

# Of marks and men: the functional and historical context of the workmen's marks of the Royal Theban Necropolis.

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## Of marks and men : the functional and historical context of the workmen's marks of the Royal Theban Necropolis



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<b>Keywords:</b>	Identity marks Deir el-Medina Ostraca New Kingdom Literacy Writing Prosopography
<b>Abstract:</b>	<p>The dissertation examines the functional and historical context of the corpus of ostraca from the Theban necropolis - hitherto largely unpublished - that are inscribed with identity marks. The feature that sets the usage of marks in Deir el-Medina apart from other systems in ancient Egypt is their application in the creation of documentary records. Analysing the 18th Dynasty ostraca, the study provides insight into the organisation and administration of the royal necropolis workmen of that period. The ostraca from the 19th and 20th Dynasty are occasionally concerned with supplies and tools for the construction of the tomb, but more often they record the delivery and distribution of commodities, goods and rations, and attendance at the worksite. In the 20th Dynasty more than in the 19th Dynasty ostraca can be recognised that pertain not to the collective necropolis administration, but that are private accounts. The subject of such records is also exclusively of a material nature. They include what seem to be inventories of private property and records of transactions. The majority of ostraca with identity marks were created by workmen without formal scribal training, although some were evidently composed by scribes or draftsmen.</p>
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