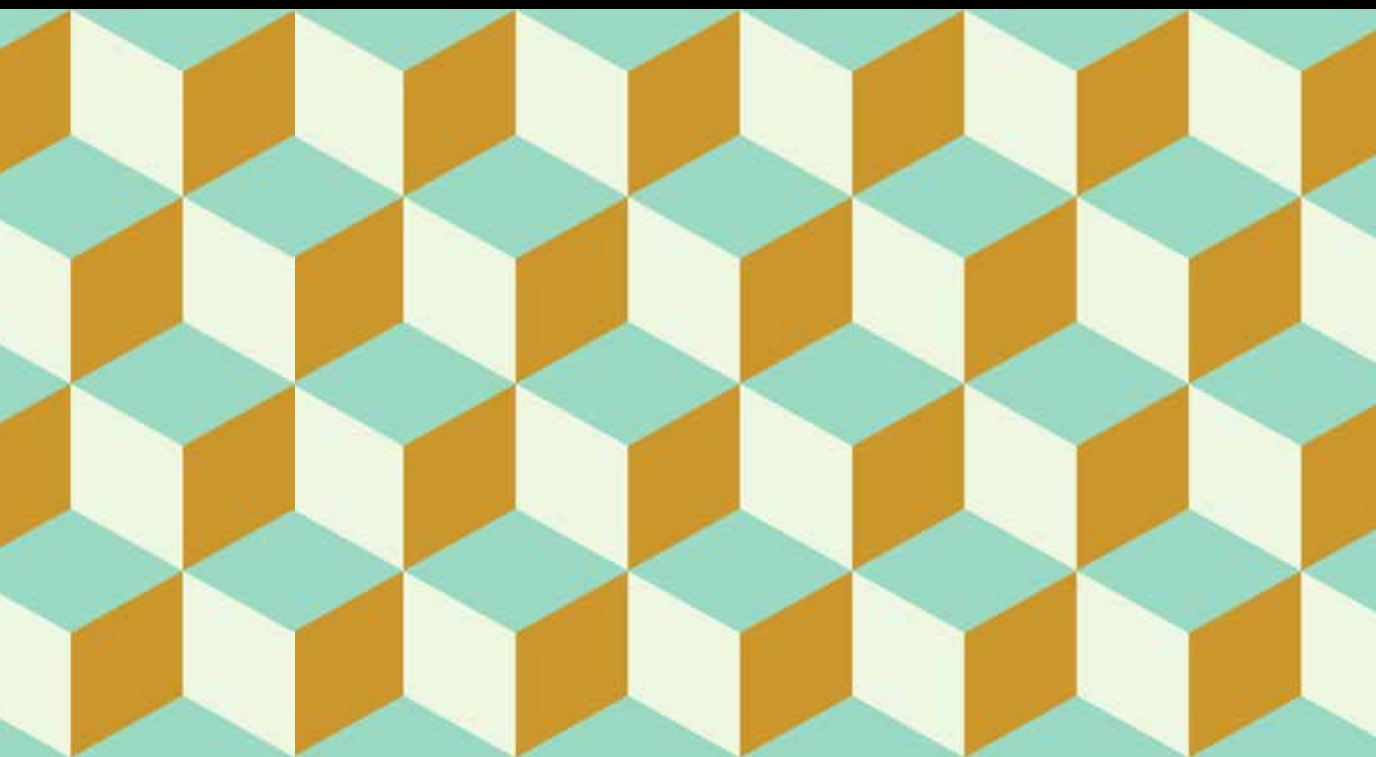


Massendinghaltung in der Archäologie

DER MATERIAL TURN UND DIE UR-
UND FRÜHGESCHICHTE



herausgegeben von

Kerstin P. Hofmann, Thomas Meier,
Doreen Mölders & Stefan Schreiber

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A Totality of a Thing with Objects

Multifaceted British-made Brooches Abroad

Tatiana Ivleva

This paper discusses the concept of entanglement of a thing with objects and with humans by using the example British-made brooches¹ found outside the province of their manufacture. Brooches formed part of a dress for most inhabitants of the Roman world; they served to hold two pieces of a person's clothing together. Up to now ca. 250 British-made brooches have been identified on ca. 100 sites in continental Europe. Being made in Roman Britain and brought overseas for the purpose of fastening the clothes, their functional aspect started to be overshadowed by other meanings attached to them by the variety of owners, users and viewers brooches have changed during their lifetime. Once the brooches reached their final owners and entered the archaeological record, they acquired the mixture of identities filled with the variety of meanings and associations.

The paper illustrates the existence of uniformity within duality of each brooch, which has the essentialised (thingliness) and multifaceted (objectness) margin, i.e. the boundaries of the brooches were repositioned in relation to different points of reference (i.e. different users, owners and viewers). In each phase, brooches were supplemented by a new narrative, i.e. new meanings were given to them while all the older meanings attached to them continued to resonate. The narratives of brooches were closely connected with the narratives of a user or an owner, allowing us to talk about the mobile narratives of objects, where the relationship between these objects and the meanings superimposed by agents underwent a similar 'conceptualised' mobility as their agents (i.e. users, owners, and viewers) underwent a physical mobility, moving from one place to another within the Roman Empire. Yet, while different messages could be sent by the owner through the wearing of a particular brooch, the embedded thingliness of a brooch resonated. The paper shows how thingliness and objectness neither precede nor proceed but are firmly entrenched within one another forming a totality, which provides a playground for myriad of identities to be projected.

Schlüsselworte: Fibeln; römisches Britannien; Verstrickung; Ding; Objekte

Key words: brooches; Roman Britain; entanglement; a thing; objects

1 In Anglo-Saxon scholarship brooches manufactured in the province of Roman Britain usually referred to 'Romano-British brooches', but, as will be discussed later in this article, this taxonomic entity is not useful when discussing these artefacts.

Introduction

Every decade, archaeology embraces a variety of concepts that come into its path, resulting in a sequence of paradigm shifts and a birth of new archaeological yet theoretically-appropriated buzzwords. Maybe one too many, as a recent publication by John Bintliff and Mark Pearce suggests, posing the question of whether archaeological theory is dead under such burdens and eclectics (Bintliff/Pearce 2011). This contribution is guilty as charged, since it yet again introduces conceptual and strategic research tools based on the variety of contemporary approaches to things and objects—but it nevertheless wishes to move further in its theoretical and metaphorical components, to create a playground of entanglement allowing a variety of approaches to mingle and coalesce.

At the outset, I wish to say that I am aware that every term, concept or combination of phrases used here has its own theoretical and philosophical baggage, and it is not practical to avoid their epistemological meaning. However, in most cases they will be treated here as terms describing what they were originally meant to describe, although I will attempt, whenever possible, to do justice to concept ‚inventors‘.

