

# *The pottery from the sacrificial refuse area in Plakari-Karystos: A first assessment*

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## *Περίληψη*

Κατά τη διάρκεια των ανασκαφικών εργασιών που πραγματοποιήθηκαν από το 2011 έως και το 2013 στον λόφο Πλακαρής στην Κάρυστο (Εύβοια) από το Πανεπιστήμιο του Άμστερνταμ (VU University Amsterdam) και την ΙΑ Εφορεία Προϊστορικών και Κλασικών Αρχαιοτήτων, ήρθε στο φως ένας ανοιχτός βόθρος που συνδέεται με τις πρώιμες τελετουργικές δραστηριότητες στην Πλακαρή. Η ανασκαφή του βόθρου απέδωσε σημαντική ποσότητα οστράκων αποκαλύπτοντας μεγάλη ποικιλία αγγείων που παρέχουν πολύτιμες πληροφορίες για τη χρονολόγηση πρώιμων λατρευτικών συνηθειών στην Πλακαρή και την κατανόηση της κατανάλωσης σε αυτό το λατρευτικό κέντρο κατά την πρώιμη φάση χρήσης του. Σε αυτό το άρθρο παρουσιάζονται παρατηρήσεις σε θέματα που αφορούν α) στην προέλευση της κεραμικής του βόθρου (που προέρχεται κυρίως από την Εύβοια και την Αττική και σπανιότερα από πιο μακρινές περιοχές όπως τα δυτικά παράλια της Μικράς Ασίας) που υποδεικνύει την τοπική και τη διαπεριφερειακή σημασία του ιερού της Πλακαρής κατά την πρώιμη φάση λειτουργίας του και β) στους πιθανούς τρόπους κατανάλωσης της κεραμικής κάνοντας αναφορά σε διάφορες μορφές λατρευτικών εκδηλώσεων και συγκρίνοντας με άλλες λατρευτικές θέσεις της Εύβοιας. Τα παραπάνω ερωτήματα απευθύνονται στην πλειοψηφία της κεραμικής που προέρχεται από τον βόθρο και χρονολογείται από την Πρώιμη Εποχή Σιδήρου καθώς επίσης και σε κάποιες μεταγενέστερες προσφορές από το ίδιο πλαίσιο που παρέχουν επιπλέον στοιχεία για την κατανάλωση καθώς και για τις συνηθισμένες απόθεσης.

## *Introduction*

The hill site of Plakari lies in close proximity to the Karystian coast and c. 2.5 km west of modern-day Karystos in southern Euboea.<sup>1</sup> Recent excavations at the site, under the direction of Professor J. P. Crielaard of VU University Amsterdam, in collaboration with the 11th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities (ΙΑ' ΕΡΚΑ), have uncovered architectural remains and numerous material finds,

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1. I would like to thank Professor Jan Paul Crielaard for entrusting me with the study and publication of the Early Iron Age and Archaic ceramic material from the recent excavations at Plakari as well as my colleagues from the Plakari Archaeological Project: Filiz Songu, Maria Chidiroglou and the late Maria Kosma. Special thanks are also due to Bert Brouwenstijn, Edwin de Vries, Jaap Fokkema, Birgit Konnemann, Alline Sinke and all the students who assisted with museum work at the Karystos Museum. I would also like to thank Jan Paul Crielaard, Maaïke Groot, Jean-Sébastien Gros, Sandrine Huber, Michael Kerschner, Evangelia Kiriatzi, Antonis Kotsonas, John Papadopoulos, Nota Kourou, Irene Lemos, Cathy Morgan, Eva Simantoni-Bournia and Samuel Verdan for fruitful discussions and comments on this article.

indicating that the site was used for cult activities for a long time, ranging from the Early Iron Age to the late Classical period.

The focus of the present paper is the large open-air refuse area at the site, which presents the earliest evidence for cult activity at Plakari and comprises the most prodigious and important body of Early Iron Age and Archaic cult evidence from the site so far. More specifically, a large deposit of material, located on the south slope of the summit of the hill, along the southern limits of Terrace 1, was excavated during the 2011-2013 excavation seasons (Fig. 1). This deposit was divided and excavated in three parts (Trench 1a-c) in order to observe the stratigraphy in the sections of trenches. Together, these three parts covered an area 83.4 m<sup>2</sup>.

The 2011-2013 excavations revealed large quantities of broken pottery—mainly from the Early Iron Age and the Archaic period—as well as animal bones, botanical remains and metal, stone and terracotta finds (such as pendants, bronze sheets, rings, pins/nails, fibulae, knives/blades, figurine fragments, beads and bird and siren perfume vases).<sup>2</sup> Most of these finds were found within a thick layer of gravel (c.20-60 cm thick).

During earlier visits to the site (by Donald Keller who led the Southern Euboea Exploration Project), noteworthy finds were also collected from this deposit, including pottery dated to the Early Iron Age, jewellery (such as a possible Sub-Mycenaean bronze dress pin), terracotta figurines (including a bull figurine) and bronze horse figurines. A ‘Macedonian bronze’ pendant in the form of a juglet, which was discovered on the surface of the modern road, may have been dislodged from this deposit by erosion.<sup>3</sup>

The character of the abovementioned finds strongly suggests that this deposit was, originally, an open-air sacrificial refuse area.<sup>4</sup> The excavation records have established that this refuse area had been dug against a terrace wall (TW1), suggesting that this was a free-standing *temenos* wall.<sup>5</sup>

### ***The pottery from Trench 1***

During the 2011-2013 excavation seasons,<sup>6</sup> Trench 1 yielded a sizable dataset composed of about 32,300 sherds. This assemblage consists of both fine and coarse wares. The pieces date mostly to the Early Iron Age and the Archaic period. A peak in deposition can be noted during the Middle Geometric (MG) and Late Geometric (LG) periods. The earliest fragments date from the Protogeometric (PG) period; the latest fragments, of which there are very few, date to the Classical period.

The range of shapes represented in this pottery assemblage is outlined below. For the needs of this preliminary article, vessel shapes will be presented primarily according to their possible function in order that a discussion of consumption practices can follow.<sup>7</sup> The largest assemblages of pottery are comprised

2. Crielaard et al. 2013, 37-40, 49-50; 2014, 3-7, 17-21; Crielaard 2015, 196-199; Crielaard, In press. See also Crielaard and Songu, this volume.

3. Crielaard et al. 2011, 100-103; Crielaard 2015, 197-198; Crielaard and Songu, this volume; Cullen et al. 2013, 22; Keller 1985, 105-106; Paspalas 2014, 532-533. Besides these chance finds, excavations by D. Keller, H. Sackett and S. Koob on behalf of the IA' EPKA also took place further down the hill in 1979 (Chidiroglou 2003-2004, 69-71; Crielaard et al. 2011, 89-90; Cullen et al. 2013, 21-22).

4. Crielaard et al. 2011, 89; 2013, 37; 2014, 3, 7; Crielaard, In press. See also Crielaard and Songu, this volume.

5. Crielaard et al. 2013, 39.

6. In 2014, no excavations were conducted in Trench 1 but a small assemblage of sherds was collected during surface cleaning.

7. My ongoing study of the pottery found in the Early Iron Age-Archaic contexts at Plakari hill from the most recent excavations at the site takes a number of factors into consideration: production, consumption and deposition. In analysing these various dimensions together, I aim to encompass a broad perspective of the life cycle of the ceramic wares at the site (on the life-cycle approach to ceramic studies in archaeology, see, for example, Lawall and Lund 2011; Peña 2007). Detailed macroscopic study (examples of macroscopic fabric descriptions are presented in this paper) will also be combined with petrographic and chemical analyses. Quantification of the pottery is conducted also in order to create a thorough picture of

of Euboean wares, probably both local (Karystian) and wares from central Euboean centres, as well as imports from Attica. Far fewer imports come from other regions such as Corinth and eastern Greece.

### *Fine wares*

The main categories of fine wares, the vast majority of which are wheelmade and date mostly to the Early Iron Age and early Archaic period (i.e. the 7th century BC), are outlined as follows:<sup>8</sup>

A) Drinking vessels<sup>9</sup>—mainly skyphoi of different sizes (Fig. 2), kantharoi (Fig. 3a-b and possibly c) and one-handled cups (Fig. 3d-e). These three open shapes predominate, whereas kotylai<sup>10</sup> (Fig. 3f) are very rare;

B) Mixing vessels—krater bowls and kraters<sup>11</sup> (Fig. 4a-b);

C) 'Bowls' (Fig. 4c-d);

D) Large closed vessels, probably hydriai and/or amphorae (Fig. 5a);<sup>12</sup>

E) Pouring vessels (Fig. 5c-e)—both fast-pouring and slow-pouring vessels, such as oinochoai, jugs and aryballoi;<sup>13</sup>

F) Pyxides (Fig. 5f) as well as a few lids (Fig. 5g), some of which may be related to pyxides. Categories B-F appear in much smaller numbers than the drinking vessels.

