The lead isotopic method for provenancing and the interpretation of data

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In recent years, there have been some suggestions that the lead isotopic method is not entirely problem-free. However, time after time these assertions have entailed the revival of debates that had already been settled and the voicing of opinions without an adequate understanding of prior research outcomes. This paper puts forward representative examples of these opinions and discusses the sequence of events of these debates, and the results of investigations undertaken by the author. Some theses have been presented on the basis of the outcome of debates in which the interpretation of data has not necessarily been appropriate. The results of investigations into these cases are also outlined. The paper reaches the following conclusions:

1) At this present point in time there are no specific problem areas concerning the validity of the lead isotopic method per se;

2) The interpretation of results of the lead isotopic method should be made in such a way as to correspond with the results of historical and archeological research, as it is dangerous to base arguments solely on numerical values.