This paper deals primarily with the union of ‚a thing‘ and ‚the objects‘ (sic) through the fashionable concept of entanglement² with the use of a case study of British-made brooches found outside the province of their manufacture, and also engages with the relationship between humans and thing/objects. The aim of this case study is to show how the original ‚thingliness‘ of brooches is not lost or dissolved by human intervention in the form of the variable acts of intentional defragmentation of the brooches’ original purpose. The position of firm embodiment as a *thing* within the variable objectness nature of brooches provided the essential component for the formation of the totality of structure, from which multiple practices, experiences and identifications of brooches grew.

A thing and the object

„I think I've more or less finished with the world as narration. I'm now only interested in the world as juxtaposition“ (Houellebecq 2011 [2010], 169, my emphasis).

This paper is a theoretical attempt to place the notion of thingliness or ground zero or constancy of materials in the context of the objectness nature of humanity, which views anything that comes its path „as the product of its capacity to transform the material world in production, in the mirror of which we create ourselves“ and „anthropomorphise objects as agents“ (Miller 2005, 2 and 13). This essential property has been discussed on many occasions in theoretical literature, and the present work is not aimed at reinventing the wheel once again. Within the current

2 It seems entanglement has become completely immersed into the contemporary theoretical vocabulary and is now everywhere, whilst a decade ago as an anthropological notion it was quietly awaiting to be discovered by archaeologists, with Michael Dietler (2010), Timothy Ingold (2008; 2010) and Ian Hodder (2011; 2012) rescuing it from oblivion. The beauty of this concept has also enchanted the present author. On the use of this notion in anthropological literature, among others, see Mbembe (2001 [2000]), Nuttall (2009), Dennison (2012).

scholarship, this essence or mathematical function known as constant, wherein the property of an entity does not vary and always stays the same, is known as ‚black box‘ in Actor-Network-Theory (Latour 2005), as ‚*das Ding*‘ (Heidegger 1971), as *habitus* (Bourdieu 1998 [1994]), or as ‚stuff‘ (Miller 2010).

I prefer to address ‚the essence‘ through a syntactic category of determiner and refer to it with an indirect article, ‚an a‘. Determiners such as indirect and direct articles help humans to identify what another human is talking about or referring to, i.e. whether it is a particular example or something referred to in general (Swan 2009, 135). While the direct article ‚the‘ refers to something that is known, i.e. ‚you know which I mean‘ (Swan 2009, 53), the indirect article ‚a‘ implies something that is undefined, singular and not-yet-referred to. To this end, ‚an a‘ exists but is not yet talked about; it is peripheral and vague, „designed to be invisible or unnoticed“ (Hodder 2012, 6). It exists in itself, which is expressed in the property of being a juxtaposition, a point of reference, a first snapshot of ‚being-in-a-state-prior-to-becoming‘.³ It is something self-sustained, something that stands on its own, comparable to the Aristotelian principle of „a thing is itself“ (Aristotle, *Metaph.* VII, 17).

The most mundane property becomes important and starts playing a role in the reality of humans at the moment when humans intervene, when they start to recognise and analyse such ‚a thing‘, which prior to that merely existed within itself. Think about a pen on a table, which was, is and will be there unless an action is taken towards *that* pen. Why this pen? Why not a red one? What make *this* pen so peculiar so that one needs to think about it? Such a sudden change in a pen’s property from being-a-pen to becoming-the-pen is exactly what constitutes the property of ‚the objects‘. Such property ‚objectness‘ is fluid, dynamic and unstable; it is constantly changing, depending on situations in which humans place ‚the object‘. It is from here that ‚a thing‘ receives its own story; narration about it has thus begun. The way the light falls on the pen changes its colour; when one uses it to write, it changes the pen’s weight. Even writing or reading about the pen makes it the center of one’s attention. Surely, you did not even consider thinking about *the* pen a minute ago?

‚An a‘ or ‚a thing‘ is thus an essentialised inherited marker, something that was there already but did not deserve one’s attention.⁴ This is precisely the power of ‚a thing‘: being relevant through its presence, being an attention-seeker or being on „the threshold of the conscious in everyday life“ (Hahn 2007, 134; cf. also Hahn/Soetgen 2011, 24). This perspective is akin to Daniel Miller’s (2005, 5) position on the „humility of things“, which are „important not because they are evident [...], but often precisely because we do not ‚see‘ them. The less we are aware of them, the more powerful they can determine our expectations by setting the scene and ensuring normative behavior, without being open to challenge“.

‚The objectness-of-the-objects‘ has a multi-dimensional nature, which implies various levels of identification, practices and experiences; it does not have markers per se, but is composed of multivalent shifting perceptions, which are devising and devised by particular behaviours in humans (cf. the concept of rhizome in

3 Cf. Gilson 1952, esp. 2-5, on ‚to be‘ and ‚being‘ conditions.

4 In Hodder’s (2012, 13) terminology it is an entity, a bounded essence.

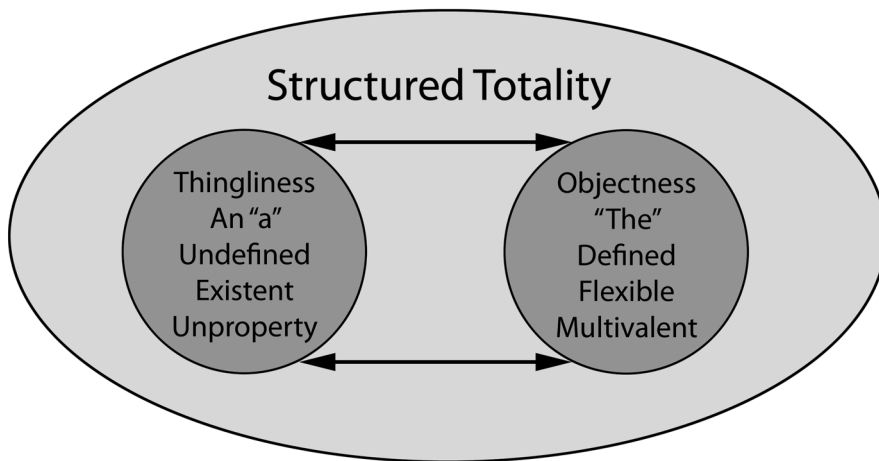


Figure 1: Structured totality of entanglement of thingliness with objectness (© Tatiana Ioleva).

