

Greek Geometric incised coarse ware, Euboea, and its connections to central Italy

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Περίληψη

Η ευβοϊκή εγχάρακτη κεραμική, γνωστή από τον 19ο αιώνα αναγνωρίστηκε από τον Boardman ως ξεχωριστή κατηγορία μόλις το 1952. Από τότε έχουν δημοσιευτεί αρκετά άρθρα για ταφικά και οικιστικά σύνολα με εγχάρακτη χονδροειδή κεραμική τόσο από την Εύβοια όσο και από άλλες περιοχές του ελλαδικού χώρου.

Σε αυτό το άρθρο γίνεται μια γενική παρουσίαση των κύριων μορφολογικών χαρακτηριστικών - τεχνική, χρονολόγηση, τυπολογία και ρυθμός - της ελληνικής εγχάρακτης χονδροειδούς κεραμικής της Γεωμετρικής περιόδου.

Η κεραμική με εγχάρακτη διακόσμηση αντιπροσωπεύει ένα μικρό ποσοστό χονδροειδών αντικειμένων· τα τελευταία αποτελούν το 30–40% του συνόλου των κεραμικών ευρημάτων τα οποία είναι κυρίως διακοσμημένα με περίτεχνη γραπτή διακόσμηση. Η εγχάρακτη κεραμική ξεχωρίζει για τη διακόσμησή της, για παράδειγμα με διακοσμητικά μοτίβα με εγχαράξεις που γίνονταν με χτένι, μοτίβα με διαγραμμισμένα τρίγωνα και σβάστικες. Οι απαρχές της τοποθετούνται χρονολογικά στην Ύστερη Πρωτογεωμετρική περίοδο ενώ γνώρισε σημαντική ανάπτυξη από τη Μέση Γεωμετρική ΙΙ έως την Ύστερη Γεωμετρική περίοδο. Κεραμική με παρόμοια διακόσμηση βρέθηκε στην Εύβοια καθώς επίσης και στην Αθήνα και στη νότια Αττική, στον Ωροπό, στη Χαλκιδική και στις Κυκλάδες, καθώς και σε άλλα μέρη του ελλαδικού χώρου.

Μια συγκριτική ανάλυση της εγχάρακτης κεραμικής αποκαλύπτει κάποιες απροσδόκητες σχέσεις (τεχνική, διακόσμηση και σχήματα) με την κεραμική του 8ου–7ου αι. π.Χ. (Εποχή του Σιδήρου) από την Ιταλία, μια εποχή που υπήρχαν σημαντικές επαφές μεταξύ Ελλάδας και κεντρικής Ιταλίας.

Τα νέα επιπλέον στοιχεία που προέκυψαν από τη μελέτη της εγχάρακτης κεραμικής στηρίζουν τη θεωρία των ισχυρών αμοιβαίων επαφών μεταξύ της Εύβοιας και της κεντρικής Ιταλίας.

Introduction¹

During the Protogeometric (PG) and the Geometric periods, fine painted pottery was the main ceramic produced in Greece. As a matter of fact, only a small percentage of the ceramic objects found in

1. Special thanks to the organizers of the conference for having proposed a fascinating topic about a crucial island in the Greek world and for their invitation to participate. The research presented here began in 2012 at the Scuola Archeologica Italiana di Atene (SAIA), thanks to a postdoctoral fellowship issued by the Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei (Clelia Laviosa), within the framework of a broader ongoing research project that I am developing, devoted to the contacts between the central and eastern Mediterranean (see Cerasuolo 2011–2012). I would like also to thank the director Emanuele Greco, and all the

tombs, settlements and sanctuaries is actually handmade coarse ware. The incised pottery is a specific coarse ware sub-class made up of a relatively few items,² a good percentage of which come from Euboea.

The Euboean incised pottery, known since the 19th century, was recognized as a class of evidence by Boardman only in 1952.³ The most distinctive aspect of this pottery is the decoration, i.e. the use of the comb drawing groups of incisions, the motifs with hatched triangles, and swastikas. The local production of incised pottery has been proven by Neutron Activation Analyses undertaken on pot sherds found at the Sanctuary of Apollo at Eretria.⁴ Although the Euboean incised pottery exhibits all the characteristics of a coherent production, it is useful to consider it in conjunction with other incised coarse ware made in Attica, the Cyclades and Chalkidiki, as this allows for some interesting comparisons.

The brief outline presented in this article should be considered a preliminary report of ongoing research which aims to bring up some discussion points and provide a general overview of the tradition of incising coarse ware pottery in the Greek world during the Geometric period. Some additional considerations will be provided, highlighting some elements that could shed new light on the connections between Greece and the central Tyrrhenian area in terms of coarse ware production.

Technique, decoration and shapes

The incised pottery is handmade using a rough, grainy clay.⁵ The decoration, which was always etched before firing, was made with a single stylus or a multi-pointed comb (Fig. 1).⁶ Both implements were used to create continuous (straight or wavy) or broken lines and geometric patterns. The combs, a rather common decorative tool in Euboea and Attica, had up to seven points, the more common being those with two, three and four points. During the MPG, they were rarely employed to decorate vessels,⁷ but their use extended throughout the whole LG. Sometimes the incisions were filled with a coloured paste⁸ that emphasized the decoration; occasionally, plastic nipples and ribbons completed the ornamentation of the vases.

The incised pottery includes several types of vessels (Fig. 2), with very few comparisons among

staff and my colleagues at SAIA, for having facilitated and enriched my research in immeasurable ways. I would also like to thank Jean-Sebastian Gros (British School at Athens), who was very helpful in making available to my study his doctoral thesis (Gros 2007a) devoted to coarse ware in central Greece: his excellent work has been very helpful and stimulating. Furthermore, many thanks to Eleni Zosi of the National Archaeological Museum in Athens, Maria Kosma of the 11th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Amalia G. Kakissis at the British School at Athens, Géraldine Delley, Jean-Paul Descoedres, Jean-Robert Gisler, Tobias Krapf and Claude Léderrey from the Swiss School of Archaeology in Greece, for their help in searching for information about the incised vases published by Boardman in 1952. Finally, I discussed some of the arguments presented in this paper with Giovanna Bagnasco Gianni, Gilda Bartoloni, Enrico Giovanelli, Nota Kourou, Annette Rathje, Jacopo Tabolli and Vicki Vlachou. They all gave me valuable suggestions and help that greatly improved my research. Finally, I would like to thank the anonymous reviewer for the useful suggestions. The following abbreviations have been used in the text: SM, Sub-Mycenaean; PG, Protogeometric; EG, Early Geometric; MG, Middle Geometric; MPG, Middle Protogeometric; LG, Late Geometric; SPG, Sub-Protogeometric. Other abbreviations belong to frequently cited works, which are listed in the Bibliography. 2. For a provisional list of the known evidence, refer to the List of Vases at the end of the paper.

3. Boardman 1952, 11, fig. 16.

4. Verdan et al. 2014, 75, samples ERET40-42. It is not clear how the results of these analyses can be representative of the entire Euboean production of coarse ware.

