CHEMICAL ANALYSIS

A SERIES OF MONOGRAPHS ON ANALYTICAL CHEMISTRY AND ITS APPLICATIONS

Editor

J. D. WINEFORDNER

VOLUME 155



WILEY-INTERSCIENCE

A JOHN WILEY & SONS, INC., PUBLICATION

New York • Chichester • Weinheim • Brisbane • Singapore • Toronto

Modern Analytical Methods in Art and Archaeology

ENRICO CILIBERTO AND GIUSEPPE SPOTO

Editors

Dipartimento di Scienze Chimiche Università di Catania Catania, Italy



WILEY-INTERSCIENCE

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data:

Modern analytical methods in art and archaeology / E. Ciliberto and G. Spoto, editors.

p. cm. — (Chemical analysis; v. 155)

Includes index.

ISBN 0-471-29361-X (alk. paper)

1. Art—Expertising. 2. Chemistry, Analytic—Methodology. 3. Archaeological

chemistry. I. Ciliberto, E. (Enrico) II. Spoto, G. (Giuseppe) III. Series.

99-057435

N8558.M63 2000

702′.8′8—dc21

Printed in the United States of America.

CHAPTER

4

X-RAY FLUORESCENCE

LUC MOENS

University Ghent, Laboratory of Analytical Chemistry, Ghent, Belgium

ALEX VON BOHLEN

Institut für Spektrochemie und Angewandte Spektroskopie, ISAS, Dortmund, Germany

PETER VANDENABEELE

University Ghent, Laboratory of Analytical Chemistry, Ghent, Belgium

4.1. INTRODUCTION

X-ray fluorescence (XRF) analysis allows the concentrations of most elements of the periodic table to be determined. The method has many advantages that make it very suited for the analysis of artifacts. It allows solid materials to be analyzed directly without necessitating dissolution or any other time-consuming or destructive sample preparation. Small objects can be brought to the XRF instrument and in many cases analyzed as such. The method is consumption free and, apart from occasional radiation damage, will leave the artifact unaltered and suited for analysis with other methods. Mobile XRF instruments allow larger objects to be studied on site. Obviously, it is also possible to sample the artifacts if such is ethically acceptable. A further advantage of the method is its capability to determine major, minor, and trace element concentrations. Finally, XRF is a well-established method, the possibilities and limitations of which are known and well understood. The operation costs are low and the analysis times are short.

Accurate quantitative analysis of unprepared artifacts may be difficult because XRF (except total reflection XRF, TXRF) suffers from matrix effects for which it is not easy to correct. Also, the concentrations measured with

Modern Analytical Methods in Art and Archaeology, Edited by Enrico Ciliberto and Giuseppe Spoto. Chemical Analysis Series, Vol. 155 ISBN 0-471-29361-X © 2000 John Wiley & Sons, Inc. 4.2. NATURE OF X-RAYS AND X-RAY FLUORESCENCE

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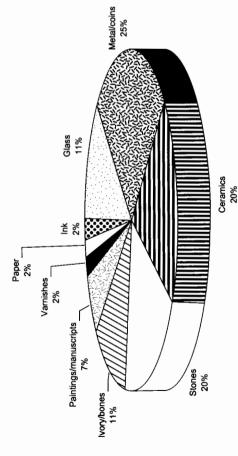


Figure 4.1. Relative importance (1995-1998) of different XRF application fields in archaeology and art history.

weathered objects this composition may considerably deviate from that of XRF mainly reflect the composition of the outer layers of the material. For alleviated when samples are taken from the artifact and sample preparation the unaltered material below the patina. These limitations are obviously methods aiming at accurate quantification are applied. TXRF, under optimal circumstances, is free from matrix effects and quantification can be simple.

and art historical materials. Figure 4.1 depicts the different application fields A literature search for the period 1995 to 1998 revealed that XRF analysis and their respective importance (period 1996 to 1998). Metallic objects (including coins) and potsherds make more than 50% of the applications, but is still widely used to identify and characterize a variety of archaeological stone material and bones and ivory have been studied as well. Also painted surfaces and glass were found to have been the subject of XRF analysis.

In this chapter the XRF techniques used will be discussed, and the application field will be reviewed via a limited number of typical applications. Rather than emphasizing the analytical details, the archaeometric potential of the method will be illustrated.

4.2. NATURE OF X-RAYS AND X-RAY FLUORESCENCE

Only a part of their spectral range between 0.1 and 100 keV or according to X-rays are part of the electromagnetic spectrum (cf. Fig. 4.2) and were discovered and described by W. C. Röntgen in 1895 (Bertin 1975; Broll 1996).

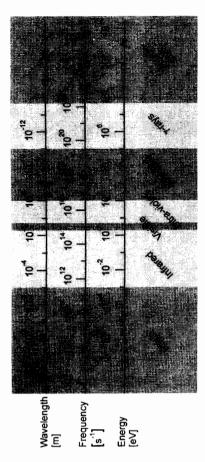


Figure 4.2. Electromagnetic spectrum.

analysis for material sciences. The X-rays are generated by bombardment of a target by means of charged particles, electrons, or ions leading to X-ray served X-ray spectra are composed of a continuum with wide spectral range the relationship $E = hc/\lambda$, between 10 and 0.01 nm is used in X-ray spectral emission or by high-energy radiation leading to X-ray fluorescence. The obsuperimposed by well-defined X-ray lines.

