

Introduction

History of personal adornments is tightly connected with the history of *Homo sapiens*: adornments were produced and worn as early as the appearance of the most ancient modern humans in Africa. This is greatly exemplified by the publication of the perforated shells of Blombos Cave (South Africa), identified in a level dated to ca. 75,000 B.P. (Henshilwood *et al.* 2004; d'Errico *et al.* 2005; Vanhaeren *et al.* 2013); Border Cave (d'Errico *et al.* 2012); Grotte des Pigeons, Rhafas, and Contrabandiers (Morocco) (Bouzougar *et al.* 2007; d'Errico *et al.* 2009); Oued Djebbana (Algeria) (Vanhaeren *et al.* 2006) or Qafzeh (Israel) (Bar-Yosef Mayer *et al.* 2009). The number of the discoveries augments for the more recent periods of prehistory, resulting an exceptional diversification of the forms and the employed raw materials. For the European continent, these types of artefacts benefited of the most detailed analyses, starting from the means of obtaining the raw materials, the techniques used for their transformation, and the ways the ornaments were used, to their abandonment, their frequent repair after fracturing/damage and their re-use (e.g. Séfèriadès 1996, 2010; Ricou and Esnard 2000; Todorova 2000, 2002; Choyke 2001; Miller 2003; Nikolaidou 2003; Gaydarska *et al.* 2004; Ifantidis 2004, 2019; Dimitrijević and Tripković 2006; Bonnardin 2006, 2009; Chapman and Gaydarska 2007; Chapman *et al.* 2008; Louboutin 2008; Polloni 2008; Laporte 2009; Perlès and Vanhaeren 2010; Skeates 2010; Ifantidis and Nikolaidou 2011; Rigaud 2011, 2013; Thomas 2011; Cristiani and Borić 2012; Vitezović 2012, Cristiani *et al.* 2014; Tata *et al.* 2014; Rigaud *et al.* 2015; Perlès 2018; Borić and Cristiani 2019; Guzzo Falci *et al.* 2019; Kysely *et al.* 2019; Rigaud *et al.* 2019 etc.).

Nowadays, adornments have become common objects of personal embellishment but looking for analogies in traditional societies we notice that adornments were used “in a social context comprised of diverse relations based upon gender, kinship, economics, politics, power, and status. In this complex web of relations, material culture (like shell beads) does not always have the same meaning, and often has multiple simultaneous meanings” (Thomas 1996: 29).

Through comparison with traditional populations, we can identify the multiple valences of personal adornments:

- they may reflect affiliation to an ethnic group: for instance, women of the *keniah* population on Borneo Island are forced to wear very heavy ornaments that deform their ears, thus individualizing them from the women of other tribes (Burenhult 1995a);

- they may indicate a certain social status: at the site of Tikal (Maya culture) artisans specialized in manufacturing personal ornaments were also making representative ornaments, some indicating an inferior social status (*low-status*), others a superior one (*high-status*) (Moholy-Nagy 1997);

- they can be an element of sexual attraction: it is significant that, if in modern societies ornaments in their various forms are especially the prerogative of women in their attempt to seduce their partners, in certain traditional societies such as the *masai*

and the *bororos*, it is the warriors (Jedrej 1995) and respectively the young men (Loncke and Durou 2000) who decorate their bodies;

- personal ornaments are used by certain primitive populations exclusively during certain rituals (initiation, marriage, death etc.); in some cases, after the ceremony, the object reverts to the individual who wore it, protecting him/her; in other case its value is lost after the consummation of the ceremony (Vanhaeren 2005);

- they are used as talismans/amulets, such as the famous greenstone *hei tiki*, made by the Maoris from New Zealand and wore by women as fertility talismans (Starzecka 1996);

- personal ornaments can be the object of ritualistic trade, such as the famous *cauri* shells from the Pacific, circulating within the *kula* exchange system (Malinowski 1989; Burenhult 1995b; Trubitt 2003);

- they at times play the role of currency and circulate over long distances, such as the cowrie shells (*Cypraea moneta*) from the Indian Ocean, which were shipped to West Africa (Gregory 1982);

- they can be parts of certain communication systems, e.g. the beads belts – the *wampum* of the North American Indians, that narrated different political events (Lips 1964).

