

The meanings of the Red

Anna Luana Tallarita
info@annaluanatallarita.com

Utad/lade/Grupo De Geociencias

ABSTRACT

Femininity is strongly linked to the symbolism of red as a color tied to fertility and blood that is poured into life for conception and not for death. Symbol to the feminine world, one thinks of the many heroines of Rosamunda's fairy tales in Snow White, from the Lovely Sleeping to Little Red Riding Hood, all have the red color symbol. The red symbol of the fire of the Holy Spirit also inspires and infuses knowledge of the Apostles, the color of fire is a symbol of knowledge, think of the myth of Promētheús that brings the fire to the men and the apple of the tree of knowledge in 'Eden that is red as red is the God of Genesis called: Lord of Fire. Red is linked to war because it is the color that metal takes when it is placed in the furnace, in fact the choice to identify with the name of Mars the red-colored planet is due to iron oxides prevalent on its surface.

Italian translation provided:
'Le significazioni del rosso'

KEYWORDS

Femininity, Red, Symbol, Knowledge

Received 20 June 2016; **Revised** 30 May 2017; **Accepted** 31 May 2017

CITATION: Tallarita A. L. (2017) 'The meanings of the Red', *Cultura e Scienza del Colore - Color Culture and Science Journal*, 08, pp. 47-52, DOI: 10.23738/ccsj.i82017.04

Anna Luana Tallarita Jazz singer, composer, anthropologist and creative artist working in different forms to express a colored complex intercultural reality. Published writing, disks, videos, plasticworks, and worked throughout Europe and South America and lives between Lisbon and Milan. In 1999-2017 (2015 PhD) she studied at the Italy France e Portugal. Member: UTAD-IADE-GEOSCIENCE GROUP.

1. THE FEMININE AND THE RED

Red is linked to war because it is the color that metal takes when it is placed in the furnace, in fact the choice to identify with the name of Mars the red-colored planet is due to iron oxides prevalent on its surface. In the alchemical symbolism one of the phases of the alchemical process is red: *rubedo*, so called for the high temperatures during this time. It represents sulfur and with the white color symbolizing mercury forms a pair of opposites whose union is called: *alchemical weddings* (Foschi, 2000). In the myths inherent in the creation of the world, red is present, for example, in Genesis where the individual is molded with red clay (Gen.1, 26; 2,7), in fact, Adam means the soil, reddish ground: Adamah with the semitic root 'DM be red. The myths are followed by historical epochs and different cultures by assuming the vital and mortal connotations of this archetypal color. Symbolism is sung in the myths of every corner where humanity is present, in terms of color and, in particular, red. In the mesothotic myth of Tiamat, the goddess is cut off because blood can make the earth fertile for animal creations. In the red-blooded Hodioid theogony, giants were born, within a symbology where blood spill was conceived only through ritual actions. Femininity is strongly linked to the symbolism of red as a color tied to fertility and blood that is poured into life for conception and not for death. Until the 19th century. The wedding dress was red [1], where the female red is a symbol of the cave, the uterus. Red is the carnation symbol of Diana, the goddess of hunting, loved by a young pastor before seduced him and then abandoned him to despair and from those tears flowers originated precisely carnations characterized by a spicy and sensual aroma. Even the Christian tradition links the tears of Mary at the foot of the Cross the birth of red carnations. In Irish myths is linked to the symbol of red water, the *banshee* [2], a legendary creature with eyes always red because of tears. It is noted that red is very related to the feminine world, one thinks of the many heroines of Rosamunda's fairy tales in Snow White, from the Lovely Sleeping to Little Red Riding Hood, all have the red color symbol. The symbology associated with red apple, a true manifestation of pomegranate, for example in Snow White's story, is the transition to the fertility stage of the woman and the appearance of the red blood. As the myth of Persephone staying in the kingdom of the dead is the representation of the woman who becomes fertile, in the myth the pomegranate [3] will be the symbol that will force her to stay in the kingdom of the dead. But Medusa's myth is aimed at the appearance of fertility, where red is in that case a symbol of life, fertility and rebirth.

1. IL FEMMINEO E IL ROSSO

Il rosso è legato alla guerra perché è il colore che il metallo assume quando è posto nella fornace, infatti la scelta di identificare con il nome di Marte il pianeta dal colore rosso è dovuto agli ossidi di ferro prevalenti sulla sua superficie. Nel simbolismo alchemico una delle fasi del processo alchemico è del colore rosso: la *rubedo*, così chiamata per le alte temperature durante questo raggiunte. Rappresenta lo zolfo e con il colore bianco che simboleggia il mercurio forma una coppia di opposti la cui unione viene denominata: *nozze alchemiche* (Foschi, 2000). Nei miti inerenti la creazione del mondo il rosso è presente ad esempio nella Genesi dove l'individuo è plasmato con argilla rossa (Gen.1, 26;2,7), infatti Adamo significa del *suolo, terra rossastra: Adamah* con la radice semitica 'DM *essere rosso*. I miti si susseguono per epoche storiche e culture diverse assumendo le connotazioni vitali e mortali di questo colore-archetipo. La simbologia si sussegue tramandata nei miti di ogni angolo dove l'umanità sia presente, per quello che riguarda il colore e in particolare il rosso. Nel mito mesopotamico di *Tiamat* la dea si fa tagliare la testa perchè il sangue possa rendere fertile la terra per la creazioni degli animali. Nella teogonia di Esiodo dal sangue rosso nacquero i giganti, entro una simbologia dove il versamento del sangue è concepito solo attraverso azioni rituali. La femminilità è fortemente connessa alla simbologia del rosso, in quanto colore legato alla fertilità e al sangue che si versa per la vita per il concepimento e non per la morte. Fino al XIX sec. l'abito da sposa era rosso [1], dove il rosso femminile è simbolo della caverna, dell'utero. Rosso è il garofano simbolo di Diana dea della caccia, che amata da un giovane pastore prima lo seduce e poi lo abbandona alla disperazione e dalle cui lacrime nacquero dei fiori appunto i garofani caratterizzati da un aroma speziato e sensuale. Anche la tradizione cristiana collega alle lacrime di Maria ai piedi della Croce la nascita dei garofani rossi. Nei miti irlandesi è legata al simbolo dell'acqua rossa la *banshee* [2], leggendaria creatura dagli occhi sempre rossi per via delle continue lacrime. Si nota come il rosso sia molto legato al mondo femminile, si pensi alle tante eroine delle fiabe da *Rosamunda a Biancaneve, dalla Bella Addormentata a Cappuccetto Rosso* tutte hanno come simbolo il colore rosso. La simbologia legata alla mela rossa [3], manifesto in vero del melograno, presente ad esempio nella storia di Biancaneve rappresenta il passaggio alla fase della fertilità per la donna e la comparsa del mestruo che è rosso-sangue appunto. Come il mito di Persefone che soggiorna nel regno dei morti è la rappresentazione della donna che diventa fertile, nel mito sarà il melograno

