

# 'Import' and 'Imitation' in Archaeology An Introduction

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The book „Import and Imitation in Archaeology“ arose from two symposia organized by the editors at the meetings of the European Association of Archaeologists (EAA) in Thessaloniki (2002) and St. Petersburg (2003). In it authors from across Europe discuss and illustrate with case studies from a wide range of geographical regions and time periods the archaeological key concepts of 'import' and 'imitation' from a variety of theoretical and methodological perspectives.

The geographical focus lies in East and Southeast Europe as well as in the Eastern Aegean and the wider Black Sea Region. Chronologically, there are three emphases among the contributions: (1) Neolithic, Copper Age and Early Bronze Age (Choyke, Czebreszuk/Szmyt, Tkachuk, Rassamakin/Nikolova, Bauer), (2) Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age (Biehl, van Wijngaarden, Lucena Martin, Makhortykh, Potrebica), and (3) the protohistoric periods (Carucci, Kaliff, Wicker).

The book has two main objectives: firstly, to publish new archaeological data, especially from Eastern Europe and make it accessible for a wider, mainly western research community (Choyke, Tkachuk, Rassamakin/Nikolova and Bauer). And secondly, to open up a debate and theorize the concepts of import and imitation in archaeology, both with scrutinizing their applications in modern archaeology as well as to better understand the epistemological – the comparative analysis of these concepts in western and eastern European research traditions – and methodological issues involved – ranging from the so called 'import chronology', which has been especially influential in culture-historical approaches, to agency-based approaches in post-processual archaeology.

Therefore, the contributions in this book mirror the general paradigm shift in modern archaeology from the concepts of 'invention' and 'innovation' – including the underlying models of migration or diffusion – to concepts ranging from culture change, contact and transfer to reception/adaptation and import/export – using models such as

centre and periphery, trade and exchange, style and interaction/communication. Other theoretical issues discussed in this volume include authenticity, identity and agency and their meaningfulness for identifying imported or imitated material culture. The basic prerequisite for this paradigm shift and debate is that we acknowledge that material culture is meaningfully constituted and that it plays an active role in the social reproduction of all human behavior and relations. In the end, the book tries to conceptualize the material engagement of both the 'importing and/or imitating' and 'exporting' individuals or groups, in order to come closer to an understanding of the entanglement of objects and people in the past.

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