Deleuze/Guattari 2004 [1980]). By repositioning the material culture within our (artificially) constructed contexts, we thus embody it with shifting meanings, bringing it forward from the monotonous peripheral existence. Yet, through this ,objectness‘ property, the artefacts have power over humans on their ability to force investigation or intervention from our side, when we are becoming attracted to the possibility of identifying in ,a thing‘ multiple contextual realities.

Properties of both ,a thing‘ and ,the objects‘ are mutually constitutive and entangled in order to have meaning and existence (Fig. 1). In other words, the two realms are connected and define each other: ,an a‘ is shaped by the self but becomes multivalent objects through humans‘ perceptions and interventions, humans who in their own turn devise by conscious or unconscious choice their behaviour towards ,being-a-thing‘ things. In this way there is no dualism of ,a thing‘ and ,the objects‘; they are neither synonymous nor antonymous. They are a whole, a total embodiment of conceptualised ,becoming-the-objects-within-being-a-thing‘ (akin to the concepts of univocity in Deleuze 1994 [1968] and ,pluralism = monism‘ in Deleuze/Guattari 2004 [1980]). Neither precedes nor proceeds each other, but each is firmly entrenched within one another, forming a totality.⁵ To this end, this discussion is within the current theoretical framework, which aims „to soften the dualistic frame“ between subjects and objects, humans and objects, and things and objects, to examine materials and materiality and move beyond the created Cartesian oppositions (Miller 2005, 7; *cf.* also Ingold 2007; Hodder 2012).

Entanglement comes into play when „a thing in its own right“ (Hodder 2012, 2) is used to construct multiple variations and perceptions by humans, but it does not lose its ,thingliness‘. The entanglement is seen here as result of inward interaction between the inherited properties of ,an a‘ and ,the‘, and outward interaction with social beings. Philipp Stockhammer (2012; 2013, 16-17), for instance, sees entanglement as „the result of the creative processes triggered by

5 *Cf.* Ingold 2007, 7: „In the real world of materials, [...] there are neither interior holes nor exterior surfaces“.

intercultural encounters“, through which „a new taxonomic entity“ is created. His ‚entanglement‘ is a close relative to ‚hybridity‘, another term loaded with epistemological luggage (Stockhammer 2012). I suggest seeing it as an embodied discursive reality, an integral component of the transformative process leading from ‚being-a-thing‘ to ‚becoming-the-objects‘, from a juxtaposition to multiple narrations. The closest depiction of such process is that of a knob, a web within which different layers of realities coalesce and mingle, presenting us with a picture-perfect totality. In this description, ‚entanglement‘ moves beyond hybridity and transcultural interaction. While I agree with Stockhammer (2012, 50-51) that the „[entangled object] is more than just a sum of entities from which it originated, [because] it is an indissoluble combination of all of them – a cultural ‚Geflecht‘ – and might be seen as a new entity“, I would like to emphasise here that even within this new entity one can encounter a resonance of all previous entities, since entanglement allows the co-existence of a constant, ‚an a‘, with the multiple influences, redefinitions and ‚objectifications‘ imposed on artefacts by humans. As such, artefacts are like chameleons, which, while staying within same body, adapt their skin colour and pattern accordingly to variable conditions and situations (Tilley 2004). One can ‚appropriate‘, ‚objectify‘, ‚incorporate‘ and ‚transform‘ artefacts (cf. Hahn 2007; 2008 methodological approach), but inherently they have a common ‚being-a-thing‘ thread.

Let us turn our attention to the human-artefact relationship, an outward interaction of artefacts with humans through which ‚a thing‘ receives meaning and comes out of the periphery. This outward interaction develops through evaluation and transformation of actions and rules by individuals, which is called discourse. Interaction can also develop through repetition of actions, which can be routinised as a result of their continuous repetition (and as such draw extremely close to ‚being-a-thing‘). Because people not only interact with objects through these actions, but also have the ability to associate objects with some other place, or cherish objects for particular associations, it gives us a criteria for evocation and affection.

This terminology is based on Anthony Giddens’s ‚theory of structuration‘, where these three actions were called discursive consciousness, practical consciousness and unconsciousness (Giddens 1979; 1984). In sociology, these three processes of discourse, routinisation and evocation were further developed towards the three main models of human action: normative, rational and emotional man (Dürrwächter 2009, 18, also for further literature). Normative man and his actions are formed by the norms and expectations of society; such behaviour, bounded by norms, becomes repetitive and individuals merely follow solutions provided by earlier choices that have been proved to work (Dürrwächter 2009, 18). This brings us to a routine engagement with objects, where they are used because they are needed and because their use has become a habit. Rational man has goals, and the ability to evaluate various means to achieve them; he makes conscious decisions based on calculations, comparisons and subjectivity (Dürrwächter 2009, 18). He enters into discourse with objects and his surroundings, evaluates responses and acts according to subjective analysis or objective responses. Emotional man complements rational and normative man; feelings, which are unpredictable,

dominate him, and the choices he makes are uncontrolled, unconscious; yet, the uniqueness of his responses lends texture to the actions of rational and normative man (Dürnwächter 2009, 19). Emotional man approaches objects not because he has to (normative or routinised aspect) or because he needs them (discursive or rational aspect), but because they – objects – evoke feelings, emotions and affectations in him. Human actions are the combinations of these categories, where norm, intentionality and affection play a significant part in the relation between humans and objects.

The three-man system and three-level process of interaction demonstrate the complexity of humans' and objects' outward 'entanglement' with each other (Stockhammer 2011, *cf.* Hodder 2012 book front image) and, to some extent, move beyond the idea of intentionality and agency of and towards artefacts.⁶ One can speak of mutual dependence, where artefacts define humans and humans define artefacts, where humans create artefacts and artefacts create humans (Hodder 2012, esp. 27-39 and 64-87). In a simplistic way, we need and depend on artefacts to function properly in our daily activities: pots and pans to cook, chairs and carpets to sit, pens and pencils to write, etc. Some of these activities are intentional and discursive, some embedded within habitual practice, some grown from particular associations. In a similar way, artefacts need us to come out of 'a thing' based existence: without intervention, no objectified plurality of their reality will be possible. This mutual dependence is a true spirit of human entanglement with the totality of artefacts. To this end, one can speak of entanglement within entanglement, which does not contradict a metaphoric image of a web.⁷

By switching now to a case-study of British-made brooches found outside the areas of their manufacture, which were in the province of Roman Britain, I wish to show how all these theoretical discussions are applicable for material culture studies.

What's in a brooch?

