



ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

Writing and Marking the Senses: a sensory approach to the mark(et)ing strategies of Late Bronze Age Cyprus

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Abstract

Cypro-Minoan potmarks were meant to be seen, touched, and even, in the case of drinking vessels painted on their interiors, tasted. Though not “writing” *strict? sens?*, Cypro-Minoan potmarks were a graphic form of communication, consisting of script signs and marks incised and painted mainly on visible parts of vessels. Often marked in the context of long-distance maritime trade, potmarks were one way that merchant middlemen could make their role visible and rebrand a commodity as their own. Potmarks would have been touched and seen by traders, stevedores, and consumers, among others, each with different levels of literacy and an overall different experience with the marks and their associated writing practices.

Attending to their placement, size, color-contrast and depth, the proposed paper investigates the sensorial and phenomenological experiences of writing, viewing, and interacting with Cypro-Minoan potmarks in commercial contexts, especially how those sensorial experiences impacted the perception of the commodities they adorned. A phenomenological approach to potmarks will conceptualize the experiences of ancient vessel markers and users and provide new insights into the ways that graphic forms of communication were deployed in the contexts of Late Bronze Age maritime trade.

Keywords

Cypro-Minoan Potmarks, Writing and Marking, Eastern Mediterranean, Branding , Trade

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