5. Gros 2006 and 2007b.

6. The incised pottery should not be confused with so-called 'Argive Monochrome', which is not incised but decorated by impression using a cog (Kourou 1987; 1988). The incised decoration on coarse ware pottery is not considered the origin of the incisions on painted fine ware; in fact, as Cook (2013, 48) writes, 'the systematic use of incision [on painted pottery] probably came from the engraving of metalwork, a process introduced into Greece from the East'.

7. Sometimes on fine ware, e.g. Lemos 2002, 83-84 (Black Slip ware) and 94-96 (the Fine Incised ware, which is handmade).

8. Bouzek 1974, 6; Lemos 2002, 96.

the coeval typology of the fine painted ware. Among the large vases, there are the handleless jars and pithoi—by far the most common incised pots—sometimes with stemmed foot or tripod foot (d-l, q-t), the amphorae (m) and the jars with two horizontal handles (o). The small vases exhibit a greater variety of shapes: lids, bowls (a-c, p), jugs (u-v, often called ‘pots’), ‘lip-amphorae’ (w-y⁹) and the spouted bucket-amphora (aa) are all attested by several specimens, whereas other types are very rare, such as the small multi-storeyed oinochoe/aryballos (z) and the hydria (bb).

Chronology of incised pottery and find contexts

The incised decoration on pottery appeared during the Neolithic period, but was rarely used until the Sub-Mycenaean period. This technique spread out at the beginning of the 1st millennium BC, namely during the Protogeometric and Geometric periods. Even though this class will need a more in-depth analysis and we await forthcoming publications, some initial considerations about the chronological development of the incised pottery can be put forward.¹⁰

Early examples of incised pottery can be recognized in the so-called ‘incised ware’ (Fig. 3),¹¹ represented by ‘dolls’ (a), globular pyxides (b), bowls (c-d, l), cooking pots (e), and some other specimens such as the kalathos (h), pitcher (f), feeder (g), small tripod jars (j-k), suspended vase (l) and some multifaceted spindle whorls (m). This type of pottery has been found mostly in relation to pyres of wealthy female cremation burials in Attica and Euboea, dating from the Late PG to the EG period.¹² Decorative motifs of the incised ware are limited and quite characteristic: zig-zags, groups of lines with lateral notches, and circle stamps.

To a later stage, dating back to the MG, belong several examples of incised pottery found in the necropoleis on the island of Naxos.¹³ These are mostly large tripod pithoi, decorated with a complex series of geometric motifs incised by a single point (Fig. 3n-p); the hatched triangles, repeated many times, represent the most common motive. Some small jugs and amphorae also present few, limited incisions (Fig. 3q-r). During the MG II, some incised decorations continued to be applied also in Eretria, but these were very simple and their presence limited to conical bowls (e.g. Fig. 2a).

Between the late MG and especially the LG, a major development in incised decoration, with the first use of the comb, occurred in Euboea and Attica (Fig. 2).¹⁴ As a matter of fact, most of the incised pottery currently published belongs to this period, and notably almost all the incised jugs. Even if some evidence suggests the evolution of the decorative patterns within these phases, it is not possible to present an in-depth analysis here. Finally, the production of incised coarse ware seems to cease during the 7th century BC.

Little can be said about the find contexts of the incised pottery. Most of the time incised vases are documented in tombs rather than in other contexts, such as sanctuaries, wells and other contexts related to settlement; however, the more ancient discoveries often have no precise provenience. For Euboea, a general overview of the edited volumes from the *Eretria* series published by the Swiss expedition

9. With the label ‘lip amphora’, I refer to a specific type of amphora with a trefoil mouth, sometimes also called a ‘spouted kados’.

10. Some preliminary considerations on the chronology of incised pottery can be found in Joung 1939, 198-199; *Agora* VIII, 27; and Young 1942, 52-53.

11. Bouzek 1974; Lemos 2002, 94-96; Martelli 2009.

12. In particular, the bowls seem to be limited to the late PG, as testified by their inclusion in tomb 48 of the Kerameikos and the Rich Lady Grave of the Agora cemetery (Bouzek 1974, 11-12).

13. Kourou 1999, 25, 82-83, n. 59, pl. 52 (MG I); Charalambidou 2008-2009 (MG II).

14. The relation between comb and multiple brush to decorate vases remains to be analysed. For the multiple brush, see Papadopoulou et al. 1998.

allows us to assess about 65% of finds coming from tombs; for Attica it is close to 60%, but published data are not very precise.

For at least nine cases, in Attica and Euboea, incised pithoi were used for *enchytrismos*, which likely belonged to infants.¹⁵ Some of the larger vases were used as urns, while others, due to their unusual typology, seem to have had specific functions, perhaps ritual, as for example the 'lip-amphorae' (Fig. 2w-y) and the spouted bucket-amphora (Fig. 2aa).

Quantitative patterns and the geographical distribution of the incised pottery

In the first stage of my research I visited dozens of large and small museums and collected all the available published data on incised pottery from the modern territory of Greece. The database includes 42 sites, but unfortunately the extent of the unpublished data is uncertain.

For fine ware and coarse ware, academic publications do not provide the same level of documentation and analysis; data are often incomplete also because of the selective collection of finds during early excavations.

The available data is summarized in Table 1, demonstrating the presence of coarse ware and incised pottery in central Greece, from the Sub-Mycenaean to the Geometric period. Of the 42 sites considered, 20 are from Euboea and 15 from Attica. Although the survey of the archaeological evidence is not complete yet, three major trends during this period seem to be evidenced by the available data:

1. an increase over time in the sites where coarse ware (both incised and plain) was used;
2. the progressive growth of the quantity of sites with incised pottery;
3. the increasing ratio of coarse ware versus fine ware (although coarse ware only rarely exceeds 30% of the whole ceramic assemblage), which may be associated with a similar increase in incised pottery versus plain coarse ware.

The current state of research does not permit us to link such trends to the fortune of the incised pottery or the well-known general rise in settlement numbers during the PG and LG.¹⁶

15. Eretria, Hygeionomeion tomb 3 and Maison aux Mosaiques tomb 2; Oropos, central quarter tomb IV; Athens, Kerameikos South tombs 53, 65, 66 and Dipylon tomb X, tum. B; Phaleron, tomb 29. Also Mende, tomb 6. Sources can be found in the List of Vases.

