



ProTeAS: The PROduction and TEchnology of Late Roman I Amphorae in Cyprus. An interdisciplinary Study of kiln site material and their digital documentation.



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Summary of the Research Project

Late Roman 1 (LR1) amphorae were produced in numerous provinces of the Eastern Roman Empire and were one of the most widely traded types of maritime transport containers in the Mediterranean. Their distribution denotes the extensive trade networks that operated during Late Antiquity and their study provides valuable insights into the complexity of multiscale regional and inter-regional exchanges. The Cypriot production is among the best documented, with at least three LR1 kiln sites investigated, thus far. Due to the type's morphological standardisation, however, it currently remains difficult to pinpoint the provenance of all different type-variants or associate them with specific production centres. ProTeAS aims at addressing this research issue through the comprehensive compositional and technological characterisation of LR1 amphorae from identified Cypriot kiln sites at Amathous, Zygi and Paphos. Chemical, mineralogical and microstructural methods of ceramic characterisation, including petrography, wavelength-dispersive X-ray fluorescence spectrometry, and scanning electron microscopy will be used for collecting information about LR1 fabric composition and technology of production, raw material selection and firing processes. This integrated approach will allow the identification and documentation of particular ceramic attributes that could be used to distinguish the products of different

regions within Cyprus. At a second stage, it would also allow the identification of Cypriot LR1 across the eastern Mediterranean, towards an enhanced understanding of the Cypriot amphora industry, the nature and scale of commodity distribution, and the trade networks in operation at that time.

Apart from the acquisition of new knowledge, an important feature of *ProTeAS* project is the design of a digital databank that will host all the accumulated morphological, contextual, mineralogical, elemental and microstructural data. This data repository will be compatible with existing online fabric databases, thus providing services to the wider archaeological community that works with Late Roman pottery in the Mediterranean. The project's added value for the local research capacity building is also significant: the creation of a core reference collection will set the basis for the development of amphora studies on the island and will reinforce the burgeoning field of maritime archaeology.

