

Alexandra Hilgner · Susanne Greiff · Dieter Quast (eds)

Gemstones in the First Millennium AD  
Mines, Trade, Workshops and Symbolism

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Leibniz-Forschungsinstitut für Archäologie

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## **GEMSTONES IN THE FIRST MILLENNIUM AD**

**MINES, TRADE, WORKSHOPS AND SYMBOLISM**

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## PREFACE

The conference »Gemstones in the First Millennium AD« was organised in October 2015 in Mainz, Germany, within the scope of the project »International Framework – Weltweites Zellwerk – Changes in the cultural significance of early medieval gemstone jewellery considered against the background of economic history and the transfer of ideas and technologies«. The project, the conference and this volume are generously sponsored by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF). The project focuses on garnet jewellery, a European phenomenon of the early Middle Ages. On the one hand, the social and symbolic character of this jewellery style is scrutinised, while another part of the project focuses on eco-historical questions. While the project's results will be published in a separate volume, the present proceedings are a collection of essays, mostly by external authors. Researchers from different countries, such as Germany, England, the United States, Sweden, Norway and Italy and from various fields, such as archaeology, history, philology as well as the natural sciences, contribute to this volume: they present their results on worldwide gemstone research – including, but not focusing on garnet. These speakers, now authors, were selected to help the project members widen their views and »think out of the box« for their own research as well as to integrate their individual research results within a wider context. Trade flows and production methods, but also utilisation and perception were discussed in a cross-cultural and diachronic approach, using gemstones as an example. The conference aimed at three main questions that formed the sessions: »Mines and Trade«, »Gemstone Working« as well as »The Value and the Symbolic Meaning(s) of Gemstones«. The structure of this volume follows the structure of the conference. The chairs of the sessions and the editors of this volume present each of these three chapters with an introduction to the topic. The chairs were chosen as representatives of the three project's joint-partners: The Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum (RGZM) in Mainz, The LVR-LandesMuseum in Bonn and the South Asia Institute of Heidelberg University (SAI). The RGZM has a strong background in provenancing garnets and thus presents the chapter »Mines and Trade«. The LVR-LandesMuseum is focusing on technological questions within the project and therefore describes »Gemstone Working«. The partners from the SAI are philologists and hence qualified to discuss »The Value and the Symbolic Meaning(s) of Gemstones«.

Starting with the idea of bringing together experts from different fields and continents as well as positioning ourselves within the scientific community, we received more than we had dared to wish for: with top-ranking researchers from the wider field of gemstone studies, this conference included interesting presentations in fields that, in the past, were often characterised by isolated research carried out by only few experts. The stimulating discussions during the sessions created new networks and led to the exchange of thoughts across the disciplines.

This conference was organised by colleagues from the RGZM, but our project partners from the SAI and the LVR-LandesMuseum in Bonn played an important role in searching for and selecting the speakers. We are very thankful for their support. We would also like to thank our student assistants Anna-Maria Bojzak, Michael Franz and Andrea Bersch, for helping to organise the conference days. Thanks are also due to Carola Murray-Seegert for proofreading, Dieter Imhäuser for designing the layout, Won Andres for helping with copy-editing, and to the publishing house of the RGZM. Of course, our special thanks go to the speakers and authors whose essays created this volume. We are now fortunate to be able to present these contributions to a wider public.

*The Editors*

*Alexandra Hilgner, Susanne Greiff & Dieter Quast*