16. Morris 1987, 156-167.

area	site	SM	PG	EG-MG	LG				
Lo	Kynos	X							
Be	Kalapodi	X	X		60				
At	Athens	3	15	x	4	16	X		
Lo	Atalante		35						
Eg	Kardiani		X						
Eg	Rhénée		X						
Th	Palia-Iolkos		15	X					
EG	Cos		x	X					
Eu	Chalcis		X	X		x			
Eg	Naxos		X	X	X	X	x		
Eu	Lefkandi		5	X	5	X	x	X	
Eu	Oropos		X	X	12	x	36	X	
Eg	Minoa			X					
Lo	Tragana			X					
Lo	Akraiphia			X	x				
Th	Halos			X		X			
Eg	Xomburgo			x		X	x		
Eu	Xeropolis			X	X	X	x		
Pel	Argo			x	X	x	X		
Eu	Eretria			X	X	22	X		
Eg	Zagora			X	X	x	x		
At	Kiapha Thiti					3			
Foc	Delphi					X			
Eg	Paros-Koukounaries					X			
Eg	Hypsili					X			
At	Anavyssos					1	X		
At	Eleusis					x	30		
At	Tourkovouni					x	X		
At	Merenda					x	x		
Calc	Mende					x	x		
At	Markopoulo de Mesogee					x	x		
At	Phaleron					x	x		
	<i>n° of sites</i>	3	0	11	5	14	8	23	15

Table 1: Quantification of coarse ware (italic) and incised pottery (bold) in Greece. Where no exact number of vases is given, 'x' = 'very few vases or sherds' and 'X' = 'several vases'. See also the List of Vases.¹⁷

As usual, the purely numerical analysis fails to describe the complexity of the phenomenon, though this represents a first approach to the scatter evidence I collected. It is therefore relevant to consider also the geographical distribution of the finds (Fig. 4); it is clear that distribution is concentrated in Euboea, Locris, Attica and the Cyclades, while further presence can be noted on Kos, and at Mende in Chalkidiki.

Types of motifs

There is no complete overlap between the decorative motifs engraved on coarse ware and the painted patterns of the fine pottery. The catalogue of the decorative motifs is rather limited, as is that

17. Data from Gros 2007a with additions.

of pattern combinations;¹⁸ more complex decorative motifs are very unusual. The incisions are located mainly on the rim and the neck (especially on the lower part, where nipples can also be found), and also on the shoulder, but very rarely on the belly or the base.

Zig-zag and wavy lines are the prevalent motifs, followed by rows of triangles and herringbone, and circular stamps. Most of the specific motifs, such as combed lines with hatches (Fig. 1c), rows of single points between lines, and hatched lozenges, can also be found in Attica, but rows of triangles are absent. Simple meanders are known from Attica but also from Naxos. In Euboea there are crosses incised on the external surface of the bases of some vases. Most of the motifs, such as the wavy line or the zig-zag, appeared during the Middle and Late PG phases. The incised swastika, which sometimes obsessively covers the vases (see Fig. 1b-c), emerged only at the end of the 8th century, and appears much more frequently on the incised pottery than on the painted type.¹⁹ The 'simple meander' (e.g. Fig. 2t-u) also has few comparisons in painted pottery.²⁰

There are very few other figurative representations. In a fragment from Xomburgo, studied by Gros,²¹ a deer or a snake can possibly be recognized. Another vase from Naxos is very important since it depicts two animals, likely two birds, above the incised image of a ship.²² Another ship is possibly represented in a problematic image from Anavyssos (Fig. 1c). Another frieze which is difficult to analyse is from a small amphora from the Agora (Fig. 2w).²³

Only in one case is there a schematic representation of human beings. On the neck of a pithos from Eretria there is a frieze with two pairs of individuals, between wavy vertical lines (Figs. 2l and 5a). The scene is duplicated and separated on each side by a vertical herringbone motif, likely a floral representation.²⁴ Each couple consists of different human figures, perhaps to represent a man and a woman. It is hard to provide an interpretation for the vertical wavy lines: they could represent snakes, water or floral motifs. The few humans incised on coarse ware do not have close comparisons on fine pottery. In fact, the oldest painted human figure on Greek pottery is that from Lefkandi which dates back to the MPG.²⁵ Later, it appears on the MG krater from tomb 43 of the Kerameikos,²⁶ together with another vase from Fortetza;²⁷ after LG human figures become very common.²⁸ While the MPG humans from Lefkandi are of peculiar stylization, the typical figures of LG have the characteristic silhouette

18. Gros 2007a, 135, fig. 3 gives the incidence of the various decorative motifs at the site of Oropos.

19. A quick look at *GGP* and *GG* shows that the swastika can be seen during SPG at Marmariani (*GG*, fig. 8h) and Lefkandi (*GG*, fig. 116, dating to SPG II); only one time in Late PG at Lefkandi; one time in EG I in Attica (*GGP*, pl. 1k); ten times in LG, in Attic style (*GGP*, pl. 9h-i; 9m; 10g; 10h; 10k; 14a; 15e; 15m), Argive style (*GGP*, pl. 26) and Thessalian style (*GGP*, pl. 33c).

20. For example *GGP*, pl. 2h and pl. 59d-h.

21. Gros 2007a, 140, fig. 6.

22. The vase is exhibited in the Museum of Naxos, but is unpublished. The decoration occupies most of the neck, where Geometric motifs define a panel with the boat. On the right, the tapered prow and the keep can be seen; on the left, there is the rudder. A series of vertical lines above the deck may indicate the ranked soldiers. This ship is almost identical to those which were painted on vases since the MG and became more common during the LG (Boffa 2006). The same type of vessel, surmounted by a pair of birds, is incised over the catch-holder of a pin from Boeotia (*GG*, fig. 66a). A close comparison for the scene is painted on a pithos at the Eretria Museum.

23. Reber 1991, pl. 10.5.

24. Boardman 1952, 11, n. 2, fig. 16c (preserved height 0.44 m) indicates that the object was at that time in the Eretria Museum; however, despite several searches in the museum storerooms (and also in the National Museum of Athens) it has not been possible so far to find this interesting vase and take new photos or complete drawings. No one from the current Eretria Swiss expedition seems to have ever seen this vase. Also, there is no other documentation at the editorial office or archives of the British School at Athens. The same is true also for the other incised vases published by Boardman 1952.

25. Lemos 2002, 66, pl. 23.11.

26. A mourning woman (*GGP*, 20-21, dating to MG I); see also the pitcher (?) from Kerameikos (*GGP*, 27-28, dating to MG II).

27. *GG*, 366, fig. 119.

28. For the Attic style see *GGP*, 37-41 and 43-44 (LG I); 56, 58, 62, 66, 69, 72-73, 75-77, 79, 81-82 (LG II). For the Argive style see *GGP*, 129 (LG I) and 136-141, 143, 145-146 (LG II). For the Melian style see *GGP*, 184 (LG II).

body, with triangular structure, that has little in common with the incisions from Eretria. Even looking at other classes of objects, such as at an MG engraved pin from Lefkandi,²⁹ no good comparison can be found. The interpretation and origin of the incised frieze from Eretria remain an open question; however, some working hypotheses about the origin of its style will be provided at the end of this paper.

Stylistic groups

An analysis of the associations within each pottery type allows for the identification of some syntactic patterns which are more frequent on the incised pottery and, more importantly, a few local varieties. This is especially true for the three better-documented areas corresponding to Naxos, Euboea and Attica,³⁰ in each of which different techniques and decorative motifs, as well as specific associations between decoration and shape, can be noted. A first attempt to sketch some local styles can help in defining the character of the Euboean production.