The energy difference between the shells involved in the transition process of The selection rules of quantum theory dictate which electron transitions are as illustrated in Figure 4.3. For instance, in $K_{\beta l}$, the capital K refers to the K which an electron leaves to fill up the originally created vacancy and to the relative intensities of the X-rays. The wavelength of the emitted X-rays depends on the atomic number Z of the excited atoms. For a given type of When applying sufficient kinetic energy, both, radiation and particles are able to penetrate into the atoms and to remove electrons from their inner shells. After the ejection of electrons, the atoms are in an energetically un-Greek letters and digits are used to further denote the X-rays in a conventional and nonsystematic way; thereby reference is made to the orbitals from X-ray (e.g., K_{α} or $K_{\beta 1}$) the dependence of its wavelength on Z is described by stable configuration, and electrons from outer shells fill up the vacancies. electrons is emitted—in the case of inner electrons shells—as X-ray photons. allowed. The nomenclature of emitted X-rays is based on conventional rules, shell (Bohr's atom model) from which initially an electron was expelled. Moseley's law:

$$\lambda = k_1/(Z - k_2)^2$$

where λ is the wavelength and k_1 and k_2 are constants. Each element emits X-rays with specific wavelengths that characterize the element. This char59

4.3. X-RAY FLUORESCENCE SPECTROMETRY

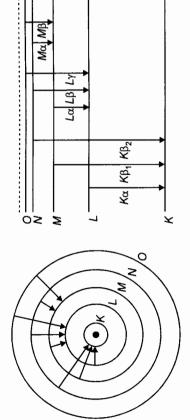


Figure 4.3. Electron transitions for different shells involved in the emission of X-rays.

trations of these elements. Main constituents up to 100% as well as minor constituents or even traces can thus be determined in a great variety of ultraviolet (UV) and visible part of the spectrum, the characteristic X-ray cient to characterize all the elements. In general, no distinction can be made between characteristic X-rays from isotopes of the same element or from for the two first elements of the periodic table of the elements, hydrogen and helium, that do not produce X-ray spectra, all elements are accessible to a qualitative and quantitative X-ray analysis. Thereby the wavelengths or while the intensities of individual signals are proportional to the concenacteristic radiation can be detected and is graphically represented by a characteristic X-ray spectrum. In contrast to the atomic emission lines in the spectra are simple: whereas Fe has alone 6000 UV-vis emission lines, not more than 600 X-ray lines are relevant in X-ray spectrometry and are suffiatoms of the same element present in different chemical compounds. Except energies of the emitted X-rays identify the elements contained in a sample, samples.

spectrometry several monographs are available: Bertin (1975), Williams tation, the quantification, and classical applications of X-rays and X-ray For detailed information concerning the physical nature, the instrumen-(1987), Jenkins (1988), and Klockenkämper (1996)

4.3. X-RAY FLUORESCENCE SPECTROMETRY

Being a form of electromagnetic radiation, X-rays can be described in terms of wave phenomena or as corpuscles. In particular, X-rays show interference effects that can be explained effectively by wave theory (Bertin 1975). One of these effects is coherent scatter (Williams 1987) usefully interpreted as a

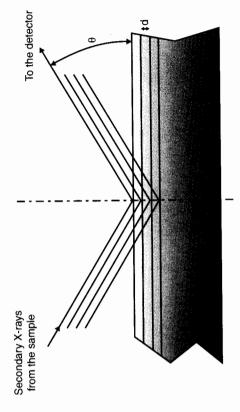


Figure 4.4. Diffraction of X-rays by a crystal according to Bragg; $\lambda=$ wavelength, $\theta=$ Bragg angle of diffraction, d = interplanar spacing of diffracting planes.

crystal planes (cf. Fig. 4.4). When a collimated X-ray beam of wavelength λ is directed at an angle θ onto a crystal with crystal planes of spacing d, a reinforced scatter of the radiation can be observed (Williams 1987) under the wave phenomenon by Bragg, who considers it as a reflection on a stack of angle of reflection on condition that Bragg's law

$$n\lambda = 2d \cdot \sin \theta$$

is fulfilled for an integer number n.

4.3.1. Wavelength-Dispersive X-Ray Fluorescence Spectrometry

fluorescence spectrometry (WDXRF) to select the characteristic X-rays of This so-called Bragg reflection is fully used in wavelength-dispersive X-ray interest originating from a sample, by selecting the corresponding angle θ . A schematic representation of a WDXRF spectrometer is shown in Figure 4.5.

nating from the sample is guided through a collimator that allows only rays a crystal, and are reflected according to Bragg's law. Scanning the angle θ by rotating the crystal and simultaneous displacement of the detector with a In WDXRF samples are irradiated by the primary X-rays of an X-ray source. The induced secondary X-ray radiation consists of different waveengths originating from the different elements of the sample and reflecting its elemental composition. The secondary (or fluorescence) radiation origiwith parallel propagation to pass. The X-rays reach a Bragg reflector, that is,

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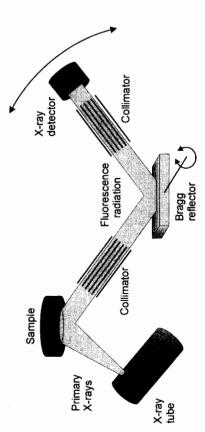


Figure 4.5. Schematic representation of a wavelength dispersive X-ray fluorescence spectrometer (WDXRF).

tially detect X-rays of different wavelength. The radiation selected by the Bragg reflector will pass a second collimator before reaching the detector. By or when only some elements are of interest, the intensity of the X-rays of the high mechanical accuracy (better than 0.001°) make it possible to sequenthe aid of a computer, the signals are recorded and composed to a spectrum corresponding wavelengths are reported.

voltages up to 100 kV; the current (milliampere) is adjusted to a maximum Several excitation sources are used in X-ray spectrometry. The most common are X-ray tubes producing a broad beam spanning a large solid angle. These are built as end- or side-window tubes that are operated at high oad of 2 or 3 kW. Also fine-focus tubes (power 0.6 to 3 kW) or tubes with rotating anodes (power up to 18 kW) are used in WDXRF spectrometers.