The earliest (PG) fragments represent a rather small proportion of the entire assemblage but, nonetheless, they provide important evidence because they can suggest that the site was used for cult activities from such an early date (see below). In many cases, the only preserved part of the deposited PG pottery is the conical feet, which often belong to open vessels.<sup>14</sup> Among other PG examples (fragments are preserved), there is an Euboean pendent semicircle (PSC) skyphos that can be dated to the Late Protogeometric period (LPG)<sup>15</sup> (Fig. 2a) on account of its tall rim (1.5 cm) and its decorative features (non-intersecting semicircles), an LPG zig-zag cup<sup>16</sup> (Fig. 3d), and a PG krater-bowl or a large skyphos,<sup>17</sup> decorated with concentric circles on the body (a most popular decorative scheme on such vessels) (Fig. 4a<sup>18</sup>).

The PSC skyphoi, which are a hallmark of Euboean pottery production, with a long period of use from the LPG to the Geometric period,<sup>19</sup> are evident in the deposit.<sup>20</sup> Such vessels in Trench 1 belong

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the dataset and to estimate the range and percentages of vessel shapes and types in connection to their periods of use. Quantification variables that are related to depositional practices in the cult assemblage are also estimated (cf. Strack 2011, 45).

8. Representative examples of each category are provided in Figs. 2-5.

9. The possible function of the 'drinking vessel' category will be discussed at greater length below.

10. Regarding the rarity of kotylai from Plakari, compare Kaiser et al. 2011, 35.

11. A few of the mixing vessels might be louteria but their spouts are not preserved, and thus even these are called kraters here.

12. These vessel fragments are, for the most part, from the belly of the vessel and, as a result, it is often difficult to say with certainty whether they come from hydriai or amphorae.

13. Definitions of the terms 'fast-pouring' and 'slow-pouring' vessels in Kotsonas 2008.

14. The conical foot disappears at the beginning of the Sub-Protogeometric (SPG) period (I thank Professor I. Lemos for this information). A cup with conical foot, which has been dated to the Early or Middle Protogeometric period, was also found among the chance finds from the deposit: Crielaard et al. 2011, 101, fig. 13a.

15. See Lemos 2002, 45, who also notes that the LPG version corresponds to Kearsley's Type 1.

16. See Lemos 2002, 30-33.

17. As its size (see below) might be closer to the sizes of the kraters, I present it, for the time being, with the kraters.

18. Regarding PG krater-bowls, see Lemos 2002, 46-48. As indicated in Lemos (2002, 46): 'the term crater-bowl is used to describe open vases of a size midway between a skyphos and a crater with a lip diameter of 20-30cm.' The diameter of the Plakari vessel inv. no 3101 is c.24 cm.

19. On PSC skyphoi, see Coldstream 2008, 51-57, 310-313; Desborough 1952, 180-194; Kearsley 1989; Lemos 2002, 44-46; Popham et al. 1980, 299-302.

20. To demonstrate some variations in fabric characteristics observed macroscopically in PSC skyphoi from Plakari, I present descriptions of three PSC skyphoi from Trench 1. The colour (described by Munsell Colour Chart 2000) of the clay

to different phases of the development of PSC skyphos. In addition to the LPG skyphos in Fig. 2a, there are later examples such as the skyphos in Fig. 2b,<sup>21</sup> which finds similarities with Kearsley 1989, type 5, dated to the MG period (825/800-750 BC).<sup>22</sup>

MG/SPG III and LG ceramic wares are well represented in Trench 1. Different vase types are included: MG-LG I skyphoi and probably kantharoi<sup>23</sup> with meander patterns, including MG II-LG I vessels with meander-hooks (Fig. 2c-d).<sup>24</sup> Chevron skyphoi (Fig. 2e), which became widespread in the second half of the MG, are also evident in Plakari. This well-known MG-LG I class was widely circulated in precolonial contexts as well as in early colonial contexts in the West and was produced in many workshops.<sup>25</sup>

Other well-known MG types that also appear in Trench 1 are the skyphoi with zig-zag decoration, exemplified by the (possible MG I) deep skyphos in Fig. 2f; we can note the rather small reserved panel between the handles, in which multiple zig-zags are depicted, framed by vertical and horizontal lines.<sup>26</sup> Many joining pieces of this skyphos are preserved—a relatively uncommon state of affairs among the typically more fragmentary material from the refuse area; the skyphos also preserves a hole in its lip, an indication of a repair made in antiquity.

The metopal system of decoration, which is evident from LG I onwards,<sup>27</sup> and variations in the vertical linear decoration on the body of vessels appear on many LG I-II drinking vessels from Plakari. Such examples are the drinking vessel in Fig. 3c that has a chain of dotted lozenges on its rim and lozenges and rosettes amidst groups of vertical lines on the body, or the drinking vessel in Fig. 2h that has thin horizontal bands on the rim and a leaf-like ornament with single outline on the body amidst groups of vertical lines.<sup>28</sup> Both vessels as well as other wares with the same fabric characteristics will be further examined in order to determine whether they can be considered of local (Karystian) provenance.<sup>29</sup> The drinking vessel

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in the core is reddish yellow (5YR 7/6) or between pink (5YR 7/4) and reddish yellow (5YR 7/6) or light red (closer to 2.5YR 6/8). The fabric has very few, mainly white ( $\pm$ dark), small inclusions, rounded to sub-rounded; there is a small to very small quantity of silver mica. The frequency and size of inclusions is as follows (Matthew et al. 1991, 240): frequency 3; size 0.5-1.0. Slip ranges from thin to rather thick; its colour is pinkish white (7.5YR 8/2) or closer to pink (closer to 7.5YR 8/3). Glaze ranges in colour from black (5YR 2.5/1) to yellowish red (5YR 5/6) or from reddish brown (2.5YR 4/4) to red (closer to 10R 5/8) or from very dark grey (5YR 3/1) to red (2.5YR 5/6). PSC skyphoi samples from Trench 1 will be included in the Plakari petrographic and chemical analyses to help identify their centre(s) of production. They will also be compared with PSC wares (skyphoi and plates) found in Eretria. The samples from Eretria are currently being analysed at the Fitch Laboratory by Evangelia Kiriati, Noémi S. Müller and the author of this article (see below); further comparisons will be made upon Kerschner and Lemos's (2014) chemical analysis.

21. On this fragment, only part of the PSC decoration is preserved.

22. Kearsley 1989, 99-101 and 128 (on the absolute chronology of the type). See also parallels in Eretria and Lefkandi, e.g. Popham et al. 1980, pl. 109, no. 59a 3 (SPGIII) and Verdan 2013, 9, pl. 62, no. 44.

23. On account of the fragmentary state of preservation of many drinking vessels, there are instances in which a clear distinction between a skyphos and a kantharos is difficult because of the similarities in the profiles of many skyphoi and kantharoi; compare also with Verdan 2013, Vol. II, 10 (nos. 71, 83), 11 (nos. 106, 109, 114), 12 (no. 124), etc., where similar difficulties appear with the analysis of the ceramic assemblage from the Apollo Daphnephoros sanctuary.

24. Coldstream 2008, 50 and 170 regarding the debased development of the motif in LG I.

25. Regarding their date, centres of production and further comments on chevron skyphoi, see, for example, Coldstream 1963, 202; 1986, 327; 1988, 40; 2008, 24, 95-96, 123, 170, etc.; Descoeudres and Kearsley 1983, 11-32; Kourou 1994, 290; 1999, 54-56; Ridgway 1979, 113-127; Savage 1989, 151. According to Descoeudres and Kearsley (1983), chevron skyphoi mainly date to the MG II-LG I periods (with the exception of the 'proto-chevron skyphoi' from the late 9th century BC).

26. For this type of decoration, see e.g. Kourou 1999, 58 with examples that date mainly to the MG I period. Skyphos inv. no. 2449 from Plakari finds parallels in Verdan 2013, 11, no. 97 (98128-1), pl. 69.

27. Coldstream 2008, 50.

28. cf. Coldstream 2008, 88.