Incised pottery from Naxos consists mainly of large jars, with a tripod foot; and, as far as I know, these are always without handles. The incisions are exclusively single lines (the comb is not used), sometimes associated with circular stamps.³¹ Among the motifs are bands of upward triangles, herringbone, as well as rare motifs such as the ship and the two birds.

In Attica, the incised vases are mainly small, but a great variety of shapes is attested. They are mostly found in Athens, but also at other sites in Attica (e.g. Eleusis, Anavyssos, and Phaleron). There are hemispherical bowls, jugs, lip-amphorae, spout-amphorae, one hydria and one multi-storeyed oinochoe/aryballos.³² There is also an exceptional piece: a jar with high foot (Fig. 2t).³³ The incisions were made with the two-point comb and, especially, with a single point. Among the most common motifs, there are crosshatched bands, wavy line bands, oblique-notched lines, simple meanders, hatched lozenges, swastikas, and also panels on the neck, which are framed but empty. More complex, perhaps narrative, representations, such as those in Figs. 1c and 2x, are very rare.

In Euboea conical bowls together with many large vessels (jars and pithoi, sometimes with handles) have been noted. The latter have a developed neck, quite often on a stemmed openwork foot. Many pithoi have a distinct neck, an unusual feature in coarse ware. This group also includes a vase from Oropos³⁴ and another from Mende in Chalkidiki³⁵ (Fig. 2o), both areas closely related to Euboea.³⁶ The three- to seven-point comb is mostly used, as well as the cog. On the shoulders of the vases, swastikas and down-pointing triangles are very popular, but also crosses and rows of empty or hatched triangles; in contrast, ribbons are very rare. There is also a unique representation of humans on Fig. 5a, incised on a vase that very likely formed part of a burial, if it did not act as the actual urn.

These three styles exhibit relevant differences but share common shapes and motifs. Closer links can be established between Euboea, the Cyclades and Chalkidiki.³⁷ This group is characterized by a preference for large pots, on a stemmed openwork or tripod foot, and by the presence of more complex figures and scenes (humans and animals). In Attica small jugs and spouts prevail; some motifs seem to link Attic style with Naxos.

29. GG, 42, fig. 19a-b.

30. Other incised pottery with different styles are known from other parts of Greece, e.g. Argos (Waldstein 1905, pl. 50).

31. Circular stamps can be found also in Attica and Euboea.

32. Simantoni-Bournia 2011.

33. Brückner and Pernice 1893, 119, fig. 12.

34. Vlachou 2007, fig. 7b.

35. Moschonisioti 1998, 235, fig. 12.

36. Kourou 2012.

37. On the broader links between Euboea, Naxos and Chalkidiki see Kourou 1998; 2012.

Euboean incised pottery and incised pottery from central Italy

A study of Greek incised pottery must consider a broad geographic area and time frame, as well as an analysis of potential influences and models. Different incised productions can be found for example in the Bronze Age coarse ware of central Europe,³⁸ Cyprus³⁹ and the Near East.⁴⁰ A complete account and discussion is beyond the scope of my current research. Nonetheless, I deem it relevant to set up a comparison with the mid-Tyrrhenian area, namely Etruria and Latium Vetus.

Connections between Greece and the mid-Tyrrhenian area are clearly proven by the Greek imported pottery. In this area the oldest imports appeared in the MG and LG periods (at Tarquinii, Caere and Veii in Etruria; Rome, Ficana and Cures in Latium Vetus) and are mostly of Euboean production.⁴¹ During the second half of the 8th century BC, imports greatly increased. Alongside the Euboean component, Corinthian, Attic and the Cycladic imports also rose. These initial contacts led to several changes among the Etruscan and Latin communities: a significant boost in the development of the proto-urban centres, but also the adoption of broader cultural models (e.g. the adoption of writing, a new method of banqueting, a heroic funerary ideology and a new mode of aristocratic living).⁴²

By nature, contacts have a degree of reciprocity. As counterparts of these Greek imports and cultural influences, few Italic objects have been identified in the Greek world.⁴³ A number of metal objects, likely to be considered valuable offerings, came especially from the major Panhellenic sanctuaries: for example, a horse-bit of 'Vetulonia type' belonging to the 8th century BC, together with a Villanovan-type crested helmets at Olympia; the Villanovan shields at Olympia, Samos, Dodona and Delphi; many Italic fibulae types; or a Villanovan bronze belt, now in Paris, which is believed to come from Euboea itself.⁴⁴ The Villanovan-style pottery can be found not only all over Campania, where Greek and Etruscan colonies were neighbours, but also on the island of the Euboean colony of Pithekoussai itself.⁴⁵ Therefore, the 8th-7th century represents a phase of intense connections between central Italy and the Greek world, especially Euboea.

The Iron Age coarse ware of Etruria is characterized by complex incised decorations, the so-called 'Villanovan style', which were mostly used on funerary objects, especially the cinerary urns⁴⁶ (Fig. 5e, g-i). It should be noted that, since the end of the Bronze Age (11th-10th century BC), in Etruria this decoration was applied using a comb. Similar incised pottery is produced in the area of Latium Vetus, at Crustumerium and Fidene; however, in these areas the use of a single-pointed tool was preferred (Fig. 5f, j-k).⁴⁷ These incised productions are common during the 9th century and decline throughout the first half of the 8th century BC.

Some of the incised patterns considered typical of Etruscan pottery are comparable to those on Greek incised pottery: zig-zags, bands of triangles, simple meanders, and, above all, the swastikas, often within metopes. Furthermore, some comparisons between pottery types from Etruria and Greece highlight the possible connections between the two productions, though not all comparisons are

38. I refer mainly to the incised tradition of the Hallstatt culture.

39. Cypriot Red and Black Polished Ware, dating to c. 2300-1650 BC, are often incised with a single point (Barlow 1989).

40. e.g. the Syrian incised pottery dating back to the Early and Middle Bronze Age (Holland 2006, 347-378).

41. There were in fact many different components alongside the Euboean: Bagnasco 2008; Bartoloni 2005; 2013, 91-92; d'Agostino 2006; Kourou 2005.

42. For an outlook of the Villanovan culture see Bartoloni 2013. The Greek influence determined also the adoption of Hellenic types of pottery into the local funerary and ritual customs: Bagnasco 2008.

43. For the earliest Etruscan objects found in the Greek world, see Gran-Aymerich and MacIntosh Turfa 2013.

44. Gran-Aymerich and MacIntosh Turfa 2013, 377, fig. 19.4.

45. Pacciarelli 2011; Cerasuolo 2016 and Forthcoming.

46. For a general recent study about the Villanovan incised pottery, see De Angelis 2001 and 2004.

47. See, for example, the incised pottery from Osteria dell'Osa (Bietti Sestieri 1992).

equally satisfactory. Among the bowls, there are similarities in the conical shape, in the handles and in the decoration of the outer surface. Among the closed shapes, in addition to some vague parallels between jugs and bucket/situlae, there are significant similarities in the arrangement of the decoration. There is a general preference for the upper part of the vase, with neck and shoulder occupied by incised geometric motifs, but also nipples.

