

Foreword

I am pleased and honoured to be asked to write a foreword to Monica Mărgărit's excellent book about the prehistory of personal adornments in southern Romania.

For prehistoric peoples, personal adornments were objects of symbolic value and played an important role in social interactions between individuals and communities. They become evident in the European archaeological record with the rapid dispersal of *Homo sapiens* across the continent, and there is an increasing recognition among researchers that objects of symbolic value were crucial in the maintenance of social contacts over long distances thereby facilitating that spread.

Through her research Monica Mărgărit has done much to promote this view. A graduate of Valahia University in Târgoviște, she completed her PhD on the mobiliary art of the Palaeolithic and Mesolithic in Romania and Moldova. Since then she has specialized in the study of artefacts made of hard animal materials, but not exclusively on personal adornments made from bone, antler, tooth and shell. She has conducted extensive research on all kinds of artefacts made from such materials, using experimentation and use-wear analysis to reconstruct their life histories from raw material acquisition, through manufacture and use, to eventual discard. She is an internationally recognized expert in her chosen field of research and the author of numerous publications, and I feel privileged to have worked alongside her on the archaeological material from the Romanian Iron Gates.

This latest work is the culmination of many years of rigorous examination of archaeological collections from all over southern Romania. Timewise, it ranges from the Upper Palaeolithic to the Bronze Age, and geographically from the Danube to the Carpathian Mountains and the Moldavian Plateau. It is a rich source of information and is beautifully illustrated.

In sum, *Personal Adornments in the Prehistory of the Northern Danube Area* is a landmark study that surely will change the way in which archaeologists think about the past.

We all owe a debt of gratitude to Monica Mărgărit!

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