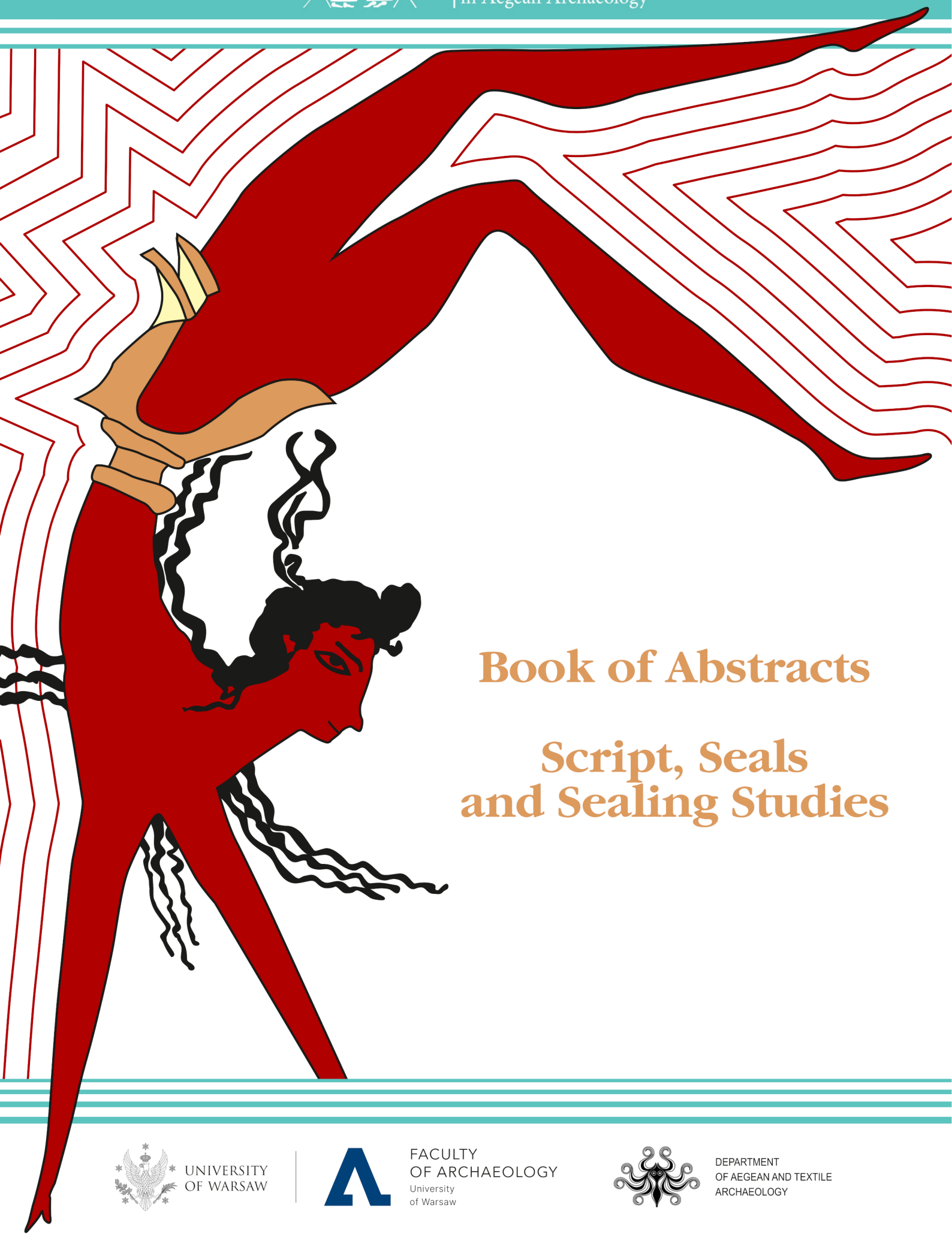




Symposium  
Egejskie  
10th Conference  
in Aegean Archaeology



## Book of Abstracts

## Script, Seals and Sealing Studies



UNIVERSITY  
OF WARSAW



FACULTY  
OF ARCHAEOLOGY  
University  
of Warsaw



DEPARTMENT  
OF AEGEAN AND TEXTILE  
ARCHAEOLOGY

SYMPOZJUM EGEJSKIE  
10TH CONFERENCE  
IN AEGEAN ARCHAEOLOGY

University of Warsaw, Poland

11th June 2025

CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS AND CHALLENGES IN  
AEGEAN BRONZE AGE  
SCRIPT, SEAL AND SEALING STUDIES

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

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## Wednesday, 11th June 2025

