PROVENANCE STUDY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTTERY

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Ceramic is the first artificially produced material by man and is the most frequently excavated material. The typological analysis – comparison of decoration and form of the excavated pottery allow of the archaeologist to create a chronology of the excavated site. One of the questions arise in such cases is: Where was produced some kind of pottery found in different similar sites? Who was the discoverer of this special type of decoration or form of pottery? Is the existing type of pottery object of trade between the two sites or regions? The answer of these questions could be found with provenance study of the excavated pottery which is generally based on the fact that the chemical composition of an artefact usually reflects the geochemical features of the raw materials (clay) it was made of. The chemical composition of ceramic finds reflects very accurately the geochemical characteristics of the region where the clay for their production came from.

The determination of chemical composition of pottery every analytical method could be used, which allows the determination of large number of elements in ceramic. Usually methods like INAA, XRF, AAS, ICP-AES etc. can be used.

In the proposed report the principles of provenance study of pottery will be presented as well as some comparison of the useful of different analytical methods in such kind of investigation will be carried out. In the report some examples of the investigations of pottery finds from medieval and Hellenistic time from different archaeological sites in Bulgaria will be given.