29. Such vessels sometimes present a range in clay colour, e.g. in the case of the drinking vessel inv. no. 2201 in Fig. 2h: the colour ranges from very pale brown (10YR 8/3) to light reddish brown (2.5YR 7/4) on the external surface, the core and the internal surface colour ranges from light reddish brown (2.5YR 7/4) to light red (2.5YR 7/6). Their fabric(s) typically have very few, mainly white ( $\pm$ dark), small, rounded to sub-rounded/sub-angular inclusions (frequency and size of inclusions: 2-5%) and, characteristically, a higher quantity of silver mica than is usual in wares from central Euboean centres. A rather

in Fig. 2g with metopal decoration may be an import and has close parallels with Attic LG I skyphoi.<sup>30</sup>

Two innovations of (Attic) LG II<sup>31</sup> are represented in Trench 1: the lipless kantharos (Fig. 3b) and pieces of a skyphos/-oi of the Attic Birdseed workshop (Fig. 2i).<sup>32</sup> It is noteworthy that products of the Attic Birdseed workshop circulated to an extent in Euboean sanctuaries; another example has been found in the sanctuary of Apollo Daphnephoros in Eretria.<sup>33</sup>

Many fragments of MG-LG closed wares come from pouring vessels (Fig. 5c-e). Notable among the MG-LG closed vessels are a small number of pyxides, such as the 'standard pyxis'<sup>34</sup> shown in Fig. 5f, which has a combination of meander pattern and dotted tangential concentric circles<sup>35</sup> on its external surface.<sup>36</sup>

The ceramic assemblage from Trench 1 also illustrates the difficulties in tracing the developments of certain shapes during the 7th century, especially those shapes with either monochrome or linear decoration.<sup>37</sup> The development of monochrome one-handed cups, a prevalent shape in Trench 1 (often preserved only in fragments), which were used for cult activities in Plakari in the Early Iron Age and probably at least until the 7th century BC, fall within this category.

The absence of vases decorated with elaborate figural scenes should be noted in Trench 1, especially since such vessels occur in other Euboean cult contexts, such as the sanctuary of Apollo Daphnephoros in Eretria.<sup>38</sup> Thus far, the figural representations that have been found in Trench 1 are restricted mostly to a few drinking vessels with bird metopes—among them a fragment from an East Greek early bird bowl (Fig. 3g).<sup>39</sup> Rather exceptional, in terms of its figural decoration, is an LG IIb oinochoe by the Workshop of Athens 897 that comes from another context in Plakari, Terrace 2 (Trench 2d), where evidence of cult activities has been discovered (see below). The pouring vessel is decorated with a zone of coursing hounds, a common figural scene for this Attic workshop.<sup>40</sup>

Late Archaic pottery is represented in Trench 1 in significantly smaller numbers. Found among this smaller body of late Archaic ceramic material was a noteworthy assemblage of fine Corinthian and Corinthianizing vessels that includes oil/perfume containers, such as alabastro and aryballoi (among

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thin layer of slip can be noted in a significant number of such examples, and a rather matt glaze. Samples from these vessels are also included in the sampling list for the future petrographic and chemical analyses; the possibility that these are wares of local (Karystian) production will be investigated.

30. Jarosch-Reinholdt 2009, 158, 294, pl. 54, nos. 649-650.

31. Coldstream 2008, 86-87: the lipless kantharos and the shallow 'birdseed' skyphos with flaring rim reached their apex in LG IIa, but survived into LG IIb in debased form.

32. Coldstream 2003, 339, K91, pl. 44 and 345, A343, pl. 52; 2008, 86-87 (according to Coldstream LG IIa and LG IIb) and Boardman 1998, 27, fig. 73 regarding conical shallow 'birdseed' skyphoi.

33. Verdan 2013, 15, no. 234, pl. 86 and Verdan et al. 2008, 123, no. 141, pl. 34.

34. Bohen 1988, 27ff.

35. See Coldstream 2008, 24 for the motif of tangential circles.

36. Very recently another fragment (not indicated in the drawing) from this pyxis has been joined and depicts the full motif of tangential concentric circles; it also preserves part of the ring base.

37. For this matter, especially in Euboean products, see Charalambidou 2011; In press b.

38. Verdan 2013, 99-102.

39. As Dr Kerschner kindly suggested, this fragment probably comes from an early bird bowl (possibly type I-II in his typology, although type III cannot be excluded completely, nor the possibility that this is a late bird kotyle). For the types of bird bowls according to Kerschner's typology: Kerschner 1995, 16-19. Regarding the production of such bird bowls of the 'standard fabric' (provenance group B) that were produced in Teos, according to the results of chemical analysis, see Akurgal et al. 2002, 66.

40. Regarding this workshop and the Painter of Athens 897, see more recently: Besios et al. 2012, 60, 80-81; Coldstream 2008, 77-81; Kourou 2002, 53-54; Jarosch-Reinholdt 2009, 135; Rombos 1988, 508-515 (most authors include bibliography on this important workshop with the wide distribution and imitation of its wares). This vessel, as well as other Early Iron Age-Archaic finds from the Plakari hill assemblages (in connection to Plakari Trench 1 pottery), will be presented in a subsequent paper by the author.

these were round aryballoi,<sup>41</sup> for example an aryballos with quatrefoil pattern;<sup>42</sup> Fig. 6a). Miniature vessels, such as diminutive kotylai (Fig. 6b), also served as votive offerings.<sup>43</sup> A late Archaic date for the vessels described above is in accordance with the dating for other finds from Trench 1: for instance, two 6th-century BC oil flasks in the shape of a bird and siren, respectively.<sup>44</sup> Both the pottery and the aforementioned ceramic finds indicate that cult activities continued in the late Archaic period. This also becomes more evident when one examines the Archaic ceramic finds associated with cult installations from Terrace 2 at Plakari hill, which were excavated during the 2013 season (see below).

Finally, only a small number of sherds can be dated to the Classical period. Among these pieces are bases from drinking vessels that were found in both the top soil layer of Trench 1 (the layer closer to the surface) and in the gravel layer, usually with Early Iron Age and Archaic pottery wares.

Thus far, about five or six of the fine pottery fragments from Trench 1 bear graffiti (efforts to identify more fragments bearing graffiti continue), such as the graffito found on the external surface of a base of a drinking vessel (Fig. 6c). This sherd was found among Early Iron Age and Archaic finds in the top soil, and thus its date, judging also from the small size of the sherd and the fact that it preserved no distinctive profile, is difficult to establish; however, it may be among the earliest graffiti from Plakari hill (most come from the Classical Building A in Terrace 2, discussed below).

### *Coarse wares*

Among the coarse wares,<sup>45</sup> cooking pots are common, and some preserve blackened surfaces as a result of being used over fire (Fig. 7), while bulk storage vessel fragments appear occasionally. The majority of the Early Iron Age and early Archaic coarse pottery from Trench 1 is handmade. Both smoothed ware and burnished ware<sup>46</sup> appear in the assemblage. Many vessel fragments preserve incised decoration (see Fig. 8a-h), while I have identified one example with impressed motifs.<sup>47</sup>

The coarse wares with incised decoration<sup>48</sup> in Trench 1 can often be associated with closed vessels of various sizes (Fig. 8a-e).<sup>49</sup> Some fragments may also come from open vessel forms.<sup>50</sup> Parts of handles and feet/stands, often with incised motifs or lines, are typically found (Fig. 8f-h) alongside pieces that might have been lids. The fact that some of the Plakari coarse fragments belonged to vessels of small dimensions suggests that at least some were votive offerings.

Aside from the abovementioned finds at Plakari, coarse vessels with incised decoration from Euboea (cf. 'Euboean incised pottery'<sup>51</sup>) chiefly come from Eretria, mainly from funerary and cult contexts.<sup>52</sup>

41. Amyx 1988, 440-443 (with reference to their time span: Early Corinthian to Late Corinthian I, approximately between 625 and 550 BC).

42. Amyx 1988, 443 (their time span ranges from Early and Middle Corinthian to the beginning of the 5th century BC). See also Blegen et al. 1964, 114; Schaeffer et al. 1997, 52-53, 56-57; Stillwell and Benson 1984, 92, and references therein.

43. cf. miniature Corinthian kotylai dating from the early to the late third quarter of the 6th century BC: Blegen et al. 1964, 106 (under 'miniature pattern skyphoi'); Boardman and Hayes 1966, 26; Pemberton 1989, 174, no. 561 pl. 52 (see also Pemberton 1989, 65).

44. Crielaard et al. 2014, 4, fig. 3.

45. Representative examples of coarse vessels are provided in Figs. 7-8.

46. Some burnished wares from Plakari find parallels in burnished wares from the Zagora settlement on Andros, for example from the MG pits and other MG levelling fills of the settlement (B. McLoughlin, pers. comm.).

47. Impressed decoration is also known from Eretria; see e.g. Boardman 1952, fig. 16b.

48. Among the macroscopically identified coarse fabrics from Trench 1, those that include coarse wares with incised decoration usually have red or light red clay in the core (for example 5YR 5/6, 5/8, 6/8, 2.5YR 7/4), a little lighter surface colour, silver mica and mainly white as well as dark (metamorphic?), rounded/sub-rounded to angular inclusions.