The most common dress accessories in the clothing of provincials in the Roman Empire were brooches that served to hold two pieces of a person's clothing together, usually outer garments such as cloaks. They were positioned on the upper part of a dress, which covered the upper torso/chest area. Because they functioned essentially as clothes-fasteners, brooches were worn in most provinces of the Roman Empire by both males and females of all ages. While the male style was to wear one brooch, which fastened the cloak on the right shoulder, the female custom was to wear two or more brooches, where two fastened the dress at both shoulders and others, usually positioned in the center of a dress, used to pin the undertunic to the overtunic (*cf.* Ubian or Norico-Pannonian female dresses in Rothe 2009 and 2013). There is, however, enough pictorial and archaeological evidence to support that in each Roman province regional, ethnic or tribal affiliations were

6 As opposed to Bruno Latour's 2005 actant artefacts, or Alfred Gell's 1998 artefacts agency; *cf.* also Olsen 2010; Gosden 2005; but see Hofmann/Schreiber 2011, 165, note 2.

7 Akin to Hodder's (2012, 88-89) entanglement, which is the dialectic dependence of things on humans depended on things. Or, „things as we want them have limited ability to reproduce themselves, so in our dependence on them we become entrapped in their dependence on us“.

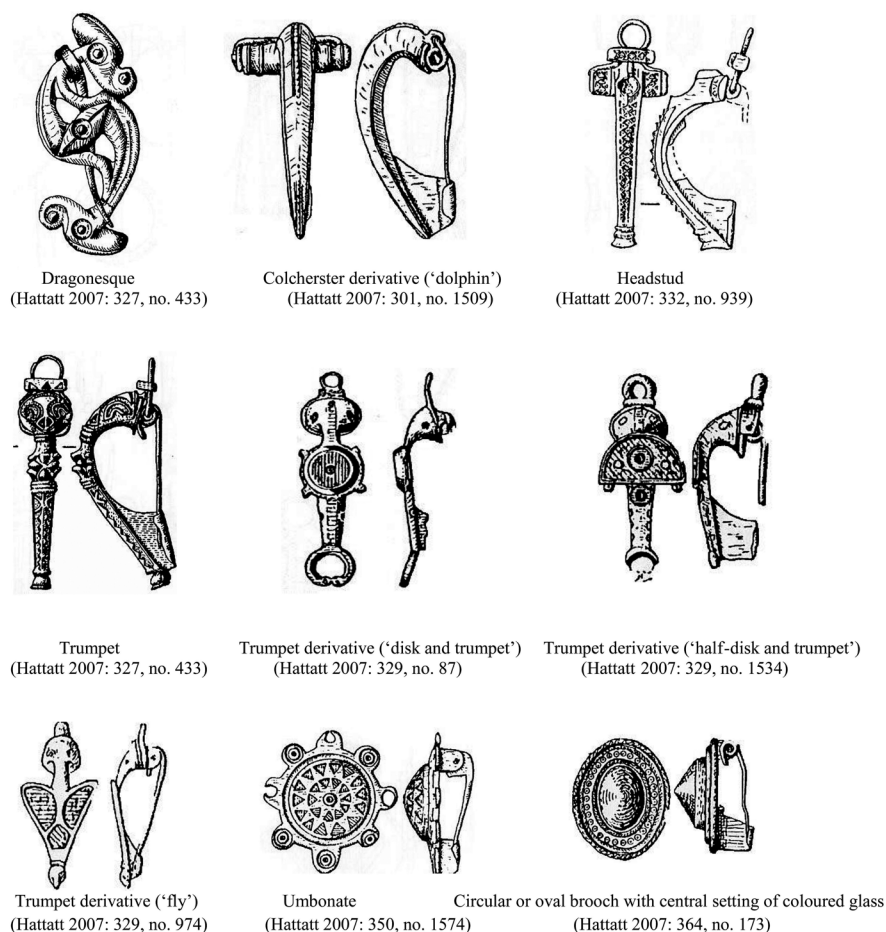


Figure 2: British-made brooches' most widespread types (reproduced by permission of Oxbow Books).

expressed visually, adding to the mainstream dress regional types of fibulae, styles of headdress and forms of dress decoration (Croom 2002, 125-147, esp. figs 24 and 25; Grabherr *et al.* 2013).

Within the province of Roman Britain, there is also evidence for the existence of regional dress decorated with brooches that were distinctive in their design, decoration and form in relation to other brooch types produced, traded and worn in other parts of the Empire (fig. 2). This alone makes them stand out within the homogenous material culture of continental sites, as I have argued elsewhere (Ivleva 2011, 133; Ivleva, forthcoming). These types of brooches appear to be relatively numerous in Britain – on any given site the percentage of brooches with typical British characteristics is over 70. Within other provinces of the Roman Empire they are, however, found in limited numbers: 1 or at most 3 percent of the total number of all brooches found on any given site.

That these brooches were actually made in Britain – as opposed to brooches reproduced by local craftspeople from templates – can be supported by the fact that they occur in too small a quantity on the Continent to suggest otherwise. To this end, within this article, they will be called British-made as opposed to Romano-British or brooches made in the Romano-British style or tradition. ‚British-made‘ is of course yet another created taxonomic entity (*cf.* also Stockhammer 2013, 18 on problems with such creations). However, a notion such as ‚Romano-British‘ can be understood as a pure hybrid of Roman with British art traditions and forms. One must take into account that these brooches were actually a result of cultural mixtures, a combination of Roman, Continental and British craftsmanship, which were produced within mixed cultural conditions such as a multiethnic Roman provincial society. In this sense, brooches are therefore a hybrid of a hybrid, pointing us towards seeing them as being a hybrid product from the very beginning of their existence. The problem here is that one cannot perceive ‚Roman‘ or ‚British‘ as fixed entities (Brather 2007; Revell 2009). These identities were fragmented, complex and imbued with multileveled meanings, such that being Roman or British was always different (Revell 2009; Ivleva 2011). One cannot therefore see these brooches as forms of Romano-British hybridised art, because of its non-existence. By understanding them more as artefacts made in Britain, i.e. as products of the provincial and global Roman Empire ‚koine‘, one can avoid the problems associated with connecting particular artefacts with ‚cultures‘.⁸

Up to now, ca. 250 British-made brooches have been identified on more than 100 sites across Europe (fig. 3). By posing the question of how these objects reached their destinations in Continental Europe, one can relate their presence to the following. Brooches ‚travelled‘ because of their function as clothes fasteners: the people who travelled from Britain to the Continent needed something to hold their cloaks and clothes together. Moreover, British-made brooches were rather regionally specific and therefore could not have always acted as trader items, since there might have been no market for them outside the province of their manufacture.