2. FROM PHOENIX TO SHAMANIC RITUALS: MEANING RED

The red symbol of the fire of the Holy Spirit also inspires and infuses knowledge of the Apostles, the color of fire is a symbol of knowledge, think of the myth of *Promētheús* [4] that brings the fire to the men and the apple of the tree of knowledge in 'Eden that is red as red is the God of Genesis called: *Lord of Fire*. Moses will see him as an ardent tree of a red and perpetual fire [5]. Red is the color that strongly characterizes China and is largely present in its mythology. *Huo-pu's*, the minister of fire, has red hair and beard, which is nevertheless represented by the Arab Phoenix [6] rising from the ashes of its red fire, whose precept is *Post Fata Resurgo* [7] that after death comes back to rise. One of the Greek names to say red is, in fact, φοινικοῦς, -ῥῆ, -οῦν Foinikus, a symbol of the followers of the Sun God which it represents. The Phoenix [8] has a beautiful plumage made of red feathers in the body and rosy pens to cover a part of the blue tail, wings are purple and gold as the neck in its iconic representation in the imagination of the myth that characterizes it [9]. The Arabian Phoenix [10], symbol of death and resurrection is also associated with Osiris, the figure of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, which is fire and light symbolized by red as the ceremonial color present in many religions [11]. The poet and writer Dante Alighieri will describe it as follows:

[...] That the phoenix more and more resurfaces, when at the fifteenth appressed grass drifts in its life does not pass, but incense salt of tears and amomo, and nard and myrrh are the last bands. (Hell XXIV, 107-111).

The magical-religious shamanic rituals of many cultures have in their foundations the presence of red color; *Shamanic* is defined as a series of ritual complexes present in different cultural contexts, by chronology and geographical position, characterized by a series of specific rituals and symbolic common traits (Mastromattei, 1995). In these rituals, blood plays a role of considerable importance, either physically used or with substitute elements that represent it through its red color, resulting in the use of red ocher [12]. Various shamanic traditions have contact with blood as a triggering of initiatory illness that comes as a result of symptoms and phenomena that reveals itself in an individual's life without warning, making him a shaman. Initiations and rites of passage are everywhere associated with isolation and suffering, symbol of death and ritual rebirth. The shaman inviting spirits to nourish his body and blood leads back to the bond he establishes

il simbolo che la costringerà al soggiorno nel regno dei morti. Ma il mito di Medusa si rivolge alla comparsa della fertilità, dove il rosso in tal caso è simbolo di vita, di fertilità e di rinascita.

2. DALLA FENICE AI RITUALI SCIAMANICI

Il rosso-simbolo del fuoco dello Spirito Santo ispira altresì il sapere e infonde la conoscenza sugli Apostoli, il colore del fuoco è simbolo della conoscenza, si pensi al mito di *Promētheús* [4] che porta il fuoco agli uomini e alla mela dell'albero della conoscenza nell'Eden che è rossa come rosso è il Dio della Genesi denominato: *Signore del Fuoco*. Mosè lo vedrà come un albero ardente di un fuoco rosso e perpetuo [5]. Il rosso è il colore che fortemente caratterizza la Cina e ampiamente presente nella sua mitologia. *Huo-pu* dai capelli e la barba rossi è il ministro del fuoco, questo è nondimeno rappresentato dall'Araba Fenice [6] che rinasce dalle ceneri del proprio fuoco rosso, il cui precetto è *Post Fata Resurgo* dopo la morte torno ad alzarmi [7]. Uno dei nomi greci per dire rosso infatti è φοινικοῦς, -ῥῆ, -οῦν Foinikus, simbolo dei seguaci del dio Sole che appunto rappresenta [8]. La Fenice ha uno splendido piumaggio fatto da piume rosse nel corpo e penne rosee a ricoprire una parte della coda azzurra, le ali sono di porpora e oro come il collo nella sua rappresentazione iconica nell'immaginario del mito che la caratterizza [9]. L'Araba Fenice simbolo della morte e risurrezione [10] è associata altresì ad Osiride, alla figura di Gesù Cristo e allo Spirito Santo che è fuoco e luce simboleggiata dal rosso quale colore cerimoniale presente in numerose religioni [11]. Il poeta e scrittore Dante Alighieri così la descriverà:

[...] che la fenice more e poi rinasce, quando al cinquecentesimo appressa erba ne biada in sua vita non pasce, ma sol d'incenso lacrima e d'amomo, e nardo e mirra son l'ultime fasce. (Inferno XXIV, 107-111).