49. Fragments in Fig. 8a and b probably come from the same vessel.

50. cf. Reber 1987; Popham and Lemos 1996, pls. 38, 38.13-16 and 108, 38.13 and 14 (Tomb 38; SPG II-IIIa).

51. Boardman 1952; Cerasuolo, this volume.

52. On coarse vessels with incised decoration in funerary contexts: Boardman 1952, 13, fig. 16. Regarding cult contexts,

There are instances among the Plakari fragments, especially when part of the vessel profile is preserved (Fig. 8a-b and c), when one can note some similarities with the shapes of the larger Euboean closed pots. Thus far we have been able to compare their shape to coarse Eretrian pithoi/jars and amphorae (many of which have a stemmed foot), which were mostly found in burial contexts.<sup>53</sup> In other cases, fragments of feet/stands find certain analogies in cooking pots on stands, such as those from the Lefkandi Toumba Cemetery.<sup>54</sup> Many similarities in the incised motifs and vessel profiles (in forms such as that shown in Fig. 8a-b—at Zagora these are of larger dimensions—as well as in types of handles, stands and lids with incised decoration) can be noted in MG-LG incised coarse wares from the Zagora settlement on Andros.<sup>55</sup> These similarities indicate close connections between southern Euboea and Andros, where incised coarse ware was used for various purposes.

As in the case of the fine wares, petrographic and chemical analyses of the coarse wares are planned to identify their centres of production and their technology. In light of questions regarding the provenance of coarse wares found at Plakari, it is interesting to note that the geology of southern Euboea deviates from the geology of central Euboea (viz. Eretria), as has been noted in the ongoing petrographic and chemical analyses of Bronze Age and Iron Age ceramic material from Eretria being conducted at the Fitch Laboratory of the British School at Athens by E. Kiriati, N. Müller and the author of this article.<sup>56</sup> Southern Euboea, as well as eastern Attica and the north-western Cyclades, contains greenschist and/or blueschist facies metamorphic rocks, indicating an origin in the central Aegean Blueschist Unit;<sup>57</sup> these metamorphic rocks are not attested in central Euboea, e.g. in the vicinity of Eretria. This feature may prove useful in discerning the provenance of coarse fabrics found at Plakari.

### *Evidence from Trench 1 for feasting and other cult activities*

Ongoing study of the ceramics from the Trench 1 refuse area shows that this trench contains a significant quantity of painted fine wares, most of which fall within the category of 'drinking vessels' and date mainly to the Early Iron Age and early Archaic period. Such vessels could have been used for various purposes: ritual/sacrificial feasting (including drinking and probably eating) and perhaps also for libations. Desborough and Coldstream, and more recently Morgan, Kerschner and Papadopoulos have argued that pots such as skyphoi, a common vessel category in Trench 1, are likely to have been multi-purpose vessels used for drinking, eating and mixing, unlike cups which, on account of their limited capacity, are mostly related to drinking.<sup>58</sup> The presence of kantharoi in Trench 1 is also noteworthy: the kantharos with high strap handles, introduced in the MG II period, is a shape that has only recently been recognized by Marek Wecowski as a form that was created in order to embellish elite drinking occasions.<sup>59</sup> The presence of kantharoi in cult contexts is evident again on Euboea at

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so far published vessels come from the Apollo Daphnephoros sanctuary and the Northern Sacrificial Area in Eretria, and they belong to different vessel forms: Huber 2003, pl. 33; Verdan 2013, pl. 74, nos. 144 and 145 (from LG I context), pl. 77, no. 163 (from LG I-LG II context), pl. 78, no. 172 (from LG I-LG II context), pl. 84, nos. 218-219 (from LG I-LG II context).

53. Boardman 1952, 13, fig. 16; Blandin 2007, pls. 119-120, 133-134, 137-138, 168; Kourouniotis 1903, 25-26, fig. 10.

54. Lemos 2014a, 47-48, fig. 14; Popham and Lemos 1996, pl. 84, pl. 121, a-b (Tomb 80; SPGII/IIIa).

55. Cambitoglou et al. 1988, Vol. I, 186-188; Gros 2007, pl. 63 (Zagora 1351 and Zagora 1353). I would also like to thank B. McLoughlin for sharing information on the unpublished coarse wares from Zagora.

56. The project 'The Ceramic Industry of Eretria', undertaken by the Fitch Laboratory of the British School at Athens, in collaboration with the Swiss School of Archaeology in Greece, aims to shed further light on Eretria's role in the context of local and regional networks through a diachronic investigation of Eretrian pottery production (see Charalambidou et al. 2016).

57. Katzir et al. 2000.

58. Coldstream 1988, 39; 1998, 354; Desborough 1952, 77; Kerschner 2011, 24, who argues that skyphoi could have been used mainly for eating; Morgan 1999, 323; Papadopoulos 2015, 9.

59. Wecowski 2014, 287-288.

the sanctuary of Apollo Daphnephoros and the Northern Sacrificial Area in various assemblages.<sup>60</sup> I mention, specifically, the discovery of drinking vessels (skyphoi and kantharoi) in Building 1, the so-called ‘Daphnephoreion’, which is thought to have been a banqueting hall for housing elite feasts, while the ceramic material from Building 150, interpreted as an elite dining hall, includes drinking vessels (skyphoi, kantharoi and kotylai) together with other banqueting vases, such as kraters and pouring vessels.<sup>61</sup>

Mixing bowls such as kraters (some large skyphoi could also have served as kraters) and pouring vessels, as well as transport/storage vessels, are noticeably fewer than drinking vessels in Trench 1; a possible explanation could have been that these categories were shared by several members of the cult community.<sup>62</sup> Furthermore, drinking vessels were more easily left behind as ‘commemorative’ objects of the ritual meals or offerings, whereas the larger vases were probably reused for many occasions. Pyxides (only a few have been found in the Plakari refuse area) are typically thought to have been used to store precious items,<sup>63</sup> and in a cult context personal ornaments may be viewed as dedications to the deity. Nonetheless, other functions for the pyxides cannot be excluded.<sup>64</sup>

In Trench 1, coarse wares, dated mainly to the Early Iron Age and early Archaic period, include cooking pots, which provide valuable information concerning food preparation, sacrificial meals and ritual dining, all of which were facets of the cult activities performed at the site. This evidence is, in turn, examined in conjunction with the study of the faunal remains from Plakari undertaken by Dr Maaike Groot.<sup>65</sup> Groot argues that adult sheep and goats were the preferred animals for sacrifice in Trench 1 in Plakari, with cattle and pigs being sacrificed in smaller numbers. A rather small percentage of the bones were burned—mostly bones from specific parts of the animals, i.e. the femur and tail, which were considered the ‘god’s portion’. The majority of the bones, however, were found unburnt, indicating that most of the meat for the sacrificial meals was prepared by stewing. The 40 iron knives discovered within Trench 1 could have been used for butchering the animals. The presence of cooking pots in Trench 1 is compatible with Groot’s results, i.e. that the meat of the sacrificed animals was usually stewed in these vessels. Positive comparisons can be drawn with other Early Iron Age cult contexts as, for example, the Artemision in Ephesos where Kerschner emphasizes the importance of cooking pots as indicators that cooking was a part of the rituals of Artemis during the Early Iron Age. On the basis of the animal bone analysis, he argues that the meat of the sacrificed animals was typically stewed and not roasted on the spit.<sup>66</sup>

In Plakari, feasting was carried out in a context separate from Trench 1, but the vessels and other remnants of these activities were then deposited in the refuse area. Crielaard has pointed out areas on the Plakari hill where cult activities were performed. Evidence mainly for the Archaic and Classical periods—but also the LG IIB oinochoe by the Workshop of Athens 897 (see above)—comes from the flat part of the hill (Terrace 2), north of Trench 1, where various phases of cult installations have been excavated.<sup>67</sup> On the same terrace, above the sacrificial refuse area, a rectangular building (Building A) was uncovered. Its period of use dates from the late 5th to the third quarter of the 4th century BC, and it has been tentatively identified as a *hestiatorion* based on the form of the building and the items found

60. Huber 2003, Vol. II, 32-35; Verdan 2013, Vol. I, especially 209.

61. Verdan 2013, Vol. I, 199-211, Vol. II, 74-75, pl. 68, nos. 77-79 (Building 1) and pls. 94 (no. 321ff.)-97 (Building 150); cf. Wecowski 2014, 184-185.

62. cf. Kerschner 2011, 24; Morgan 2011, especially 15.

63. Kotsonas 2008, 142 with bibliography.

64. cf. the diverse functions of pyxides found, for example, in funerary contexts (Charalambidou 2010-2012, 161).

