

Jeannette Forsén: NEOLITHIC AND EARLY HELLADIC POTTERY FROM THE TEMPLE EXCAVATION

The prehistoric pottery reviewed in this section dates from the Final Neolithic period (only two sherds, **C-PH 1–2**) to one sherd, **C-PH 8**, which may possibly date to the late Middle Helladic or early Late Helladic period. 13 Early Helladic sherds attest to a certain degree of continuity during the Early Bronze Age, although all this material was recovered out of context. At the very least, Tegea can be added to a group of temple sites where much earlier activities can be documented.¹

Turning to the finer details of the Early Helladic material, the frequency with which incisions were used to decorate the rims of open vessels is quite striking. The use of direct incision appears to be more common on EH I than EH II pottery, with the exception of askoi and handles, at least in the Peloponnese.² However, at the site of Pevkakia in Thessaly, a similar predilection for decorative incision can be noted during late EH II.³ Furthermore, the ceramics from two Boeotian sites, Eutresis and Lithares, seem to feature rim incisions during both EH I and II.

C-PH 3–6 are assigned a more general date in EH I or II, as they did not have any preserved traits that would admit a more precise dating. The plain body sherd with multiple zigzag incisions **C-PH 7** is highly unusual, at least outside of Arcadia. A fairly close parallel was recently found at the prehistoric site Kolonna on Aigina, but it was recovered from a non-stratigraphic context.⁴ We know from earlier research that Aigina was very influential during Early Helladic times as an “emporio”, or transmitter of new pottery styles from southwestern Anatolia and the Cyclades to the Peloponnese;⁵ this decorative motif of multiple zigzags likely originated in the Cyclades. A later type of incised decoration dating

to EH III – the so-called fine incised and impressed decoration – always appears on a burnished surface.⁶ Incisions on so-called “Adriatic ware” are usually quite different in terms of both pattern and execution.⁷ Somewhat similar incisions to those on **C-PH 7** are found on pieces from Prosymna and the Franchthi cave in Argolis, but the incisions are placed just beneath the rim, and the sherds are Late or Final Neolithic in date.

Four vessels can be dated to the EH II period (**C-PH 9–12**), on the assumption that **C-PH 11–12** do indeed have plastic bands with overlapping incised discs.

The final phase of the Early Helladic period is represented by the three sherds **C-PH 13–15**. The body sherd of a large, wide-mouthed jar **C-PH 14** is identical to examples found at Asea Paleokastro. Rutter states that this type of jar is “attested throughout EH III at Lerna although considerably more common after late phase 2 than previously”.⁸ **C-PH 15**, which may represent a narrow-necked jar, has a dark-on-light painted pattern that resembles Rutter’s cross-hatched rectangles on shoulders (pattern IXc).⁹ However, the pattern on our sherd is interrupted by vertical lines, unlike the examples found at Lerna.

Finally, the two most enigmatic sherds of the 16 presented here are **C-PH 8** and **16**. The neck of Rutter’s shape III.2 is much shorter than that of **C-PH 16**, and the smallest tankards found at Lerna are 3.6–3.8 cm in diameter, which is 8 mm larger than **C-PH 16**. The morphological differences are therefore notable. I believe, however, that the fabric and surface finish indicate that **C-PH 16** falls into Rutter’s “Medium Coarse Unburnished” class.¹⁰

We had difficulty finding any parallels for the shallow bowl with a well-burnished, very pale brown surface and a large loop handle on the rim (**C-PH 8**). One potentially comparable piece is a bowl that Fossey found at Perachora,

¹ In addition to the pottery, a few Early Helladic bronze pins found in the northern sector (**BrN-P 1–4**) support this conclusion. For the pins, see *Tegea II*, section ix (Voyatzis), 165 and 168.

² Wiencke 2000, 620–1.

³ E. Christmann, *Die deutschen Ausgrabungen auf der Peukakia-Magoula in Thessalien 1, Die frühe Bronzezeit*, Bonn 1996, 194, 196 and 198.

⁴ Felten and Hiller 1996, 61, pl. 13.1.

⁵ J. Forsén, *The twilight of the early Helladics (SIMA-PB 116)*, Jonsered 1992, 256.

⁶ See M.N. Valmin, *The Swedish Messenia expedition*, Lund 1938, 265, pl. III.20; Rutter 1995, 627–32.

⁷ See Rutter 1995, 632–4.

⁸ Rutter 1995, 451.

⁹ Rutter 1995, 574–7.