Through in-depth analysis of all sites, their location, the history of a settlement, analysis of the epigraphic material found on such sites, and the study of the context in which these artefacts were found, I have shown elsewhere that it is possible to associate particular sites with the presence of individuals travelling from Britain (Ivleva 2011, 137-142; Ivleva 2012 and forthcoming). In the analysis, the chronological context has been considered carefully in each case; sites were only selected when the presence of people travelling from Britain is contemporary with when the particular type of British-made brooch was still in use, as shown from site evidence in Britain itself.⁹

The research has shown that a few brooches, especially those found in the frontier regions of the Roman Empire, can be connected with the service of military units raised from Britain, which contained, among other recruits, soldiers of British descent as well as their wives (Ivleva 2011, 137-138). Another group of British-made brooches seems to be concentrated in the areas settled with former soldiers of the Roman army, veterans, who served 25 years in the Roman

⁸ See Hofmann/Schreiber 2011, 171, notes 9 and 10 for further discussion.

⁹ For the problems associated with dating, see Ivleva 2011, 133 and 2012, 45.

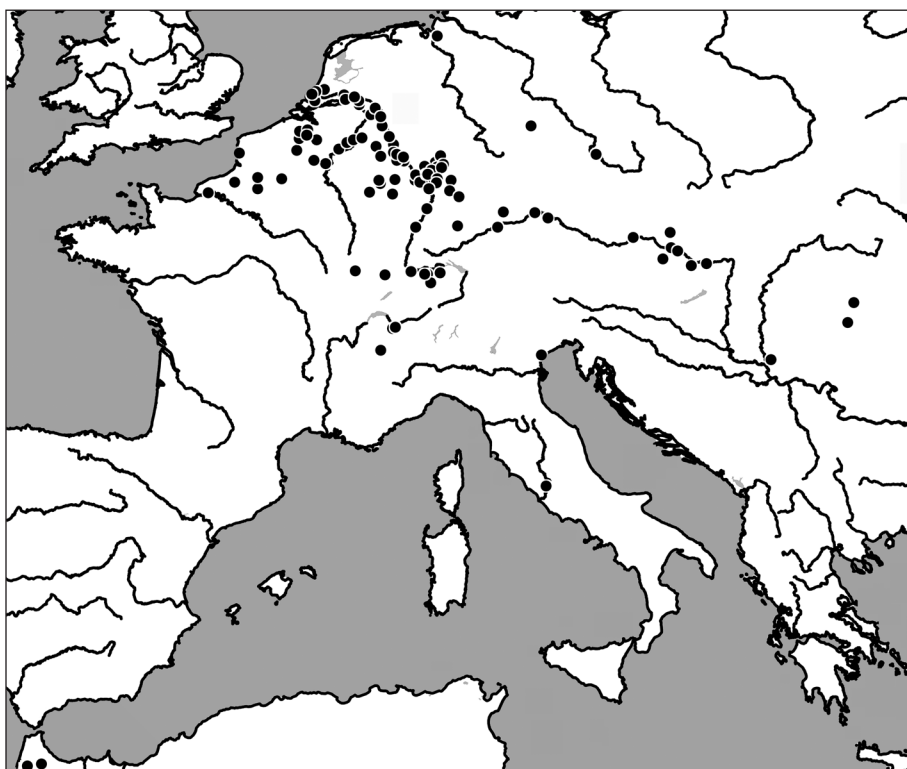


Figure 3: Distribution of British-made brooches on the Continent (© Tatiana Ivleva).

army stationed in Britain. Upon discharge, some of the veterans and their family members, *e.g.* wives and children, preferred to return to their home region on the Continent – we know of such returns being made (Derks/Roymans 2006). Both groups undoubtedly brought their personal possessions with them: they needed, after all, to have something to secure their pieces of clothing together.

By looking at the contexts and settings in which various British-made brooches ended up, there seems to be a particular distinction. Returning veterans more often than not incorporated foreign objects into their own social practices, whilst soldiers tended to discard their brooches near their military posts. That British-made brooches were found in a variety of archaeological contexts is a first indication that their purpose was not limited to being a dress accessory or to pinning down garments. One can talk of mobility of function and practice (*cf.* Stockhammer 2011, 190 on „plurality of object function“), where the brooches’ original purpose as clothes fasteners was defragmented and started to be overshadowed by other practices attached to them by the variety of owners, users and viewers, that brooches changed during their itineraries in time and space.

Cremation burials on sites associated with veterans returning from Britain to their homelands are common places where British-made brooches appear in significant numbers. Placing the brooches into the burials was a relatively common practice in the north-western Roman provinces: some were placed as grave goods or put on top of the cremated remains to hold together wrappings containing the cremated bone, others were placed in the ditches outside the grave, probably some

time after the burial had taken place or during the feast (Philpott 1991). It should also be taken into account that a significant number of brooches could have been placed with the body of a deceased person and burned, therefore not surviving intact to enter the archaeological record.

All British-made brooches found with cremations were in good state and unburnt, suggesting their deposition after the burning of the body of the deceased, possibly for the purpose of fastening a leather bag or a cloth containing the cremated remains or as offerings. This shows that their functionality was an important factor; yet, one may ask why *these* particular brooches were put into graves. Conscious or unconscious deliberateness in the inclusion of brooches with foreign associations suggests that they had important connotations for the deceased whose remains they were supposed to secure, as well as for the relatives.¹⁰ This may have been a defined act, through which various forms of perceived identities could have been projected and communicated by the descendants rather than representing the personal and actual identity of the deceased. The placement of brooches as intact grave goods suggests an unwillingness for their destruction and a wish to preserve them in a complete state. Brought from Britain because of their functionality, not destroyed, kept intact, they could have been used by other members of a family or community because of their limited availability and uniqueness in a settlement. However, neither their precious looks nor their functional value for the living were important, but rather their particular associations with the deceased. I have argued elsewhere that they could have been valued by their owners and, later, by the relatives of the deceased for their associations with the past, indicating the (dead) owner's experience in Britain among other things, and can be seen as a manifestation of memory relating to the deceased's past (Ivleva 2012 and forthcoming).

British-made brooches have also frequently appeared on sites associated with religious activity, presumably serving as votive deposits. Such treatment of objects primarily intended as lifestyle accessories and meant for decoration implies a gradual movement in their value and adoption of another meaning, i.e. from profane and mundane to sacred and special. The inclusion of objects of personal ornament in votive deposits suggests that people offered them for „more personal reason“, as an act of offering „something *of themselves*“ (Pudney 2011, 126). Analysis has shown that British-made brooches found on the Continent within a sanctuary context were brought by families of returning veterans or by veterans themselves, who took the trouble of transferring them overseas, but chose not to use them appropriately, i.e. as clothes fasteners, and gave them away as offerings. That the choice of gift fell on British-made brooches might indicate their symbolic value as an embodiment of a ‚British‘ military past. Objects, as symbols of the past and (unpleasant) service, were no longer needed in daily life, and were therefore positioned in the ceremonial pit of a sacred site.