I rituali sciamanici magico-religiosi di molte culture hanno come fondamento la presenza del colore rosso; sono definiti *sciamanici* una serie di complessi rituali presenti in contesti culturali differenti tra loro, per cronologia e posizione geografica, caratterizzati una serie di tratti specifici rituali e simbolici comuni (Mastromattei, 1995). In questi rituali il sangue ricopre un ruolo di notevole importanza, adoperato materialmente o con elementi sostitutivi che lo rappresentino attraverso il suo colore che è rosso, riconducendo all'uso dell'ocra rossa [12]. Diverse tradizioni sciamaniche, presentano il contatto con il sangue come scatenante della

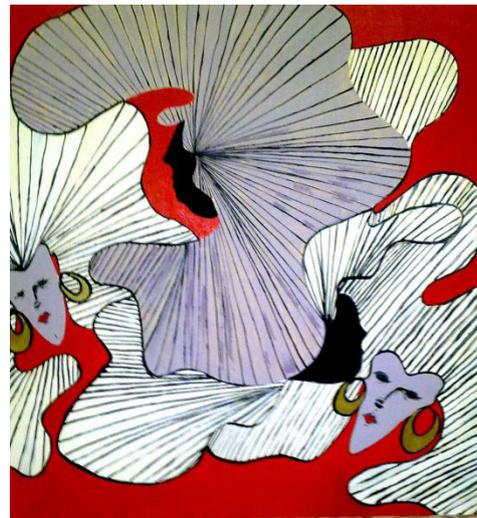


Figure 1 - Oil and acrylic paint on canvas and various materials: from left to right La Donna and Le Maschere. Al.Tallarita 2014.

Figura 1 - Pitture olio e acrilici su tela e vari materiali. Da sinistra a destra La Donna e Le Maschere. Al.Tallarita 2014.

with them at the time of initiation. The concept of pure and impure is vital in this initial trauma of the initiatory process and subsequent shamanic profession, where blood and its representation through red is one of the magic substances for excellence (Propp, 1976). This color tied to the shamans is found manifest in some South-Siberian (Marrazzi, 1984) Turkish songs, the blood often recurs, reciting a few lines: *black lake formed by the tears of the eyes, red lake formed by the blood of the chest* [13]. According to Rong culture, for example, the demon that infects the house is urged to move away inviting him to drink red blood and eat red meat to leave and leave the house free. In Nepal, between the Tamang, at the end of a ritual in honor of the spirits of the clan, a dough of rice, the flesh and blood of a red cock sacrificed for the occasion was offered to the spirits of the dead. For Dharmaphala in magical rituals, a blood supply is symbolically performed with a cup filled with a colored red liquid that represents it (De Nebesjk-Wojkowitz, 1975).

FUNDING

This research did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

I don't have actual or potential conflicts of interest, including financial, personal or other relationships with other persons or organizations within three years after the commencement of the work submitted, which may unduly influence or be perceived to influence the work.

NOTES

[1] The Queen Victoria at his wetsuit for the white with the orange holes. White in India is the habit of widows in many parts of Africa is the color of mourning, the twentieth

malattia iniziatica che si presenta a seguito di sintomi e fenomeni che svelandosi nella vita di un individuo senza alcun preavviso, ne fanno uno sciamano. Iniziazioni e riti di passaggio sono ovunque associati a isolamento e sofferenza, simbolo di morte e rinascita rituale. Lo sciamano che invita gli spiriti a nutrirsi del suo corpo e del suo sangue riconduce al legame che egli instaura con questi al momento dell'iniziazione. Il concetto di puro ed impuro è vitale in questo trauma iniziale del processo iniziatico e della successiva professione sciamanica, dove il sangue e la sua rappresentazione attraverso il colore rosso è una delle sostanze magiche per eccellenza (Propp, 1976). Questo colore legato agli sciamani lo si ritrova manifesto in alcuni canti turchi sud-siberiani (Marrazzi, 1984) il sangue ricorre sovente, recitano alcuni versi: *nero lago formato dalle lacrime degli occhi, rosso lago formato dal sangue del petto* [13]. In base alla cultura Rong ad esempio il demone che infesta la casa è pregato ad allontanarsi invitandolo a bere il sangue rosso e mangiare la carne rossa per andar via e lasciar la casa libera. In Nepal tra i Tamang al termine di un rito in onore degli spiriti del clan un impasto di riso, carne e sangue di un gallo rosso sacrificato per l'occasione veniva offerto agli spiriti dei morti. Per i Dharmaphala nei rituali magici si esegue simbolicamente una offerta di sangue con una coppa riempita di un liquido colorato di rosso che lo rappresenta (De Nebesjk-Wojkowitz, 1975).

NOTE

[1] La regina Vittoria alle sue muta per il bianco con i fori d'arancio. Quello bianco in india è l'abito delle vedove in molte parti dell'Africa è il colore del lutto, il Ventesimo sec lo impone caduto il costume della verginità.

[2] La banshee più famosa si chiamava Aibhill e proteggeva gli ÒBrien. Stando alla leggenda, nel 1014 il re Brian Boru si gettò nella battaglia di Clontarf pur sapendo di andare incontro a morte certa, dal momento che la notte precedente Aibhill gli era apparsa mentre lavava i panni dei soldati finché l'acqua non si tingeva completamente

century imposes the fall of the costume of virginity.

[2] The most famous banshee was called Aibhill and protected Ó'Brien. According to the legend, in 1014 King Brian Boru threw himself into the battle of Clontarf, knowing that he was going to meet certain death, since the previous night Aibhill had appeared to him as he was washing the soldiers until the water was completely dyed of blood vermilion color

[3] The symbolism of the apple is related to pomegranate. Domain symbolism on the world sometimes takes on an erotic value. Among the most noteworthy symbols are the apple eaten by Adam and Eve but with controversial explanations the boss of discord that would give rise to the war of Troy after the judgment of Paris the pies of the Elders guarded by a dragon in a garden at the confines of the world, the mystical apples that give the name to Avalon Island of Apples, the poisoned apple offered by the stepmother in Snow White and the one put by William Tell on her son's head. Remember the boss of mystery discord in which the apple engraved to the most beautiful, thrown by Eris, goddess of discord, on the table of the wedding banquet of Peleo and Teti, the cause of the dispute between Era, Aphrodite and Athena. Zeus resigned to Parid Prince of Troy, who voted for Aphrodite, who had promised Elena's love, and that was the cause of the war that had arisen. Also Golden Apple is an element that appears in some myths and legends as well as in the stories of Nordic literature. In the painting on the theme of the artist Edward Burne-Jones (1833-1898), the Garden of the Hesperides 1869-1873 painted the Esperides dressed in red.

