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Jul 13, 2022 • 6 tweets • 3 min read • [Read on X](#)

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A 🧵 for #WatermarkWednesday, also about Starbucks

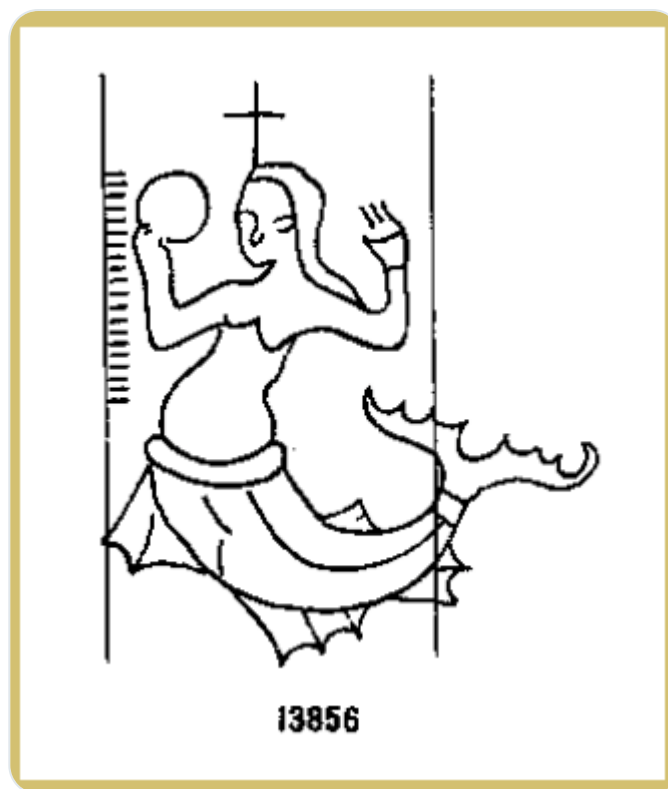
This mermaid watermark is on a Hebrew text from the #Cairo #Geniza. When people see it, I often get the comment that it looks like the Starbucks logo. Can't really argue with that, but I've always dismissed it as a coincidence.



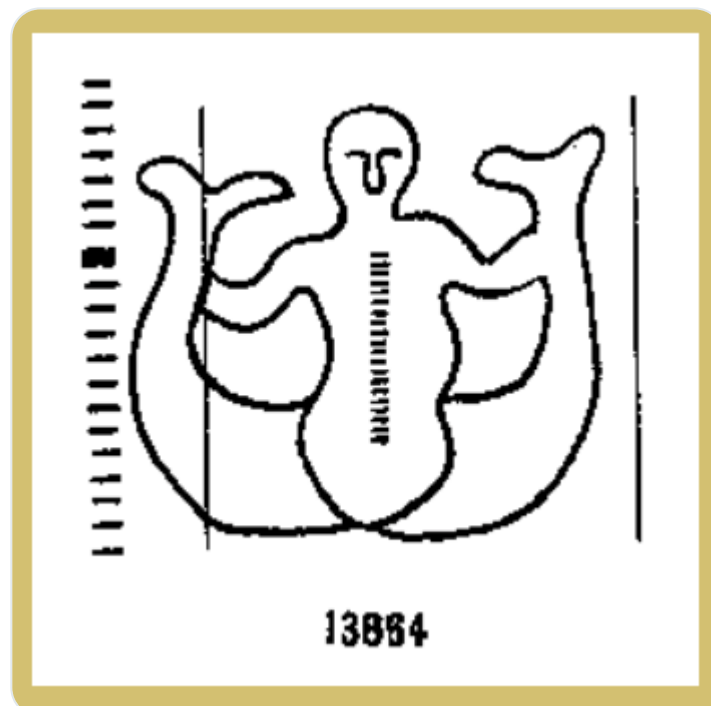
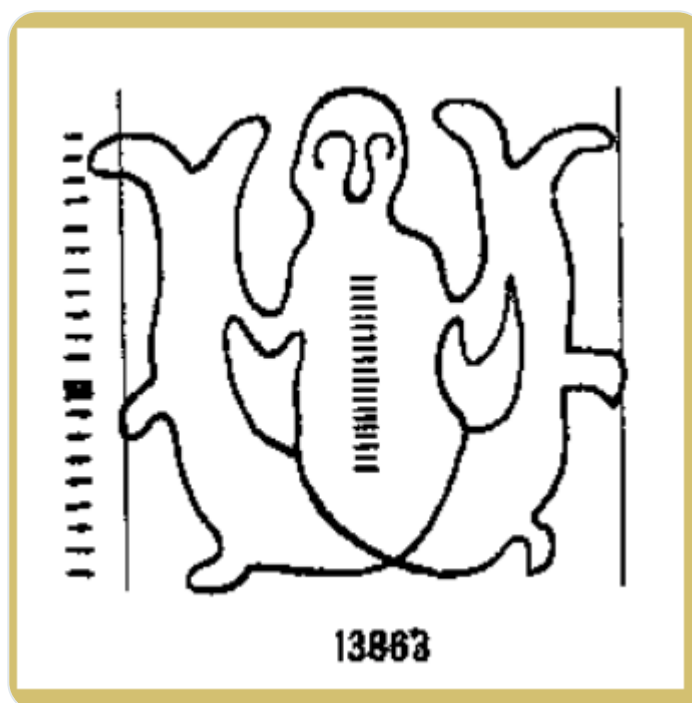


Watermarking was all the rage among historical European papermakers. Our mermaid is similar to other marks used in France in the mid-15th century (Briquet 13855-6), suggesting the paper was made in France around that time.





These mermaids are part of a wider mermaid (or 'siren') motif that evolved over time in late medieval Europe. Some of the earliest examples are 'twin-tailed' mermaids, attested in Italian paper already in the 1360s (Briquet 13863-4).



It turns out, the original Starbucks logo was based on the same motif. Specifically, a woodcut image from a 15th-century German book (image/info from this blogpost on the topic:). A German book that, possibly, could've been printed on French paper. gotmedieval.com/2010/08/the-ot...



<http://www.gotmedieval.com/2010/08/the-other-starbucks-mermaid-cover-up.html>

So in a roundabout way, the mermaid watermark kind of is the Starbucks logo. Sorry for ever doubting. I think I like what this says about the reception of history in popular culture, but I also bet the mermaid union was strong af.

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Aug 16

After 100 days of continuous action, the Cambridge Encampment for Palestine finally closed on Wednesday. This is a thread documenting the incredible things I witnessed there over the last 3 months, in the hope of demystifying the protest for my many colleagues who remain silent.