

Preface by the Series Editor

The sixth volume of the *Oriental and European Archaeology* series examines body armour in Bronze Age Europe in a detailed and holistic study. The series' aims of connecting research in European and Oriental archaeology by focusing on big topics and questions for both connected cultural zones is well represented in the current volume. The presented monograph 'Protecting the Body in War and Combat: Metal Body Armour in Bronze Age Europe' by Marianne Mödlinger continues the focus of the peer-reviewed OREA series in discussing general themes for a broader scientific community. The four volumes published so far dealt with proto-urbanisation, exchange systems, interaction and societies in their environmental contexts, material sources, metallurgy and transfer of knowledge in prehistory. Each volume focuses on huge geographical-cultural areas, such as Anatolia and the Aegean, the Aegean and the Near East, Anatolia and southeastern Europe as well as northern Arabia. The present monograph is also embedded in a vast geographical context, reaching from the Mediterranean to Europe.

Body armour is – like offensive metal weapons – a significant element in the Bronze Age period and is known all over the continent. This distinct object category not only contains an important information source of war and combat; its relation with complex deposition systems and symbolisms of power and wealth also opens a window into the social and cultural dimensions of Bronze Age societies in the vast area between Scandinavia, the Iberian Peninsula and Cyprus. The innovative approach of the author Marianne Mödlinger lies in the analysis of the potential use and function of body armour with a wide range of methods. By integrating compositional analyses, micro- and macrostructural features, shaping processes, repairs and scales of deformation, she offers new insights into the manufacture and use of helmets, greaves and cuirasses. Mödlinger's broad study not only provides new primary analytical data, but – not less important – also a collection of altogether c. 230 body armour objects between the Mediterranean and Europe. Her detailed discussion of their geographical distribution, chronological position, typological classification and material characteristics leads to a new reference work for a broad scientific community. Thanks to the author's engagement in collecting all available data and in additional sampling a representative group of objects, her results offer sustainable conclusions regarding the use and function of Bronze Age metal body armour.

The Schrödinger program of the Austrian Science Fund (FWF) and the European CHARIS-MA key action program have funded the author's studies. My sincere thanks go to the FWF for financing this publication including editing, layout and print procedures. I warmly thank Steven Matthews for native speaker corrections and Estella Weiss-Krejci (OREA) for editing the manuscript.

Finally, I wish the author a broad international and interested readership taking over her outlook in the concluding chapter to continue material analyses of body armour and weaponry in the future.

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Vienna, 10 February 2017

ORIENTAL AND EUROPEAN ARCHAEOLOGY



- Vol. 1 B. Horejs – M. Mehofer (eds.), *Western Anatolia before Troy. Proto-Urbanisation in the 4th Millennium BC?* Proceedings of the International Symposium held at the Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien, Vienna, Austria, 21–24 November, 2012 (Vienna 2014).
- Vol. 2 B. Eder – R. Pruzsinszky (eds.), *Policies of Exchange. Political Systems and Modes of Interaction in the Aegean and the Near East in the 2nd Millennium B.C.E.* Proceedings of the International Symposium at the University of Freiburg, Institute for Archaeological Studies, 30th May–2nd June, 2012 (Vienna 2015).
- Vol. 3 M. Bartelheim – B. Horejs – R. Krauß (eds.), *Von Baden bis Troia. Ressourcennutzung, Metallurgie und Wissenstransfer. Eine Jubiläumsschrift für Ernst Pernicka* (Rahden/Westf. 2016).
- Vol. 4 M. Luciani (ed.), *The Archaeology of North Arabia. Oases and Landscapes.* Proceedings of the International Congress held at the University of Vienna, 5–8 December, 2013 (Vienna 2016).
- Vol. 5 Barbara Horejs, *Çukuriçi Höyük 1. Anatolia and the Aegean from the 7th to the 3rd Millennium BC.* With contributions by Christopher Britsch, Stefan Grasböck, Bogdana Milić, Lisa Peloschek, Maria Röcklinger and Christoph Schwall (Vienna 2017).