[4] Prometheus friend of men, devised a stratagem to drive the gods the privilege of the fire. He challenged the inevitable revenge of the gods to shine the darkness of humanity. He was punished by Zeus, but not tamed in his emotional intent, though he was punished hard on the cliff and devoured by the birds of prey.

[5] Moses in the Old Testament. Chapter III of the Exodus, God calls Mose on Mount Oreb, from the middle of a bush burning alive, but without consuming he hears the voice of God who tells him the job of saving the Jews from slavery in Egypt. On that occasion, God confides to Moses his name: I am He Who am (Exodus 3. 14).

[6] The ancient Egyptians were the first to speak of Bennu, who then became Greek in the Greek legends. In Egypt it was usually depicted with the Atef crown or with the solar disk emblem. For the Egyptians it was a sparrow, for the first dynasties or a herd of herons, nor did it resurface from the flames but from the waters.

[7] In Greek myths but not only was a fabulous sacred bird, it looked like a real eagle The ancients identified it with the golden pheasant and the Bible, with ibis or peacock. Others, with the pink heron or cinereo heron. The volatile to represent it is the Garzetta which is similar to heron. As a symbol of the rising and setting sun, the Phoenix was presiding over the royal jubilee. Collies that re-emerged for the first time, was associated with the planet Venus Star of the Morning, a manifestation of the resurrected Ishiris.

[8] This represented BA's soul of the sun god RA, of which he was the hieroglyphic emblem.

[9] A long tapered beak, long paws, two long feathers, a rose and a blue sliding softly down the head or erect on the top of the head and three long feathers hanging from the tail pierced a rose, a blue and a red-fire.

[10] Every morning at dawn he bathed in the water and sang such a wonderful song that the sun god stole his boat or his chariot in Greek mythology to hear it. Every 500

del colore vermiglio del sangue.

[3] La simbologia della mela è legata al melograno. Simbolo del dominio sul mondo, assume talvolta una valenza erotica. Tra le simbologie più note si ricordano la mela mangiata da Adamo ed Eva ma con spiegazioni controverse il pomo della discordia che avrebbe dato origine alla guerra di Troia dopo il giudizio di Paride i pomi delle Esperidi custodite da un drago in un giardino ai confini del mondo, le mele mistiche che danno il nome ad Avalon Isola delle Mele, la mela avvelenata offerta dalla matrigna a Biancaneve e quella posta da Guglielmo Tell sulla testa del proprio figlio. Si ricordi il pomo della discordia mito in cui la mela incisa Alla più bella, lanciata da Eris, dea della discordia, sul tavolo del banchetto di matrimonio di Peleo e Teti, causa della lite fra Era, Afrodite e Atena. Zeus si astenne fu chiesto a Paride principe di troia, che votò per Afrodite che le aveva promesso l'amore di Elena, e ciò fu causa della guerra che si scatenò. Inoltre La mela d'oro è un elemento che appare in alcuni miti e leggende come anche nei racconti della letteratura nordica. Nel quadro sul tema l'artista Edward Burne-Jones (1833-1898) The Garden of the Hesperides 1869-1873 dipinge le Esperidi vestite di rosso.

[4] Prometheus amico degli uomini, escogitò uno stratagemma per carpire agli dèi il privilegio del fuoco. Egli sfidò l'inevitabile vendetta degli dèi per rischiarare le tenebre dell'umanità. Fu punito da Zeus, ma non domati nel suo intento emotivo, se pur duramente punito sulla rupe e divorato dai rapaci.

[5] Mosè nel vecchio testamento. Il capitolo dell'Esodo, Dio chiama Mose sul monte Oreb, dal mezzo di un cespuglio che bruciava a fuoco vivo, ma senza consumarsi egli ode la voce di Dio che gli comunica l'incarico di salvare gli Ebrei dalla schiavitù in Egitto. In quella occasione Dio confida a Mose il suo nome: Io sono Colui che sono (Esodo 3. 14).

[6] Gli antichi egizi furono i primi a parlare del Bennu, che poi nelle leggende greche divenne la fenice. In Egitto era solitamente raffigurata con la corona Atef o con l'emblema del disco solare. Per gli egizi era un passero, per le prime dinastie o ad un airone cinereo, inoltre non risorgeva dalle fiamme ma dalle acque.

[7] Nei miti greci ma non solo era un uccello sacro favoloso, aveva l'aspetto di un'aquila reale Gli antichi la identificavano col fagiano dorato e nella Bibbia, con l'ibis o col pavone. Altri, con l'airone rosato o l'airone cinereo. Il volatile idoneo a rappresentarla è la Garzetta che è simile all'airone. Quale simbolo del sole che sorge e tramonta, la Fenice presiedeva al giubileo regale. Colei che ri-sorge per prima, venne associata al pianeta Venere Stella del Mattino, manifestazione dell'Osiride risorto.

[8] Questa rappresentava l'anima BA del dio del sole RA, di cui era l'emblema in geroglifico.

[9] Un lungo becco affusolato, lunghe zampe due lunghe piume una rosa ed una azzurra che le scivolano morbidamente giù dal capo o erette sulla sommità del capo e tre lunghe piume che pendono dalla coda piumata una rosea, una azzurra e una color rosso-fuoco.

