

Processing Unio Sp. Valves for Adornments at the Gumelnița Communities (Mill. V BC): Archaeological and Experimental Data

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Abstract:

Valves of the Unio sp. processed to be made into personal adornments are discovered from several settlements of Gumelnița culture (the second half of the 5th millennium B.C.). These assemblages includes pieces in different phases of transformation, from irregular splinters, to finished pieces in the shape of circular beads used as personal adornments. In this study, the raw material was interpreted as local, obtained as a by-product of the gathering process. Among the food waste products from the few settlements, the Unio sp. valves are well-represented quantitatively, their nutritional contribution being quite substantial. In order to identify the costs invested in the manufacturing of this type of items, both in point of time and in point of effort, we have developed an experimental program, allowing us to record all the variables (raw material aquisition, technological stages, time recorded for each operation, tools used, evolution of the wear following the usage etc.). Finally, the items were put together in a bracelet, tracking the evolution of the surface wear and of the perforation, which would allow us an evaluation of the use of archaeological pieces.

Keywords: *Gumelnița culture, Unio sp. valve, personal adornments, technical transformation sequence, experimental replica*