Since it is impossible to select all wavelengths using a single Bragg reflecor the stability of the crystal. A list of crystals regularly used in WDXRF lor crystal, most X-ray spectrometers are equipped with several crystals that can be used according to the needs of the experiment. The choice will depend, for instance, on the elements to be detected, the required spectral resolution, and their specifications is given in Table 4.1. Detailed information can be found in the literature (Bertin 1975).

of this arrangement is a gas flow proportional counter for the registration of ong-wave (low-energy) radiation. The second is a scintillation counter for In WDXRF two detectors with different characteristics are normally used. These are arranged in a tandem geometry and are switched on depending on the wavelength of the radiation to be recorded. The first detector the detection of the hard X-rays having higher energies. Specifications and working methods are described in detail elsewhere (Bertin 1975; Heinrich

4.3. X-RAY FLUORESCENCE SPECTROMETRY

Fable 4.1. Bragg Reflectors Regularly Used in WDXRF^a

Lightest element detectable (Z)

		at max $\theta = 70^{\circ}$	$\theta = 70^{\circ}$
Crystal	2d (Å)	Using K Lines	Using L Lines
Lithium fluoride, LiF (220)	2,848	V (23)	Pr (57)
Lithium fluoride, LiF (200)	4,208	K (19)	$\ln (49)$
Germanium, Ge (111)	6,532	S (16)	Zr(40)
Pentaerytrol PET (002)	8,742	Si (14)	\mathbf{Rb} (37)
Thailium acid phtalate, TIAP (1010)	25,75	O (8)	V (23)
Lead stearate decanoate, PbSD	100	B (5)	Ca (20)
Multilayer, W/C	120	B (5)	

[&]quot;The crystallographic orientation is given in brackets.

tectors is poor and therefore a preselection by means of diffraction (Bragg 1981; Klockenkämper 1980). The energy resolution of these types of dereflector) is necessary.

4.3.2. Energy-Dispersive X-Ray Fluorescence Spectrometry

nteract primarily by photoelectric absorption, producing electron-hole pairs. The number of pairs produced is proportional to the energy of the photon, thus making X-ray spectrometry possible. The produced charge is swept from the semiconductor diode by the applied voltage and produces an tor, FET) (Heinrich 1981). For optimal operation of the system and to freeze the lithium drifting process, effective cooling with liquid nitrogen is detectors is sufficiently high to allow X-ray spectrometry without previous electric pulse. The signals produced by the X-ray photons are very weak and have to be amplified by a low-noise amplifier transistor (field effect transisindispensable. By processing the signals with a fast multichannel analyzer MCA), energy-dispersive X-ray fluorescence spectrometry (EDXRF) will produce X-ray spectra with a spectral resolution sufficient for most applicadispersion with a Bragg reflector. X-ray photons entering the Si(Li) crystal ions. Though its spectral resolution is poor in comparison to WDXRF, EDXRF has the advantage of being simpler and cheaper and to allow truly The development of semiconductor materials had consequences in X-ray spectrometry. Indeed the energy resolution of lithium-drifted silicon [Si(Li)] simultaneous observation of all X-rays.

X-ray source. Additionally X-ray emitting radioisotope sources such as As in WDXRF, in EDXRF different X-ray tubes are applied as primary cadmium-109 (109Cd), americium-241 (241Am), and others are used instead

of X-ray tubes. Radioisotope sources, among others, are used in compact portable spectrometers that are applied in field work for fast screening of the elemental composition of a material.

Recently, synchrotrons (Haller and Knöchel 1996) have been used as extremely intense X-ray sources that make XRF analysis with a superior sensitivity possible (synchrotron radiation XRF, SRXRF). The high initial intensity available at the source moreover allows microbeams to be used, offering excellent spatial resolution (μ -SRXRF) and good sensitivity.

4.3.3. Samples and Sample Preparation

for either WD- or EDXRF. Conducting or isolating solids, powdered materials, and liquids can be subjected to X-ray fluorescence analysis. One of the most prominent properties of XRF analysis is that the samples can be recovered completely after the analysis. Unfortunately, some samples show alterations caused by the irradiation with X-rays and a change in color or a served. Some minerals, glasses, plastics, and organic materials are affected more seriously than others. The sample chambers of the spectrometers in general contain the end of the X-ray tube, parts of the spectrometer and of sure of the order of 10 Pa. Nevertheless, XRF instruments can be operated at normal atmospheric conditions or filled with helium depending on the sample and/or the analytical tasks. Especially in the latter cases, the size of the sample chamber can be sufficiently large to accommodate small archaeological objects (jewels, statuettes, etc.). The sample chamber among others is designed to prevent X-rays from escaping the instrument and thus is important for safe operation. Nevertheless, open-beam instruments have been used, especially for in situ analysis of large artifacts (e.g., paintings). Safety In general, no restrictions exist concerning the samples or their preparation change in mechanical properties caused by radiolysis is occasionally obthe crystal changer (WDXRF), detectors or parts of these, collimators, and the sample stage. Usually the sample chamber is evacuated down to a presin this case will depend on keeping an appropriate distance during operation and on the use of protection shields.

4.3.4. Quantification

Unfortunately, WD- and EDXRF operated in conventional modes are absorption of X-rays in the sample and by fluorescence enhancements when the radiation is crossing the sample. Also effects related to the surface texture, to the inhomogeneity of the sample, and to the particle size have been observed. All these effects lead to curved instead of straight calibration lines affected by matrix effects that cannot be neglected. These are caused by

goals. Many calibration and correction procedures are being applied in XRF and have to be taken into account if quantitative evaluation of data and accurate determination of the elemental composition of a sample are the 4.3. X-RAY FLUORESCENCE SPECTROMETRY

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analysis (Bertin 1975):

measured as well as at least one sample to which a known amount of is necessary to make the two specimens as similar in density, surface Standard Addition and Dilution Methods. The pure sample itself is the elements to be determined (analytes) is added. Sample preparation condition, and the like as possible. In this method, the sample actually provides its own standard(s) in its own matrix. Thin-Film Methods. The specimens (samples and standards) are made so thin that absorption/enhancement effects become irrelevant.

