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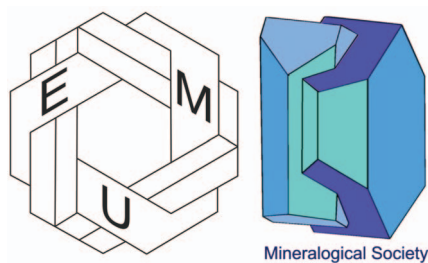
Volume 20

**THE CONTRIBUTION OF
MINERALOGY TO CULTURAL
HERITAGE**

UNIVERSITY TEXTBOOK

Edited by

GILBERTO ARTIOLI and ROBERTA OBERTI



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On the front cover: Egyptian faience was coloured by Cu to reproduce turquoise minerals, or by Co to reproduce lapis lazuli. Here a specimen of lapis lazuli from the classical localities in the Badakshan Province, Afghanistan is related to a faience cat from Egypt, 26th Dynasty (cat image courtesy of Sadigh Gallery Ancient Art Inc., New York).

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Contents

Preface	ix
Chapter 1. Introduction: The role of modern mineralogy in cultural heritage studies	1
by G. Artioli and R. Oberti	
1. Traditional vs. modern mineralogy	1
2. The materials of cultural heritage	8
References	11
Chapter 2. Variations on the silica theme: Classification and provenance from Pliny to current supplies	13
by E. Gliozzo	
1. Classifying opal, chalcedony and quartz varieties	14
2. Opal-A _N , Opal-A _G , Opal-CT, Opal-C	14
2.1. An introduction to their structures, colours and properties	14
2.2. Silica dissolution and precipitation	18
2.3. Formation sequence	20
2.4. Pliny on opals: description and provenance	21
2.5. Past and current supply areas	22
2.6. Opal provenance in archaeometry and information gained from the geological literature	23
3. Chalcedony	23
3.1. Terminology and distinguishing features of chalcedony	23
3.2. Formation conditions of chalcedony	24
3.3. Moganite	26
3.4. Diagenetic transformations and selective growth of moganite	27
3.5. Moganite and quartz identification and quantification: a tool for the provenance issue in Archaeometry	28
4. Agate	31
4.1. Pliny on agate: description and provenance	34
4.2. Past and current supply areas	36
4.3. Agate provenance in archaeometry and information gained from the geological literature	37
5. Chalcedony varieties	38
5.1. Red and orange chalcedony: carnelian and sard	39
5.2. Pliny on carnelian, sard, <i>carbunculus</i> and <i>charchedonia</i> : description and provenance	39
5.3. Past and current supply areas	42
5.4. Carnelian provenance in archaeometry and information gained from the geological literature	43
5.5. Black and brown chalcedony: onyx and sardonyx	45
5.6. Green chalcedony: chrysoprase, Cr-chalcedony, “gem silica” or “chrysocolla chalcedony” and heliotrope	46

5.7. Pliny on green chalcedonies – description and provenance	47
5.8. Modern supply areas	48
5.9. The provenance of green chalcedonies in archaeometry and information gained from the geological literature	49
6. Chert, flint and jasper	49
6.1. The distinction between chert and flint.	49
6.2. The distinction between chert and jasper	50
6.3. Pliny on chert, flint and jasper.	51
6.4. Chert and flint provenance in archaeometry	51
7. Quartz varieties	53
7.1. Hyaline quartz (rock crystal), milky quartz, smoky quartz (morion)	53
7.2. Pliny on hyaline, milky and smoky quartz: description and provenance	53
7.3. Past and current supply areas	55
7.4. Hyaline, milky and smoky quartz provenance in archaeometry and the information gained from the geological literature.	55
7.5. Rose and pink quartz	56
7.6. Pliny on rose and pink quartz	57
7.7. Amethyst, citrine and prasiolite	57
7.8. Pliny on amethyst	58
7.9. Past and current supply areas	60
7.10. Amethyst, citrine and prasiolite provenance in archaeometry and the information gained from the geological literature.	60
7.11. Blue quartz.	60
7.12. Pliny on blue quartz.	61
7.13. Current supply areas, archaeometric studies and geological literature.	62
8. Final remarks.	62
Acknowledgements	64
Abbreviations and references	64
Chapter 3. Glass and other vitreous materials through history by I. Angelini, B. Gratuze and G. Artioli.	87
1. Introduction: chemistry, mineralogy and texture of vitreous materials.	87
2. Composition of vitreous materials through time in the Mediterranean and Indian worlds.	92
2.1. Bronze Age	92
2.2. Iron Age.	116
2.3. Antiquity and Late Antiquity	122
2.4. Early Middle Ages and later	123
2.5. Modern period	124
2.6. Notes on Indian and Chinese glasses	124
3. Glass-making transition at the beginning of the 1 st millenium BC.	125
4. Glass-making transition at the end of the 1 st millenium AD.	127
5. Techniques for the investigation of glass.	131
5.1. Surface vs. bulk chemical analysis.	135
References	139