10 Conscious deliberateness implies here an intentionality in an action, as in ‚I know why I did it the way I did‘. Unconscious deliberateness implies an action without the realisation of why it had been executed, as in ‚I do not know why I did it the way I did, but I did it anyway‘.

In many other cases, British-made brooches were found in rubbish pits or appeared in roadsides or fields, or beneath floors of buildings. Such occurrence indicates the brooches' non-value: after fulfilling the purpose of decoration and pinning, they were no longer needed, taken out of circulation and thrown away. The sites where brooches were found in rubbish pits had a direct connection to British auxiliary units and the British fleet, which had close contact with Britain. It is possible that there was an abundance of British-made brooches on these sites, and soldiers and their family members did not regard them as something special. Their 'daily-ness' and un-exoticness may have been the cause of their becoming rubbish. In a similar vein, brooches recorded as 'accidental losses' entered the archaeological record as the result of someone's carelessness. These items were most likely worn at the time of loss, an indication that British-made brooches were part of daily routine, habitually and continuously worn, in spite of changes in living places, of daily habits and the people surrounding the brooches' wearers. These acts of losing and throwing away meant the functional and practical death of a particular brooch, together with all the meanings with which this item may have been associated. To this end, one can speak of the British-made brooches' 'non-functionality' in these contexts (Hofmann/Schreiber 2011, 179), where their primary purpose and other practices with which brooches were imbued stopped producing any meaningful narration, becoming simply a juxtaposition or 'a thing'.

The occurrence of brooches in diverse contexts shows variability and creativity in their use, function and practice within different levels of population who came in contact with these objects (sic). While the archaeological contexts in which objects are found represent the final and ultimate deposition, the ways and the states in which brooches reached their resting places give us possibilities for discussing their itineraries (Hahn/Weiss 2013), as opposed to a 'cultural biography of things' (Appadurai 1986; Kopytoff 1986). While I will turn my attention to this in a bit, I wish to point out that any actions discussed here, such as positioning in burial or ceremonial or rubbish pits, were actually normal activities, performed more or less regularly (cf. Hofmann/Schreiber 2011, 180 on everyday-ness of 'objects' actions). Such (un)conscious routinisation of significant practices in which brooches were imbued with or dissolved from narratives is a clear example that everything and everyone is entangled in a web of (un)intentional objectification embedded in 'thingliness'.

Brooches' entanglement

„Each time the same object would give rise to a new meaning, though all former meanings would resonate together with the new one“ (Kundera 1995 [1984], 84).

This is where I would like to return to the theoretical basis of this paper: the entanglement of thingliness with objectness. The entangled totality of brooches is articulated in them being a juxtaposed thing expressed through their sheer physicality, and in them becoming multiple narrative objects once they were put to use. To this end, a thing can be seen as „the tangible stuff [or a product] of craftsmen and manufacturers“ (Ingold 2007, 2). It is physical property, a substance that is

omnipresent, that forms brooches' inherited ground zero or essentialised basis¹¹ (on substance Gibson 1979; Hahn/Soentgen 2011). Its physicality, i.e. the presence of a pin, spiral and sometimes headloop, and colourful or monochrome decorations, formed the brooches' tangible 'thingliness' and were the main reason they were taken to the Continent. It is there when 'a brooch' became 'the brooch' through the positioning of its physicality in a variety of contexts and social surroundings, on bodies and clothing. At the moment of the first encounter with a brooch, a person, an agent, a social being made it come out of its shadowed existence. In a similar vein, Stockhammer (2012, 49) calls the process of the first encounter as „seeing through“, but this is the exact moment when seeing through triggers the rise of constructions and perceptions, otherness and differences. Through acknowledging the existence of 'a thing' and encountering it, the artefact's use starts to be dependent on the (sensory) *responses* its physical property evokes. The formulation of the objectness properties of the brooch is therefore a by-product of „materials [partaking] in the very process of the world's ongoing generation and regeneration“ (Ingold 2007, 9). In other words, the physical property of a brooch gave margins for the resonance of the brooch's objectness, entangled within the interactive nature of discourse, routinisation and evocation.

The routinised aspect of usage lies in brooches' primary function: to fasten clothing. The positioning of a brooch at shoulder level and wearing it so that everyone could see it provides an entrance for discourse, when a meaning is given, responses from viewers evoked and value evaluated. The emotional person sees the value of the item as an embodiment of particular meanings, associations and feelings, bringing to the surface the evocative interaction. Each aspect intervenes and collaborates, and finalises the end result of a brooch's use, i.e. whether it is thrown away, buried, given away, etc. In this system of usage, emotions and values are part of the outward entanglement described above. At each stage, viewers, owners and makers collaborate in the creation of brooches' objectified meanings as gendered, or as status-dependent, or as ethnic-projecting objects. In an essence, each brooch is dual in its uniformity, having the essentialised (thingliness) and multifaceted (objectness) margin, i.e. the boundaries of the brooches were repositioned in relation to different points of reference (i.e. different users, owners and viewers) (Fig. 4). In each phase, objects are supplemented by a new narrative, i.e. new meanings are given to them while all the older meanings attached to them continue to resonate. Objectified brooches are, therefore, a sum of material resonances, although their core property as 'a thing' was not erased within the other meanings. So what constitutes the thingliness of British-made brooches; how does it resonate and how does it entangle through the discourse, routinisation and evocation?

11 The destruction of the physical properties of artefacts is of course a common occurrence in the archaeological record. Artefacts can be (un)intentionally broken or changed to the point of the emergence of a completely new substance with its own objectified narrative. Cf. shreds of Roman amphorae being used as rubbing tools in second-third-century AD India (Tomber 2013, 98) or turtle, so-called oracle, bones crushed and digested as medicine in 19th-century China (Hodder 2012, 12 after Keightley 1985). This defragmentation of original purpose and relocation of 'thingliness' into a new environment does not, however, deconstruct the inherited marker, which is 'a thing', but forms a part of a process of meaningful resonance whenever such resonance is possible (see below).

