

# OPHIUSSA

REVISTA DO CENTRO DE ARQUEOLOGIA DA UNIVERSIDADE DE LISBOA

ISSN 1645-653X  
E-ISSN 2184-173X



CENTRO DE ARQUEOLOGIA  
DA UNIVERSIDADE  
DE LISBOA

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9 - 2025



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**OPHIUSSA** REVISTA DO CENTRO DE ARQUEOLOGIA DA UNIVERSIDADE DE LISBOA

PUBLICAÇÃO ANUAL · ISSN 1645-653X · E-ISSN 2184-173X

## Volume 9 - 2025

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<https://ophiussa.letras.ulisboa.pt>

Dezembro de 2025

ISSN 1645-653X / E-ISSN 2184-173X

DEPÓSITO LEGAL 190404/03

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UNIARQ – Centro de Arqueologia

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Revista fundada por Victor S. Gonçalves (1996).

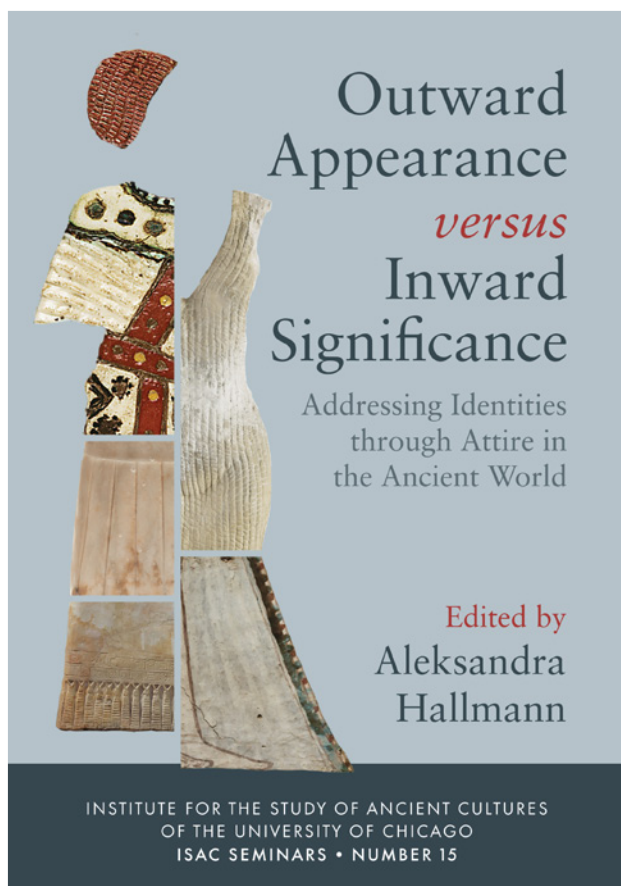
O cumprimento do acordo ortográfico de 1990  
foi opção de cada autor.Esta publicação é financiada por fundos nacionais  
através da FCT – Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia,  
I.P., no âmbito do projecto UID/00698/2025  
(<https://doi.org/10.54499/UID/00698/2025>) - Centro  
de Arqueologia da Universidade de Lisboa

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## **RECENSÕES BIBLIOGRÁFICAS**



**HALLMANN, A. (ed.) (2025)**

***Outward Appearance versus Inward Significance. Addressing Identities through Attire in the Ancient World***

Chicago: Institute for the Study of Ancient Cultures of the University of Chicago. viii + 566 pp.; 189 figures, 8 tables [ISBN 978-1-61491-127-2]

10.51679/ophiussa.2025.203

**YUNA LE QUÉRÉ**

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The study of dress has, over the past few decades, become a key avenue for exploring identity and cultural exchange in archaeology. *Outward Appearance versus Inward Significance: Addressing Identities through Attire in the Ancient World*, edited by Aleksandra Hallmann, makes a significant contribution to this growing field. The volume, which gathers seventeen essays and three responses from the fourteenth annual post-doctoral seminar held at the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, explores the multifaceted roles of dress, from imperial politics and individual identities to ritual agency and textile production, across a wide chronological and geographical spectrum.

In her introduction, Hallmann situates the reader within the field of dress studies, outlining the volume's objectives and tracing the development of the discipline to its current interdisciplinary scope. She highlights attire both as a medium of identity formation and a form of non-verbal communication, and stresses the importance of integrating various sources in its study.

