain areas, such as grain deliveries to Rome and army supplies, were largely organized by the state. However, the sphere of influence of the so-called *annona militaris* is currently difficult to understand, due to the lack of data, especially from the Black Sea region.

The proposed project will provide new input in the above-mentioned discussion. Its purpose is to study the economy of the Roman fort Apsaros (today's Gonio, Georgia) by analysing ceramic finds and using modern archaeometric methods, which will bring the following results:

1. Information about the exact origin and content of amphoras and plain wares found in the fort.
2. Reconstruction of the economy of Apsaros based on the results of archaeometric analyses integrated with data from literary, epigraphic, archaeobotanical sources, etc.
3. Comparison of the Apsaros supply system with Novae (another well-researched Black Sea fort) and with 'civilian' sites in the Black Sea region.

Apsaros was one of the principal Roman forts situated on the border between the provinces of Cappadocia and Colchis during the first three centuries of our era. Thanks to its location at the crossroads of sea and land routes, it connected Roman Asia Minor with the Transcaucasia (principally Caucasian Iberia). Despite a short period of abandonment (between the 4th c. and 6th c. AD) the fort was in constant use throughout the Byzantine and Ottoman periods until the end of the 19th century. In 2014 the Polish-Georgian Gonio-Apsaros Expedition began to excavate the site. So far, over a thousand diagnostic amphora fragments, i.e. vessels used to transport products (e.g. wine, olive oil and fish sauces), as well as hundreds of fragments of plain wares have been discovered. A part of these vessels has been subjected to macroscopic analyses.

However, macroscopic analyses do not always reveal the provenance of vessels, which is why more advanced archaeometric methods should be used. Thus, the purpose of this project is to carry out petrographic and chemical analyses of the material. Petrographic studies enable ceramic inclusions to be identified based on differences in their optical properties, which can be observed under a polarising microscope. In turn, chemical analyses reveal the elemental composition of the clay from which the vessels were made through the use of X-rays. Moreover, gas chromatography and mass spectrometry allow the content of the vessels to be studied. Combining these methods helps to determine the origin of different types of vessels and their content.

Until now, archaeometric analyses of pottery produced in the Black Sea basin have been rare, which means that the production places of many amphoras and plain wares remain unknown. This gap in our understanding presents a serious obstacle with regards to studying supply and trade in this region, because transport containers and every-day plain wares are among the most important sources when studying the processes of production and trade in antiquity. Therefore, this project is important not only from a ceramological point of view, but also from the perspective of researching the ancient economy and understanding the ways and means of supplying the Roman army.