[10] Ogni mattina all'alba faceva il bagno nell'acqua e cantava una canzone così meravigliosa che il dio del sole arrestava la sua barca o il suo carro, nella mitologia greca, per ascoltarla. Ogni 500 anni, la Fenice sentiva sopraggiungere la sua morte si ritirava in un luogo appartato e costruiva un nido sulla cima di una quercia o di una palma. Qui accatastava le più pregiate piante balsamiche con le quali intrecciava un nido a forma di uovo, grande quanto era in grado di trasportarlo (cosa che stabiliva per prove ed errori). Infine vi si adagiava,

years, the Phoenix felt his death come to a secluded place and built a nest on the top of an oak or palm tree. Here she packed the most valuable balsamic plants with which she had an egg-shaped nest, as large as she was able to carry it (which she established for tests and mistakes). Finally he lay down, let the rays of the sun burn him, and let himself be consumed by his own flames. Because of the cinnamon and myrrh that burns, the death of a phoenix is often accompanied by a pleasing fragrance. A small larvae (or an egg) emerged from the cumulus of ash, which the sun's rays grew rapidly until transformed into the new Phoenix in three days, after which the young and powerful Phoenix flared to Eliopoli and lay above it 'sacred tree, it is also said that from the throat of the Phoenix came the breath of life as reported by Cheremone stoic philosopher initiated in Egyptian mysteries or by Orapollo lived under Zenone. Phenicism is one of the manifestations of the sun as interpreted by Sordon, bearing a late handwriting of the name Osiris consisting of an eye and a scepter.

[11] It tells the myth of creation that phoenix was the vital force that originated from the aquatic Chaos on the primordial hill at the origin of times. It is said that the Bennu created himself from the fire that burned on the summit of the sacred willow of Heliopolis. Just as the sun is always the same and rises only after the previous sun has gone down, Fenice always had one copy at a time. Hence the appellativo sempre eradem: always the same.

[12] The ocher: these are clay silica blends and iron oxides and / or hydroxides. From the geological point of view, ochers are secondary deposits formed by erosion from rocks of various kinds, enriched with ferrous base particles. While the simple use of color can be dated at least 400,000 years ago. The paintings dating back to at least 30,000 years ago, think of rock paintings in the caves of Lascaux (southern France). around 80,000 years ago, finds at the Blombos cave in two pieces of red ocher decorated with geometric motifs. Beyond the Blombos graffiti, the first and most important artistic expressions are undoubtedly considered the rock paintings created in the same caves.

[13] Quoted in the representation of the progeny of Arlik Qan, where the eldest Arka Solton, brings the smallpox and dwells in a lake. Marazzi, U. Testi dello sciamanismo, Torino, UTET, p.115

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A.V. (2008). 'Esodo, Bibbia'. Roma, Cei Edizione.

De Nebeskj-Wojkowitz, R. (1975) 'Oracles and demons of Tibet: The cult and iconography of the Tibetan protective deities'. Gratz, Akademische Druck, pp. 343-344

Foschi, V. (2000) 'Il simbolismo del colore rosso. Titolo: Centro studi la runa Archivio di storia, tradizione, letteratura, filosofia'. [Online], Available: <https://www.centrostudilaruna.it/simbolismodelrosso.html> [Accessed 31.05.2013].

Marazzi, U. (1984) 'Testi dello sciamanismo'. Turin, UTET, p. 114

Mastromattei, R. (1995) 'Tremore e potere Roma'. Franco Angeli, pp. 27-28.

Propp, W. J. (1976) 'Le Radici Storiche dei Racconti di Magia'. Roma, Newton Compton

lasciava che i raggi del sole l'incendiassero, e si lasciava consumare dalle sue stesse fiamme. Per via della cannella e della mirra che bruciano, la morte di una fenice è spesso accompagnata da un gradevole profumo. Dal cumulo di cenere emergeva poi una piccola larva (o un uovo) , che i raggi solari facevano crescere rapidamente fino a trasformarla nella nuova Fenice nell'arco di tre giorni, dopodiché la nuova Fenice giovane e potente volava ad Eliopoli e si posava sopra l'albero sacro, per altro si dice anche che dalla gola della Fenice giunse il soffio della vita (il Suono divino, la Musica) che animò il dio. Ma nella antica tradizione riportata da Erodoto, la fenice risorge ogni 500 anni, come riportato da Cheremone filosofo stoico iniziato ai misteri egizi o da Orapollo vissuto sotto Zenone. La fenice è una delle manifestazioni del sole come interpretato da Sbordone che riporta una grafia tarda del nome di Osiride costituita da un occhio e uno scettro.

[11] Narra il mito della creazione che la fenice fu la forza vitale che all'origine dei tempi sorse dal Chaos acquatico sulla collina primordiale. Si dice infatti che il Bennu abbia creato sé stesso dal fuoco che ardeva sulla sommità del sacro salice di Eliopoli. Proprio come il sole che è sempre lo stesso e risorge solo dopo che il sole precedente è tramontato, di Fenice ne esisteva sempre un unico esemplare per volta. Da qui l'appellativo sempre eradem: sempre la medesima.

[12] Le ocre. Si tratta di miscele di silice argilla e ossidi e/o idrossidi di ferro. Dal punto di vista geologico le ocre sono depositi secondari formati per erosione da rocce di vario tipo, arricchiti di particelle a base ferrosa. Mentre il semplice impiego del colore è databile ad almeno 400.000 anni fa. Le pitture risalenti ad almeno 30.000 anni fa, si pensi alle pitture rupestri nelle grotte di Lascaux (Francia meridionale). A circa 80.000 anni fa risalgono i ritrovamenti presso la caverna di Blombos in di due pezzi di ocre rossa decorati con motivi geometrici. Al di là dei graffiti di Blombos, le prime e più importanti espressioni artistiche sono senza dubbio da considerare le pitture rupestri, create nelle stesse grotte.

[13] Citato nella rappresentazione della progenie di Arlik Qan, dove il primogenito Arka Solton, porta il vaiolo e dimora in un lago. Marazzi, U. Testi dello sciamanismo, Torino, UTET,p.115

BIBLIOGRAFIA

A.V. (2008). 'Esodo, Bibbia'. Roma, Cei Edizione.

