

Petro-mineralogical and geochemical characterization of Middle Neolithic Bükk Culture fine ware (Hungary)

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Bükk Culture is one of the 'industrial' prehistoric cultures in the Carpathian Basin (Middle Neolithic, cca. 5300-5000 B.C. The core of the distribution area is located at NE Hungary-and SE Slovakia). It is famous for its intensive role in lithic trade and even more famous for its pottery of artistic perfection. Bükk pottery is claimed to be traded over large areas much beyond the limits of the tribal quarters.

The authors had the first essay on the subject of Bükk pottery distribution and petroarchaeology of the ceramic in connection with a German-Hungarian Collaboration project centred on Early Neolithic pottery. As a valuable by-product, characterisation and provenancing of Bükk pottery was emerging, giving a basis for the continuation of the collaboration.

In the current project, a systematic and representative study of Bükk pottery products is initiated, in the first phase, on the core of the tribal area. Our basic aim is to compare Bükk fine ware from sites of the Bükk Culture of different topographic position (cave, hill top, valley) and to identify local or regional raw materials and making technology (and probable workshops). In addition, characteristic incrustation of fine ware will be under observation. Later on we are planning to compare 'Bükk imports' that are found or claimed sometimes in the distance of several hundred kilometres from the territory of the Bükk Culture.

The framework of the project involves detailed petrographic (PM), mineralogical (XRD) and geochemical (XRF and PGAA) characterisation. Collecting these data on both archaeological finds and comparative soil/clay samples from the field, it will be possible to determine the applied special raw materials and/or special manufacturing techniques of Bükk fine ware. Raman microscopic analysis is planned to investigate the decoration. By creating the "fingerprint" of Bükk pottery, their possible long distance traded vessels may be identified in later future.

References

Szilágyi, V. et al. (in press): Preliminary archaeometrical data of the Middle Neolithic Bükk culture's fineware. Proceedings of the 37th ISA.

Project descriptions:

Archaeometrical analysis of Neolithic pottery and comparison to potential sources of raw materials in their immediate environment <http://www.ace.hu/daad/daad2/english.html>

Long distance trade in Neolithic pottery <http://www.ace.hu/daad/daad3/english.html>