Delos, home of the sanctuary of Apollo since the archaic period, underwent a period of rapid economic development after 167 BCE, when the Romans put the island under Athenian dominion and by granting the port a "duty free" status turned it into a commercial base connecting the eastern and western Mediterranean. Between 167 BCE and the sacks of 88 and 69 BCE by the troops of Mithridates and the pirate Athenadoros, the island became an intermediary step in Rome’s commercial relations with the Hellenistic east. According to the literary sources, slaves and luxury goods—all originating in the Middle and Far East—as well as the highly prized Delian bronze statues were traded through Delos. The result of this important economic development and the unprecedented demographic growth that it generated was an accelerated urbanisation on the island—which is attested by the formation of new neighbourhoods and the redevelopment of existing urban and port areas of the island.
Although the literary sources stress the importance of the Delian trade, the archaeological record has not provided evidence for the ways in which the commercial centre operated. This is the aim of my study of the urban development of the late Hellenistic city of Delos—namely to explain the ways in which the city accommodated the economic activities as well as the large number of businesspeople that were coming through. The study was funded by the Marie Curie Intra-European Fellowship scheme (FP7-PEOPLE-2012-IEF, n° PIEF-GA-2012-331969) and was hosted by the National Hellenic Research Foundation until the end of March 2015. The study is now my major research project as a Birmingham Research Fellow in Visual and Material Culture of Classical Antiquity in the Department of Classics, Ancient History and Archaeology (https://urbanetworks.wordpress.com).

In order to further understand the organization and operation of the Delian trade, I initiated the underwater fieldwork project in collaboration with the Ephorate of Underwater Antiquities (https://urbanetworks.wordpress.com/underwater-fieldwork-project/). The underwater fieldwork project is a cooperation of the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports and the National Hellenic Research Foundation, where I maintain a position as an adjunct research associate. There is a scarcity of permits for the British School at Athens in Greece, and after discussing with the former and current Directors of the British School (Catherine Morgan and John Bennett) we concluded that the best course of action is to maintain my position as an external research associate at the National Hellenic Research Foundation in order to continue the underwater survey.

The first fieldwork season was conducted in October 2014 and was funded by the Marie Curie Intra-European Fellowship scheme. The second fieldwork was conducted in May-June 2015 and was funded by the University of Birmingham and the Roman Society.

The aim of the first two seasons of the underwater survey was to re-identify and map the submerged remains in the Stadion District. In the past these remains had been identified as port facilities. However during the first underwater investigation, carried in October 2014, it was found out that they are in fact settlement remains that form the eastward limit of the Stadion District towards the sea. We came to this conclusion after finding a partly preserved structure with 16 storage pots at a depth of about 1,5-2 meters and at a distance of 30 meters from the shoreline.
During the 2015 fieldwork season the storage pots found at a depth of 1.5-2 m in October 2014 were cleaned (Image 1). During the cleaning, two more pots were found and the structure with the 18 storage pots was mapped and photographed (Image 2).

Furthermore a second structure with 15 storage pots embedded in a beachrock formation was located at a depth of about 70 cm and at a distance of 10 meters from the shoreline (Image 3). This second space is part of a building with at least 5 rooms, located along the shoreline, enclosed between two streets. The floor of this building is embedded within a beachrock formation (Image 4). The walls of the building (Image 5) and 9 fallen fragments of columns in the middle of the building—probably remains of its peristyle courtyard—were also mapped. In addition, remains of large stone plinths that formed the eastern breakwater of the Stadion District were located and documented. The building is therefore located at the eastern edge of the district along the ancient coastline, which was artificially formed.

The size of this building and its association with commercial activities makes it comparable to the large commercial buildings on the west side of the island, to the south of the main harbour, which are also located along the ancient coastline. The identification of a facility that is associated with commercial activities so close to the ancient shoreline is an important finding for understanding the ways in which the Delian emporion operated. Studies so far have focused on the area of the main harbour and the Stadion District was hitherto considered as a kind of suburb. The finds from the underwater investigation in the Stadion District prove that this area had a very similar character to the areas next to the main harbour and was part of the Delian emporion. It is possible that the small bay to the north of the
neighbourhood in the area of Gourna served as an anchorage during the late Hellenistic period in order to complement the activities of the main port, and an anchor found in this bay in 2003 supports this hypothesis.

