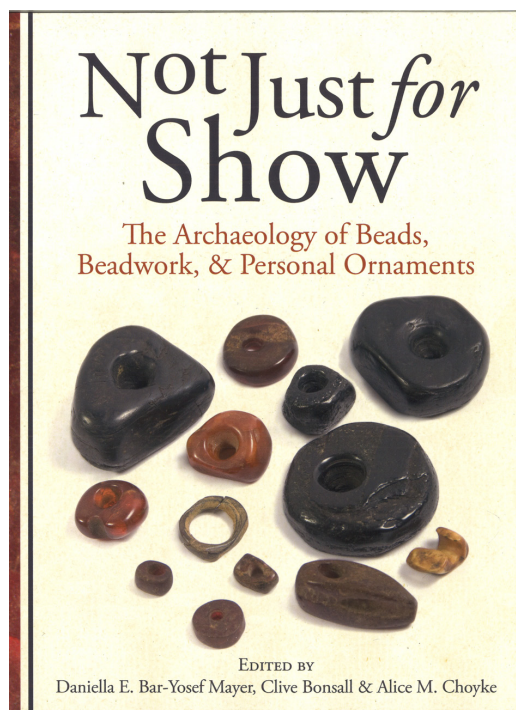


Daniella E. Bar-Yosef Mayer, Clive Bonsall & Alice M. Choyke (eds.): *Not Just for Show – The Archaeology of Beads, Beadwork, & Personal Ornaments*. Oxbow Books, Oxford & Philadelphia 2017. ISBN 978-1-78570-692-9. 224 pp.

The publication *Not Just for Show – The Archaeology of Beads, Beadwork, & Personal Ornaments* deals with body decoration, such as bone and shell beads, beadworks and pendants and buttons made of stone and amber. As the title of the book suggests, beads, beadworks and personal ornaments are not only items to put on display, but also have a deeper meaning. Indeed, these small items have been produced and sewn on clothing or worn as part of personal decoration from the Palaeolithic to the modern day. Aside from being part of decoration, the artefacts might also have protected the wearer from supernatural forces or have been used to express one's identity (e.g. Fowler 2004; Choyke 2010). Beads and personal ornamentation are intriguing also, since the use of such items connect us to the people of the past.

According to the introduction of the book (Choyke & Bar-Yosef Mayer 2017: 1), the study of these tiny, yet meaningful, artefacts is scattered in isolated papers, and thus there has been a dire need for a volume that compiles theoretical frameworks, methodologies and technical strategies. In the present publication, a solution to this problem is sought by presenting – in a single volume – research from a session held at the 78th Annual Meeting of the Society for American Archaeology. Given that the conference was arranged in 2013 and that the book was published in 2017, the research presented in the volume is not all that recent. Indeed, new research on beads and personal ornamentations has been published since then. For example, following in the footsteps of the present publication, a new book entitled *Personal Ornaments in Prehistory: An Exploration of Body Augmentation from the Palaeolithic to the Early Bronze Age* has just been published by Emma L. Baysal (2019).



Not Just for Show – The Archaeology of Beads, Beadwork, & Personal Ornaments is divided into four sections and consists of twelve articles and a short introduction by two of the editors. Of the four book sections, the first one, entitled *Socio-cultural reflections*, is the largest with six papers. The second section consists of three papers and handles audio and visual social cues connected with beads and beadworks. Although methodological approaches are mainly dealt with in the two papers of the third section, the second section already introduces an acoustic-musicological and object-biographical approach to the study of beads and personal ornaments. Finally, the fourth and last section considers experimentation and technology in relation to stone, bone and shell beads via two articles.

The structure of the book is clear but not very well balanced. Indeed, half of the book is dedicated to the first section, suggesting that the field of beads and personal ornaments is heavily dom-

inated with socio-cultural approaches. Although papers dealing with methodological or experimental approaches tend to be shorter than the more theoretical papers, these sections are nevertheless presented also with fewer articles than the first section. Indeed, even though this division is probably a follow-up from the conference and the research presented there, it nevertheless emphasizes the socio-cultural approaches over other approaches to the study of personal ornamentation. This being said, it must also be noted that most papers in the book have adopted a multidisciplinary approach. Thus, aiming to divide the papers into the above-mentioned sections is more or less artificial.

The individual papers of the book are well-written and interesting; the topics include bead production and seasonality (Peschaux et al.), exchange (Balme & O'Connor, Mueller Epstein, Spatz), personhood and arts (Cristiani & Borić, Shaham & Belfer-Cohen), as well contributions from microscopy, imaging and reproduction (van Gijn, Velázquez-Castro et al., Gurova & Bonsall, Campbell, Schneider & Hager). In addition, an astonishing beadwork analysis of Tutankhamun beadwork is presented by Bos. For the most part, the articles are also accompanied by large amounts of good-quality illustrations.

Geographically and temporally the papers of the book extend from North and Central America to Australia, the Near East and Egypt, and deal with materials dating from the Upper Palaeolithic to the Early Formative period (1359–1250 BC) of Mesoamerica. The wide geographical and temporal range is one of the greatest strengths of the book, as it allows us to see what a significant phenomenon the use of beads, beadwork and personal ornaments has been around the globe. Although the book does not cover north-eastern Europe and, for example, the important research conducted in relation to Stone Age amber (Butrimas 2001; 2018) and animal teeth pendants (Zagorska & Lõugas 2000; Larsson 2006; Rainio & Mannerman 2014; Jonuks & Rannamäe 2018) in this region, the book nevertheless offers invaluable insights to researchers working with these materials. For example, the paper by Cristiani & Borić handles personal adornments among the last foragers of the central Balkans, suggesting that these items were used to construct social identities and per-

sonhood. At the same time, the paper offers a wide range of suitable methods to be used, in order to investigate Stone Age bone ornaments. Similarly, van Gijn's article that deals with amber, jet and bone beads and pendants from Dutch Middle and Late Neolithic funerary contexts could be of special interest for people working, for example, with amber artefacts.

According to two editors of the book (Choyke & Bar-Yosef Mayer 2017: 1), the volume was intended 'to bring together specialists from diverse backgrounds and intellectual approaches, working on geographically separated bead material from the deep past as well as more historical material.' In my opinion, the volume succeeded well in this aim, and is clearly an important milestone in the study of personal ornaments and body decoration. Beyond those researchers working with beads and other ornaments, the book is a recommended read also for any researcher dealing with tiny artefacts, textiles, handicrafts or experimental archaeology.

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