Chapter 4. The Vitruvian legacy: Mortars and binders before and after the Roman world

by **G. Artioli, M. Secco and A. Addis** **151**

1. Historical survey	151
1.1. In the beginning it was clay	151
1.2. And then fire came	156
2. Classification of inorganic binders: their chemistry and mineralogy	158
3. The composition and properties of ancient mortars.	161
3.1. Lime-based binders, technology and development.	161
3.2. Hydraulic mortars and pozzolans: the success of the ‘Vitruvian’ recipes	170
3.3. Natural hydraulic lime (NHL) mortars.	176
4. The development of modern cement materials and the hydration process.	177
4.1. Binders of the future	185
5. Conservation of binders in architecture – Binders for conservation	186
Acknowledgements	188
References	189

Chapter 5. Mineralogy of slags: A key approach for our understanding of ancient copper smelting processes

by **D. Bourgarit** **203**

1. Introduction	203
1.1. A short history of copper metallurgy	203
1.2. Copper smelting: from ore to metal	204
1.3. Copper slags: the main material studied.	205
1.3.1. Other sources exploited for the investigation of smelting processes.	205
1.3.2. Slag description.	205
1.3.3. Slag representativeness	205
2. A brief historiography of archaeometallurgical studies of copper smelting	208
2.1. When and where?	208
2.2. Why?	209
2.3. Who?	210
2.4. How?	211
3. Main working conditions documented by slag investigation.	212
3.1. Temperature	212
3.2. Atmosphere	213
3.3. Charge composition.	215
3.4. Process duration	216
4. Three archaeological issues for copper smelting: cases studies.	217
4.1. The appraisal of copper smelting: sulfides or oxides?	217
4.2. Multistep processes for copper sulfide smelting: from Late Bronze Age to Chalcolithic	218
4.2.1. Chalcopryrite smelting during the Late Bronze Age in the Alps	218
4.2.2. Early Bronze Age and Chalcolithic bornite and fahlore smelting.	218
4.3. Smelting or melting?	221

5. Conclusion	223
Acknowledgements	224
References	224
Chapter 6. The struggle between thermodynamics and kinetics: Phase evolution of ancient and historical ceramics	
by R. B. Heimann and M. Maggetti	233
1. Introduction	234
2. Ceramic phase diagrams	236
2.1. Derivation of phase diagrams	236
2.1.1. Binary systems	237
2.1.2. Ternary systems	240
2.2. Micro- or local equilibria	242
3. Oxidizing vs. reducing firing – the role of the oxygen partial pressure.	245
4. Case studies.	251
4.1. Low-fired earthenware	251
4.1.1. Neolithic Mesopotamian wares	251
4.1.2. Egyptian Neolithic pottery	254
4.1.3. Aegean Neolithic pottery	256
4.1.4. Bronze Age Cretan (Minoan) pottery	258
4.2. Medium high-fired earthenware	260
4.3. High-fired stoneware and porcelain	265
4.3.1. Chinese stoneware (proto-porcelain)	265
4.3.2. Chinese porcelain	266
4.3.3. Thai stoneware	269
4.3.4. Hard-paste porcelain of Meissen	271
4.3.5. Soft-paste porcelain	273
5. Conclusion	276
References	276
Chapter 7. Mineral pigments: the colourful palette of nature	
by I. Reiche	283
1. Introduction	283
2. Terminological definitions	285
2.1. Definition of minerals, pigments and colourants	285
2.2. Definition of paints	286
2.3. Definition of colour	286
2.4. Relevant archaeological and historical mineral pigments	287
3. A general approach for analysing mineral pigments	287
3.1. Laboratory investigation based on samples.	291
3.1.1. Study of loose pigments	291
3.1.2. Study of pigments in paints.	293
3.2. <i>In situ</i> pigment analyses using portable equipment	295
3.2.1. Digital microscopy	295
3.2.2. X-ray fluorescence analyses	298

