Sand from the sealed Middle Byzantine amphorae of cape Stoba shipwreck

Jaklić, Manuela; Zmaić Kralj, Vesna; Mileusnić, Marta


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approaches used to characterise the residues. Special attention will be given to compound-specific isotope analysis, which allows further distinction between terrestrial ruminant adipose fats, dairy fats, non-ruminant fats and even wild animals fats as well as fats from marine and freshwater sources based on the d13C signatures of the palmitic and stearic acids commonly found in archaeological residues. Complexities and limitations of the technique will also be discussed.

The results obtained from ORA on vessels recovered from the Late Bronze Age cemetery and settlement of Mačkovac-Crišnjevi, in Northern Croatia will be presented. The site is located on the left bank of the Sava River, near the town of Nova Gradiška and is dated to the BrC2 to HaA1 period (Barice-Gredani group). Lipids were extracted and characterised using Gas Chromatography-Mass Spectrometry (GC-MS) and Gas Chromatography - combustion - Isotope Ratio Mass Spectrometry (GC-c-IRMS). The results obtained were found to complement faunal data, and further show the use of dairy products.

Manuela Jaklić1, Vesna Zmaić Kralj2 & Marta Mileusnić1
1 Faculty of Mining, Geology and Petroleum Engineering, University of Zagreb, Croatia
2 Croatian Conservation Institute, Zagreb, Croatia

Sand from the sealed Middle Byzantine amphorae of cape Stoba shipwreck

The remains of cape Stoba shipwreck lies on the seabed near Mljet island at the depth between 21 and 28 m. The wreck-site is evidenced by a cargo of amphorae and glass dated back to the 10th-11th century AD. Five amphoras, located in the cargo part of the ship, as well as the small ceramic vessel which had to be placed in the ship’s kitchen, were found filled with sand and closed with a wooden stopper and resin. The aim of this study is a characterization of the sand which could help in the determination of its purpose.
Sand samples from amphorae and vessel, as well as from the sea bottom, were investigated. Mineralogical content was determined using X-ray diffraction and grain size distribution by wet sieving. From fine sand magnetic fraction is separated. All granulometric and magnetic fractions were examined by binocular magnifier. All sand samples are marine sediment of carbonate composition. Sand grains are mainly skeletons of the Mollusca, Corals, Foraminifera, Sponges and Echinodermes.

This investigation has neglected the archaeological assumption that sand was used as a raw material for glass manufacture. One of the assumptions is that sand could serve as dishwash as it was found in a small ceramic vessel inside the kitchen as well. But, the composition of sand is not suitable for this purpose. It is not possible that sand from the sea bottom entered in amphorae through a small hole at the center of the cap as the coarser grain size were found. Additionally, the depth at which the amphorae were found is below the base of the waves, and the sea currents in this area are not strong enough to produce a significant suspension of seabed material. This sand could serve as a ballast, although archaeologists have not encountered such a case so far.

Nina Dirié1, Tatjana Glihak1 & Danny Rosenberg2
1 Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum, Mainz, Germany
2 Laboratory for Ground Stone Tools Research, Zinman Institute of Archaeology, University of Haifa, Israel

Provenance analysis of basaltic rock tools of Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Age I periods in Israel

The fact that vessels as well potter’s wheels and spindle whorls in Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Age I were made selectively from basaltic rocks shows that this raw material played a major role for tool production as well as for craft specialization during these periods. These items obviously had a great value for the communities in the southern Levant, facing increasing social and economic changes.

The petrological definition of the raw material of the archaeological finds, as well as the determination of the sources of basaltic rocks that were used for these tools, enables not only the mapping of the distribution of these items across the landscape and over time but also tracking possible trade routes and exchange mechanisms.

The value of basaltic rock tools as carriers for information is essential. In contrast to many other raw materials, the petrological characteristics of a basaltic tool correspond directly to the characteristics of its source.

To achieve more information about trade/exchange systems, a geochemical database of the basaltic raw material is currently created to enable a geochemical affiliation of the archaeological finds to their sources. For this reason, over 500 basaltic rock samples were collected in Israel and geochemically analyzed over the past years. The evaluation of the major and trace element analytical data supported by cluster analyses show that single basaltic rock deposits can be distinguished from each other as well as from other sources outside the borders of modern Israel. This permits an exact tracking of the origin of the archaeological finds.

This presentation will give an overview of the geological background data as well as present a case study of a Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Age I assemblage in order to demonstrate the approach of the provenance determinations.

Danica D. Mihailović1, Tristan Carter2, Kathryn Campeau3, Anda Petrović4 & Nikolaos Skarpelis5
1 Archaeological Institute, Belgrade, Serbia
2 Department of Anthropology, McMaster University, Hamilton, Canada
3 Department of Anthropology, University of Toronto Mississauga, T. Donnelly Health Sciences Complex, Ontario, Canada
4 Università La Sapienza, Roma, Dipartimento di Scienze dell’Antichità, Rome, Italy
5 Department of Economic Geology and Geochemistry, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece

The Earliest Evidence for the use of Emery in Toolmaking from Stelida, Naxos

The Cycladic island of Naxos, Greece is long renowned for its geology, and the range of lithic resources used in antiquity, not least marble, chert and emery. The latter raw material is particularly rare, with few sources in the larger region, and globally more generally. While its use as an abrasive from the later Neolithic to modern times is relatively well established, this paper focuses on its previously undocumented use as a resource for the production of flaked stone tools.

Emery consists mainly of blue corundum and is mixed with magnetic iron ore creating the rough granular abrasive stone. It is one of the hardest materials to knap being graded 6-9 on Mohs scale depending on the source. Here we detail the first evidence for an assemblage of flaked stone implements, knapping debris and hammerstones of emery stone from Stelida on the northwest coast of Naxos, a chert source and stone tool workshop (located at least 5km distant from the nearest emery outcrops) whose exploitation spanned ~9000 to ≥2000,000 years ago. In the presentation we discuss the techno-typological characteristics of emery assemblage, discuss its distribution across the site and its potential chronological range of use, before then considering the exploitation of this material within the context of hominin and early human mobility on Naxos, and Palaeolithic behavioural studies more generally.

Ivan Jerković1, Željana Bašić1, Ivana Kružić1 & Simun Andelinović2,3
1 University Department of Forensic Sciences, University of Split, Croatia
2 Clinical Dep. for Pathology, Forensic Medicine and Cytology, Clinical Hospital Center, Split, Croatia
3 School of Medicine, Split, Croatia

Data archaeology in archaeometry and osteometry: can we simulate raw data from descriptive statistics?

In all scientific fields, the external validity of the studies is an indispensable condition to generalize the results. So, validation and cross-population studies are always of paramount importance. Although researchers are encouraged to provide and publish their raw data, it is still more exception than a rule. Also, many earlier studies contain valuable data, but it is not possible to access them. Recent anthropological studies provided a novel approach that employs algorithms used to recreate data from descriptive statistics. Using the assumption that skeletal metric data from a homogenous sample follow the normal distribution, they provided raw data and constructed metapopulation data. Although that approach showed promising results, it was not tested in detail if the original sample and simulated sample differed.