The intriguing neck-jar with human frieze from Eretria has a good comparison in an urn from Cerveteri (Fig. 5g), with a similar shape, nipples and incisions on the shoulder. The neck of the Etruscan vases is usually undecorated, but similar vessels dating back to the Final Bronze Age exhibit many complex decorative motifs on this part of the vessel (Fig. 5c-d).

Conclusions

To sum up, similarities between local Greek incised pottery and the Iron Age incised pottery from the mid-Tyrrhenian area can be found in relation to: a) the crafting technique (handmade); b) the decoration techniques (incision, use of both comb and single-point tools); c) some of the pottery types; d) the arrangement of the decoration; and, e) some of the decorative motifs (triangles, swastikas, human figures). Similarities are not limited to the formal aspects (shapes and decorations), but sometimes they are also functional.⁴⁸

From a chronological point of view, the Italic incised vases are usually earlier by one or two generations. Only the comparison between the amphora with openwork foot from Eretria (Fig. 2m) and the one from Bisenzio (Fig. 5l),⁴⁹ is consistent in date. Nonetheless, there is a contemporaneity between the last production of incised pottery in the mid-Tyrrhenian area (early-mid 8th century BC) and the initial stage of the efflorescence of the Greek incised pottery. Significantly, this period also coincides with the first Greek imports in Etruria.

My thesis is that the evidence discussed above suggests that at least the use of the comb to engrave decoration could have been transmitted from Etruria to Euboea during the early 8th century. It is not easy to say if this took place as a transmission of techniques and tools among craftsmen or due to the actual moving of Etrusco-Latin people to Euboea, since both are plausible but not necessary. Therefore, together with the Italic metal objects discussed above, it seems plausible to consider some aspects of the incised pottery as a reflection of Greek contacts with central Italy. The little overlap in the incised motifs of the coarse ware and the decorative motifs of the painted Euboean fine wares could be an argument for itinerant potters from Etruria who travelled to Euboea, perhaps during the LG period.

The frieze with humans on the vessel from Eretria, which does not find easy comparisons in Greek art—neither in decoration nor form—also constitutes a further element which stresses the connections between these two worlds. These types of human representations are very close to the human figures commonly incised in Etruria and Latium Vetus during the Iron Age (Fig. 5b), where typical features are the extreme simplification and the clear-cut angular lines of the body. The strong link between human representation and cinerary urns is repeated also on some hut-shaped urns from Tarquini (Fig. 5e) and Osteria dell'Osa (Fig. 5f). When compared with the frieze from Eretria, the Etruscan figures seem to represent a good and very intriguing parallel.

* * *

48. The similarity between the rare multifaceted spindle whorls published by Bouzek 1974, 16 (here Fig. 3m) and those common in central Italy is also interesting.

49. The vase has been found in the necropolis of Olmo Bello at Bisenzio and its chronology is 8th-early 7th century BC (local phases Iron Age 2-Early Orientalizing; Paribeni 1928).

List of Vases⁵⁰

A. Euboea

Eretria

- Hygeinomanteion, *enchytrismoi* (Boardman 1952, 11, fig. 16; *Eretria* XVII): one jar and four openwork stemmed jars (Fig. 2f, g, i-j, l)
 - Hygeinomanteion, K. Kourouniotis excavation, tomb 3 (Kourounithis 1903, 25-29, fig. 10; *Eretria* XVII): jar with openwork stemmed foot (Fig. 2k)
 - Hygeinomanteion, K. Kourouniotis excavation, pyres (*Eretria* XVII): conical bowl and aryballos
 - Eratonymou (Andreiomenou 1981, 219, fig. 70): sherd (Fig. 1d)
 - Eratonymou, tomb 3 (*Eretria* XVII; Gros 2007a, n. 26): one bowl and two plates (Figs. 1a, 2a-c)
 - Maison aux Mosaiques, tomb 1 (*Eretria* XVII): amphora with openwork stemmed foot (Fig. 2m)
 - Maison aux Mosaiques, tomb 2 (*Eretria* XVII): jar with openwork stemmed foot (Fig. 2h)
 - Apollo Daphnephoros (*Eretria* XIV, pl. 33; Gros 2007a, n. 34, 36): sherds (Fig. 1d), two bowls and a plate. See also *Eretria* XXII and Verdan et al. 2014
 - C/7 207.1 (*Eretria* XVII; Gros 2007a, n. 37; Reber 1987, 2, 23-34): plate
 - SW Gate (s.2), tomb 1,I (*Eretria* XVII): tripod jar (Fig. 2n)
 - OT29beta, tomb 11,I (*Eretria* XVII): jar (Fig. 2e)
 - Town workshop, west quarter (Léderrey 2007, 267-273, figs. 1-8): several sherds
 - (Reber 1987, 2, 23-34): plates
- Some sherds with simple incisions are also in *Eretria* XX.

Lefkandi-Xeropolis

- (Gros 2007a, n. 152; Popham and Sackett 1980, 72-73, pl. 41, 58-59, 61): one jar, several sherds

Oropos

- O.S.K. (Gros 2007a, n. 38, 207): plate, handle
- Tomb 4 (Gros 2007a, n. 255; Vlachou 2007): tripod jar

B. Attica

Athens

- Dipylon, tomb X, mound B (Brückner and Pernice, 1893, 73-191; 1893, 119, fig. 12, pl. VIII): jar, with tall foot (Figs. 1b and 2t)
- Agora, tombs and well (Burr 1933, 598-599, figs. 64-66, 69: n. 225-228): jug and other sherds (Fig. 2u)
- Agora (Young 1939, 110, 122, 137-138, 189-190, 199, figs. 77, 87, 94, 139-140: n. B4, B51, B82, C157-C159, C161-C164): several sherds and a lamp (fig. 87.B51)
- Agora (Brann 1960, 414, fig. 8, pl. 92; Gros 2007a, n. 254): jar with tall foot
- Agora, wells (*Agora* VIII, 1962, 27, 54-55, pl. 11, 101, pl. 40: no. 198 and 199; 607; 612-617; Brann 1961; Gros 2007a, n. 146-147, 149-151, 179-180, 215; Reber 1991): two lip-amphorae, five jugs, a bowl and several sherds (Fig. 2p, v-w)
- Kerameikos, tombs 53, 65, 66, 98 (Gros 2007a, n. 148, 242; *Kerameikos* V.1, 1954, 139, 248, 255-256, 271, 282, pl. 154-157): two jugs, one hydria, one tripod pithos, and other vases (Fig. 2q, bb)

Phaleron

- Tomb 29 (Young 1942, 30-32, figs. 12, 52-53): jar (Fig. 2.5).

50. This is the first attempt to provide a comprehensive list of vases with incised decoration. It includes published vases and unpublished items, to the best of my knowledge. It cannot be considered in any way conclusive, and I am certain it will be enlarged as the study of this specific class of pottery continues.