65. Groot 2014.

66. Kerschner 2011, 24.

67. A description of these cult installations in Crielaard et al. 2014, 13-15; Crielaard, In press; Crielaard and Songu, this volume.



within.<sup>68</sup> Chidiroglou suggests that two pots with the letters *AII*, as well as a sherd found in Plakari with the graffito *AP*, can indicate the specific deity or deities who were venerated on the Plakari hill: Apollo and possibly Artemis.<sup>69</sup> The location of the Trench 1 sacrificial refuse area, so close to that of the *hestiatorion*, cannot be coincidental: all the evidence combined reveals a history of feasting activities on the western part of the hill.

Feasting was an important component of Early Iron Age cult activities in sanctuaries, and evidence for it, from various cult contexts in the Greek world, is increasing rapidly.<sup>70</sup> For example, tableware assemblages with high percentages of drinking vessels appear at the sanctuary of Apollo Daphnephoros at Eretria,<sup>71</sup> the sanctuary of Herakles at Thebes,<sup>72</sup> the sanctuary of Dionysos at Hyria on Naxos,<sup>73</sup> the sanctuary of Apollo and Artemis at Kalapodi,<sup>74</sup> the Poseidon sanctuary at Isthmia,<sup>75</sup> the sanctuary of Zeus at Olympia (the Pelopion excavations<sup>76</sup>) and the Artemision at Ephesos,<sup>77</sup> etc.

In Trench 1, the range of vessel shapes in combination with the presence of faunal remains and iron knives indicate that animal sacrifices and sacrificial feasting, probably in the form of communal meals, were among the focal points of the cult activities on the Plakari hill.<sup>78</sup> Furthermore, the discovery of votive items such as personal ornaments made of various materials, terracotta figurines and fine and coarse vases of small dimensions<sup>79</sup> in Trench 1 clearly indicates a range of cult activities. Jewellery dedications discovered in Trench 1 suggest that men and women participated in Plakari cult practices. It is likely that a significant portion of the abovementioned activities were connected to maturation rites.<sup>80</sup>

Recording the depositional history of the Trench 1 assemblage is vital for identifying sequences of events within the sanctuary. To this end, the quantification of this ceramic assemblage, which I am currently undertaking, will help us to interpret a series of matters integral to the manners of deposition. Preliminary observations indicate that many of the sherds are in a good state of preservation and, coupled with a high degree of brokenness, this indicates that the pottery from Trench 1 is likely to have been intentionally broken—a situation that is compatible with intentional breakage practices in other cult contexts.<sup>81</sup> Simantoni-Bournia, referring to the sanctuary of Hyria on Naxos, notes that most of the drinking vessels there were intentionally broken to prevent their desecration by further use.<sup>82</sup> Dabney, Halstead and Thomas have argued, albeit for an earlier period (the Mycenaean era), that for symbolic

68. Crielaard et al. 2013, 43-47; 2014, 8-11; Crielaard 2015, 194-195; Crielaard, In press; Crielaard and Songu, this volume.

69. Chidiroglou 2014, 60. See also Crielaard et al. 2013, 47; 2014, 17; Crielaard, In press; Crielaard and Songu, this volume.

70. Feasting with drinking and cooking vessels appears not only in sanctuaries but in other cult sites as well, such as in a number of edifices in Attica discussed in van den Eijnde and Laughy, In press: the Areopagos Oval Building, the oval building on the northern summit of Tourkovouni, the 'Sacred House' at the Academy, the so-called 'Sacred House' at Eleusis, etc. These structures in Attica date from the LG period onwards, and in all of them the focal point of the activities seems to have been banqueting; in some of these cases the banquets have been more tentatively associated with the commemoration of the dead. Feasting with a high representation of drinking vessels was also performed in various areas of the Aegean at platforms connected to the cult of the dead (Hägg 1983; Kourou 2015, 93-101).

71. Verdán 2013.

72. Aravantinos, In press.

73. See especially in Simantoni-Bournia 1999; 2002; Lambrinoudakis 2002.

74. Jacob-Felsch 1996; Kaiser et al. 2011; Strack 2011.

75. Morgan 1999; 2011.

76. Eder 2006; 2011.

77. See especially Kerschner 1997; 2011.

78. See also Charalambidou, In press a; In press b; Crielaard et al. 2013, 54; 2014, 16; Crielaard 2015, 196; In press.

79. Crielaard et al. 2013, table I, examples in figs. 3-4; Crielaard, In press. For fine and coarse vases of small dimensions, also see above in this article.

80. See also Crielaard et al. 2014, 17; Crielaard, In press.

81. e.g. Eder 2011, 62 (Pelopion in Olympia); Huber 2003 (Northern Sacrificial Area in Eretria); 2015 (sanctuary of Athena in Eretria); Kyrieleis 2006, 16-17, 44; Simantoni-Bournia 2002, 277 (Hyria); Strack 2011, 45 (Kalapodi).

82. Simantoni-Bournia 2002, 277.

as well as practical reasons, debris from significant ceremonies was often destroyed, displayed or buried rather than merely left discarded on the ground.<sup>83</sup>

In all, systematic research at cult sites on Euboea, especially Eretria and Karystos, makes comparisons between these contexts possible. The similarities and differences between the sanctuary at Plakari, the Apollo Daphnephoros sanctuary and the Northern Sacrificial Area in Eretria gradually become clearer and more meaningful; even at this early stage of research at Plakari some provisional comparisons can be made. The Trench 1 ceramic assemblage bears some similarities to the material from the sanctuary of Apollo Daphnephoros, where tableware, including drinking vessels, predominates. Certain vessel types from Plakari can be compared to those from the sanctuary of Apollo Daphnephoros, such as 'bowls', one-handled cups, skyphoi and kantharoi. Other types represented in the sanctuary of Apollo, such as the LG drinking vessels (skyphoi and kantharoi) with concentric circles on the external perimeter of the lip ('concentric circles group'),<sup>84</sup> have not been found so far at Plakari. Archaic miniature hydriai and jugs with tall neck, which are common in the ceramic assemblage of the Northern Sacrificial Area<sup>85</sup> and indicate cult activities related to water, are also missing from Trench 1.

This evidence, in addition to the fact that Attic imports are frequent in Plakari and that affinities with Andros are strong, indicates that central and southern Euboea had certain distinct cultural features that were imposed by their geography and close proximity to different regions (see also above).<sup>86</sup>

Cult activities seem to have taken place on the western part of the Plakari hill for an extensive period of time, from the Protogeometric to the Archaic and the Classical periods. The presence of early ceramic material in the Trench 1 refuse area connected to cult activities is of great significance because this can mean that Plakari was amongst the earliest cult sites on Euboea during the Early Iron Age.<sup>87</sup> At Eretria, the first phase of the Apollo sanctuary dates from MG II to the beginning of LG I.<sup>88</sup> The Northern Sacrificial Area was probably established over the course of the LG period.<sup>89</sup> Cult activities on the acropolis of Eretria associated with a sanctuary dedicated to Athena date to no earlier than the 7th century BC.<sup>90</sup> Early Iron Age and Archaic sanctuaries from Chalkis have not yet been found—with the exception of a possible votive deposit uncovered in Pei (Lithosoros near Chalkis) which might date to the LG II b—Archaic period and which was associated with Athena (?).<sup>91</sup> To the south, closer to Karystos, the cult site dedicated to Apollo Delios at Zarakes was probably established in the LG period.<sup>92</sup>

Moreover, the cult site at Plakari hill constitutes the earliest evidence of cult activities in Karystia when compared to other Karystian sanctuaries in the Kampos and the Paximadi Peninsula (including a sanctuary located near the eastern end of the Plakari ridge).<sup>93</sup>

83. Dabney et al. 2004, 205.

84. Verdan 2013.

85. Huber 2003 (cf. also Kourou 2011, 128). Of the Northern Sacrificial Area, 42 m<sup>2</sup> has been explored so far, while the sanctuary continues further north (S. Huber, pers. comm.).

86. cf. Charalambidou, In press a; In press b.

87. Material remains dating from the Final Neolithic were also discovered on the Plakari hill during the 1979 (Chidiroglou 2003-2004, 70), 2012 (Crielaard et al. 2014, 6) and 2014 excavation seasons, indicating an earlier and different phase of occupation at the site.

88. Early Helladic II finds from the area of the Apollo sanctuary belong also to a different phase of occupation, while the discovery of a SPG tomb (Tb20) in the sanctuary space suggests the existence of a funeral area at that time (Müller Celka et al. 2013; Verdan 2013, Vol. II, 8).

89. The exploration of the area is not complete (see above). According to Verdan 2013, 224, the Northern Sacrificial Area may have been founded during phase II of the Apollo Daphnephoros sanctuary.

90. Huber 2007; 2008; 2015. Evidence of human occupation on the acropolis of Eretria dates at least as early as the Final Neolithic/EH I period (Müller Celka et al. 2013, especially 41).