Matrix Dilution Methods. The matrix of all specimens is diluted with a suited material so that the effect of the matrix is determined by the material used for the dilution. ж.

ples are compared with those of standards, having the same form as the sample(s) and as nearly as possible the same matrix and analyte Comparison Standard Methods. The X-ray intensities from the samconcentration. 4.

Internal Standardization. The comparison standard method is improved by quantitative addition to all specimens of an internal standard element. The calibration function involves the intensity ratios of the analyte and internal standard lines. ς.

Standardization with Scattered X-rays. The intensity of the primary X-rays scattered by the specimen is used to correct for absorption/ enhancement effects. 6.

Experimental Correction. Various other experimental techniques have been described to minimize or compensate matrix effects. Mathematical Correction. Absorption/enhancement effects are corrected for mathematically by use of experimentally derived parameters. ∞.

The most prominent methods are the fundamental parameter approaches based on standards or on programs for the standardless analysis (Lachance and Claisse 1995). Monte Carlo calculations (Vince et al. 1995a, 1995b) and chemometric techniques (Adams and Allen 1998; Luo et al. 1998) are applicable as well. It is beyond the scope of this book to go into further detail on the different calibration methods. Suffice it to say that the development of computational techniques improved XRF in the last decades from a semipowerful hardware and software in combination with new mathematical and quantitative to a fully quantitative method.

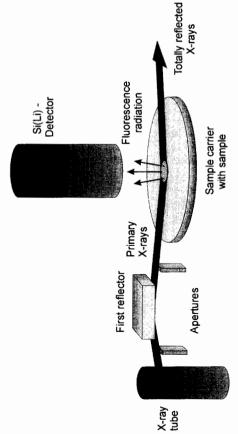


Figure 4.6. Schematic representation of a total reflection X-ray fluorescence spectrometer (TXRF).

4.3.5. Total Reflection X-Ray Fluorescence Spectrometry

rescence (EDXRF) by the excitation geometry (Klockenkämper and von Klockenkämper 1996). In TXRF a flat, sheetlike primary X-ray beam is filtered and collimated when passing a first reflector (see Fig. 4.6). Then it is directed at a small glancing angle < 0.1° to a very flat and smooth surface of a sample carrier. The incident beam is totally reflected at the sample carrier's surface. It therefore hardly interacts with the carrier but effectively excites Total reflection X-ray fluorescence spectrometry (TXRF) is a newly developed method that differs from conventional energy dispersive X-ray fluo-Bohlen 1992; Prange and Schwenke 1992; Klockenkämper et al. 1992; the elements of the sample. The fluorescence radiation emitted by the sample is recorded by a Si(Li) detector positioned directly above it. Usually TXRF instruments operate at normal pressure in the sample chamber. Absorption of X-rays by the gas in the chamber is minimized since the sample detector distance is very small

The special excitation arrangement leads to a substantial decrease of the spectral background originating from the sample carrier. If applying only small amounts of sample (microgram or microliter size), a very effective excitation to fluorescence of the sample and an effective collection of the secondary radiation is observed. The detectable amount of a great number sample mass (upper limit), depending on the matrix of the sample, is not exceeded, no matrix effects occur and multielement analysis with a simple of elements is in the order of a picogram (10⁻¹² g). Moreover, if a critical

4.3. X-RAY FLUORESCENCE SPECTROMETRY

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and reliable quantification becomes possible (Klockenkämper and von

effects are observed and the recorded intensities are proportional to the mass fractions of the corresponding elements. The intensities have only to be divided by their respective relative sensitivities S. The sensitivities are constants of proportionality that have to be determined only once by analyzing the residue after drying of aqueous standard solutions. By the absence of In TXRF spectra the intensities I of the X-rays are recorded. If the abovementioned conditions concerning the sample are fulfilled, no interelement matrix effects these sensitivity factors can be applied to all kinds of samples.

If the sample mass is too low to be determined accurately, only relative mass fractions (m_x) of the detected elements can be calculated by the following equation (von Bohlen et al. 1994; Klockenkämper 1996):

$$m_x = \frac{I_x/S_x}{\sum_L I_L/S_k} \times 100\%$$

detected elements (k) can be calculated. However, a full quantification beone standard element, which is not contained in the sample, is added to the sample. After recording the spectrum, the absolute masses of the detected Thus, relative mass fractions with respect to the sum of the masses of all comes possible if the sample mass is known and the method of internal standardization is applied. For this purpose, a known quantity (m_i) of only elements (m_x) are calculated from the following equation (von Bohlen et al. 1994; Klockenkämper 1996):

$$m_x = \frac{I_x/S_x}{I_{\rm int}/S_{\rm int}} \times m_{\rm int}$$

and when relating the masses m_x to the total sample mass, mass fractions (e.g., in micrograms per gram) can be obtained. As mentioned above, the TXRF sample chamber is normally filled with air, so that the characteristic X-ray radiation of elements with atomic number ≤13 is absorbed and these elements are not detectable.

tively simple. An excitation unit containing a high-voltage generator and an TXRF instrumentation is, compared to other modern techniques, rela-X-ray tube with housing, a total reflection module, and a detection unit composed of a Si(Li) detector and a multichannel analyzer are needed. The operating and maintenance costs are low.

TXRF proved to be a versatile tool for chemical analyses, especially for extreme trace and microanalyses and for direct analyses of solid samples as *L*9

was reviewed by several authors (Reus and Prange 1993; Klockenkämper et al. 1992; Prange and Schwenke 1992; Klockenkämper 1996; Moens et al.

4.4. APPLICATIONS

The examples cited here are far from a complete overview and should only show the versatility and the variety of applications of X-ray fluorescence analysis.

