

FOREWORD

The message of personal adornments is not an easy one to decipher. Nevertheless, they provide an insight to the many aspects (social, spiritual, economic, etc.) of human behaviour, personal expression, relationships and communication. Understanding the complicated social and technical aspects of adornments generally require a broad spectrum of technical and methodological approaches as well as a good knowledge of the state of research and numerous local case-studies.

Beyond the aesthetic impact, at times secondary in traditional societies, personal adornments represents a language in itself, a complex communication system, conveying clear messages on ethnic, gender and age class affiliation. They are associated to certain rituals (e.g. passage or marital), they can be amulets or talismans and they can act as currency or as symbols of the ritualistic trade (e.g. Sciana 1998; Trubitt 2003; Vanhaeren 2005, etc.).

Moreover, their manufacture can be related to complex territorial and economic organization helping to identify in certain cases crafts and specialized workshops, circulation paths of raw materials and the existing systems for inter-community exchange (e.g. Newell *et al.* 1990; Vanhaeren and d'Erico 2006; Rigaud *et al.* 2015). Further information can be extracted from their presence in funerary contexts, revealing whether they were exclusively created for the afterlife or had been part of the every-day life of the respective individual/community.

There is already an impressive literature dedicated to personal adornments, which analyses the most diverse aspects: from their possible social-cultural functions to the means of obtaining the raw materials, the techniques used for their transformation, the ways they were used/repared and their discard (e.g. Bar-Yosef Meyer *et al.* (eds.) 2017; Bar-Yosef Mayer and Bosch (eds.) 2019; Baysal 2019; Ifantidis 2019; Mărgărit 2019; to exemplify only with the latest publications). Nevertheless, as this volume also shows, the subject is a vast one and there is continuous need for further exploration.

The International Colloquium: “Beauty and the eye of the beholder: personal adornments across the millennia” took place at Valahia University, Târgoviște, Romania, between 12 and 14 September 2019. Bearing in mind the complexity of the subject, the participants were invited to discuss a variety of topics, expressing the views of various “beholders” both in the past and at the present moment: their meaning/symbolism within the prehistoric/historical societies (e.g. cultural tradition, social and spiritual organization and exchange systems), raw materials (identification of sources and acquisition), various methodologies of study (technological and usewear analyses, microscopy, SEM+EDS analysis, FTIR and RAMAN spectroscopy, etc.) and experimental approaches (creating experimental reference collections), etc.

At the end of the colloquium, following the discussions with our colleagues, it was decided to gather all presentations in a volume while also inviting other contributions dedicated to this topic, in an attempt to capture a broader spatial and temporal image.

The result is the present volume comprising 26 studies organized in three major sections related to regional studies on adornments, and their use and presence in everyday life and afterlife. Within one section, papers were organized in chronological order. The papers in the volume cover geographically the whole of Europe and Anatolia: from Spain to Russia and from Latvia to Turkey; it spans chronologically many millennia, from the Middle Palaeolithic to the Iron Age (2nd – 4th centuries AD).

The volume opens with ten regional studies offering not only comprehensive syntheses of various chronological horizons (Palaeolithic - Daniella E. Bar-Yosef Mayer, Neolithic/Chalcolithic - Emma L. Baysal; Fotis Ifantidis; Selena Vitezović and Dragana Antonović; Sanda Băcucă Crișan and Ancuța Bobîna; Andreea Vornicu-Țerna and Stansislav Țerna; Roberto Micheli) but also new data on the acquisition and working of various raw materials or specific types of adornments (*Columbella rustica*

shells - Emanuela Cristiani, Andrea Zupancich and Barbara Cvitkusić; wild boar tusk - Ekaterina Kashina and Aija Macāne; canid tooth pendants - Petar Zidarov). The unbreakable link between adornments of the everyday life and those of the afterlife it is also highlighted in some of the contributions.

The following section - *Adornments in settlement archaeology* - includes nine studies, covering the archaeological evidence from specific settlement sites. Many studies focused on the adornments' iconographic designs, meaning, and exchange but also on raw materials, technologies of production and systems of attachment. Chronology-wise, this section brings together the most varied range of ornaments, raw materials and processing techniques from sites in Spain (Esteban Álvarez-Fernández), Turkey (Sera Yelözer and Rozalia Christidou), Greece (Catherine Perlès and Patrick Pion; Christoforos Arampatzis) and Romania (Adina Boroneanț and Pavel Mirea; Ioan Alexandru Bărbat, Monica Mărgărit and Marius Gheorghe Barbu; Monica Mărgărit, Mihai Gligor, Valentin Radu and Alina Bințișan; Gheorghe Lazarovici and Cornelia-Magda Lazarovici; Vasile Diaconu).

The last section - *Adornments of the afterlife* - focuses on ornaments identified in various funerary contexts allowing for a more detailed biography of ornaments through mostly use- and micro-wear studies, in order to reconstruct their production sequence and use life. Raw material availability and their properties, as well as contexts of deposition are also taken into account. In the seven studies of the section, different funerary contexts from Latvia (Lars Larsson), Ukraine (Nataliia Mykhailova), Hungary (Zsuzsanna Tóth) and Romania (Monica Mărgărit, Cristian Virag and Alexandra Georgiana Diaconu; Vlad-Ștefan Cărăbiși, Anca-Diana Popescu, Marta Petroneac, Marin Focșăneanu, Daniela Cristea-Stan and Florin Constantin; Dragoș Măndescu; Lavinia Grumeza) are discussed.

We would like to thank to all contributors who responded to our call and helped us complete this volume in less than a year. Each paper was submitted to external reviews. Therefore, we would like to also thank our colleagues who accepted to anonymously review the contributions, thus improved the overall content of the volume.

The Editors

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