3.2.3. Micro-Raman analyses	301
3.2.4. Complementary <i>in situ</i> analyses	302
3.3. Investigations using imaging techniques	302
3.3.1. In the laboratory	302
3.3.2. <i>In situ</i> MA-XRF scanning analyses	303
3.3.3. On the micro- and nanoscale, combined imaging methods at large-scale facilities	305
4. Examples highlighting the information obtained when studying mineral pigments in historical and archaeological contexts.	306
4.1. Non-invasive <i>in situ</i> characterization of manganese oxides used for Palaeolithic cave art in the Rouffignac cave, Dordogne, south-western France. Differentiation of artists' contributions	306
4.2. Alteration mechanisms of pigments on central Asian wall paintings from the Northern Silk road, kept at the Asian Art Museum, Berlin.	310
4.2.1. Identification of different mineral pigments	310
4.2.2. Alteration phenomena	313
4.3. Revealing the two underlying compositions of the Gustave Courbet painting ' <i>L'Homme blessé</i> ' using a combined non-invasive approach of MA-XRF imaging and CXRF	315
5. Conclusions and perspectives.	317
References	318

Chapter 8. Gems and man: a brief history

by G. Rapp.	323
1. Introduction	323
2. Early works	325
2.1. Theophrastus	325
2.2. Pliny	325
2.3. Minerals of the Old Testament	326
2.4. Ancient East Asia: China, Japan and India	326
3. Gems and semiprecious stones	327
3.1. Quartz family minerals	327
3.1.1. Amethyst	327
3.1.2. Citrine	327
3.1.3. Chalcedony.	328
3.1.4. Chrysoprase	328
3.1.5. Carnelian	328
3.1.6. Agate	328
3.2. Non-quartz silicate minerals.	329
3.2.1. Beryl	329
3.2.2. Topaz.	330
3.2.3. Garnet	330
3.2.4. Zircon	330
3.2.5. Tourmaline.	330
3.2.6. Jade	331

3.2.7. Opal	332
3.2.8. Opalite	332
3.2.9. Lapis lazuli	332
3.3. Non-silicate minerals	334
3.3.1. Diamond	334
3.3.2. Corundum	334
3.3.3. Fluorite	335
3.3.4. Chrysoberyl	335
3.3.5. Turquoise	336
3.3.6. Malachite	336
3.4. Organic gem materials	337
3.4.1. Amber	337
3.4.2. Pearl	337
3.4.3. Shell	338
3.4.4. Jet	338
3.5. Other semiprecious stones	339
3.5.1. Obsidian	339
3.5.2. Jasper	339
4. Altered, fake and counterfeit gems	340
5. Recent times	341
6. A note on the geology and geography of gem mineral deposits	342
7. Conclusion	343
References	343
Chapter 9. Gemmology in the service of archaeometry	
by M. P. Riccardi, L. Prosperi, S. C. Tarantino and M. Zema	345
1. Introduction	345
2. Some historical sources	348
3. The study protocol	349
4. Case study: the Iron Crown	350
5. Case study: King Tutankhamun's pectoral and Libyan Desert Glass	356
6. Concluding remarks	360
Acknowledgements	362
References	362
Chapter 10. Ancient Mediterranean polychrome stones	
by L. Lazzarini	367
1. Introduction	367
2. The archaeometric problems of polychrome stones	370
3. The coloured stone catalogue	372
Acknowledgments and dedication	374
References	388