4.4.1. Analysis of Ancient Coins

Metal analysis is one of the most prominent applications of XRF in archaeometry. In particular, the analysis of ancient coins proved to be very useful. In general, coins were produced from well-controlled alloys by a known mint and often were provided with a date of issue. Many references concerning the technology, the typology, and the chronology can be found in historical documents and in modern studies. Coins are, except for the rough surface, ideal objects for XRF analysis. They can be investigated without any sample preparation and nearly all elements of interest present as major or minor constituents, as well as some traces can be detected in coins of all forms and sizes. Further advantages are their favorable physical properties allowing nondestructive multielement analysis in a reasonable time. Only layers of patina, bleaching, or plating have to be considered when discussing the results of elemental analyses. Indeed, the observed fluorescence radiation originates from the top layer of the sample, resulting in a "depth of information" of 1 to some 100 µm, depending on the applied technique, the alloy, and the elements in question. Therefore XRF results do not necessarily represent the composition of the bulk of the coin material.

Until now, the elemental composition of hundreds or even thousands of ancient coins, predominantly of Roman origin, has been determined by and it is notable that XRF techniques often have been used in combination XRF analysis. Very different approaches have been used for this purpose, with other methods.

going hand in hand with the development of techniques to study problems Condamin and Picon (1964) were the first to examine corrosion effects on dinarii and concluded that the surface silver content will be markedly higher than the silver content of the alloy within the coin. The notable discrepancy between the silver contents in Roman coins induced several approaches of bleaching, plating, corrosion, and wear off by circulation. Walker (1976, 1977, 1978) presented an extended work related to the metrology of Roman

silver coinage. Several other works dealing with the examination of Roman coins (e.g., Carter 1978; Butcher et al. 1997) and related analytical problems (e.g., Lutz and Pernicka 1996) have been published. Some of these are presented below.

In his approach, Klockenkämper (1978) uses WDXRF and a scanning electron microscope with energy dispersive X-ray detection (SEM-EDX) for he characterization of more than 200 coins. The combination of the two techniques with different penetration depth of the primary X-rays and of electrons, respectively, into the material provided insight into the silver enrichment at the surface of dinarii relative to the silver content in deeper ayers. The results showed the decay of values in the Roman Empire: Less silver was used for coinage alloys, but the surface of the coins was enriched starting from about the year A.D. 200. Similar results are reported for Roman coins (dinarii, quintarii, etc.) found in Switzerland, Augusta Raurica, and analyzed by Zwicky-Sobczyk and Stern (1997). They combined the results of EDXRF analysis using silver-K and silver-L lines and of density measurements to characterize more than 600 coins. The intensity ratio of silver X-ray ines in modern silver alloys is, theoretically, a clue to the presence of plating, but with most ancient silver coins this ratio is influenced by the surface morphology and by corrosion. However, the silver-K intensities of massive and of uncorroded plated silver coins are clearly different.

Though most work has been done on Roman coins, other coins of very different regions and ages were analyzed using XRF as well. Ancient dirhams (silver coins) from the Abbasid period 158-218 Hirji (A.D. 775 to 833) of the Great Islamic Empire were analyzed by Al-Kofahi et al. (1997). The dirhams were found to have silver (about 41 to 84%) as a major constituent and minor quantities of 1% or more of silicon, copper, mercury, gold, and lead, of 0.1 to 1% of aluminium, phosphorus, iron, and tungsten and less than 0.1% of titanium, nickel, and zinc. The results of the analyses show that the dirhams coined in the capital of the state, Madinat Essalam, are of good quality, having a silver concentration of at least 80%, whereas those fabricated in locations far from the capital have significantly lower silver concentrations (41 to 54%).

Genuine and counterfeit German Reichsgoldmünzen dated 1872 to 1914 made of gold were studied by Klockenkämper et al. (1990). A gold content of about 90% and a silver content of about 0.4% were found to be reliable criteria of genuineness. Counterfeits frequently show more gold and often more or less silver. Additionally, several counterfeits have a gold enrichment at the surface. Early Russian platinum roubles, of the beginning of the eighteenth century, showing gold inclusions and lower fineness than reported by the mint were examined by Auer et al. (1998). In earlier times platinum ores contain-

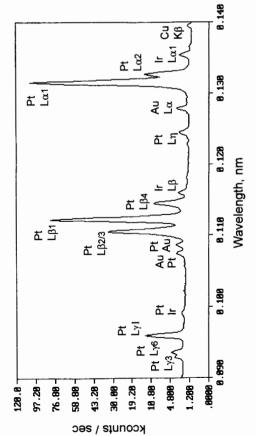


Figure 4.7. WDXRF spectrum of a platinum rouble of the year 1838 showing gold and iridium lines next to those of platinum; analyzing crystal LIF (220); rhodium X-ray tube 100 kV, 30 mA.

lurgical process to coins of 2, 3, or 6 roubles. These should have 96 to 99% of gold. An XRF spectrum of a platinum rouble with gold inclusions is shown and traces of chromium, iron, and copper. The analysis of 2 rouble coins ing ca. 64% platinum found at the Ural could be refined only by a complex chemical procedure. The refined platinum was minted in a powder metalplatinum and up to 0.5% of ruthenium, 0.25% of palladium, 1.2% of iridium, revealed the presence of additional elements like manganese, zinc, silver, and in Figure 4.7. The detection of manganese, iron, nickel, copper, zinc, palladium, silver, iridium, and gold suggests a mixing of refined platinum and original platinum ores for the coinage.

indium in silver, rhodium, palladium, and platinum in gold, present in coinage metals of different provenance were analyzed by a combined procedure The transfer of gold and silver originating from the New World starting about the year 1500 and the propagation in the Old World and later mixing with European, Russian, and Ottoman gold used in coinage was studied by Guerra (1995, 1998). Typical element traces, for example, arsenic in copper, including methods of neutron activation, laser ablation mass spectromerty, proton-induced X-ray fluorescence, and XRF.

