

The aim of this project is to define, characterize and contextualize 3000 years of pottery production in one of the oldest cities in the World, and one of the main economic centers in Antiquity: Tyre (Lebanon) from its earliest evidence of human occupation in the Early Bronze Age to the Byzantine Period (Third Millennium BCE to the 6th century AD). Two archaeological areas cover all periods of that city: the Iron Age necropolis of al-Bass and the Acropolis of Tyre. Both are part of the international joint archaeological project in Tyre, which has been developed since 1997 under the direction of Prof. M. E. Aubet (Chair of Prehistory of the Pompeu Fabra University of Barcelona, Spain), Dr. A. Badawi (General Directorate of Antiquities of Lebanon), and Dr. F. J. Núñez (adjunct and head of the Department of Levantine Studies in the Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology of the University of Warsaw). This project has been financed by the Spanish Ministry of Science, the Pallarq Foundation, and, from 2021, by the University of Warsaw.

The ceramic array produced by these excavations covers domestic, ritual, and funerary contexts. It will be approached from the holistic concept of the 'ceramic process' or 'ceramic ecology', which covers all stages, from the extraction of raw materials to the workshop and, from there, to the distribution and use of the vessel in a domestic, ritual or industrial context.

Essential in this analysis will be the identification and definition of the Tyrian ceramic products, which must stand on a synchronic and diachronic identification and definition of (1) their fabrics and variations, (2) their distribution among specific types and wares, and (3) the socioeconomic dimension of this production from the required market for the products concerned.

The project presents a new approach to analyzing the ceramic production in the Levant because it covers the entire Antiquity rather than just a selected subperiod. Ceramic production, from the very beginning of its existence, is a complex process, but at the same time, it is also a continuous one that develops linearly throughout its duration. Therefore, its complexity represents the sum of previous experiences modified by changing social, economic, and political factors.

This project will be developed over three years by an international team, and will involve three basic parts: (1) collection of ceramic samples in Tyre, (2) the chemical, petrographic, and mineralogical characterization of the fabrics, (3) their typological and socio-economic analysis. All those approaches will be developed from both synchronic and diachronic perspectives.

The outcome will be a new and comprehensive view of one of Tyre's main economic undertakings, which was oriented to satisfy the demand emanating from the needs and habits of its society and the requirements of the productive sector. Taking those factors as a reference, this project will improve, in particular, our knowledge of the technical, typological, social and economic aspects of the Tyrian ceramic production: (1) an accurate picture of the evolution of the ceramic production in Tyre, (2) a precise definition of their fabrics and an analysis of their distribution among the diverse wares and typological array; (3) evidences relative to the relationship among fabric, type, and ware from synchronic and diachronic perspectives; (4) an analysis of the existing relationship among fabric, vessel and context of use; (5) a better knowledge of the Tyrian commerce network and, in particular the dynamics of the Phoenician commercial expansion to the western Mediterranean, by creating a technological and typological reference for Phoenician ceramic productions overseas; (6) the results will be contrasted with data generated in other regions of the Levant; (7) the objective would be to apply this methodology to other sites located in the central Levant to obtain a comprehensive picture of pottery production in Antiquity in the region.

The diffusion of the results of this project will involve four basic means: a monographic volume, several articles in specialized scientific periodicals, presentations in international congresses, and the creation of a webpage where the analysis processes followed in the project will be presented in open access.