Chapter 11. Obsidian and volcanic glass shards:**Characterization and provenancing**by **D. Barca, G. M. Crisci and D. Miriello** **393**

1. Introduction	393
2. The origin and geochemical classification of obsidian	394
3. Distribution and geochemical characteristics of obsidian sources in the Mediterranean area (the peri-Tyrrhenian)	395
3.1. Lipari	395
3.2. Sardinia: Monte Arci	397
3.3. Palmarola	397
3.4. Pantelleria	398
4. Provenance studies of archaeological obsidian in Italian Neolithic settlements .	399
5. The obsidian sources in Mesoamerica	400
6. Obsidian as a raw material in Mesoamerica – a particular case: The use of volcanic ash as an aggregate in plasters	403
7. Reconstruction of an ancient route using obsidian	404
Acknowledgements	406
References	406

**Chapter 12. Synchrotron Radiation InfraRed microspectroscopy
and imaging in the characterization of archaeological materials
and cultural heritage artefacts**by **A. Marcelli and G. Cinque** **411**

1. Introduction	412
2. Basics of Fourier Transform InfraRed spectroscopy	414
3. Synchrotron Radiation and IR microanalysis, principles and advantages	418
4. General applications of IR microspectroscopy to materials of historical interest	424
5. Selected examples of IR imaging in archaeology and cultural heritage	426
6. Perspectives for IR and Synchrotron Radiation in conservation and restoration	438
7. Conclusions	440
Acknowledgements	441
References	442

Index **445**

Preface

Mineralogy and its companion discipline, crystallography, are fundamental sciences, which from their original observations of natural minerals and their practical applications of economic interest (metal resources) and aesthetic appeal (gems) slowly became core parts of the physical and chemical developments of science in the period following the industrial revolution. Clashing with their fundamental importance in scientific education, mineralogy and crystallography are now encountering an identity crisis in academic curricula, and the net effect is an overall and diffuse rapid shrinking of competences concerning natural materials and their transformation products. All basic and applied sciences are suffering enormously from this general attitude of academic myopia. Some of these issues are discussed in the first chapter of this volume, where the editors argue that mineralogy is a truly interdisciplinary fundamental science as it lies in a very special position between the Earth sciences and materials science. The competent mineralogist should possess a profound perception of the complexity of natural materials, he/she should have the necessary knowledge of the ancient and recent geological and physicochemical processes acting on them and on the artifacts produced by human activities, and he/she should master most of the methods and techniques useful for investigating our common heritage.

The chapters contributed to the volume recognize the important and diverse contributions of mineralogy to the valorization, characterization, interpretation and conservation of cultural heritage. The book focuses on examples of materials and methodological issues rather than technical/analytical details. We have attempted to deal with the cultural heritage materials in chronological order of their technological developments, to relate them to past human activities, and to highlight unresolved problems in need of investigation.

The chapters collected in the present volume, of necessity, show only a selection of examples of the mineralogical applications to cultural heritage. Natural minerals and rocks [silica (chapter 2), obsidian (chapter 11), lithics (chapter 10), gemstones (chapters 8 and 9), pigments (chapter 7)] used by man in antiquity for various purposes are described. Insights into transformation products provide fundamental information on pre-historic and historic man-made materials [glass (chapter 3), mortars (chapter 4), metals (chapter 5), ceramics (chapter 6)]. An exception to this materials-ground approach is chapter 12, which illustrates some state-of-the-art methodological developments based on synchrotron radiation.

The editors originally planned to cover other key topics of mineralogical research related to human heritage, *e.g.* the important advances in our knowledge of apatite and apatite-composites, related to bio-materials such as bones and teeth. Lack of time precluded several authors from contributing. The reader will hopefully forgive the volume limitations and value the large amount of information collected by the authors. The authors are thanked for their efforts and competence; as editors we are greatly indebted for their knowledge and patience.

Gilberto Artioli and Roberta Oberti
Padova and Pavia, July 2019