Considering this multitude of significations, it has been underlined the remarkable importance played by ornaments in the reconstruction of the social structure within the prehistoric communities, in the identification of geographic limits and, implicitly, of the practiced exchange systems (e.g. Taborin 1974, 1993; Newell *et al.* 1990; Séfériadès 1996; Sciama and Eicher 1998; Trubitt 2003; Vanhaeren and d'Errico 2006, Rigaud 2011, Rigaud *et al.* 2015 etc.). Personal adornments thus become important pieces of evidence for identifying the circulation and exchange routes during prehistory. As numerous anthropologists have previously shown, their social value is higher than their economic one (e.g. Sahlins 1963; Mauss 1970; Dalton 1977; Renfrew 1984; Lemonnier 1990), thus contributing in maintaining alliances and managing conflicts (Perlès 2012). Based on ornament typology, an ethno-linguistic map of Europe was drawn for the Aurignacien communities (Vanhaeren and d'Errico 2006). It was also possible to infer the geography of social, ethnic and linguistic groups in the European Mesolithic (Newell *et al.* 1990) and identify cultural changes at the transition from the Mesolithic to the Neolithic (Rigaud 2011; Rigaud *et al.* 2015).

Moving from the general to the particular, the study of ornaments also offers information regarding the technical and economic aspects specific to a human group. The economic ones bring into discussion problems concerning the means of obtaining the raw materials, while the technical ones deal with issues concerning the identification of the processing marks and their integration to the operational sequence. An essential element of this study is represented by the identification of waste products during the manufacturing process. This is a rather recent direction of research, as previously the multitude of the information contained by these products had not been taken into account. The lack of waste implies two possible explanations: 1. it either corresponds to an archaeological reality (the artefacts were manufactured elsewhere, outside the site, and they reached the site as finished products only, or they resulted from exchanges among human groups); 2. the lack of waste products is the consequence of different

recovery techniques for different categories of material, during the archaeological excavations. The regrouping of all the elements following an operational sequence – waste, blanks, preforms and finished objects – offer the key to the analytical decrypting of the manufacturing methods and techniques, of the reassembling and even of the gestures and the intentions, in other words, the *savoir-faire* (Tersac 1990).

When the ornaments are discovered in funerary contexts, new types of information can be obtained. First, when a primary funeral context is being studied, correlations can be made regarding the sex and age of the individual, it also allows for observations of use-wear nature, indicating whether the ornaments were created exclusively to be used as grave goods or whether they had been worn previously. It also allows the identification of the attachment mode, based on the use-wear marks. Through the analysis of grave goods adornments, we can take a glimpse on the nature of economic (raw material - the way of acquisition) and technological (processing modalities) choices of the respective community. Depending on the composition of the grave goods assemblage, we can speculate on the functions of the buried adornments. They may represent objects that belonged to the deceased and were worn by him/her during his/her lifetime –fulfilling the simplest function, the ornamental one only. Alternatively, they could have been deposited following a funeral ritual, indicating the status, the social identity of the individual during his/her life or perhaps providing protection to the respective individual in his/her new status (Van Gennep 1996). Consequently, we can accept the particular social status of the children in the Sungir grave, who were buried with an impressive number of beads. Experimental work showed that 45 minutes were required to manufacture a single bead (White 1992), and thus 3500 hours of work were required for the funerary assemblage of each child (White 1999); the same goes for the children buried at Krems-Wachtberg (Austria) covered with ochre, whose funeral inventory included 30 ivory ornaments (Einwogener *et al.* 2006, 2008). These examples may suggest that during the Palaeolithic, social position was acquired at birth and that social hierarchy may have already been present.

Starting from these reasons, the importance of studying prehistoric adornments becomes obvious. Its main purpose is the identification of the diagnostic elements which allow us to determine various aspects of the social life of the prehistoric communities, and to highlight certain cultural boundaries. Despite the general interest manifested for this topic and the rich European (and not only) literature (see above) focusing on the appearance and evolution of personal adornments, the technological, use-wear and ethno-archaeological studies have had little impact on the Romanian archaeological thinking. Equally, such an approach would provide an exceptional area for a comparison with Western Europe and other areas, where studies on the evolution of personal adornments in prehistory have progressed significantly. The present book proposes to explore the archaeological relevance of these valuable discoveries, based on the author's most important scientific accomplishments in the field of personal adornments study. We estimate that that the subject will be of interest, not just in the context of the prehistoric research in Romania but also to the international academic community, which will find the information concerning the prehistoric communities, especially from the Romanian area, absolutely new, in the context of the existing methodological standards used in the publication of such items.

While the different types of ornaments discovered on the European continent were the focus of various studies, those deriving from the Romanian prehistory were viewed especially from a typological perspective: a review of the literature reveals a lack of technological and functional analysis of personal adornments. In the best cases, the numbers of adornments attributed to the principal typological categories were provided, with only a few considerations of technological nature, and even fewer geological, archaeozoological and malacological determinations regarding the chosen blanks. Artefacts with a common morphology were assigned to a single functional category, with no identification/description of the use-wear traces, which would have allowed a more precise interpretation and classification according to the real manner in which they were used. Moreover, beads were not always recovered from archaeological sites due to insufficient rigour in excavation techniques. For instance, the cultural and technological impact of the occurrence and disappearance of certain adornment shapes in prehistory was poorly investigated (e.g. the gradual replacement of small gastropods by the Mediterranean bivalves during the Eneolithic or the *quasi*-disappearance of pendants made of mammalian teeth at the tell-dwellings of the Gumelnița culture), and much less were we able to identify the reasons and the consequences of these changes.