The first section (Ch. 1–4) treats dress as an instrument of power and representation within imperial contexts. Essays by Brittenham, Miller, Mynářová, and Wozniak and Yvanez examine how garments articulate political hierarchy, ethnicity, and social order. Particularly strong are Brittenham's study of Inca and Aztec dress and Wozniak and Yvanez's exploration of Nubian textiles, both of which combine multiple sources to reconstruct the sartorial habits of these societies. Miller's contribution on Persia is theoretically engaging, introducing the notions of 'subjective' and 'objective' identity to examine cross-cultural representations. Mynářová's chapter, although rich in material regarding relations between Near Eastern empires, presents its sources in a slightly opaque manner. Together, these chapters showcase the dress and textiles through which empires projected authority and negotiated diversity, even if they vary in analytical depth and clarity.

The second part (Ch. 5–8) shifts from political identity to performative and experiential identity, considering how garments act as social agents and vehicles of transformation. Foster's detailed overview of Achaemenid dress, Hallmann's critique of scholarly terminology surrounding the so-called 'Persian costume', and Ritner's and Rothe's respective studies on Libyan (mainly through Egyptian sources) and northern

Roman identities (through local sources) all explore the body as both medium and message. Each chapter succeeds in questioning established assumptions while remaining clear and methodologically sound. Rothe's essay is especially noteworthy for its nuanced treatment of local identities in the northern Roman empire, illustrating how dress negotiates between local traditions and imperial ideals.

The third section (Ch. 9–13) addresses ritual and divine embodiment, examining how clothing materialises sacred identity and mediates between human and divine spheres. Nosch's chapter on royal and priestly attire in ancient Greece stands out for its comprehensive comparative approach, integrating Near Eastern and Jewish material besides limited Greek evidence. Gawlinski, Thomason, and Cifarelli each push methodological boundaries: Gawlinski re-evaluates the role of Greek religious personnel through attire, Thomason introduces a phenomenological perspective on the sensory experience of dress in Mesopotamia, and Cifarelli reinterprets the well-known Hasanlu lion pins as materialisations of divine traits rather than simple dress complements. Kapić's discussion of colour in Egyptian temple rituals, although more traditional in scope, expands the field by addressing the symbolic dimension of coloured textiles. Collectively, these studies question the limits of dress and divinity, and their intersection in ritual practice.

Grounding the discussion in the tangible sphere of production and exchange, the fourth part (Ch. 14–17) turns to textile technology, craft organisation, and economic value. Gleba synthesises ancient Mediterranean textile cultures, drawing on the PROCON project's data to reconstruct technological and social networks across Greece, Italy, and Spain, albeit treating the latter more briefly. Muhs offers an excellent overview of the role of cloth as currency in Egypt, from the Predynastic to the Third Intermediate Period, while Vorderstrasse's and Barnard, Boytner, and Cassman's studies on Nubian and Andean contexts connect textile terminology and dye technology respectively to issues of identity, be it individual or regional. These essays are particularly valuable for integrating archaeological and scientific data with social interpretation, demonstrating how technological practice intersects with systems of value and identity. This is so especially for Barnard, Boytner, and Cassman, whose approach

stands out in a volume dominated by philological and iconographical sources.

The final section (Ch. 18–20) brings together three responses that reflect on historiographical and methodological issues in the study of dress. Gunter revisits the conceptual framework of dress studies all while providing a very rich bibliography on the topic, and Muhs problematises the perspectives through which dress can be viewed. Wright's concluding essay weaves together the volume's main themes of identity, cross-cultural exchange, and ritual embodiment, calling attention to what she terms the 'hidden producers' behind the garments and textiles, which, despite being briefly addressed in earlier chapters (e.g., Gleba), deserve deeper consideration.

Across its five sections, the volume succeeds in bridging multiple dimensions of dress: from imperial representation and social performance to ritual embodiment and material production. The essays vary in length, scope, and methodological approach, yet collectively illustrate the interpretive richness of attire as material culture. From the Mesoamerican empires to ancient Egypt and Nubia, through Greece and the broader Eastern Mediterranean, to Rome's northern provinces, the geographic and chronological range grants the book an impressive global reach. However, the Eastern Mediterranean remains disproportionately represented, with limited attention to other parts of the globe such as the Western Mediterranean, Central and Eastern Asia, and beyond.

The diversity of approaches—textual, iconographical, archaeological, and scientific—constitutes one of the book's strongest features. Technical analyses such as Gleba's stand effectively alongside phenomenological inquiries like Thomason's or Cifarelli's. This interdisciplinarity reflects the vitality of current dress studies and their capacity to bridge material, social, and sensory dimensions. Detailed and much needed overviews of dress in different cultural contexts are also a strong component of this book (e.g., Wozniak and Yvanetz, or Foster). Particularly commendable are contributions that challenge entrenched academic conventions, such as Hallmann's re-evaluation of the 'Persian costume' and Cifarelli's reassessment of object agency, both of which invite broader reflection on the epistemological limits of dress terminology and categorisation.