**Photographs**

Image 1. Cleaning of the storage pots located at the a depth of about 1.5-2 m.  
Image 2. View towards the east of the structure with the 18 storage pots.

Image 3. Close view of the 15 storage pots that have been embedded in the beachrock formation at a depth of about 70 cm.  
Image 4. Close view of the building’s floor that has been embedded in a beachrock formation.

Image 5. View towards the NA of the building that is located along the shoreline.
Related Links

Press Releases of the Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Education and Religious Affairs
[29.06.2015]: http://www.yppo.gr/2/g22.jsp?obj_id=61632
[19.11.2014]: http://www.yppo.gr/2/g22.jsp?obj_id=59132

Press Release of the National Hellenic Research Foundation

Press coverage

http://www.archaeology.wiki/blog/2015/06/30/new-finds-waters-north-east-delos/
(see also attached excerpts)
Nazca archaeological sites in danger near Ica, Peru

‘Invasores’ (‘invaders’) have taken possession of two large tracts of land in a protected area.

‘Cowboy builders’ blamed for Rome’s crumbling Colosseum

An ambitious attempt to save Rome’s Colosseum from collapse is being undermined by the authorities’ cost-cutting decision to employ ordinary builders rather than specialists to perform the delicate overhaul, restoration experts have claimed.

New finds at Kissonerga-Skalia

The Ministry of Communications and Works, Department of Antiquities announces the completion of the latest season of excavation at the Early–Middle Bronze Age settlement of Kissonerga-Skalia.

New finds at Aigai

Three impressive funerary monuments which might open a new chapter to the study of the evolution of the so-called Macedonian Tombs have been discovered.

An ancient city (1200-100 BC) comes to light at Krousona

An important archaeological excavation has just started at “Koupos” by Krosona. It is expected to bring to light more findings from a settlement that has already proved a life span of twelve centuries.

New finds in the waters north-east of Delos

The use of the sunken buildings

The new finds which came to light during the investigations conducted by the Ephorate of Underwater Antiquities in collaboration with the National Hellenic Research Foundation on the northeastern side of Delos, were announced yesterday. The collaboration is part of the survey funded by the University of Birmingham and the Roman Society and headed by Dr Mantha Zarmakoupi (scientific responsible, architect and underwater archaeologist) from the National Hellenic Research Foundation regarding the city planning of Delos during the Late Hellenistic period.

Aim of the underwater surveys were to re-identify and map the remains in the sea area of the Stadion District (Quartier du Stade). In the past these remains had been identified as port facilities. However during the archaeological investigation in October 2014 it was found out that they are in fact settlement remains, e.g. the eastern borders of the Stadion District. Researchers came to this conclusion after finding a floor with 16 in situ embedded clay vessels (amphoriskoi), semi-preserved.

The new finds

During the survey the storage vessels found in depth of 1,5-2 meters in October 2014 were cleaned. During the cleaning, two more vessels were found. The 18 storage vessel were again graphically illustrated and photographed. Also a floor with another 15 embedded storage vessels was located in a depth of 70 cm and mapped.

This second room is part of a building with at least 5 rooms, located along the shoreline, enclosed between two streets. The floor of the building is embedded in the beachrock. The room containing the 15 vessels is situated about 10 meters away from the shoreline. The walls of the building and 9 fallen fragments of columns, apparently part of its colonnade, were mapped.

Big stone blocks were located and photographed in the extension of the room with the 18 embedded vessels. These stone blocks were part of the eastern quay of the Stadion District.

The underwater surveys of Delos clarify the use of the sunken buildings in the Stadion District. It seems that in this area a second commercial harbor was used in an auxiliary manner next to the central ancient harbor of Delos in the west part of the island.
New finds off the north-east coast of Delos

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Source: Archaiologia Online [June 30, 2015]
New finds off the north-east coast of Delos

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