4.4.2. Pottery and Porcelain

Among the most important archaeological finds are ceramic materials, and it should not come as a surprise that numerous XRF studies deal with pottery or porcelain. Small samples are usually taken and either analyzed as such

4.4. APPLICATIONS

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these with the concentrations of the same elements in 29 samples of known saw, and the remaining clay fraction was prepared for analysis by grinding and sieving of the obtained powder. A fraction of the powder was transferred to a sample holder and measured as such. Principal component analrace elements characterizing pottery of known or unknown provenance. For instance, LaBreque et al. (1998) have used radioisotope (cadmium-109) XRF to study the origin of 12 Majolica ceramics, found in the Americas, by comparing the concentrations of lead, rubidium, strontium, and zirconium in provenance. The lead-tin enamel of the shards was removed with a diamond collowing standard XRF procedures. Pottery samples can often be linked to a common provenance based on petrographic and chemical characteristics originating from the clay matrix or the temper. The interpretation of the analytical information in most cases will be based on multivariate statistical methods. XRF has been used for the determination of major, minor, and LaBreque et al. 1998) or prepared for analysis (Punyadeera et al. 1997) vsis was used to establish the provenance of the unknown samples.

atomic emission spectroscopy (ICP-AES). For the latter analysis the outer sults were used for principal component analysis. Using the concentrations of 13 trace elements, this allowed porcelain from different periods during the Ming dynasty to be distinguished and imitations to be separated from au-Yu and Miao (1996) used EDXRF for the determination of trace elements For calibration, samples of broken objects from the Ming and Qing dynasties were taken and analyzed with EDXRF and inductively coupled plasma l-mm layer of the shards was taken as a sample. The material was ground and sieved prior to dissolution and ICP-AES analysis. The quantitative rein Chinese blue and white porcelains of the Ming dynasty, in imitations, and in a modern porcelain object. The porcelain objects were analyzed as such. hentic artifacts.

Punyadeera et al. (1997) used EDXRF for a provenance study of Iron Age pottery from South Africa. They compared the amounts of 10 transition metals in 107 potsherds originating from four archaeological sites. The shards were ground and the powder was homogenized, mixed with a binder, and compressed to a pellet of standardized dimensions and with a wellpolished flat surface. Pellets prepared from blank samples and from four geological samples of known composition were used for calibration purboses. The data obtained were subjected to correspondence analysis to distinguish between groups. The groupings were interpreted in terms of social and cultural interactions between sites.

4.4.3. Obsidian

Obsidian was widely used and traded in prehistoric times as raw material for tool making. Provenance determination of obsidian found at archaeological

using cellulose as a backing. Synthetic standards, mimicking obsidian, were made by mixing known amounts of the elements of interest with basic comreliable indicators for the provenance determination of the obsidian found at cultural contacts. Among others, Vázquez and Escola (1995) have used (iron) in obsidian samples from archaeological and geological sites. Obsidian ponents (mainly silicon dioxide) that reflect the major element composition of obsidian. It was found that rubidium, zirconium, and strontium are very the site of Casa Chavez Monticulos (450 B.C. to A.D. 650) in Argentina. The WDXRF to determine the concentration of five trace elements (rubidium, zirconium, strontium, titanium, and manganese) and one major element flakes were ground and the powder was sieved and compressed to a pellet obsidian deposit of Ona, at a distance of 80 to 90 km from the site, turned sites therefore is an interesting tool for studying trade patterns and interout to have been the source of the material used at the site.

method was designed whereby nondestructive XRF analysis of the dentine is made of glancing angle XRF for the determination of the intensity ratios of The analysis of mammoth ivory was the subject of a study (though not a purely archaeological study) by Shimoyama et al. (1998). The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), while protecting elephants has also created a market for smugglers. Archaeological mammoth ivory is obviously not meant in the CITES, but it has been discovered that elephant ivory is transported together with and as mammoth ivory. Visual distinction of these materials is extremely difficult and therefore a used to distinguish mammoth ivory from modern elephant ivory. Use was the K_{α} X-rays of strontium and calcium and of bromine and phosphorus. These ratios are sufficiently different for both types of ivory to allow mammoth ivory clearly to be distinguished from smuggled African elephant

4.4.5. In Situ Element Mapping with EDXRF

Element mapping of small objects can be performed with a small diameter XRF analysis. EDXRF equipment can be made to be portable or at least displaceable. Thus it becomes feasible to transfer the equipment to a museum or any site where artifacts need to be studied. Moreover the equipment can be attached to a mechanical system that allows it to be positioned at will with respect to large artifacts. The primary X-ray beam is aimed at a selected spot on the surface of the object and the characteristic fluorescence X-rays X-ray beam and by stepwise moving the object, at each position performing

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are measured. Schreiner et al. (1992) have used such a system for in situ napping of elements in large objects such as paintings. In one such application, they performed element mapping of Indian miniature paintings seventeenth century) in the Millionenzimmer at the Schönbrunn palace in lienna (Austria). The spatial resolution of the mapping was 1 mm and the measuring time per spot was 30 sec. This led to a long total analysis time (up to hours), but it was possible to identify most of the pigments used: red lead, vermilion, white lead, a green copper pigment, azurite, and ochre. In addition silver and gold were found to be present in metallic form. Some pigments could not be identified and were assumed to exclusively consist of light elements that escape XRF analysis under the conditions used (e.g., ultramarine or organic pigments). The mapping allowed original sections to be distinguished from later additions.

In situ analysis of paintings is hampered by the fact that the observed Xays originate not only from the pigments under study but also from superficial contamination, varnish, underlying paint layers, or even the carrier. Critical interpretation of this mixed information is therefore necessary and in most cases sufficient to come to relevant conclusions.

u-SRXRF. Unlike the major element composition, the trace element pattern showed considerable variation and allowed the objects to be divided in two have used synchrotron radiation for the analysis of glass. These authors studied 90 Roman glass samples (about A.D. 4 to 68) originating from Qumrân (Jordan) and determined the concentrations of trace elements with different groups (Fig. 4.8). It was concluded that objects from each of both groups originated from the same batch of glass, suggesting a local production or import from the same source. The same authors also used the method for race element mapping, making line scans over glass sections in a direction Glass Analysis with SRXRF. Janssens et al. (1996) and Adams et al. (1997) perpendicular to the surface. Thus the alteration of the glass could be studied. Glass Analysis with TXRF. The characterization of valuable glass objects exhibited in museums becomes possible when no samples need to be taken or when only a few grains of material are required. Samples of ca. 100 µg can be taken with a diamond drill from the bottom of the artifacts (Wegstein 1997). The technique was applied to sample artifacts in the Hessisches Landesmuseum Kassel, Germany. The small samples were stored in plastic containers to avoid loss or contamination during transport to the laboratory.

