

Integration of Humanities with Sciences: New Logistics understanding Human Adaptations in Northeast Asia

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Tools of transformation - a Study of jade objects in The International Network on Jade Cultures

Abstract

Currently many researchers working with jade are facing some of the overall problems regarding provenance analysis of jade objects, which is of cardinal importance when trying to entangle past societies exchange, network and mobility patterns. One of these studies focused on a previously unknown exploitation of jade during the Neolithic and Bronze Age in the Aegean on the Cycladic island of Syros. During sampling, several flakes and preforms of considerable age were identified, demonstrating, for the first time, the presence of several knapping places around the large jadeite boulders on Syros. In order to classify the specific trace elements from the source of Syros a series of investigations has been initiated using petrographic studies combined with radiospectrometry, XRD and ICP-analysis. Comparable studies indicate the emergence of a previously unknown exchange network of jade objects initiated by Neolithic societies covering the whole Eastern Mediterranean region from the 7th to 3rd millennium BC. The challenges from this particular project gave birth to the idea of establishing The International Network on Jade Cultures, where the aim is to integrate researchers from areas of archaeology, archaeometry, geology, mineralogy, geochemistry and socio-economics, which is concentrating on developing new tools for transforming and challenging our current understanding of prehistoric Jade Cultures around The World using a multi-interdisciplinary approach. The purpose of establishing The International Network on Jade Cultures is to gain new knowledge of the sources, the distribution of prehistoric jade assemblages and to compare their chemical composition, which will enable us to identify previously unknown sources, prehistoric meeting places, exchange networks, trading paths and routinization of routes within these jade exploiting cultures around The World.

(Keywords: Jade, interdisciplinary research, provenance-analysis, Aegean, exchange, mobility)