De Nebeskj-Wojkowitz, R. (1975) 'Oracles and demons of Tibet: The cult and iconography of the Tibetan protective deities'. Graz, Akademische Druck-u Verlagsanstalt. pp. 343-344

Foschi V. (2000) 'Il simbolismo del colore rosso. Titolo: Centro studi la runa Archivio di storia, tradizione, letteratura, filosofia'. [Online], Available: <https://www.centrostudilaruna.it/simbolismodelrosso.html> [Accessed 31.05.2013].

Marazzi, U. (1984) 'Testi dello sciamanismo'. Torino, Utet. p.114

Mastromattei, R. (1995) 'Tremore e potere Roma'. Franco Angeli. pp. 27-28.

Propp, W. J. (1976). 'Le Radici Storiche dei Racconti di Magia', Roma, Newton Compton.

An overview of the history of the use of colour in jewellery

Lynne Bartlett
lynnebartlettoriginals@
btinternet.com

Jewellery Designer/Maker

ABSTRACT

From ancient times rare and beautiful coloured materials have been prized and worn as adornment and/or indications of status.

In early societies these materials would have been 'found' objects such as shells and feathers but as technologies advanced metals were used extensively.

For thousands of years jewellers created beautiful objects using a range of metals with limited colours: yellow, red and white. Whether the yellow was high purity gold or bronze, or the white was silver, platinum or a base metal alloy, the visual impact was essentially the same. Other materials were needed to expand the palette to colours such as blue, purple and green.

This paper outlines the materials and methods that were used from the earliest known examples to recent decades.

Historically gemstones and vitreous enamels provided jewellers with a wide range of colours. The Ancient Egyptians used turquoise, lapis and coral with gold to produce vibrant multi-coloured jewellery. The Romans had a particular fondness for emeralds, sapphires and pearls while the Anglo-Saxons produced amazing jewellery featuring red garnets and blue enamel. Magnificent mediaeval jewels, mostly royal status symbols, incorporated rubies, emeralds, sapphires and diamonds with fine enamels. By the eighteenth century new sources of gemstones, particularly from S America, made jewellery more affordable and subject to changes in fashion. Over the ensuing decades fashionable jewellery veered from almost monochrome, diamond-set designs to multi-coloured, multi-gemstone pieces. The Victorians used an amazing array of gemstones, with rare and unusual species particularly prized.

The mid-twentieth century saw the introduction of metals that could be coloured such as anodised aluminium and a new metal, titanium, which enabled jewellers to produce multi-coloured pieces without the use of gemstones or enamel.

KEYWORDS

colour, jewellery, gemstones, titanium, aluminium

Received 12 January 2017; **Revised** 6 November 2017; **Accepted** 15 November 2017

CITATION: Bartlett L. (2017) 'An overview of the history of the use of colour in jewellery', *Cultura e Scienza del Colore - Color Culture and Science Journal*, 08, pp. 53-58, DOI: 10.23738/ccsj.i82017.05

Lynne Bartlett is a jewellery designer/maker. Having originally studied chemistry and worked for many years in the Chemical Industry, jewellery is her second career. The use of colour in jewellery has been a dominant theme in her work and she currently uses titanium and dyed anodised aluminium. Her doctoral thesis at the University of the Arts London (2010) studied the surface of coloured titanium.

1. INTRODUCTION

From ancient times rare and beautiful coloured materials have been prized and worn as personal adornment, indication of status and/or for supposed protective or amuletic purposes. This paper outlines the ways in which colour has been incorporated into jewellery from the earliest times to recent decades. Consideration is given to the colours of the most commonly used metals, gemstones in various forms, vitreous enamel, anodised aluminium and, finally, the interference colours of titanium. However as an overview it is not possible to include information about the cultural significance of the colours used, the sources of the gemstones or more modern coloured materials such as plastic.

Of all the elemental metals only two, gold (yellow) and copper (red) are intrinsically coloured. All the others such as silver, iron, nickel, etc. are white or rather various shades of grey. Regardless of the workability, strength or cost, the aesthetic appearance is equivalent. Whether the yellow was high purity gold or bronze, or the white was silver, platinum or a base metal alloy, the visual impact was essentially the same. Gold may be manipulated by alloying to produce a range of colours namely white, yellow, red and green but the variations are subtle. Vibrant colours can only be introduced by the incorporation of other materials in a piece of jewellery and it is the range and use of these coloured materials such as gemstones and enamels that are the focus of this paper. But to cover such a vast subject means that only a glimpse of the methods and materials that have been used can be provided. Examples have also been limited to Europe and the ancient civilisation of the Middle East that have most influenced the development of European jewellery.

2. EARLY ADORNMENT

In early societies *'found'* objects such as shells, seeds and coloured stones were used as adornment and examples have been found in graves dating back to 30,000 BC (Phillips, 1996). Necklaces from ancient cities in what is now Iraq illustrate how the materials were fashioned and drilled so that they could be worn. In later periods found objects were augmented by beads fabricated from ceramic and glass. Coloured beads with varying degrees of shaping have continued to be a significant jewellery item over the centuries.

With technological advances metals began to be used extensively. Gold was particularly prized for its colour, immutability and the relative ease with which it could be worked. Highly sophisticated gold jewellery has been excavated from Sumerian tombs dating from 2500 BC in ancient

Iraq. This jewellery also incorporates coloured gemstones such as lapis lazuli, garnet, turquoise and cornelian, which were fashioned into both simple and complex shapes as shown in Figure 1. For example from 3000 BC turquoise beads were combined with garnets and gold. Typically beads were fashioned into biconical shapes but there are also examples of more elaborate gem cutting from Ur where gemstones were cut and polished to set as inlay into metal brooches (Tait, 2006) The gemstones were mostly opaque and surely prized for their intense colours.

The Ancient Egyptians used turquoise, lapis and coral to produce vibrant multi-coloured jewellery and also created beads with similar appearance from glazed composition and faience, Figure 2. As glass became more available in the Egyptian New Kingdom (ca 1567-1085 BC) it was used to imitate natural stones as well as in fine inlay, which could be argued as the precursor to true enamel. Jack Ogden (Ogden, 1982) gives a good overview of ancient sources of metals and gemstones and how they were worked.

