ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

Sailing on Stone: New Graffiti Ships from Palaepaphos-Marchello, Cyprus

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Abstract

The excavation conducted by the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA) at Palaepaphos-Marchello (Kouklia, Paphos) has provided significant new insights into the architectural remains and stratigraphy of this key site. Previous excavations identified a massive defensive wall, initially dated to the Archaic period. However, the NKUA findings reveal that the earliest phase of this wall dates to the LC IIC period. During the transition from LC IIC to LC IIIA, three burials were discovered north of the wall, with two being particularly wealthy. In the LC III period, an enigmatic structure likely serving a religious function was constructed, strategically positioned atop a hill and aligned with the nearby sanctuary. Notably, two graffiti depicting ships were found on stones on the northern side of this structure. The style and form of these images closely resemble ship engravings from Kition, found at the LC sanctuary in Kition-Kathari. An additional unfinished ship engraving was discovered on an adjacent stone of the northern wall. These finds represent the first instances of ship engravings identified in the Paphos region. This paper investigates the typology of these ships, the carving techniques employed, and their potential symbolic meanings, within their LC and the broader, Mediterranean, context.

Keywords

Cyprus, Palaepaphos, Ships, Kition, graffiti

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