91. Papavasileiou 1891, 612; 1906, 168; Sackett et al. 1966, 57. It is reported that the deposit may be associated with an Athena shrine, based on an inscription published by Papavasileiou 1891.

92. Chatzidimitriou 2003-2004.

93. Crielaard et al. 2013, 54-55; Keller 1985; Keller and Hom 2010, 3-5; Tankosić and Chidiroglou 2010.

As regards other types of cult on Euboea, Lefkandi holds chronological primacy since three circular structures/platforms—which were connected to ancestor/hero cult and which were used for ritual dining and feasting that date successively from the LH III to the EPG period—were identified in the vicinity of the settlement in Region II at Xeropolis.<sup>94</sup> Another example comes from Viglatouri (Kyme), which faces the Aegean Sea: Building A (or Oval Building) is dated to the MG II period and has a platform located inside the structure (in addition to other stone platforms discovered in the settlement). It was identified as a cult building; it is considered ‘a *heroon*-sanctuary in honour of the dead men who had been heroised.’<sup>95</sup>

### ***Concluding remarks***

The Plakari sanctuary was intensively used in Karystia during the first half of the 1st millennium BC, and in periods of great historical importance, such as the 8th century BC, a time which is marked by the Greek colonization phenomenon; in this context, we should note the key role the Euboeans played in these processes in the Mediterranean. For the first time, a cult context dating from the beginning of the Early Iron Age is being studied in Karystos, thus making comparisons with other Early Iron Age cult sites on Euboea and the Aegean possible.

Southern Euboea was a region of significance, and it was situated at an important intersection in this period: the crossroads of the Aegean Sea and the Euboean Gulf. The range of imports found in Plakari attest to it being part of external connection networks. In addition to the local southern Euboean material, imports came from central Euboean, Attic, Corinthian, East Greek and other ceramic workshops. Apart from the pottery, we can also add some imported metal and terracotta items from East Greece and the northern Aegean.<sup>96</sup>

Furthermore, Early Iron Age and Archaic Plakari offers significant insights regarding consumption in an Euboean cult context and reveals a detailed picture of the range of ritual activities performed at the site. Evidence demonstrates that animal sacrifices and sacrificial feasting were among the focal points of cult practices on the Plakari hill.

The information we can gain as regards the provenance of the Plakari material record, as well as consumption and deposition practices in this sanctuary, establish it as an important site in the Aegean, with a wealth of evidence to offer the archaeological world.

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94. Lemos 2010, 135; 2014b, 175.

95. Sapouna-Sakellarakis 1996-1997, 61-62; 1998, 61-68 (cf. Kourou 2015, 96).

96. Crielaard, In press; see also above in this article and Crielaard and Songu, this volume.

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Figures

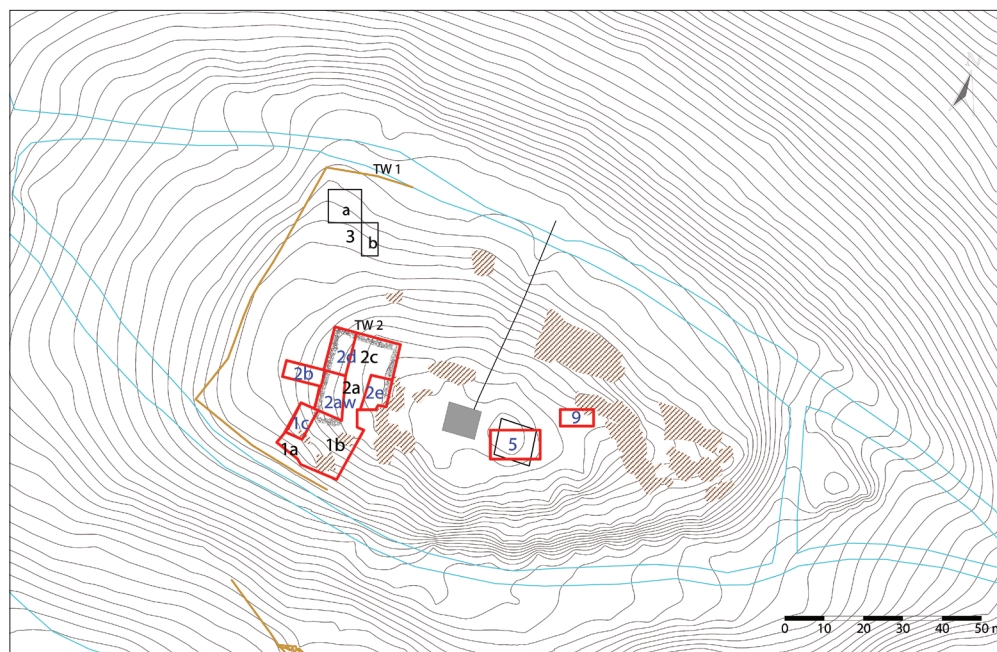


Figure 1: Plan of the Plakari hill excavation trenches with Trench 1a-c indicated (drawing by Jaap Fokkema).

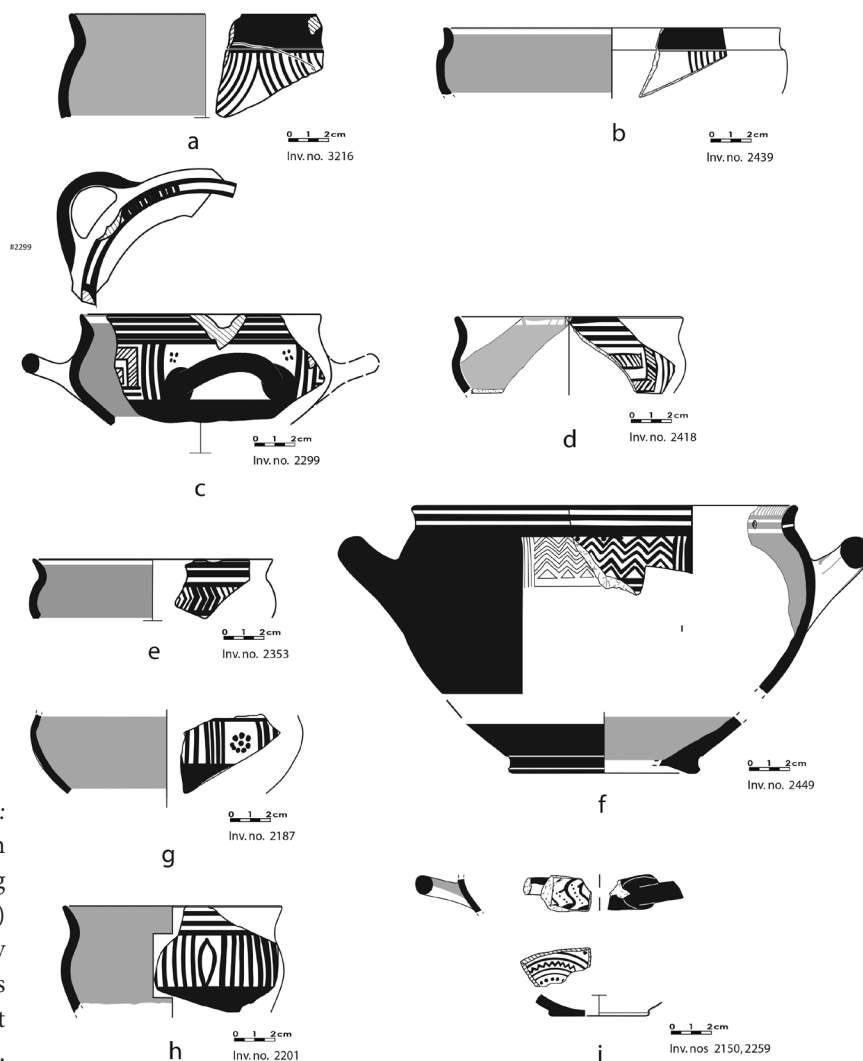


Figure 2: Plakari Trench 1: fine drinking vessels (skyphoi) (drawings by Edwin de Vries and Birgit Konnemann).

