



**Colette BEESTMAN-KRUIJSHAAR**

**University of Amsterdam**

***The uses of ceramics in Hellenistic Halos***

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Shortly after her graduation in Mediterranean Archaeology at the University of Groningen in 1993, she started processing and studying the pottery of New Halos, a Hellenistic town in Thessaly, Greece, excavated by the Groningen Institute of Archaeology (The Netherlands). One of the main advantages of the Halos excavations is that all pottery was kept for analysis. In October 2007, she started her PhD research within the project 'New Perspectives on Ancient Pottery' (University of Amsterdam), with special interest in (Hellenistic) domestic pottery, which has not been studied much in a systematic way.

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Ms Beestman's PhD study focusses on the comparison between household, funeral and ritual pottery assemblages, and their relationships with regard to production, supply and consumption. In this work she moves away from social explanatory models, and embraces the concept of "symmetrical archaeology" (Bjørnar Olsen), drawing on Actor-Network Theory (Bruno Latour).

The assemblages retrieved from houses and a farmhouse, a cemetery, and a small shrine form the basis for a comparative study on the uses of ceramics in context, in which the usual divide between coarseware and fineware, plain and decorated, utilitarian and ritual/ceremonial has been renounced. Pottery vessels are regarded as things with intrinsic qualities of their own which they bring to our cohabitation with them, and not passive entities that are waiting to be embodied with culturally constituted meanings. This approach sheds new light on developments in Hellenistic pottery styles and shape repertoire, which will be exemplified with a case study on drinking cups and drinking practices in the domestic sphere