Pottery fragmentation in archaeology: Picking up the pieces

Abstract:

One important aspect of the material culture covered in fragmentation research is pottery. The very ubiquity of pottery in most periods of archaeology has meant that previous researchers have considered certain aspects of ceramic breakage and re-fitting, in particular the chronological aspects of sherd re-fits. However, in the absence of fragmentation theory to explain the implications of sherd re-fits, it was all too easy to reach flawed conclusions in respect of the stratigraphic implications of sherd re-fits. This question will be re-visited here, as well as a number of recent studies dealing with pottery fragmentation and its implications for our understanding of the past.

Keywords: *pottery, fragmentation, sherd re-fits, stratigraphic research, archaeology.*