



The Diversity of Dyes in History and Archaeology

Edited by Jo Kirby-Atkinson

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The papers published in this collection (supported by a generous donation from Abegg-Stiftung), all presented at Dyes in History and Archaeology meetings, demonstrate how dyes were used through the centuries. If one century is chosen – the 17th century, for example – a fascinating comparison can be made between the dyes and dyeing methods used in Europe, in Turkey, in South America and in Japan, not only on textiles, but also in the pigments used for painting. Taking a different approach, chemical analysis has assisted detective work enabling a distinction to be made between rather similar 18th-century textiles with chinoiserie motifs, not all of which were Chinese in origin. Over the long time scale covered in this book, many developments took place and are described in its pages. One of the most exotic of dyes, shellfish purple, was used in Late Bronze Age wall paintings dated to the 17th century BC at Akrotiri, while over 3000 years later the brilliantly colored, but sometimes impermanent synthetic dyes, devised by chemists, appeared on the market: the azo dyes, fluorescein, the eosins and others. A long and distinguished history of the use of color, a glorious variety of dyes revealed – the diversity of dyes in history and archaeology.