- 11:20–11:25      **Introduction**  
Sarah Finlayson (University of Heidelberg)
- 11:25–11:50      **Inclusive or Exclusive? The Material Diversity of Linear A**  
Ester Salgarella (Aarhus Institute of Advanced Studies, Aarhus University)
- 11:50–12:15      **Mycenaean Perfume Industry: New Approaches to Deciphering**  
Laura Bellinato (University of Bologna)
- 12:15–12:40      **Markers and Writers in Late Bronze Age Cyprus**  
Cassandra Donnelly (University of Cyprus)
- 12:40–13:00      **Discussion**
- 13:00–14:30      **Lunch Break**
- 14:30–14:55      **Challenging our Present Views about Linear B Ideograms/Logograms/Sematograms**  
John Evrenopoulos (Independent Researcher/Directorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Athens)
- 14:55–15:20      **Digital Approaches to Bronze Age Aegean Seals: Exploring 3D Documentation, Challenges, and Insights**  
Tatiana Stamatia Andreovits (University of Heidelberg)
- 15:20–15:35      **Discussion**
- 15:35–15:55      **Coffee Break**
- 15:55–16:20      **Valuing the Unassuming: Social Prestige and Late Minoan Soft Stone Seals**  
Diana Wolf (Deutsches Archäologisches Institut (DAI) Athens)
- 16:20–16:45      **Seals and Sealings: Insights into the Protopalatial Sealing Practices at Phaistos**  
Gregor Staudacher (University of Heidelberg)
- 16:45–17:00      **Discussion**



**Tatiana Stamatia Andreovits, MA**

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**Digital Approaches to Bronze Age Aegean Seals:  
Exploring 3D Documentation, Challenges, and Insights**

The proposed paper presents a comprehensive study that integrates traditional visualisation methods with contemporary digital technologies to analyse Bronze Age Aegean seals, with a particular focus on those depicting human figures. Structured-light scanning and 3D digital tools were utilised in order to create high-resolution models of both original seals situated in Greek archaeological museums and modern impressions from the Corpus der minoischen und mykenischen Siegel (CMS). A total of 133 modern impressions and 47 original seals were scanned, representing a diverse range of materials, such as clay, steatite, agate, jasper, carnelian, silicon, and plasticine.

The study highlights the challenges of capturing intricate details on miniature artefacts using digital technologies. It critically evaluates the potential and limitations of computational methodologies when applied to micrographic objects such as seals. By comparing traditional documentation techniques (manual illustration and photography) with digital approaches (structured-light scanning), this study assesses how computational analysis enhances the understanding of engraving techniques and corroborates stylistic developments across different periods of the Bronze Age.

Ultimately, this paper underscores the value of integrating both traditional and digital methodologies for a more holistic study of archaeological artefacts. It also aims to contribute to the establishment of standardised 3D documentation methods, ensuring improved accuracy, consistency, and reliability across a variety of materials.

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### **Mycenaean Perfume Industry: New Approaches to Deciphering**

During the Bronze Age, the Mycenaean palaces were productive centres with flourishing industries, aiming to create luxurious items that reached the Egyptian and Syro-Levantine coasts. Among these industries, one is that of perfumed oil, especially prominent at the centre of Pylos, Messenia. By investigating the perfume industry, we gain a deeper understanding also on the age-old question about the Mycenaeans' role in Late Bronze Age trade and on the cultural practices of Mycenaean civilization. However, the Linear B tablets do not provide us with recipes for their precious sage and rose oil. The tablets only register some lists of ingredients that perfume boilers received from the palace to create their scents, but even nowadays those lists are not completely deciphered and understandable. The presence of wool or wine among the ingredients, along with the undeciphered logogram \*171 and the monogram KA+PO, adds an extra layer of intrigue to the process involved in making perfumed oil. Perhaps, the solution to this mystery might be within reach, as we can compare some contemporary sources in Egyptian and Mesopotamian treaties and later sources on perfume making in Greece with the ingredients listed on the Linear B tablets. The recreation of Mycenaean perfumed oil can not only share insights into their craftsmanship with a wider audience, but also can bring researchers closer to the answer of the meaning of logogram \*171 and KA+PO, which appear in only a few documents.



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**Markers and Writers in Late Bronze Age Cyprus**

The undeciphered Cypro-Minoan script is the most wide-travelled Mediterranean script of the Late Bronze Age, with inscriptions found at Tiryns, Hagia Triada (Crete), in shipwrecks along the Anatolian and Levantine coasts, Cyprus, Ugarit, and Ashkelon. Wherever the script went, associated marking systems, mostly in the form of potmarks on vessels, came with it. Both the wide dissemination of the script and its associated marking practices are connected to overseas trade contexts, which makes Cypro-Minoan and its potmarks unique within the region and time period. This talk will address the mercantile dimensions of Cypro-Minoan writing practices and their role in the dissemination of the script during the Late Bronze Age and also describe the mutual influence between the script and potmarking systems, challenging our definitions of script, mark, and literacy. The important role played by traders in the dissemination of script will be highlighted.