3. GREEK AND ROMAN JEWELLERY

Gold working spread around the Eastern Mediterranean and examples of fine gold work are known from Crete, Mycenae and Etruria. The emphasis in this work was in the many sophisticated techniques that were used to embellish the gold surfaces. Gemstones are relatively rare but examples of an early type of dark blue enamel have been found in Mycenaean tombs in Cyprus dating from the thirteenth century BC (Tait, 2006).

Greek jewellery, drawing on this legacy of fine workmanship, is characterised by the use of gold. Only in the Hellenistic period (from 325 BC) is there an increased use of coloured gemstones with fine quality cabochon cut garnets and transparent gems such as amethyst and emerald (Higgins, 2006).

The Roman conquest of the Hellenistic world and establishment of the Empire (27 BC) resulted in jewellery in a similar style with the accent on gold work. But this developed into a much more polychrome style.

The Romans had a particular fondness for emeralds (in crystal form), sapphires and pearls as shown in Figure 3. Mummy portraits show how these items were worn. Almost all the forms of jewellery that are worn in the twenty-first century had their origin in the Roman period. Romano-British jewellery reflects a merging of the 'standard' Roman jewellery with the added influence from the strong Celtic metalworking traditions. In particular colour was incorporated

not only from the example of Roman gemstone use but also from the Celtic technique of enamelling on bronze, Figure 4.

4. ANGLO-SAXON AND BYZANTINE JEWELLERY

The colour palette changed over the centuries and between different cultures. As shown in Figure 5, the Anglo-Saxons produced amazing jewellery featuring red garnets and blue enamel (Care Evans, 1989). The technique of inlaying thin slices of garnet into cells of gold, backed with textured gold foils, is thought to have its origins in Southern Russia around 300 AD and to have spread with migration of the Gothic tribes throughout Western and Northern Europe (Kidd & Webster, 2006). These jewels show a great

sophistication in gem cutting and gold working. In Northern Europe during the ninth and tenth centuries there is an increasing use of silver but in the Eastern Mediterranean the rise of a particular Byzantine style of highly coloured jewels featured gold cloisonné enamelled work, Figure 6.

5. MEDIEVAL JEWELLERY

In the early thirteenth century gold was used to set polished gemstones of different colours in simple brooch forms, which also had a practical purpose. Subsequently goldsmiths demonstrated their skill by creating intricate high-relief gold work which was covered in enamel and enhanced with gemstones. These highly decorative jewels were particularly



(1)



(2)



(3)



(3)



(5)



(6)

Figure 1 - Carved lapis and gold beads from Ur, 2500 BC.

Figure 2 - Collar of glazed composition beads from Egypt, 2020 BC.

Figure 3 - Gold bracelet with emeralds and pearls from Roman Egypt, 1st century AD.

Figure 4 - Copper alloy brooch with red and blue enamel Faversham, UK, 1st-2nd century AD.

Figure 5 - Gold shoulder clasp with garnet inlay and blue enamel Sutton Hoo Treasure England 7th century AD.

Figure 6 - Gold reliquary cross with cloisonné enamel Constantinople, 11th century AD.

All images in Figs 1-7 courtesy of the British Museum, London

Figure 7 - Enamelled gold hat badge with rubies and diamonds Spain or Italy 1526-75.

Figure 8 - Enamelled gold pendant with baroque pearl, pearl drop and emerald Europe late 16th century.



(7)



(8)

Figure 9 - Brooch with diamonds set in silver and Hessonite garnets set in gold Europe ca 1700.

Figure 10 - Base metal earrings with Blue Creeper bird heads England 1872.



(9)



(10)

Figure 11 - Anodised and dyed aluminium earrings Jane Adam ca 1995.

Figure 12 - Heat-coloured titanium neckpiece Lynne Bartlett 2013.



(11)



(12)

All images in Figs 8-10 courtesy of the V&A Museum, London

important as hat badges worn by men, Figure 7. Such magnificent mediaeval jewels were mostly royal status symbols, indications of piety or princely gifts (Somers, 1980). The allegorical

scenes depicted in the chased and engraved gold were embellished with rubies, emeralds, sapphires and diamonds and with fine enamels. Even pendants that incorporated imitation

gemstones are finely enamelled on the reverse. Unusual materials and large gems were particular prized and baroque pearls (Philips, 2000) were often used as the bodies of animals Figure 8. In the early fourteenth century gem cutting became more elaborate and faceted stones started to be used extensively. There are examples of other styles of gem cutting such as amethyst and agate cameos.

Much more information from the fifteenth century onwards can be gleaned from the portraits of the period. Many artists were also jewellery designers and faithfully represented the jewels worn by their sitters. In London we have a fine collection of jewellery from the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries in the Cheapside Hoard (Forsyth, 2013). The Hoard includes many finished pieces incorporating enamelled gold chains set with sapphires, emeralds, garnets and diamonds, carved amethysts and emerald earrings and gold rings set with rubies and other gemstones. It also contains many unset gemstones with a particularly large number of cabochon garnets. The range of materials used shows how extensive the trade in coloured gems had become and indicates the popularity of multicoloured jewellery in the period.

6. EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURY

By the eighteenth century new sources of gemstones, particularly diamonds, emeralds and topazes from S America, were extensively used as in Figure 9. The increased availability and hence reduced price of these gemstones made jewellery more affordable, especially for the growing affluent middle class, and designs and materials became much more subject to changes in fashion. Over the ensuing decades fashionable jewellery veered from almost monochrome, diamond-set designs to multi-coloured, multi-gemstone pieces and this cycling of styles has continued through the twentieth century.

The Victorians used an amazing array of gemstones, enamels and other materials, with rare and unusual species particularly prized Figure 10.