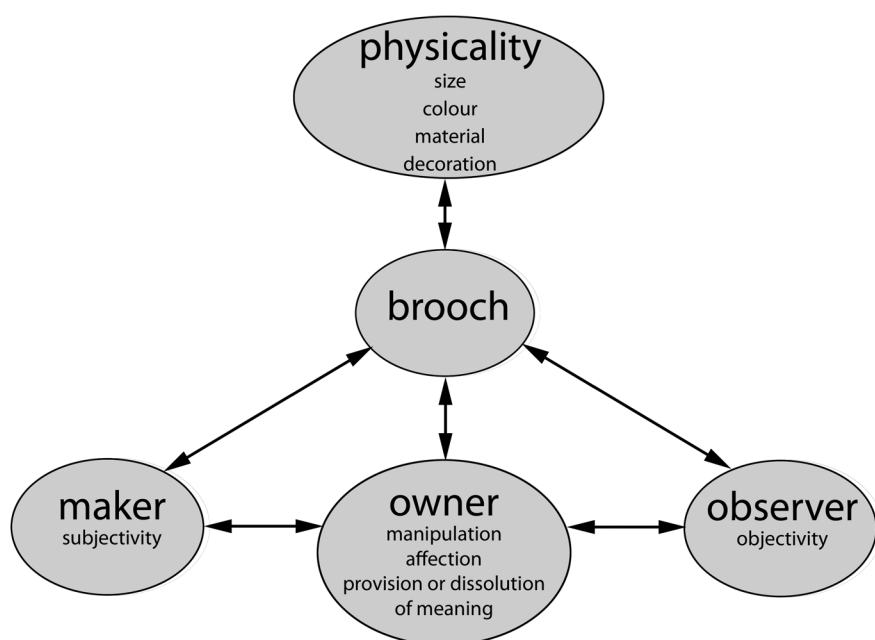


Figure 4: Entanglement within and of brooches (© Tatiana Ivleva).

British-made brooches took on and played a variety of roles outside Britain, yet the past was the cornerstone in determining their 'future' as objects. The aspects of 'physicality' and 'place of manufacture' connected the agents with their British past. The desire to forget, re-invent, evoke or project this past attests to the importance and value of memory when British-made brooches were put in specific contexts abroad. The analysis conducted here regarding the contexts and possible meanings behind including brooches in burials, sacred settings and rubbish pits indicates that one can correlate the context in which the brooches were found with the groups of people who may have brought these objects to the sites. It seems that British recruits serving in British units were prone to accidentally lose their brooches or to discard them as unneeded rubbish, while there are indications that returning veterans included foreign material in their own social practices, such as putting an exotic object in a grave or in a sanctuary. Moreover, the overall analysis has suggested that people arriving from Britain, British-born soldiers serving on the Continent in particular, continued to wear their British-made brooches (Ivleva 2011, 2012 and forthcoming). Was this done by practical necessity or as a result of ethnic consciousness? Of course, wearing a British-made brooch does not make one British. Through wearing a British-made brooch, a variety of identities could have been projected: age (large ones for the elderly, small ones for children), gender (decorated for women, plain for men) or status, as well as local rather than provincial identities. All in all, the narratives of brooches are closely connected with the narratives of a user or an owner, allowing us to talk about the mobile narratives of objects, where the relationship between these objects and the meanings superimposed by agents underwent a similar 'conceptualised' mobility as their agents (i.e. users, owners, and viewers) underwent a physical

mobility, moving from one place to another within the Roman Empire. Yet, while different messages could be sent by the owner through the wearing of a particular brooch, the embedded thingliness of a brooch resonated. In other words, messages sent by the brooches' use could range from 'I served as a soldier in Britain' or 'I travelled to Britain and returned safely' to 'I am a Briton'. Different meanings are emphasised in each case, but Britain is present in all, allowing us to talk about the particular resonance of Britain through the brooches. This is a brooch's thingliness, its undefined British-ness.¹²

This discussion, I believe, allows us to surpass the fear of all contemporary archaeologists to connect artefacts with 'ethnic' roots, but it is of course not immune to criticism. This 'British-ness' does not necessarily imply ethnic associations; rather, different British pasts as a soldier, a trader, a traveler, etc., are emphasised. If an individual wore a brooch in the same manner as in Britain, this would not have made this person British, but the value of this brooch as a symbol and embodiment of 'British' aspects and pasts was at the front, literally and metaphorically, for everyone to see. This visibility could have been used by Britons abroad as indicators of their shared ancestry. A Briton living overseas would, probably, know that a brooch was made in Britain, and by wearing British-made brooches, members of the British emigrant community could easily recognise each other overseas. The movement and transfer overseas could have triggered in some Britons a desire to dress in the same way as their ancestors, reinforcing a desire to express the differences between them and the host population – differences in origin, manner of dressing or in wearing brooches. Access to British-made objects by people native to the province may have triggered the desire 'to do like the British do'. All these factors may, in their own turn, have given rise to an ethnic consciousness, allowing the brooches to become a token of ever-changing and shifting ethnicity. To this extent, the brooches themselves are active participants in defining their owners, since they may have provoked the rise of ethnic associations.¹³ Thus, this resonance of Britain through brooches' physical properties provides the opportunity to investigate how the ethnicity of British-born persons may have been projected by wearing British-made brooches.¹⁴ This resonance has been called by Carla Antonaccio (2009, 35) „material resonance“, where objects „do not always retain their original meaning when recontextualised“, however, some of them „may still

12 Or one may call it spatial connectedness. Cf. Hodder 2012, 6: „An American car is connected to mines in northern Minnesota from where the iron ore to make the steel frame of the car was obtained. It is connected to the Detroit assembly plant where it was painted by robots and workers. It is connected to oil fields in Iraq over which Western and Middle East powers have fought for the last century.“ To this end, a car's thingliness in this example includes those very same mines in northern Minnesota and the Detroit assembly plant (on multiple thingliness see below). By simply paying proper attention to a car, we would see behind it a desolated Detroit or snow in Minnesota, bringing to the surface the objectified nature of the car as an entangled product of a contemporary global market: Detroit, Minnesota and United States of America.

13 Cf. Hodder 2012, 86: „[T]hings unleash potential in humans“.

14 One should take into account that the rise of ethnic consciousness through the wear of British-made brooches is not semantically stable. We have seen that British-born soldiers discarded their tokens of British-ness, thus making ethnicity a dischargeable thing (Jones 2007; Lucy 2005).

retain particular resonance for their users“.¹⁵ In the same vein, since these objects were being associated with British-ness, i.e. foreignness and the past, they were also active agents for evoking and resonating particular feelings and memories. This defining of brooches' agency allows us to move beyond animist approach in seeing artefacts as having soul or being alive (Ingold 2007; Pels 1998); agency here is simply a by-product of objectness.