Eleusis

- Necropolis *panarchaia*, inhumation (Αρχ. Εφ. 1898, 29-122, pl. 3.9; Gros 2007a, n. 153): jar (Fig. 2r)

Anavyssos

- Tombs within mounds (Gros 2007a, n. 175-177; Kastriotis and Philadelphous 1911, 124-125, figs. 24-29, 126, no. 10): two amphorae, one spouted bucket-amphora, one multi-storeyed oinochoe/aryballos (the last also in Simantoni-Bournia 2011) (Figs. 1c, 2x-aa)

Merenda

- Tomb 19 (Gros 2007a, n. 166; Xagorari-Gleissner, 2005, 70, pl. 32c): small jug

Markopoulo in Mesogea

- (Kakavogianni 1983, 62, pl. 30c; Gros 2007a, n. 178): one-spouted bucket amphora

Tourkovouni

- (Gros 2007a, 133; Lauter 1985, 95, 106-107)

C. Chalkidiki*Mende*

- Coastal necropolis, tomb 6 (Vokotopoulou 1989, 414-415, 418, fig. 14; Moschonisioti 1998, 235, fig. 12): jar with horizontal handles and openwork stemmed foot (Figs. 1e, 2o)

D. Cyclades*Naxos*

- Enclosure 6 (Charalambidou 2008-2009, fig. 6a-b, d): amphora, jug and tripod jar (Fig. 3n, q-r)
- Enclosure 10 (Charalambidou 2011, fig. 6g-h): tripod jar (Fig. 3o)
- Enclosure (Charalambidou 2011, fig. 6i-l): tripod jar (Fig. 3p)
- Gymnasium tomb C-1937 (Karouzou 1937, 118, fig. 5; Kourou 1999, n. 59-60, 25, 82-84, 154-155, pl. 25): tripod jar and sherd

At least five other tripod jars, including the one with the incised boat, are exhibited in the Naxos Museum.

Zagora

- Unit H23 (Cambitoglou et al. 1988, 187, pl. 191c-d; Gros 2007a, n. 58, 208-210): bowls, handle

Xomburgo

- (Gros 2007a, n. 211-212, 264-265, 267 and fig. 6): sherds

Abbreviations

- Agora VIII = Brann, E. T. H. (1962) 'Late Geometric and Protoattic Pottery: Mid 8th to Late 7th Century B.C.'. Vol. VIII of *The Athenian Agora*. Princeton; New Jersey: The American School of Classical Studies at Athens.
- Eretria XIV = Huber, S. (2006) *L'Aire sacrificielle au nord du Sanctuaire d'Apollon Daphnéphoros. Un rituel des époques géométrique et archaïque*. Gollion: Infolio editions.
- Eretria XVII = Blandin, B. (2007) *Les pratiques funéraires d'époque géométrique à Erétrie. Espace des vivants, demeures des morts*. Gollion: Infolio editions.
- Eretria XX = Verdan, S., A. K. Pfyffer and C. Léderrey (2008) *Céramique géométrique d'Erétrie*. Gollion: Infolio editions.
- Eretria XXII = Verdan S. (2013) *The Sanctuary of Apollo Daphnephoros in the Geometric period*. Gollion: Infolio editions.
- GG = Coldstream, J. N. (2003) *Geometric Greece, 900-700 BC*. New York: Routledge.
- GGP = Coldstream, J. N. (2008) *Greek Geometric Pottery. A survey of ten local styles and their chronology*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.
- Kerameikos V = von Kübler K. (1954) 'Die Nekropole des 10. bis 8. Jahrhunderts.' Vol. 1 of *Kerameikos: ergebnisse der Ausgrabungen*. Berlin: W. de Gruyter.

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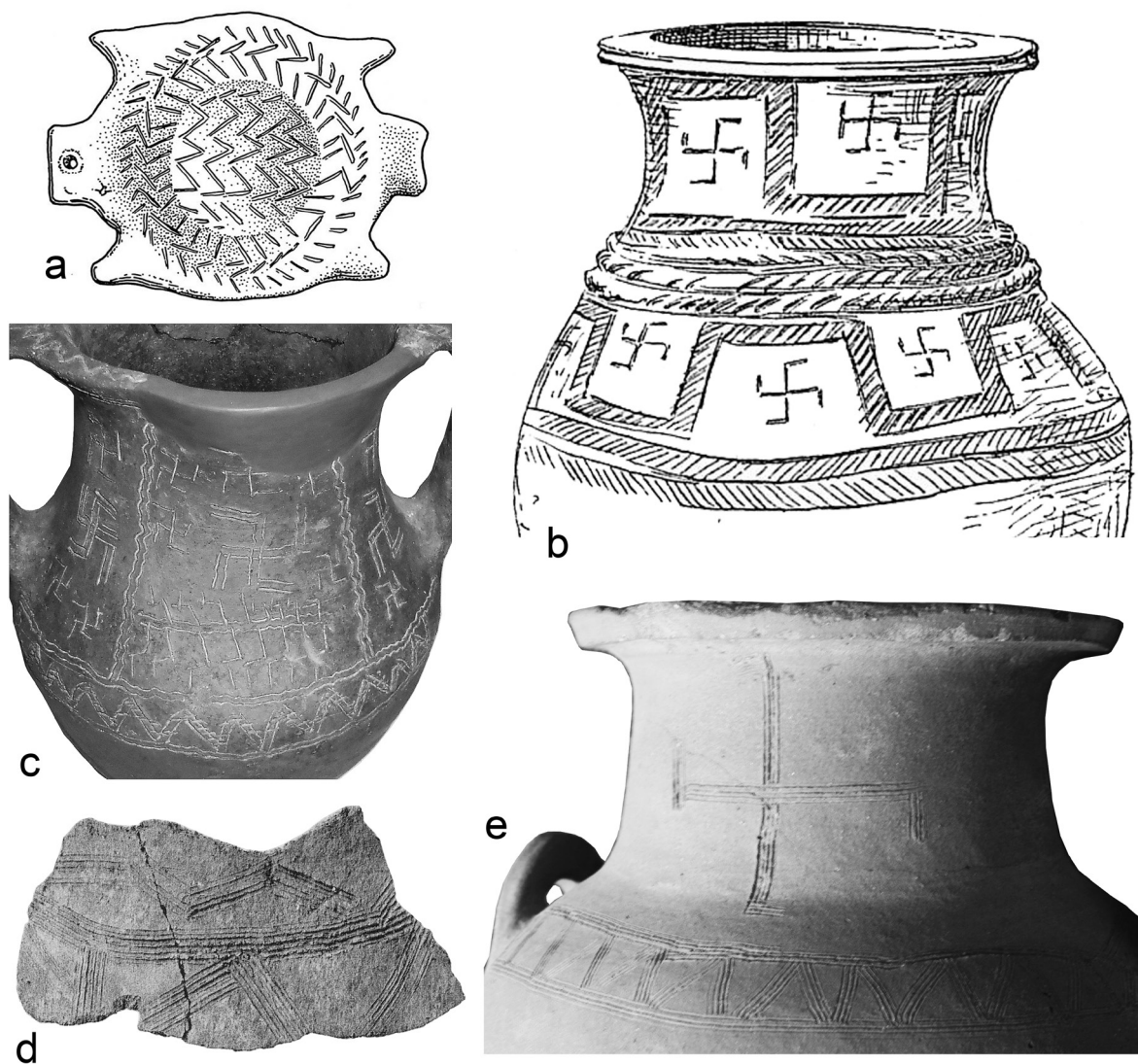
Figures

Figure 1: Different types of decoration: a. single-point incisions; b. single-point incisions and ribbons; c. single-point and two-point comb incisions; d. six-point comb incisions; e. four-point comb incisions.