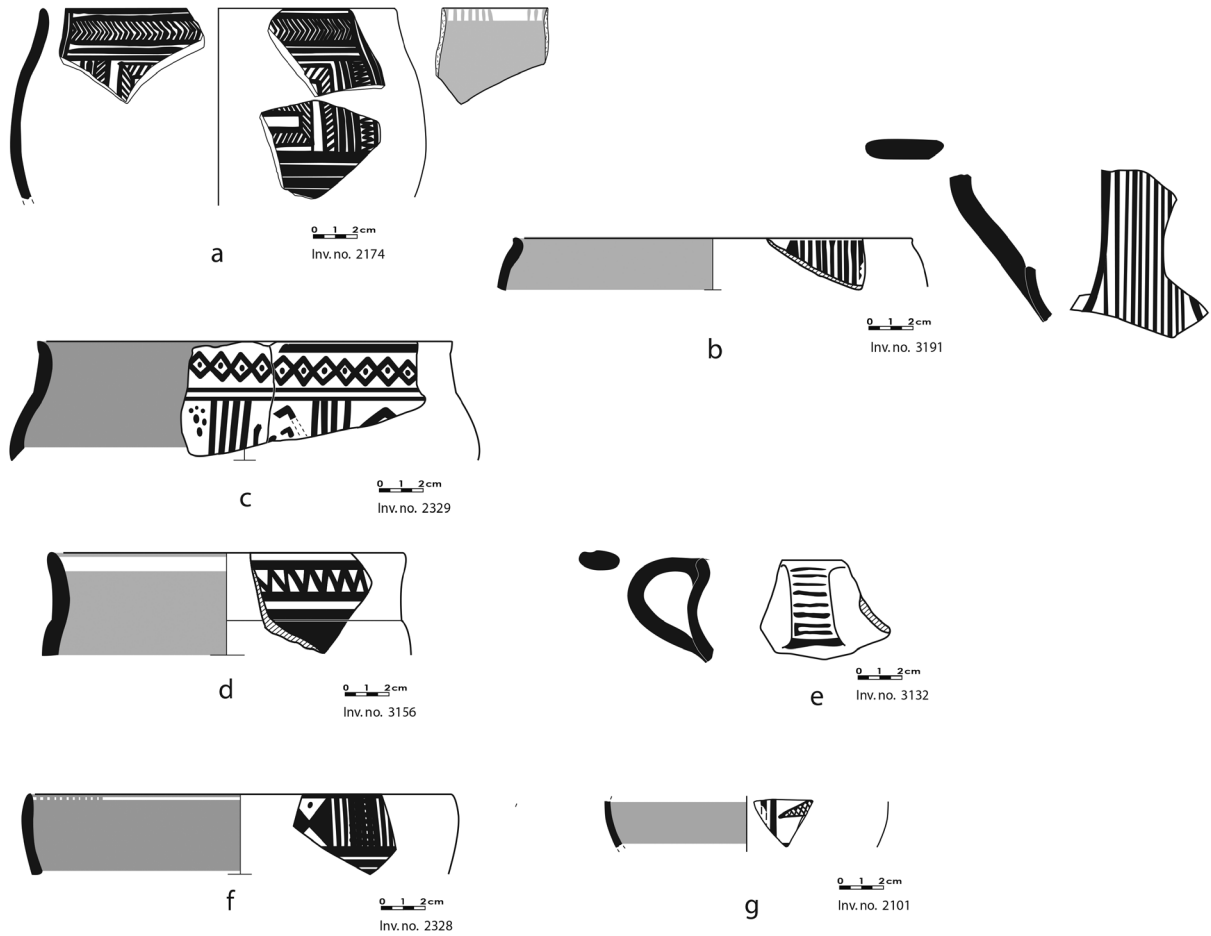


Figure 3: Plakari Trench 1: fine drinking vessels (kantharoi [a, b and possibly c], one-handed cups [d, e], kotyle [f], two-handed bird bowl [g]) (drawings by Edwin de Vries and Birgit Konemann).

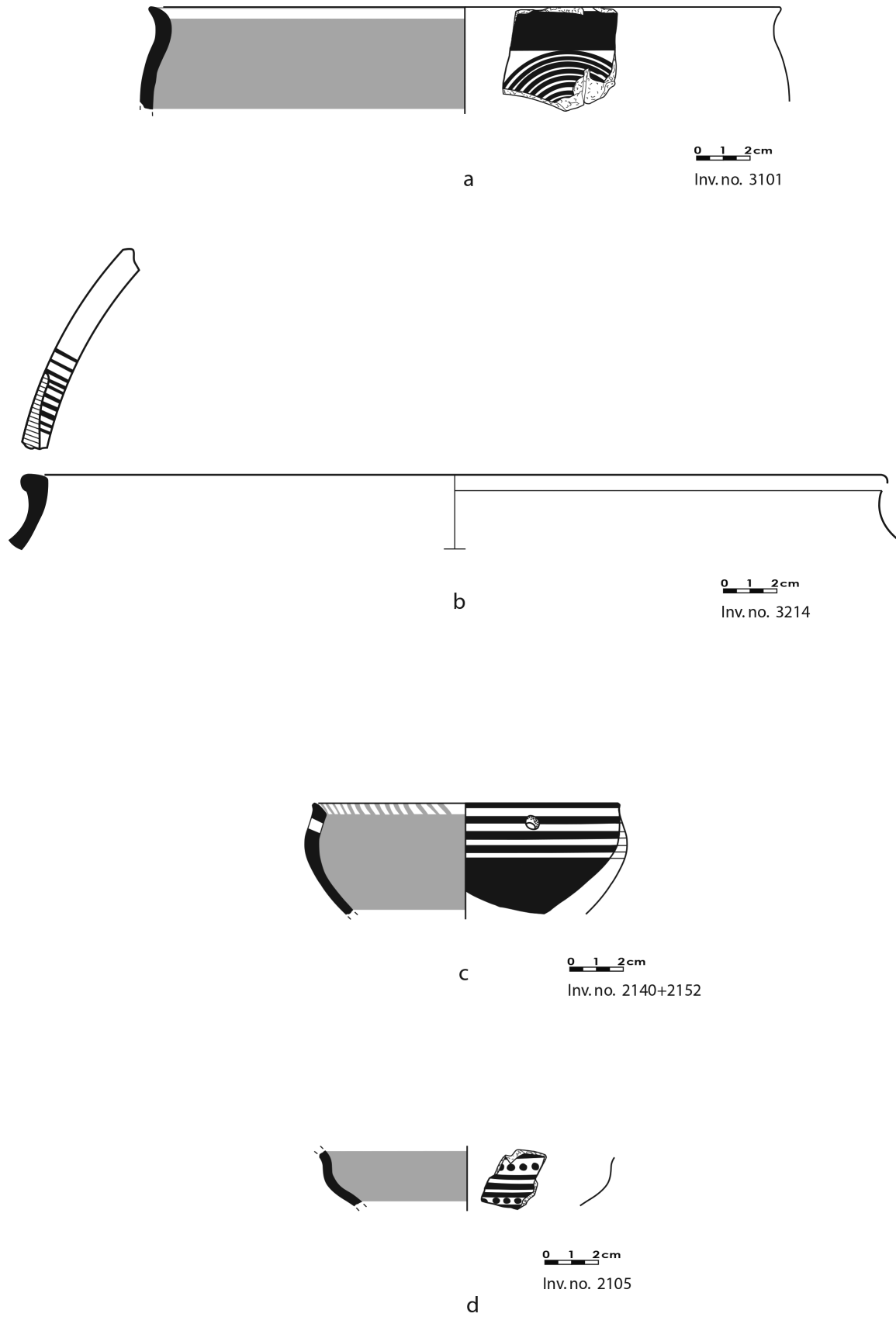


Figure 4: Plakari Trench 1: krater-bowl or large skyphos (a) and krater (b), 'bowls' (c, d) (drawings by Edwin de Vries and Birgit Konnemann).