It is true that during the last years studies based on a modern methodology of research have been published on this subject, but these address only particular aspects of the general problematic, namely technological analysis of some prehistoric archaeological assemblages, raw materials analysis and experimental programmes (e.g. Beldiman and Sztancs, 2005a, 2005b, 2008a; Beldiman *et al.* 2008; Cârciumaru *et al.* 2010, 2016, 2018, 2019; Cârciumaru and Țuțuianu-Cârciumaru 2012; Sztancs and Beldiman 2013; Țurcanu 2013; Mărgărit and Radu 2014; Mărgărit and Vintilă 2015, 2018; Mărgărit 2016a; Mărgărit *et al.* 2016a; Lazăr *et al.* 2018a, 2018b; Mărgărit *et al.* 2018a, 2018b; Nițu *et al.* 2019). In order to rectify this situation, our main purpose in this work is to analyse and compare the types of ornaments used by prehistoric communities in the area north of the Danube. Unfortunately, this shall not be an exhaustive monograph as much of the information comes from early excavation reports, which often lack a good or any illustration, any technological information and at times, even the total number of uncovered artefacts. In our work, for the illustration of the analysis of the personal adornments, we used mostly finds that we were allowed to study, accompanied by detailed microscopic photographs.

After a short introduction dedicated to the possible significations of the prehistoric personal adornments, the following sections were structured chronologically: the first part refers to the hunter-gatherer communities (the Palaeolithic and Mesolithic) north of the Danube, followed by the second chapter focused on the farmer-breeder communities inhabiting the same territory during the Neolithic and Eneolithic. North of the Danube, the first personal adornments appeared during the Upper Palaeolithic: various pendants of bone and stone, perforated teeth or perforated shells of gastropods. In the Early Holocene, the Mesolithic communities use both local aquatic resources (*Lithoglyphus* sp., *Theodoxus* sp., *Zebrina* sp.) and also marine gastropods (*Tritia* sp.) and scaphopod shells. Teeth, especially the *Cervus elaphus* canines were also perforated. Another element that is characteristic for this area of Europe is the use of the pharyngeal teeth of cyprinidae, sewn onto clothes. During the Neolithic, the most detailed data

come from the Starčevo-Criș culture (c. 6000–5700 BC). Shells used were those of *Lithoglyphus* sp., *Ansius* sp., *Theodoxus* sp. or *Esperiana* sp. gastropods, and of the *Unio* bivalves or the *Antalis* scaphopod. For the first time in the area were observed personal adornments made of *Spondylus*, *Glycymeris* and *Cardium* valves. Different rings or belt elements were processed from mammalian bones. During the Eneolithic period (c. 5000–3500 BC), *Lithoglyphus naticoides* shells and *Unio* sp. valves continued to be used. Also, beads made of *Cyprinus carpio* opercular bones were identified. Malachite, marble or other stones were used for cylindrical beads, along with various shapes of *Spondylus* adornments, bracelets of the *Glycymeris* valve or tubular beads of scaphopod shells. *Sus scrofa* canines were transformed into perforated plates. Still, the number of perforated teeth pendants is limited especially in the Gumelnița tell-settlements. From mammalian bones were manufactured hairpins, cylindrical and tubular beads - imitating those of *Spondylus* valve - and perforated plates or triangular pendants.

These changes, with the abandonment of certain types of adornments and their re-emergence at other chronological stages under the impulse of a multitude of factors, were highlighted by the present author in a series of academic publications and they were the result of the work performed on assemblages originating from over 30 archaeological sites, ranging from the Palaeolithic to the Eneolithic. They were correlated with personal experimental studies and a methodology of study based on the most important scientific productions in the field. It was fortunate that part of the materials came from recent excavations and for those particular artefacts detailed archaeological contexts were provided, which allowed for the identification of a number of manufacturing workshops, as well as for the identification of composite items/necklaces or of some sub-products of the operational chain, abandoned in the refuse areas etc.

Finally, we discuss the combination and recombination of adornments and their social and economic impact within the prehistoric societies north of the Danube. Also, we highlight various aspects of the grave goods assemblage and their recycling/fixing/imitation during prehistory. It was mainly the exotic raw materials that were recycled, illustrating their rigorous management triggered by the difficulty of their acquisition and their special socio-economic or symbolic significance. The same exotic raw materials provide information on the networks of exchange existing throughout the Balkans and Central European area during the Neolithic and Eneolithic.