Subsamples of only one or two grains were used to perform semiquantiative analyses of a Bohemian Reichsadlerhumpen dated back to the year

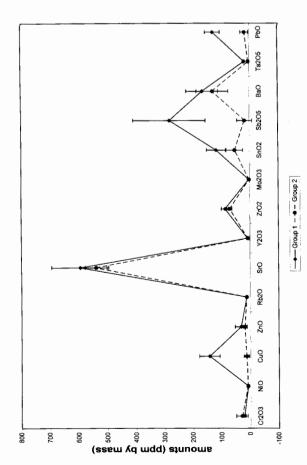


Figure 4.8. Concentrations determined by SRXRF in two different types of Roman glass from Qurnrân (Jordan)

identical element ratios of potassium : calcium of 1:1 and of manganese : iron of 2:1 were found as in the Bohemian Reichsadlerhumpen. In contrast to lime are present. The presence of other traces (e.g., lead) can be explained by parison, glass fragments from old Prague (sixteenth century) and from the glassworks in the Vogler (a forest in Lower Saxony) were analyzed. Nearly these results, the analysis of recent glass from glass-making regions in Lower Saxony and Thuringa shows a potassium:calcium ratio of 1:5 and less 1572. Relative amounts referring to the amount of iron (\sim 100 arbitrary mass nese, iron, zinc, rubidium, strontium, barium), sands (titanium, iron), and the usual recycling of old glass. Furthermore, potassium- and manganese-rich cannot be explained by the inclusion of native plant ashes alone. For comunits) were determined with TXRF: potassium = 2160, calcium = 2260, manganese = 147. Minor constituents and trace elements were titanium, zinc, rubidium, strontium, barium, and lead. In the glass of this tumbler all elements found in the ashes of native plants (potassium, calcium, mangacomponents must have been added to the glass because the amounts present manganese than iron.

4.4.7. Analysis of Artist's Pigments

chrome sculptures is ethically acceptable only if no damage is inflicted to the The analysis of valuable works of art such as paintings, miniatures, or poly-

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For TXRF only microsamples (less than 1 µg) are required, and a gentle microsampling method was developed, consisting of rubbing a dry cotton wool bud (Q-tip) over the painted surface. This will remove a minute amount of material, without causing any visible damage. A fraction of the artefact (as in direct XRF without sampling) or if the damage is negligible. naterial can next be transferred to the TXRF sample carrier.

vantageous because samples can easily be taken by restorers or art historians, the response time is short (analysis time of a few minutes), and the costs are very low. However, sampling is possible only when the pigment layer is not covered by varnish. For most old paintings, therefore, samples can only be taken during restoration. Also, the sampling only concerns the surface of the object, and the analysis consequently does not reveal any information on TXRF was extensively used for identification and fingerprinting purposes. Apart from being practically nondestructive, the method proved to be addeeper paint layers.

TXRF proved to be an excellent method to identify artists' pigments via he detection of key elements, a principle also applied in the in situ XRF pigment analysis outlined before. Especially ancient pigments are predominantly of mineral origin and can indeed be characterized by the presence of (1995). In addition, TXRF allows the mixing ratios of different pigments, used to produce a paint of a particular hue, to be determined. Finally, it is also possible to determine minor and trace element concentrations that reflect the characteristics of the minerals used, of the refinement process, and of the actual paint-making recipe used in the artist's workshop. This concentration pattern is often a unique result of various parameters and thereore can be used, with the necessary precautions, to tell different workshops one to three typical elements (Klockenkämper et al. 1993; Moens et al. apart.

Apart from this, pigment identification and characterization can provide data for various other investigations: general art historical or archaeological studies on the materials used, conservation and restoration, detection of lorgeries, and relative dating. The latter two aims are within reach because some pigments are known to have appeared (dating post quem) on artists' pallets and/or to have disappeared (dating ante quem) at a certain time.

ments that were not found in any of an artist's authentic works can also reveal falsification. For instance, in 1994 a privately owned painting claimed to be painted by Modigliani was offered to the organizers of a comprehensive exhibition on the work of this master. The pallet of Modigliani has been studied by Delburgo et al. (1981), who analyzed 15 authentic oil paintings with in situ XRF. It was reported that in those paintings Modigliani only used cadmium and chrome yellow, ochre, vermilion, chromium green, Prus-Apart from the detection of anachronistic pigments, the detection of pigsian blue, white lead, zinc white, and organic pigments. In the painting dis-

cussed here, cerulean blue and emerald green where detected via TXRF Further radiographic research revealed anomalies in the painting technique analysis of microsamples, which could indicate falsification (Devos 1996). as well, and the painting was rejected by the exhibition.

