Personal ornaments from osseous raw materials in the Late Neolithic Vinča culture

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Résumé

The Vinča culture phenomenon was widespread in the South-Eastern Europe in the Late Neolithic and Early Chalcolithic period, roughly 5400-4500 calBC. It is characterised by long-lasting, large settlements and rich and diverse material culture, including vessels, figurines, ground and chipped stone industries, etc. Osseous industries were also well developed, and included mainly daily tools, as well as personal ornaments. In this paper, an overview will be given of the personal ornaments from several sites situated in Serbia (the eponymous site of Vinča-Belo Brdo, Gomolava, Botoš – Živanića Dolja, Vitkovo, Stragari, Drenovac, Selevac, Belovode, Pločnik, etc.). Their quantity varied, and the site of Vinča-Belo Brdo provided the richest assemblage. Raw materials encompassed mollusc shells (mainly Spondylus, Glycymeris, Dentalium), bones, antler and teeth from various species, mainly wild. Typologically, they included pendants, beads, bracelets, but also some more elaborated shapes, such as decorative needles or applications. Manufacturing techniques and usewear traces will be discussed as well. Technology of manufacture showed high level of technological know-how, while use wear traces enabled reconstruction of the mode of use and also showed long use and repetitive repairs, suggesting these were valued objects. It is difficult to reconstruct their symbolic role, however, some hypotheses can be made on the importance of selected raw materials, time and labour input, etc. Aside from settlement finds, it is important to note that the only two cemeteries of Vinča culture discovered so far also contained numerous personal ornaments made from osseous raw materials, in particular beads and bracelets from Spondylus and Glycymeris shells.

Mots-Clés: osseous industry, bone, antler, mollusc shell, Neolithic, personal adornment

*Intervenant