Introduction

Volume 33 of Acta ad archaeologiam et artium historiam pertinientia, the DNiR journal, presents papers from two very different workshops held at the Norwegian Institute in 2019. The first, New research on late-antique recycling, was a one-day workshop organised by Simon J. Barker and held on September 5th. The second, Adornment as expression of everyday identity in ancient and medieval life, was a two-day conference held later in September on the 12-13th. It was organised by Courtney A. Ward and jointly held with the Finnish Institute in Rome. Although very different in scope, both meetings aimed to bring together new and established scholars not only to address traditional areas of research within these respective topics but also to provide a forum in which to present new finds and novel approaches. The editors would both like to express their gratitude to Christopher Prescott for seeing the importance of these events and providing the opportunity to make them a reality. His focus on interdisciplinary research and international collaboration made the Norwegian Institute in Rome the ideal location for these conferences. Moreover, his vision for pairing scholars with diverse specialisms and areas of interest as editors for volumes 32 and 33 of Acta showcases the breadth of research undertaken at the Norwegian Institute in Rome.

The first part of the current volume presents six papers from the workshop, New research on late-antique recycling. The central aim of the workshop was to bring together researchers and scholars to address questions about the role of recycling and spolia in Late Antiquity with the aim of providing a more coherent understanding of the cultural changes that characterised late-antique recycling. The study of re-use in Late Antiquity is of course a matter of longstanding investigation, though arguably recent years have seen a resurgence of interest in the subject. While the papers presented at the workshop included objects that have been a mainstay of investigation over the years (statues, portraits, city walls, and inscriptions), the authors use them to take a fresh look at the theme of late-antique re-use. Topics discussed include recycling practices on a city-wide level (Bigi) and the treatment and origin of spolia in city walls (Ismaelli et al.). In addition, the papers look at the re-use of late-antique statues within the period of Late Antiquity (Lenaghan), the often neglected re-carving of private female portraits (Sande), the evolution of recycling practices over the course of the third century AD and the beginnings of ‘late-antique’ recycling (Varner), and the destruction and mutilation of statues beyond the usual narrative of Christian iconoclasm (Lamy). All told, the papers touch upon many important themes for late-antique recycling practices and spolia-use
that have been under-represented in recent studies. Along the way, the articles highlight important new conclusions about recycling. These range from the differences between the recarving of male and female portraits, with sculptors focusing recarving efforts not on the face but on female coiffures (the main markers for female portraits), to the many different forms the practice took and how closely it was connected to local histories. These papers thus stress the very important point that while there is no doubt that recycling was an empire-wide phenomenon, it was also conditioned by specific local circumstances.

The second section of this volume presents a selection of papers from those presented at the conference, *Adornment as expression of everyday identity in ancient and medieval life*. The conference brought together scholars from a number of countries – Norway, Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Iceland, the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Spain, Italy, Serbia, Israel, Canada, the UK, and the USA – to discuss what can be learned about the role of personal adornment in past societies through an analysis of literary texts, artistic representations, archaeological contexts, and the objects themselves. The presentations covered a variety of time periods and geographical locations – from the Bronze Age Levant to Etruscan Italy, from Roman Britain to late-antique Egypt, and from Viking Iceland to medieval Lebanon. The contributors demonstrated the various ways in which jewellery and dress accessories were used daily to express aspects of an individual’s gender identity, social status, religious association, political affiliation, familial relationships, sexuality, and stage in their life course, both publicly and in private. The similar themes, which were present in all of the presentations on such diverse cultures and periods and which are represented in the articles in the current volume, reveal the continuous importance of objects of personal adornment in social life. This is particularly evident in religious texts (from a variety of periods and belief systems) navigating the gendered use of clothing and adornment (cf. Hirsch, Schnitzer) as well as in the choice of particular religious scenes or symbols on individual items of jewellery (cf. Allen, Antaki-Masson, Walker).

In addition to its ability to act as a marker for identity, jewellery could create a multi-sensorial experience for both the wearer and the viewer. This would have been particularly notable in settings where the acoustic qualities of certain types of jewellery (e.g., metal bracelets, anklets, and belts) were most impactful, such as in dance or hospitality contexts (cf. Berg, Gouy). Moreover, the characteristics of individual items of jewellery (e.g., the materials used and the quality of craftsmanship) and the physical process of adornment itself were both vital for the creation and display of identity (cf. Nelson, Ward). As the current volume illustrates, jewellery and dress accessories provided physical ways for individuals to negotiate different aspects of their identity, connect with earlier generations through heirloom pieces (cf. Barrero Martín, Bison), and express emotion and sentiment; however, the identities and affiliations attached to these objects were not static (cf. Marshall). They could and did change over time and with new social, political, and/or religious interactions. The studies in this second section, therefore, present a sample of the array of important social and cultural information that can be revealed from the careful study of jewellery and dress accessories - the sensory impact of different forms of adornment (Gouy, Berg); how similar forms existed over broad periods of time with various potential interpretations (Berg, Nelson, Schnitzer); what the deposition or depiction of specific items of jewellery in funerary contexts can reveal (Antaki-Masson, Bison, Barrero Martín, Walker); and how varying
aspects of craftsmanship, style, and design could alter the message of a particular form of jewellery/dress accessory or allow those with different resources the ability to display similar identities (Ward, Marshall, Allen, Hirsch).

As this brief introduction has outlined, the articles presented in this volume are varied and cover a wide array of periods, cultures, and materials; however, they demonstrate the important socio-cultural conclusions that can be drawn from close study of the material remains of the past. Moreover, the variety of subjects present within this volume display the importance of interdisciplinary and international exchange and cooperation. This volume, therefore, is a testament to the wide-range of interests and expertise fostered by the vibrant academic community at the Norwegian Institute in Rome.

Last but not least, the editors would like to heartily thank all of the contributors for their hard work, perseverance, and patience throughout the realisation of this volume, which took place in difficult times both personally and professionally. The two conferences were held shortly before Covid-19 impacted life across the globe with lockdowns, library closures, and numerous other obstacles. For this reason, the sunny September days spent in scholarly exchange and lively discussion over aperitivi with views of Rome on the Institute’s terrace seem even more remarkable and precious.