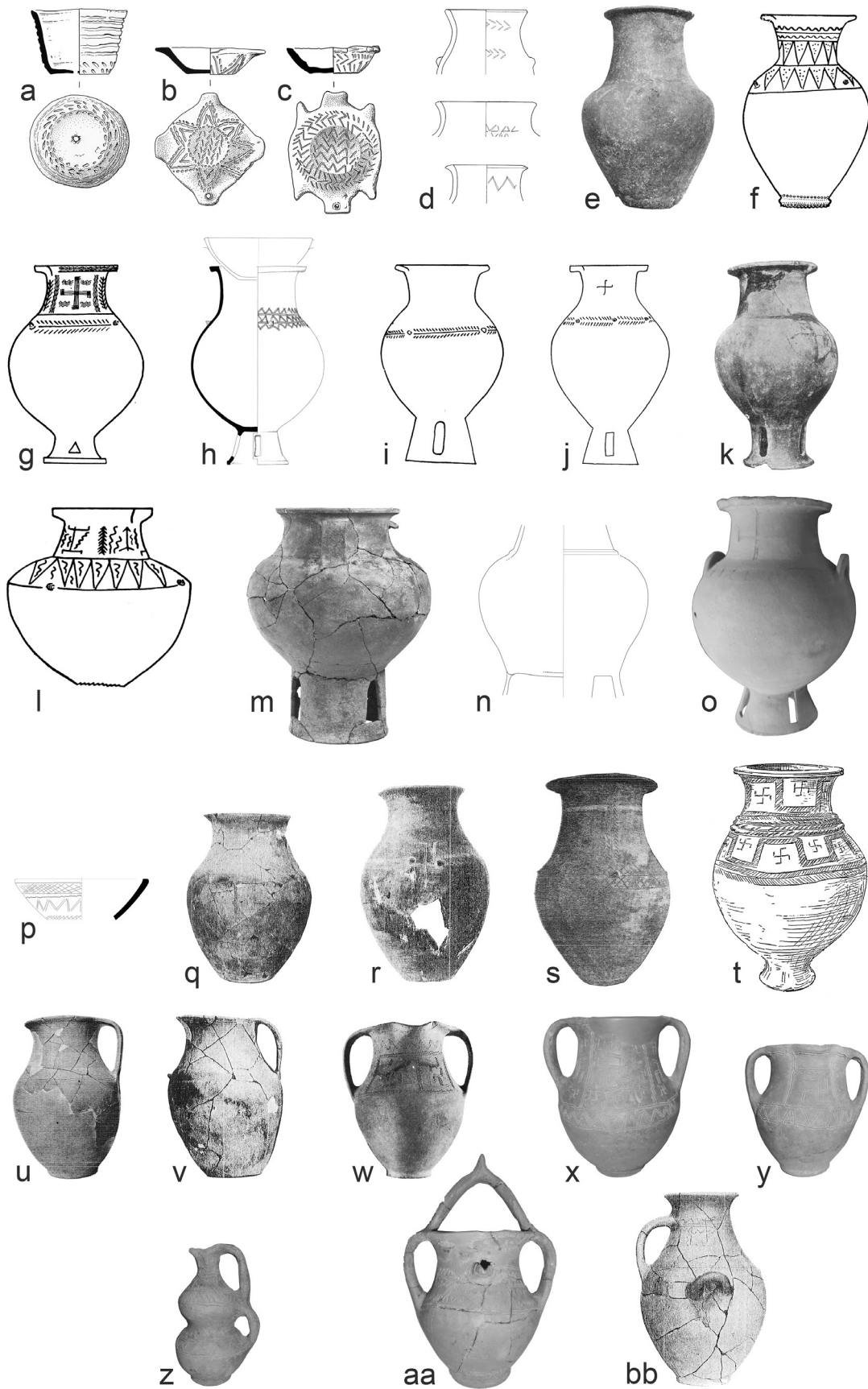


Figure 2: Illustrative typology of incised pottery from Euboea (a-o) and Attica (p-bb) (each vase is cited in the List of Vases at the end of this paper).

