

POSSIBILITIES AND LIMITATION OF MACROSCOPIC DETERMINATION OF POTTERY FABRICS IN THE FIELD

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Many proposals were made how to describe pottery fabrics in the field and there is a lot of experience of many groups of archaeologists working in different regions. But in many instances later archaeometric analysis done to check the fabric groups from field showed large discrepancies and the fabric groups classified in the field were not confirmed. If the laboratory test was not made in the beginning of the field work later corrections of the previous pottery classification mostly is impossible. Therefore, and also in cases when a large number of samples can not be taken to a laboratory e.g. to another country for archaeometric analysis, a fabric classification and documentation in the field is necessary. Modern digital cameras offer a cheap and quick possibility to make a photo of a fresh break. This could be done with thousands of sherds. Later thin sections studies, refiring (MGR-analysis) and chemical analysis can be made on a few sherds and then correlated to the appearance in the fabric photo. This is tested using examples from a basis of 500 sherds from Neolithic to Islamic periods collected during archaeological field surveys in Oman and analysed in the laboratories in Berlin and Warsaw (project was paid by DFG). For the laboratory analysis a down-up sampling strategy was used starting with 500 MGR-analyses, followed by selecting 70 samples for chemical analyses by WD-XRF and 52 for thin sectioning.