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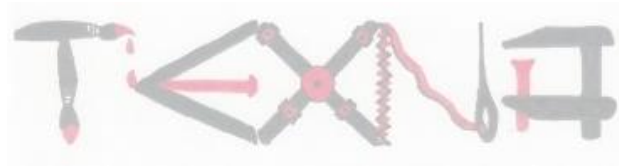
University of Cyprus
Archaeological Research Unit



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ÉCOLE FRANÇAISE D'ATHÈNES
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In the frame of the

TEXNH: Making, creating, and agency networks in the Ancient Mediterranean world

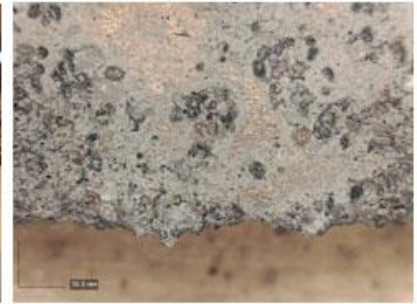
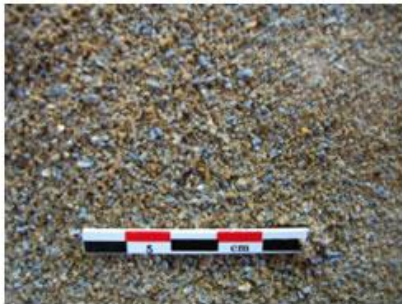
lecture series and discussion forum

we kindly invite you to a lecture by

Dr. Athina Boleti

MSCA Fellow 2020-2023, Leiden University - Faculty of Archaeology

Abrasive technologies and cross-craft interaction in the Bronze Age Aegean world



18 October 2023, 18.00

at the Netherlands Institute at Athens

11, Makri str., 117 42 Athens

Due to limited seat number please R.S.V.P. at nia@nia.gr or 210 9210760

The event will also be streamed live. For registration please visit:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZwscemupzsvE9GuAjmlCsN1C1Ky6jiiueWt>



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Abstract

In this presentation I will explore cross-craft interaction issues through the lens of abrasive materials and techniques. I will consider crafting techniques using and/or producing abrasive powders. Abrasive powders were used for drilling and sawing stone, in different crafts, like seal- and vase making, as well as masonry. They were also used for polishing stone and metal. Stone working technology including abrasive technology (drilling and sawing) developed in the field of spectacular stone vase productions already in predynastic Egypt is thought to have been transposed on a much larger scale to masonry and to have contributed to the impressive monumental architecture of the following dynastic periods (see for example Arnold, Romer 2007). The same can be seen in prepalatial and protopalatial Crete (Boleti 2021). Abrasive powders were not only produced for this purpose by crushing and grinding raw material (for example in form of chunks), but could also be the by-product of different operations in different crafts. Knapping and pecking stone (for tool making or stone dressing), for instance, provided mineral products in form of flakes and powder. Likewise, the slur issued from drilling and sawing gave different pastes composed from the abrasive used, the material cut and the lubricant substance added. These practices certainly allowed for experimentation with mixtures of different materials, as well as grain size and texture. Abrasive powders could then be used for polishing stone (of different hardness), metal and other materials. Successive abrasive operations could result in fine-grained compositions required for a high quality “mirror” type polishing of stone and metal. The case of emery, the most powerful abrasive rock known in the Bronze Age Eastern Mediterranean and its periphery, occurring on the island of Naxos and in Asia Minor and imported in several sites (Crete, Mycenaean Argolid) will serve to give more detailed insights. Emery in form of powder is found in the Aegean in both stone working and metal working contexts, but up-to now available evidence suggests that its abrasive qualities were first discovered in the framework of stone working activities, then further exploited in metalworking. All the above elements inevitably call to further explore the proximity of craftsmen working areas, the degree and type of specialization in each craft, as well as procurement and distribution strategies, in regard with the scale of production in each case. Further elements will be sought in neighboring cultures, like Egypt and Hittite Anatolia, as well as in historic and ethnographic sources.

References

Arnold, D., 1991, *Building in Egypt. Pharaonic Stone Masonry*, New York.

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Romer, John, 2007, *The Great Pyramid. Ancient Egypt revisited*, Cambridge.