4.4.8. Analysis of Ink

ments used have been studied among others with TXRF. Also writing ink, in Gall ink was made by adding iron sulfate to gall extract. A complex between had to be made quite regularly, and it is likely that the impurity pattern was slightly different for each new batch and quite different for different scriptoria. This allowed constructing a chronology of undated letters and notes by Galileo based on impurity patterns determined with proton-induced X-ray to study a series of manuscripts from the collection of Raphael de Merca-Medieval manuscripts are often illuminated with miniatures and decorative most cases gall ink, was found to yield interesting information on the writer. iron and gallic acid is formed that, only after the writing, turns into a black ink by oxidation of the iron (Wunderlich 1994). In the scriptorium new ink emission (PIXE) and comparison of these patterns with those of inks on dated bills and diaries (Giuntini et al. 1995). Recently, ink analysis was used tellis (1437 to 1508), native son of Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy (Derolez 1979). One of the manuscripts (Decretum Gratiani) consists of three volumes from which microsamples where taken from the ink on several pages. The relative concentrations of a number of elements, as determined by TXRF are shown in Figure 4.9. All samples show a similar pattern, except one, a sample from a colophon, mentioning the acquisition date (1505). The motives (Van Hooydonk et al. 1998, Vandenabeele et al., 1999). The pig-

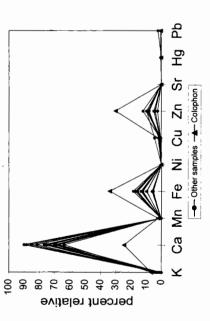


Figure 4.9. Impurity pattern of gall inks on different pages of a Medieval manuscript.

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analysis suggests that the colophon was not written at the same time or the same place as the manuscript.

4.4.9. Violin Varnishes

conents some inorganic substances were added to control the properties of Historical violin varnishes are mixtures of natural products in which the nain components are organic substances such as drying oils, essential oils, esins, waxes, organic colorants, spirit, and others. Beside these major comhe varnish. It is indeed possible to influence the color, the hue, the transparency, the hardness, and also to reduce drastically the drying time of oilbased varnishes. A great variety of old formulas describing how to produce and how to process varnishes for violinmakers are known, but unfortunately those of early Italian masters were lost. Especially these varnishes, applied by prominent violinmakers and families of violinmakers remain unattainable. The particular beauty of these varnishes and their capability to preserve the wood and thus the sound quality of the instruments can therefore not be

paper bags for transport and storage. Fractions of such samples with masses ment analyses were performed in a counting time of 100 to 300 sec. More tected simultaneously and relative detection limits of the order of 10 pg/µg for elements with atomic number $Z \ge 24$ were estimated. In Figure 4.10 a shown. Elements such as iron, arsenic, and lead could be related to pigments added to the varnishes, whereas manganese, cobalt, and lead are related to Small flakes of varnishes were collected from stringed instruments that were under restoration. The flakes were removed carefully from the precleaned surface of the varnishes by the aid of a scalpel and deposited in small below 20 µg were analyzed directly by TXRF without any additional preparation except the deposition on Plexiglas carriers by means of wooden coothpicks (von Bohlen 1999; von Bohlen and Meyer 1996). The multielethan 20 elements (silicon, phosphorus, sulfur, chlorine, potassium, calcium, titanium, chromium, manganese, iron, cobalt, nickel, copper, zinc, arsenic, bromine, rubidium, strontium, barium, lead, potassium, calcium) were de-TXRF spectrum of an Andrea Guarneri varnish of a violin of ca. 1660 is siccatives accelerating the drying process of the oil-based varnishes. Occasionally elements are detected (e.g., silver or tin) that seem to have been introduced accidentally.

weighed accurately, and, consequently, it was impossible to calculate the Unfortunately, the masses of the analyzed flakes were too low to be mass fractions of the detected elements in relation to the total sample mass. However, a possibility for quantification is given when relative mass fracions of the detected elements are calculated with respect to the sum of all REFERENCES

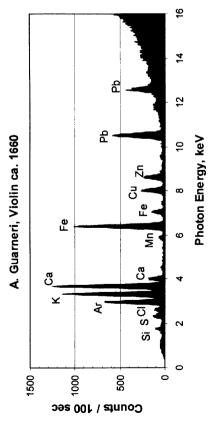


Figure 4.10. TXRF spectrum of an Andrea Guarneri varnish obtained from a violin of about 1660. A sample with a mass of less than 20 µg was used for the analysis. Excitation: molybdenum X-ray tube, 50 kV, 38 mA and spectrum acquisition time of 100 sec.

detected elements (see before). After normalization of the data, a generation representation of TXRF results using star plots (cf. Fig. 4.11). This combination makes an easy classification of element pattern in violin varnishes possible. It can be used to characterize unknown historical varnishes, to distinguish retouches made on historical stringed instruments using modern varnishes, and for general classification of the elemental distribution in and visualization of multielement patterns was performed by a graphical varnishes.

4.5. CONCLUSION

XRF-based methods, versatile and various as they are, will continue to be of great use to archaeometric research. For qualitative analysis the nondestructive character and the speed of analysis allow the element composi-This information is often sufficient to determine the nature of the material The useful information present in the vast amount of data, generated by the tion of an artifact to be known instantly and without damaging the object. used for making the object. Quantification may require expert knowledge, but numerous examples show that accuracy and precision are within reach. simultaneous multielement analysis, often is extracted from the data set with the aid of statistical analysis.

In recent years the means have been created to perform microanalysis and spatially resolved analysis with good resolution. Microsamples, as required for TXRF, can be taken from most artifacts without inflicting any visible damage and can easily be analyzed quantitatively. Microbeams, as generated

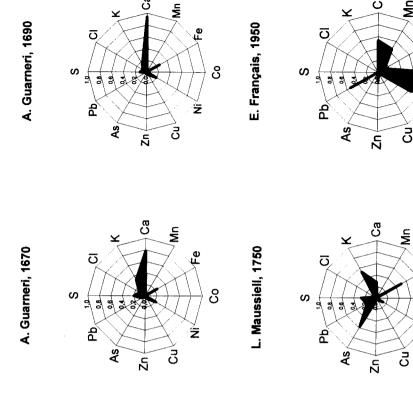


Figure 4.11. Radial plots for the characterization of elemental pattern of varnishes of two different celli made by A. Guarneri, of a varnish of a cello made by L. Maussiell, and of a modern iolin varnish made by E. Français. Relative concentrations were obtained by TXRF analysis of mall varnish flakes.

by special X-ray source setups and synchrotrons, allow element mapping at submilimeter scale. It is expected that new applications of these new possibilities will continue to be developed, making XRF an even more attractive analytical tool than it is today.

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