

PERCENTAGE REPORTS IN THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH

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Abstract: In the study of archaeological, paleozoological, anthropological, and other data, scientists often use percents and percentage reports. At the same time they do not take into account that the studied samples represent only a fraction of the total samples of the objects and their interest and calculated percentages contain probable errors, which ultimately leads them to mistakes and incorrect conclusions. In order to avoid similar situations in the future, the authors propose to use the method of percentages reports at which the calculated probable errors and confidence intervals.

Cuvinte cheie: marjă de eroare, rapoarte procentuale, eroare probabilă, eşantion, intervale de încredere, procente, metode statistice.

Rezumat: În studiile de arheologie, paleozoologie, antropologie, și altele, cercetătorii folosesc adesea procente și rapoarte procentuale. În același timp, ei nu iau în considerare faptul că eşantioanele studiate reprezintă doar o fracțiune din unitățile generale ale obiectelor și procentele calculate de ei conțin erori probabile, care în cele din urmă duc spre tragerea unor opinii nejustificate și concluzii incorecte. Pentru a evita în viitor situații similare, autorii propun să fie utilizată metoda rapoartelor procentuale prin care se calculează erorile probabile și intervalele de încredere.

Beginning with the first stages in the development of archaeology and often in modern archaeological publications there are found direct or indirect references about the quantity of the artefacts, events or phenomena like: much-less, often-seldom, typical-exceptional and others. This level of making a general inference about the data and the volume of artefacts quantity, the archaeologist demands an initial collectivity, its systematization in the form of statistical reports.

But, it is out of our intention now to draw attention of the researchers upon the methods of percentage using. In archaeology there are not rare cases of inadequate utilisation of statistics. This situation may be due to the fact that the archaeologist who use the mathematical statistics are not trained enough in this field. Still the attempt of finding an unique general scheme which can be fit to all scientists and cases, cannot be designed.

In our everyday life, in business, but also in the scientific research the percentages play an important role, as they offer a possibility of comparing

the parts of a whole between them and they simplify the calculation. The percentage is the hundred part of a unit, which is designated by the sign “%” and it is meant to show a part of a whole and its report with it. The term “percentage” comes from the Latin “*pro centum*”, namely the hundred part, that was used in the Ancient Rome. These parts of a hundred from a specific number are comfortable to use in the practical activity and this is why people have started to utilize them for a very long time.

The percentages are widely used in mathematics and statistics. Such calculations are employed not only in the exact sciences, but also in archaeology, history, as well as in other interdisciplinary domains. Very popular is the operation of transforming the quantity data into percentages. In this case the numeric data are being transformed into percentages based upon the empirical percentages, yet without taking into account the possible existence of some errors, that depends upon the volume of studied units or upon the samples of the materials investigated. Most probably, do not exist researcher which had never used percentages or percentage reports in their studies.