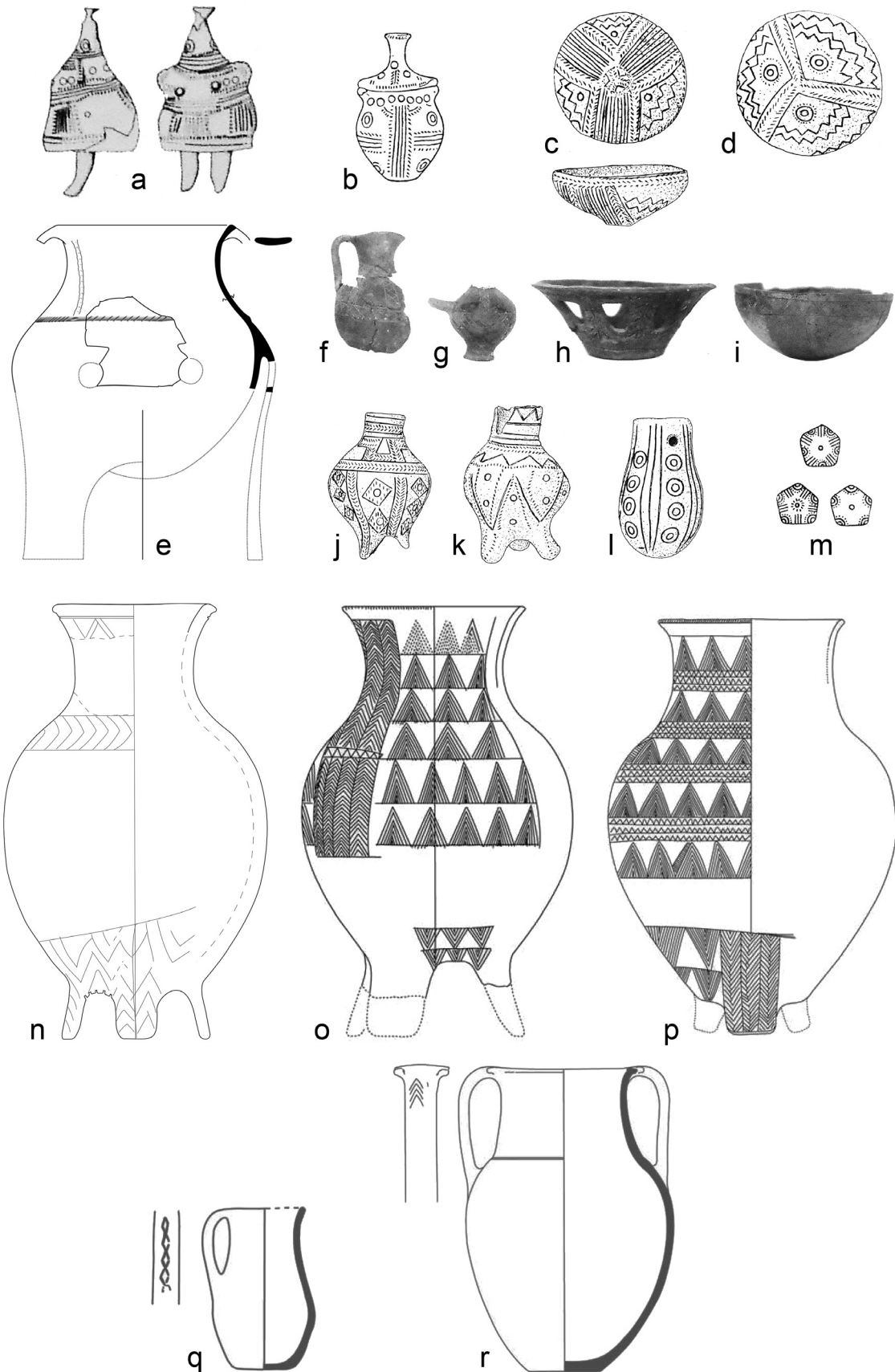


Figure 3: Illustrative typology of the Late PG to EG incised ware (a-m); and a selection of MG II incised pottery from Naxos, the necropolis of Tsikalario (n-r).

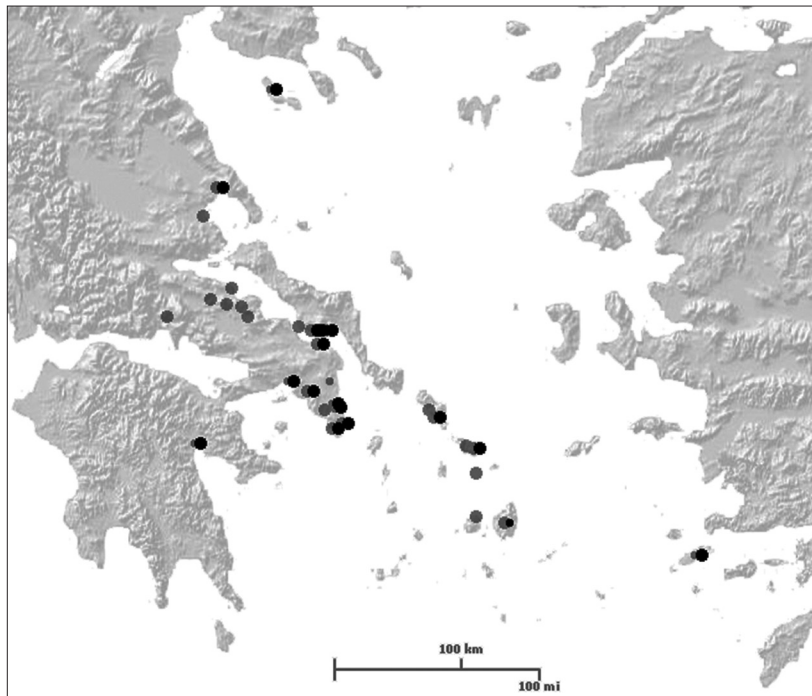


Figure 4:
Distribution of coarse ware pottery (grey) and incised pottery (black); see also Table 1.

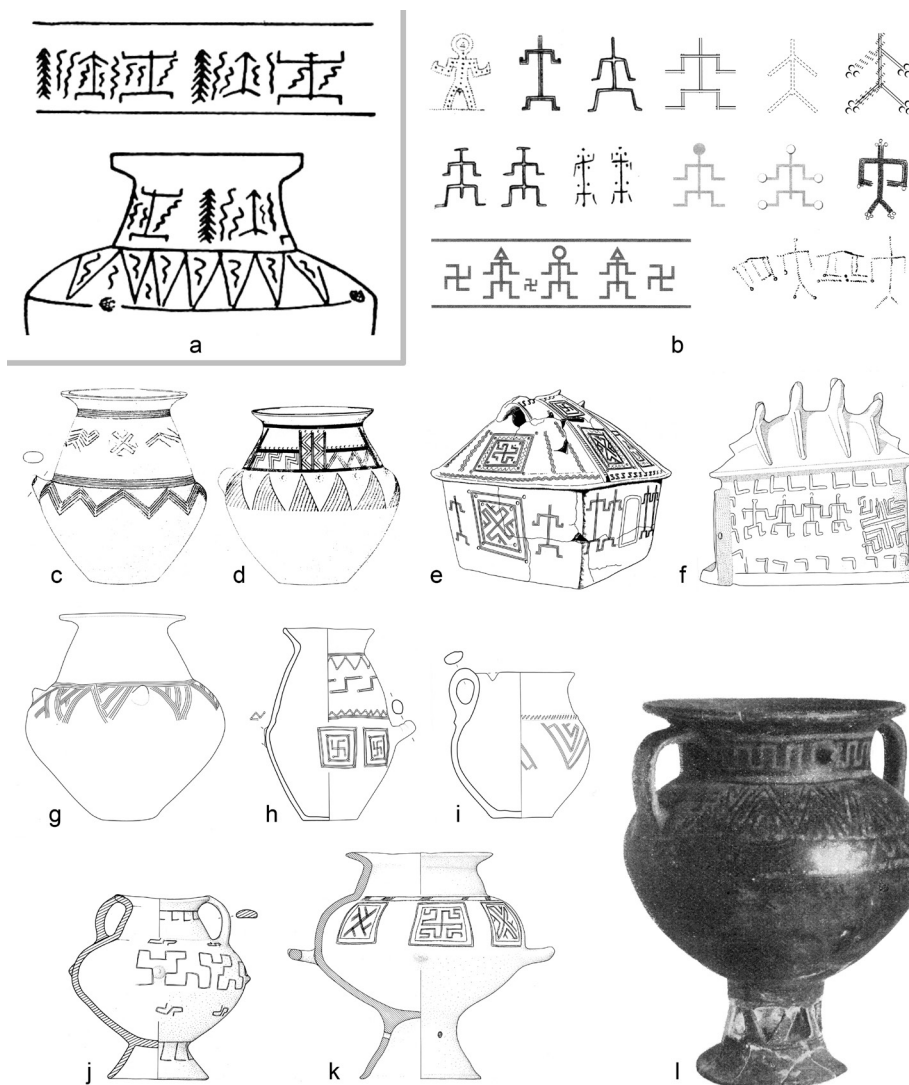


Figure 5:
Detail of the frieze with humans from Eretria (a) and a selection of mid-Tyrrhenian pottery: human figures incised on the Etruscan Villanovan pottery (b); Final Bronze Age cinerary urns (c-d); hut-shaped cinerary urns (e-f); Iron Age pottery from southern Etruria (g-i); Iron Age pottery from Latium Vetus (j-k); amphora with stemmed openwork foot (l).