¹⁰ Rutter 1995, 27–8.

although this bowl is described as “smooth pink ware”. Phelps dates all three phases (X–Z) at Perachora to EH I;¹¹ Dousougli equates late Early Helladic I with Perachora (X?)–Y–Z.¹² The excavators – Fossey, and more recently Wiencke – date the majority of the material to late Early Helladic I, but some also to early EH II.¹³ The handle on **C-PH 8** is also problematic, because handles on rims are particularly common during the Middle Helladic period. In Nordquist’s unpublished manuscript from Asine, she presents a broad-rimmed bowl that is similar to **C-PH 8** in both fabric colour and shape, but it does not have a handle; moreover, it is matt-painted.¹⁴ Zerner writes that light yellow or buff surfaces became more popular at the end of the Middle Helladic and in the early Late Helladic, when they began to replace grey surfaces.¹⁵ The pottery is also burnished or polished. This is the “fine and medium coarse, Yellow Minyan from Argolid or NE Peloponnese” described by Zerner.¹⁶ It is possible that our sherd represents this kind of ware, and it should in this case be dated to the late Middle or early Late Helladic instead of the Early Helladic. There is, however, no other catalogued material in this assemblage that can be safely identified as Middle Helladic.¹⁷

Overall, the pervasive use of incision on the Early Helladic material is striking, and may indicate a transitional phase between EH I and II or early in EH II. Equally remarkable is the lack of typical EH II pottery in the Tegean assemblage: there are no ring bases, saucers or sauceboats, and almost no dark or light painted wares such as the distinctive yellow-mottled ware of earlier excavation reports. This may also support the idea that the material dates to the early EH II or transitional EH I to II. However, there is some definite EH III material, which may indicate abandonment and subsequent reoccupation near the end of the Early Helladic period. Nevertheless, we must be cautious about drawing conclusions based upon a few sherds found out of context.

Catalogue: Neolithic and Early Helladic pottery

C-PH 1

Fig. 1; Pl. 1

Rim from a deep bowl, thickened towards the exterior; flat rim. Plain. Fabric: dark grey (10YR 4/1; secondary burning

¹¹ W.W. Phelps, *The Neolithic sequence in southern Greece* (PhD diss. University of London 1975), 356.

¹² Dousougli 1987, 211 n. 114.

¹³ Fossey 1969, 69; Wiencke 2000, 632.

¹⁴ G.C. Nordquist, *The Middle Helladic finds from the Barbouna slope at Asine from the excavations 1973–74 and 1989* (unpublished ms.), cat. no. 241.

¹⁵ Zerner 1993.

¹⁶ Zerner 1993, 42–3.

¹⁷ Some probable Middle Helladic sherds were observed during the excavation, and have been reported from the following stratigraphical units: B1Sa/7; B1T/4, /17, /20; C1a/31, /61; C1d/20; D1/78. These sherds have not been catalogued. See section ii (Nordquist) for the relevant units.

on exterior?), small to medium white inclusions. Preserved dimensions: 2.95 H × 2.4 W cm.

Inv. no. 5028. Location, F. no.: E1S/125-12 (bothros, Level B-5).

Date: FN

Parallels: Vitelli 1999, 74, fig. 54.h (shape).

C-PH 2

Fig. 1

Rim from a deep bowl. Part of hole drilled through the wall; lumpy rim. Incisions made by short nails on exterior edge of lip. Fabric: pink (7.5YR 7/4), small white and dark inclusions. Preserved dimensions: 3.5 H × 3.75 W cm.

Inv. no. 5069. Location, F. no.: E1S/127-24 (bothros, Level B-4).

Date: FN

Parallels: Vitelli 1999, 67, 78, figs 59.c–d, 62.b (and the index for references to drilled mending holes); K. Zachos, *Ayios Dhimitrios, a prehistoric settlement in the southwestern Peloponnese: The Neolithic and Early Helladic periods (BAR-IS 1770)*, Oxford 2008, 29 no. 42/81, fig. 18.

C-PH 3

Fig. 1; Pl. 1

Pithos or large bowl rim. In-sloping wall, rim thickened to exterior. Plain, undecorated except for vertical incised lines all along lip. Fabric: reddish yellow (7.5YR 7/6), numerous small, white inclusions and stones. Preserved dimensions: 1.9 H × 4.1 W cm.

Inv. no. 4510. Location, F. no.: B1Sc/4-5 (debris above Building 1).

Date: EH I–II

Parallels: H. Goldman, *Excavations at Eutresis in Boeotia*, Cambridge Mass. 1931, 88–9 figs 108–109; Tzavella-Evjen 1985, 22 fig. 8, pl. 12.h.

C-PH 4

Fig. 1

Rim from an incurving bowl. Rim thickened towards the interior. Burnished exterior surface; flat lip has short incisions. Fabric: very pale brown (10YR 7/3), medium brown and white inclusions. Preserved dimensions: 2.5 H × 4.3 W; D 20.0 cm.

Inv. no. 4944. Location, F. no.: E1S/114-15 (bothros, Level B-2).

Date: EH I–II

Parallels: Pullen 1985, 154 no. 113 (shape of rim); Tzavella-Evjen 1985, 22 fig. 8, pl. 12.e.

