

Mediterranean Ceramics

Identification, Recovery and Improvement of Ancient Mediterranean Ceramic Manufacturing Technologies for the Reproduction of Ceramic Artefacts of Archaeological Value



Objectives

- Identification of raw materials used in the production of ancient Mediterranean ceramics
- Recovery and Revival of lost manufacturing techniques
- Improvement of manufacturing processes through application of modern scientific methods, while respecting health and safety regulations
- Dissemination of knowledge

Mediterranean ceramics

- Attic black and red, Greece (7th- 4th cent. BC)
- Terra Sigillata, Spain (2th cent. BC- 2th cent. AC)
- Nabataean, Jordan (1st cent. BC- 6th cent. AC)
- Iznik, Turkey (15th- 17th cent. AC)
- Majolica, Morocco and Spain (17th- 18th cent. AC)

Implementation

- Ethno-archaeological research and documentation of the ancient techniques
- Physicochemical studies of archaeological artefacts and raw materials
- Experimental ceramic reproductions
- Compliance of contemporary production with health and safety regulations mainly through the development of novel lead free or lead safe glaze formulations

Achievements

- Full scale reproduction of the five ceramic types
Thorough understanding of failure causes
Improvement of production yield
- Preservation of the Mediterranean cultural heritage
- New employment opportunities
- Dissemination of knowledge: www.cera-med.net, educational programs, exhibitions, thematic workshops
- Establishment of a CERAMED 'museum quality' label for aesthetically sound and technologically authentic reproductions of antique type ceramics



Food for thought

A well-documented problem, especially in the Mediterranean, is the illegal trade in archaeological value objects. The contemporary production of Museum quality, technologically authentic, and archaeologically documented ceramic artefacts may well mitigate the demand for the originals, while at the same time allowing access to a wider clientele. This policy has been adopted recently by the Peruvian government, which set up outlets for high quality 'certified' artefacts in order to reduce the illegal export of pre Columbian antiquities. One aim of the project is the promotion of similar policies by the countries involved (Greece, Turkey, Spain, Morocco and Jordan). The Greek Ministry of Culture has already adopted such a policy by commissioning "museum quality" reproductions for sale at the major museum shops. The same applies to the Benaki and Cycladic Art Museum shops that offer such authentic reproductions of items in their respective collections. Another similar measure adopted by the Greek Ministry of Culture is the creation of exhibitions promoting regional history based on high quality reproductions of local archaeological finds (Athens Metro stations, Corinth Suburban rail terminal).

There is of course an intrinsic danger that these high quality reproductions might be artificially aged in order to enter the market as originals. As a safeguard against this eventuality a Museum quality label or elemental tag will be stamped or inserted in the ceramic body and the production will be documented and communicated to the Antique Market and major Auction Houses.

Partners

- Theoretical and Physical Chemistry Institute, National Hellenic Research Foundation, Athens, Greece www.eie.gr
- Equip de Reserca Arqueometrica, Dept. Prehistòria- Història Antiga i Arqueologia, Universitat de Barcelona, Spain www.ub.edu
- Materials Science Institute, TUBITAK - Marmara Research Center, Istanbul, Turkey www.mam.gov.tr
- Queen Rania Institute of Tourism and Heritage, The Hashemite University, Zarqa, Jordan www.hu.edu.jo
- Faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humaines, Université Mohammed I, Oujda, Morocco
- Thetis Authentics Ltd, Science and Techniques for Art-History-Conservation, Athens, Greece www.thetis.gr



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