Color, materiality, sensory experience and Late Bronze Age burials in the Argolid

Gillis, Carole

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Abstract:
One aspect of tombs and burials in the BA Aegean in general that has not received much notice is that of color (hue and shine). Were certain hues more predominant than others? Was this significant? Was the presence (or absence) of shine of importance? Following a discussion of ‘what is color?’, the study and results of the colors of the finds from Late Bronze Age tombs at three sites in the Greek Argolid, Asine, Berbati and Dendra, are analyzed, followed by a brief review of the theoretical background used here regarding symbolism, materiality and agency. This theoretical structure and the aspect of possible color symbolism are then combined with the material objects and in specific with the color analyses to determine whether this method could 1) offer broader interpretative possibilities for understanding displays of hue and shine and 2) add other dimensions beyond the conventional interpretations of anthropocentric shows of kinship, status and power in LBA Argolid burial contexts. The aspect of local and global is discussed. The study ends by presenting a scenario of a hypothetical Aegean Late Bronze Age burial incorporating these and other sensory aspects.

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