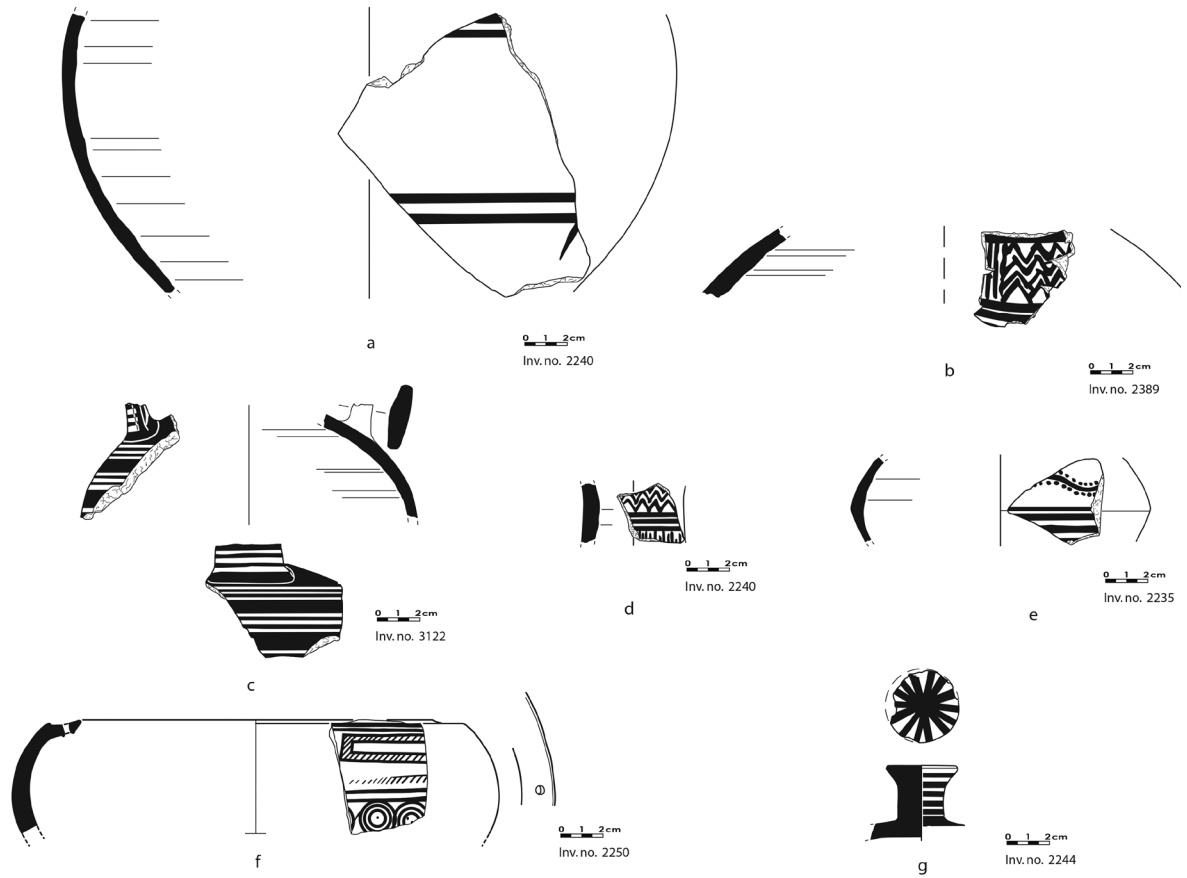


Figure 5: Plakari Trench 1: fine closed vessels (drawings by Edwin de Vries and Birgit Konnemann).

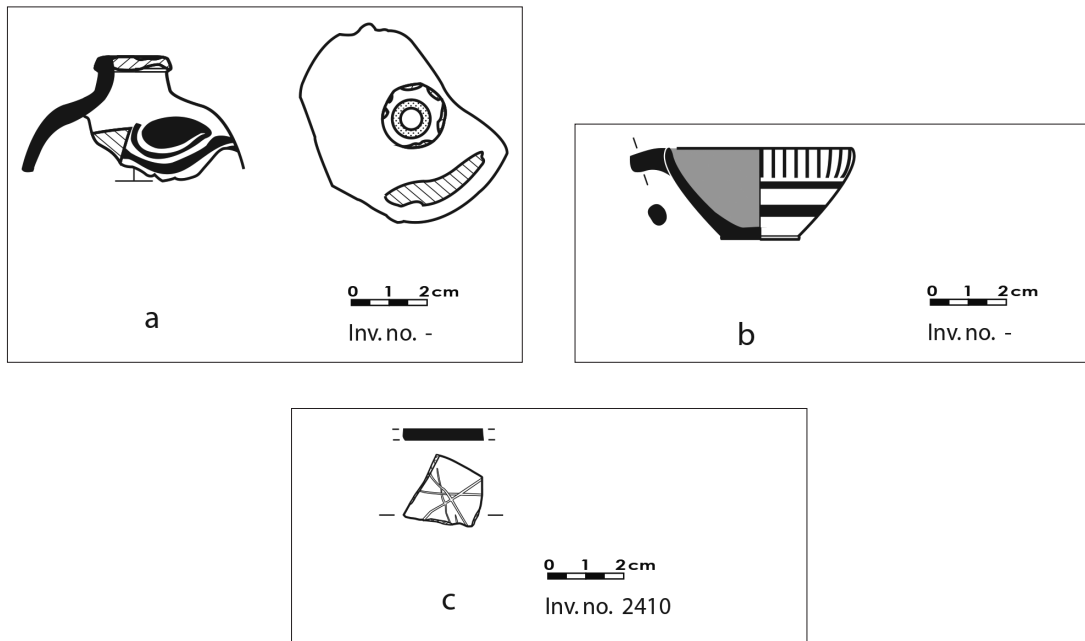


Figure 6: Plakari Trench 1: aryballos (a), miniature kotyle (b) and a base of a drinking vessel with graffito (c) (drawings by Edwin de Vries and Birgit Konnemann).



*Figure 7:* Plakari Trench 1: coarse cooking pots (a-c) presenting blackened surfaces as a result of being used over a fire (photograph by Xenia Charalambidou, edited by Bert Brouwenstijn).

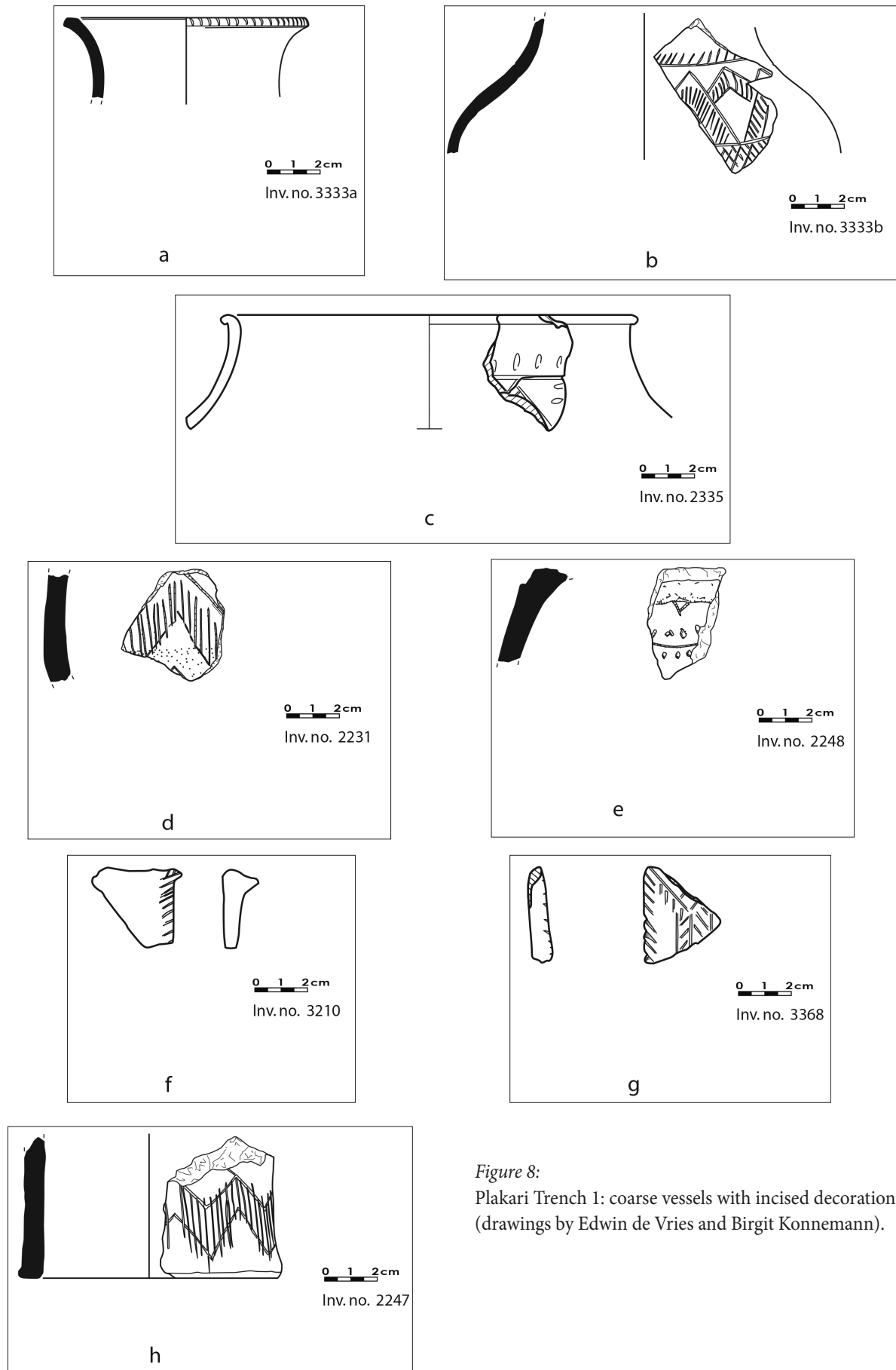


Figure 8:  
Plakari Trench 1: coarse vessels with incised decoration  
(drawings by Edwin de Vries and Birgit Konnemann).