Now, up to that point, our attention was captured by meaningful resonance; however, the resonance of ,thingliness', or ,British-ness' in our case-study, has its own limits. Resonance is limited to the space pregnant with biographies. Once artefacts reach un-biographic territory through their travel in time and space they lose any biographic associations, since this territory has none.¹⁶ Let me provide an example. If we take a British-made brooch and put it on display in a museum case without a supportive explanation card, how many people would actually realise its association, first with Roman Britain, second with the Roman Empire, third with the travelling object, and so on. The ,British-ness' of a British-made brooch shines through all time and is everlastingly present, but its relocation to the surface where the brooch or its ,British-ness' is spoken about makes this thingliness an objectified reality, whereas in this museum case, a British-made brooch is a brooch in itself, nothing else and nothing more (*cf.* Oevermann's *et al.* (1987) method of ,objective hermeneutics'). Rephrasing Ingold (2007, 11), „for beneath the skin of the form the substance [thingliness] remains alive, reconfiguring the surfaces [object-ness] as it matures“, but remains invisible until called upon (*cf.* also Miller's position on thing's humility at the beginning of the paper). In the same way, if one encounters a brooch but chooses not to ,see through' and the gaze is diverted elsewhere, the resonance can no longer happen, since a human, a social being, etc., must choose, (un)consciously, to let thingliness be thingliness, or to let British-made brooches be as they are.¹⁷

The spotlight so far has been on British-ness as thingliness, but other aspects can naturally be meaningfully projected as well, since there is no articulation of intentionality in the projection of a British past only, but rather an (un)conscious

15 This resonance is akin to Hodder's idea on resonance through entanglement (2012, 131-132), when objects awaken new potentials in a person's body and mind that resonate with and onto the world. This resonance works on an unconscious level, contributing to the production of particular emotions and actions and devising behaviour. The main difference between Hodder's resonance and Antonaccio's ,material resonance' is that in the latter, the knowledge stored within the objects, their thingliness, resonates, while in the former resonance is closely connected with bodily reactions, reinforcing the right kind of associations or emotions (Antonaccio 2009, 35; Hodder, 2012, 132).

16 This is the reason why the ,cultural biography' theory is not going to work, since biographies and the projection of such are only possible once there is a point of reference, which may not exist in territories un-biographic. *Cf.* Hahn/Weiss (2013, 3-4), after Janet Hoskins (1998): „Biographies of things are entangled with people's histories. They jointly create a network of relevancies. The immanence of an object cannot explain why it is meaningful at a later moment.“

17 *Cf.* also Hahn/Soentgen 2011, 21 (my emphasis): „We have to fish the thing out [...] so that we can see it. Only then is it possible to determine what it is.“ Also Hodder's (2012, 103) example of a pebble embedded with memories of a beach, and for this cherished by members of a particular family, but being disunited with its past once the pebble is seen as ,junk' by those who have no memory that this pebble was of particular importance. In a similar vein, what has been considered rubbish in the past, i.e. brooches thrown away by British-born soldiers, today is put on display in a museum and cherished as a valuable art work, i.e. the exhibition of devaluated British-made brooches as valued masterpieces of ,Romano-British' craftsmanship in any British museum today (Hahn/Weiss 2013, 4).

choice of what, when, where and how to project by those who made choices. For my own argument, ‚British-ness‘ was important, but the infinitive richness of thingliness of a British-made brooch is not confined to the juxtaposition of being British, since being British would have been different on many levels.¹⁸ Within Roman Britain itself, this aspect would not be of any importance, although it would have been part of a brooch at the time of its creation. This essential attribute resurfaces at the moment of travel, when British-made brooches were taken out of the comfort zone of the province of their own manufacture. A brooch consists of a variety of physical substances, which agents can practically and sensually explore, evoking objectified meanings out of them for the purpose of meaningful projection. The surface of a brooch is „endlessly variable in relation to light of shade, wetness or dryness, and the position, posture, or movement of the observer“ and owner, allowing for a plurality of narratives and a functional mobility to spring to life (Ingold 2007, 14). Yet, the physical substance of a brooch allows it to be juxtaposed as ‚a thing‘, existing within its own tactile, shadowed but significant existence (as an abovementioned metaphoric chameleon or a ‚window‘ according to Bill Brown’s (2004) concept), without which any meaningful projection would not have been possible. The infinitive richness of thingliness can be further exemplified by the concept of the ‚spirit of a thing‘ existing within Maori law on gift-giving and exchange (Mauss 1950 [1923/24]). A gift given contains an essence of the giver, i.e. spirit, prompting reciprocal gift-giving/gift-exchange in return; „even when it has been abandoned by the giver, it still possesses something of him [and] follows after anyone possessing the thing“ (Mauss 1950 [1923/24], 12). A receiver may do whatever he or she wants with the gift, but it will always conceal beneath its substance a reference to the giver’s personhood, which can be brought to light at any given moment by the wish of the receiver by seeing, noticing, talking about, picking up or touching it, etc. Any British-made brooch is thus also embedded with a reference to the original owner or its maker (craftsperson), which forms its thingliness, worth researching in future studies.

The infinitive richness of thingliness, as well as multileveled temporal and spatial objectness, may be too large or too complex to be grasped fully by one person or researcher. However, I do not wish to finish this paper with this possibly troublesome note. Instead, a slightly paraphrased quote (my emphasis) from artist Nina Canell, who is interested in the physical and poetic characteristics of artefacts, will summarise the spirit of the conclusion: „I like the tactile quality and the knowledge stored within. These are *objects* that we understand. What they can be used for, how they feel, how heavy they are. There is nothing mysterious about *a thing* itself, and this once again opens up a sense for *it* symbolic capacity.“¹⁹

18 On the infinitive richness of substances see Hahn/Soentgen 2011.

19 Quote retrieved from a description of an exhibition by Nina Canell and Rolf Julius entitled „*Lautlos*“ held between 30.11.2012-23.06.2013 in Hamburger Bahnhof, Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin. URL: http://www.smb.museum/en/museums-and-institutions/hamburger-bahnhof/exhibitions/ausstellung-detail.html?tx_smb_pi1%5BexhibitionUid%5D=46 [accessed on 03.01.2014].

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Tatiana Ivleva studied archaeology at the Russian State University for the Humanities in Moscow, Russia, and Leiden University, the Netherlands, where she also received a PhD in 2012 with a thesis entitled "Britons Abroad: the Mobility of Britons and the Circulation of British-made Objects in the Roman Empire". It mainly explored cultural biographies of artefacts and images, employing as a case study the occurrence of British-born people and the mobility of British-made objects in continental Europe. In 2015 she received the European Commission's 2015 H2020 Marie Skłodowska Curie International Fellowship for the multidisciplinary comparative research at the Newcastle University, UK, on the cross-cultural consumption of personal adornments known as glass annulars.

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