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**Challenging our Present Views about Linear B**  
**Ideograms/Logograms/Sematograms**

This paper focuses on the multiple viewings of Linear B non-phonograms by Mycenologists over the course of time. The terminology adopted by researchers may differ in several cases, showing our weakness in agreeing on a generally established description of the signs' semantic content. In addition, there seems to be significant controversy around defining what exactly is ideography, logography/lexigraphy and sematography, with all of these general terms being intertwined to a certain degree. It may be prudent to avoid the one-sided conclusions adopted by many researchers, who often position themselves in favor of or against a particular approach, marginalizing or diminishing other suggestions. Perhaps a more compromising view of reading and writing should be in order. In reality, the time factor and the human cognitive functions are parameters often underestimated in the interpretation of these graphemes. For this reason, we should be aware of their contribution to shaping and transforming the meaning of Linear B non-phonographic terms and thus their impact on the transition from lexigraphy to sematography and vice versa.

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### **Inclusive or Exclusive? The Material Diversity of Linear A**

Administrative or non-administrative? Palatial or non-palatial? Clay or non-clay? Writing or non-writing? Literate or non-literate? Linear A evidence is often defined by negation, bringing forth a dichotomous classification of Linear A inscriptions (also referred to as ‘documents’), which does nothing but hamper our understanding as well as appreciation of the multifaceted, kaleidoscopic nature of Linear A-inscribed objects.

By shifting the focus to the wider context of use of the Linear A script, and by moving away from the traditional (perhaps implicit) administrative-centered, tablet-centered, clay-centered approach, this paper aims to emphasize the rich material diversity of Linear A evidence and to re-evaluate our epistemological approaches (in both theoretical and practical terms) to classifying and analysing Linear A inscriptions.

Inclusive or exclusive? We shall perhaps move beyond strict dichotomic taxonomies with a view to arriving at a more nuanced appreciation of ‘Linear A’ (a label itself) in 360 degrees and in its polymorphic nature: script, inscriptions, underlying language, and inscribed objects as ‘living’ and ‘lived’ historical documents that escape rigid classifications.

Linear A knowledge as ‘exclusive’ to specialists? Perhaps (still) so, yet efforts are being made to make it more ‘inclusive’, as will be shown.





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### **Seals and Sealings: Insights into the Protopalatial Sealing Practices at Phaistos**

The sealings of Phaistos, discovered in 1955 and subsequently published by Doro Levi, were later studied by Enrica Fiandra. Despite these studies, many questions remain unanswered.

While Fiandra has suggested that the over 1500 studied pieces were used to seal only 16 different objects, a thorough case study of 155 casts of the sealings, which were available through the CMS in Heidelberg, reveals that Fiandra's conclusion can by no means be considered definitive. It seems that the sealings came from a greater variety of objects than previously thought.

On the one hand, this presentation aims to explain why Fiandra's assumptions, on which numerous subsequent publications are based, need to be questioned.

On the other hand, I would like to demonstrate what the seal impressions on the clay seals can reveal about the sphragistic function of seals and the responsibilities of specific seal holders of that time. To achieve this, potential patterns in the use of different seals must be identified. This is facilitated through a quantitative analysis within the framework of the case study involving 155 sealings and the seal impressions found on them. This analysis consists of a systematic examination and comparison of seal motifs in relation to the types of clay sealings on which the impressions appear. The objective is to determine whether specific motifs predominantly occur on particular types of sealings or whether no discernible pattern exists. As a case study, it can serve as a foundation for future research on the sealings of Phaistos.



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**Valuing the Unassuming: Social Prestige and Late Minoan Soft Stone Seals**

Aegean scholarship has long associated Late Minoan soft stone seals with lower social groups on account of their availability, the accessibility of the raw materials, and their large number. Their subdued colors, idiosyncrasies of hand-engraving, and rough texture create an almost muted contrast to seals made from prestigious materials such as semi-precious stones or gold. From a modern perspective, the use of readily available materials and unsophisticated manufacturing techniques might suggest that these were inexpensive ('cheap') objects. But does this necessarily mean they were held in low esteem in the past?

This presentation challenges that notion by applying theoretical concepts of valuation to reassess these unassuming artifacts. Building upon the results of prior foundational research, it explores the attribution of value as a dynamic process shaped by social negotiation rather than material hierarchy alone. The creation or attribution of value vis-à-vis an object is considered a strategic action that operates on both an individual and a societal level. By integrating insights from Value Orientation Theory (as initially presented by Kluckhohn, and developed by Parsons and others) — particularly societal value frameworks and their potential interplay, strategies for substantiating and transforming value, and resulting symbolic orders — this study re-examines the social role of soft stone seals beyond the constraints of material determinism.

The findings suggest that the valuation of this abundant material group may have been more complex, contingent on context, use, and social discourse, rather than intrinsic material value alone.

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