In the late nineteenth century new metals such as platinum and aluminium were increasingly used but both were essentially white metals. The strength of platinum made it an ideal material for 'invisible' settings in which the gemstones played the major role in the design of the piece. Initially the whiteness of the metal and its relative lack of tarnish meant that it was used as a setting for diamonds replacing the mixed gold and silver settings of early diamond-set jewels but designers at the prestige fine jewellery

houses such as Cartier increasingly used multi coloured gemstones.

Aluminium, when it was first produced in the mid-nineteenth century, was treated as a novel material set in gold mounts. The isolation of the pure metal was very difficult and small ingots of the purified metal were shown at the Paris exposition in 1855. It is perhaps not surprising that the modernising nephew of Napoleon Bonaparte, Napoleon III, ordered the fabrication of aluminium utensils and is reported to have eaten from an aluminium plate in preference to a gold one (Venetski, 1969). Other special uses for aluminium included the cap on the top of the Washington Monument which was cast from aluminium in 1884 because of its whiteness and resistance to tarnish (Dix, 1934). The statue of Eros at Piccadilly Circus was cast in aluminium in 1893.

As new processes for aluminium production were developed, the metal became readily available and was used for general construction and the growing aeronautical industry in the twentieth century.

7. TWENTIETH CENTURY

Metals that could be coloured were introduced in the twentieth century.

In 1923 anodising of aluminium was developed to provide protection from corrosion of seaplane parts. The process thickened the natural aluminium oxide layer on the surface to provide a durable hard layer. When first created the thin porous oxide layer on the surface of the metal is very receptive to dyes and a wide range of patterning techniques can be used to produce what is effectively a coloured metal surface. Dyed anodised aluminium jewellery was probably first produced in the USA but of particular note is the work of the UK jeweller, Jane Adam an example of which is shown in Figure 11.

Colours may be bright or subtle and, as the pigments are fixed in the thin adherent oxide layer on the surface of the metal, they are very durable. The lightweight of aluminium and the broad range of decorative possibilities have made it a significant material for the twentieth century jeweller.

An area of colour that has not been covered so far is patination. Examples exist from antiquity of metal sculptures that have been coloured in this way and historic armour used 'bluing' to provide multicoloured surface decoration (Tellez, 2011). However, as much historic jewellery has been buried, it is often not possible, even if the underlying metal has survived, to be sure if the whole surface was coloured.

The twentieth century saw the introduction of a new metal, titanium, whose colour could be said to be produced by a form of patination, i.e.

oxidation. Industry values titanium for its unique combination of high strength and low weight, and although this has been exploited by a few designer/makers, it is titanium's colour potential that most attracted jewellers to the material and led to its expanding usage through the 1970s and 1980s. The thin oxide layer produced on the surface of the metal by heat or anodising resulted in a wide range of interference colours. Various ways of preventing oxygen reaching the surface by masking were used to produce stunning optical effects. Research has established (Bartlett, 2009) that the use of titanium for designed jewellery was a technical innovation, pioneered in the UK and instigated by the titanium metal producers.

Early users of titanium tended to use coloured pieces in a similar way to gemstones by setting them in silver frames or fixing them with silver pins. However the strength of titanium meant that very thin sections could be cut as integral pins. Its biocompatibility also meant that integral ear wires could be produced without the problems that have been associated with the use of non-precious metals for such a purpose.

One of the pioneer jewellers who first used titanium at Birmingham (1965-1968) was Ann Marie Shillito. The first identifiable piece of designed titanium jewellery is a belt buckle. Another artist of note in the early decorative use of titanium was Pietro Pedeferra, a University researcher in electrochemistry in Milan, he was inspired by the colour possibilities of the metal to produce wonderful compositions on titanium. In this case he used flat sheets of titanium as a canvas.

By the early 1970s titanium had become a regular product used in Jewellery courses. However its popularity peaked in the late 1980s and it is only in recent years that its use has been revived, Figure 12.

8. CONCLUSION

This rapid survey has provided an outline of various materials and methods that have been used to incorporate colour into jewellery over many centuries. Jewellers have been shown to readily incorporate new materials and exploit new sources of valued gemstones as they become available while building on the legacy from previous periods. Precious metals and gemstones continue to provide the most desired raw materials for the manufacture of jewellery but whatever the material, colour continues to be a major factor in jewellery design and new coloured materials are eagerly adopted.

FUNDING

This research did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The Authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bartlett, L. (2009) 'Variability in coloured titanium surfaces for jewellery', PhD Thesis, Central Saint Martin's College of Art and Design, University of the Arts London, London.

Care Evans, A. (1989) 'The Sutton Hoo Ship Burial', British Museum Publications, London.

Dix, Jr. E.H. (1934) 'Aluminum Cap Piece on Washington Monument' *Metal Progress* (Cleveland, OH: American Society For Metals, December).

Forsyth, H., (2013) 'London's Lost Jewels', Philips Wilson Publishers, London.

Higgins, R. (2006) 'The Greek and Roman World, 7000 Years of Jewellery', British Museum Press, London, p.84.

Kidd, D, & Webster, L. (2006) '7000 Years of Jewellery', British Museum Press, London, p.101.

Ogden, J. (1982) 'Jewellery of the Ancient World', Trefoil Books Ltd., London.

Phillips, C (1996). 'Jewelry From Antiquity to the Present', Thames and Hudson Ltd., London,

Phillips, C. (2000) 'Jewels and Jewellery', V&A Publications, London.

Somers Cocks, A G, (1980) 'Princely Magnificence Court Jewels of the Renaissance, 1500-1630', Debrett's Peerage Ltd., London.

Tellez, H et al (2011), 'Multi-analytical study of patination methods on steel substrates: a full insight into surface chemistry and morphology', *Anal Bioanal Chem*, DOI 10, 1007/s00216-011-5473-6, Oct. 2011.

Tait, H. (2006) ed. '7000 Years of Jewellery', British Museum Press, London.

Venetski, S. (1969). "'Silver" from clay". *Metallurgist*. 13 (7): 451-453.