Yet, despite its title's general emphasis on 'outward appearance', the majority of the chapters focus primarily on textiles. Other aspects of dress, such as metallic fasteners, ornaments, or even non-visual elements like texture, sound or smell, receive little attention. While this textile-centred perspective aligns with current archaeological priorities, it narrows the broader potential of dress studies to engage with embodiment beyond the fabric itself. A more balanced consideration of dress complements and possible sensorial aspects would have further enhanced the volume's holistic approach to ancient dress.

Placed within the expanding corpus of dress scholarship, alongside major works such as Michel and Nosch's (2010), Harris, Brøns and Żuchowska's (2021), and Gouy's (2023) contributions to the *Ancient Textile Series; Dress and Society* (Martin – Weetch 2017), and *Fashioned Selves* (Cifarelli 2019), Hallmann's volume distinguishes itself by its cross-continental scope and integration of non-Mediterranean case studies. It demonstrated how comparative and interdisciplinary perspectives can illuminate both local specificities and shared cultural processes. The inclusion of Andean and Nubian contexts is particularly valuable, broadening the field beyond its usual Greco-Roman and Near Eastern focus.

Editorially, however, the volume is slightly uneven. Some chapters are richly illustrated (notably those by Ritner and Gleba), while others lack sufficient visual material, especially given the centrality of appearance to the book's theme. The quality of images is generally adequate but not exceptional, and the near absence of maps is regrettable, as it hinders the reader's grasp of the extensive geographic scope. The inclusion of graphs and tables in scientific studies, however, is a welcome addition. Despite these shortcomings, the overall production is solid, and the bibliography is commendably extensive.

In sum, *Outward Appearance versus Inward Significance* is a valuable and timely contribution to the study of dress and identity in the ancient world. Its interdisciplinary and global outlook makes it a useful reference for any archaeologist or historian of dress. While a bit uneven in focus and somewhat limited by its reliance on textile-related evidence, the volume's ambition and methodological diversity guarantee its relevance and importance within the field. It not only reflects

the complexity of dress as both material cultural and social discourse but also paves the way toward future research on the 'inward significance' of the 'outward appearance' of ancient individuals and societies.

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## POLÍTICA EDITORIAL

### Objectivos

A Ophiussa – Revista do Centro de Arqueologia da Universidade de Lisboa foi iniciada sob a direcção de Victor S. Gonçalves em 1996, tendo sido editado o volume 0. A partir do volume 1 (2017), a Revista Ophiussa converteu-se numa edição impressa e digital da UNIARQ – Centro de Arqueologia da Universidade de Lisboa (ISSN 1645-653X / E-ISSN 2184-173X). Em 2025, a revista deixou de ser publicada em formato impresso, passando a disponibilizar-se exclusivamente em versão digital, em acesso aberto, em <https://ophiussa.letras.ulisboa.pt>

O principal objectivo desta revista é a publicação e divulgação de trabalhos com manifesto interesse, qualidade e rigor científico sobre temas de Pré-História e Arqueologia, sobretudo do território europeu e da bacia do Mediterrâneo.

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### Secções da revista

A revista divide-se em duas secções: artigos científicos e resenhas bibliográficas. Excepcionalmente poderão ser aceites textos de carácter introdutório, no âmbito de homenagens ou divulgações específicas, que não serão submetidos à avaliação por pares. Isentas desta avaliação estão também as resenhas bibliográficas.

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Aceitam-se trabalhos redigidos em português, inglês, espanhol, italiano e francês.

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Os artigos submetidos são sujeitos a um processo de avaliação por parte de revisores externos (double blind peer review).

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### *Objectives*

*Ophiussa* – Revista do Centro de Arqueologia da Universidade de Lisboa started under the direction of Victor S. Gonçalves in 1996, with the edition of volume 0. After Volume 1 (2017) it became a printed and digital edition of UNIARQ – Centro de Arqueologia da Universidade de Lisboa (ISSN 1645-653X / E-ISSN 2184-173X). In 2025, the journal ceased to be published in print format and became available exclusively in digital, open-access form at <https://ophiussa.letras.ulisboa.pt>

The main objective of this journal is the publication and dissemination of papers of interest, quality and scientific rigor concerning Prehistory and Archeology, mostly from Europe and the Mediterranean basin.

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The journal is divided into two sections: scientific articles and bibliographic reviews. Exceptionally, texts of an introductory nature may be accepted, in the context of specific tributes or divulgations, which will not be submitted to peer-review evaluation. Exemptions from this evaluation are also the bibliographic reviews.

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