C-PH 5

Fig. 1

Rim from a shallow bowl, thickened towards the interior. Horizontal and vertical incisions on plain, flat lip. Fabric: light reddish brown (5YR 6/4), many grey and white inclusions. Preserved dimensions: 3.2 L × 1.25 H × 1.5 W cm.

Inv. no. 4995. Location, F. no.: E1S/120-8 (bothros, Level B-3).

Date: EH I–II

Parallels: Pullen 1985, 152 no. 76 (shape); Tzavella-Evjen 1985, 22 fig. 8.

C-PH 6

Fig. 1

Rim from a large incurving bowl, with rim thickened towards the interior. Plain, incised vertical and horizontal lines on flat lip. Fabric: light reddish brown (5YR 6/4), small to medium white inclusions. Preserved dimensions: 3.1 H × 2.1 W cm.

Inv. no. 5067. Location, F. no.: E1S/127-22 (bothros, Level B-4).

Date: EH I–II

Parallels: Pullen 1985, 155 no. 125 (shape).

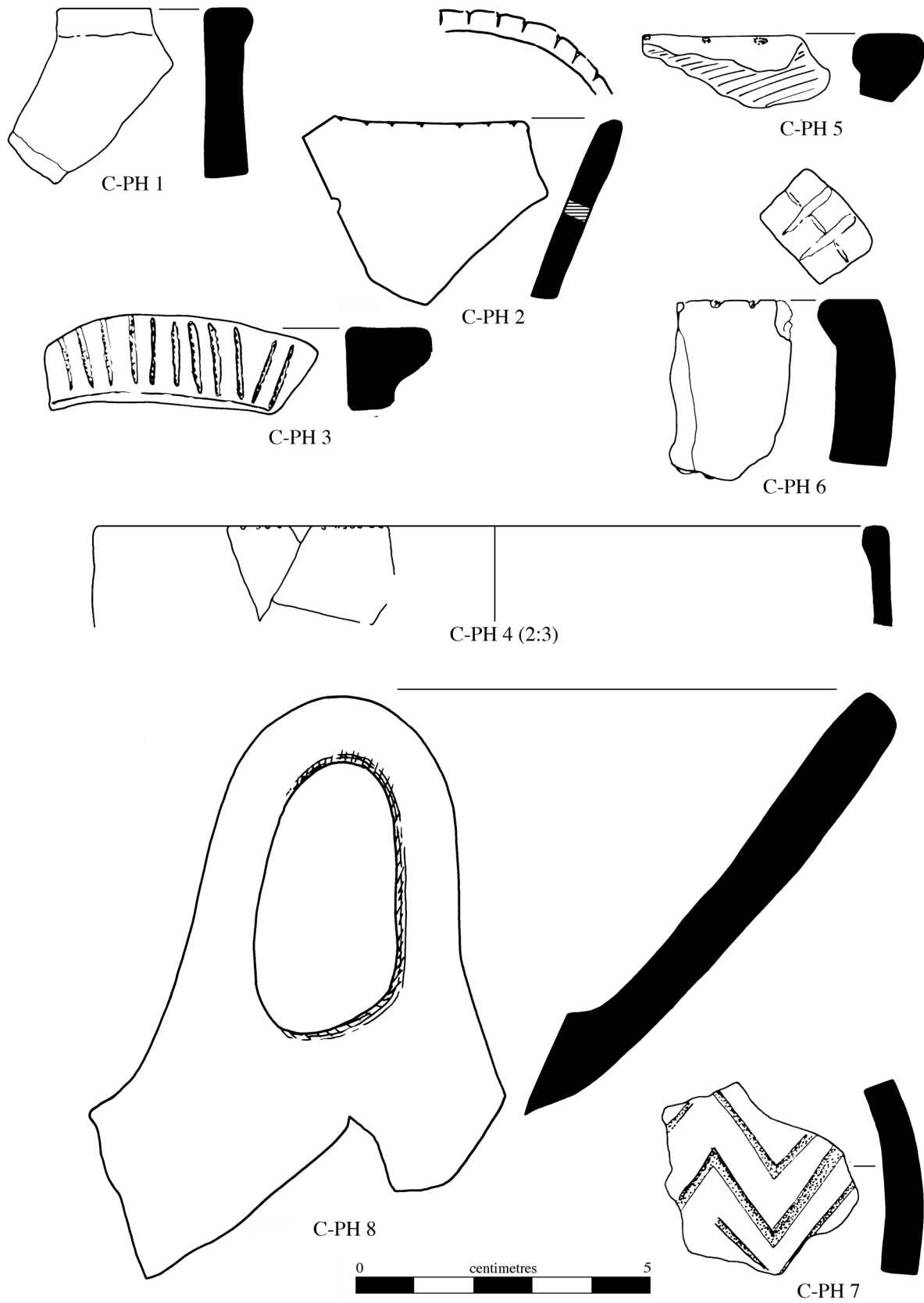


Figure 1. Neolithic and Early Helladic sherds (C-PH 1-8). (Drawing: L. Kain)

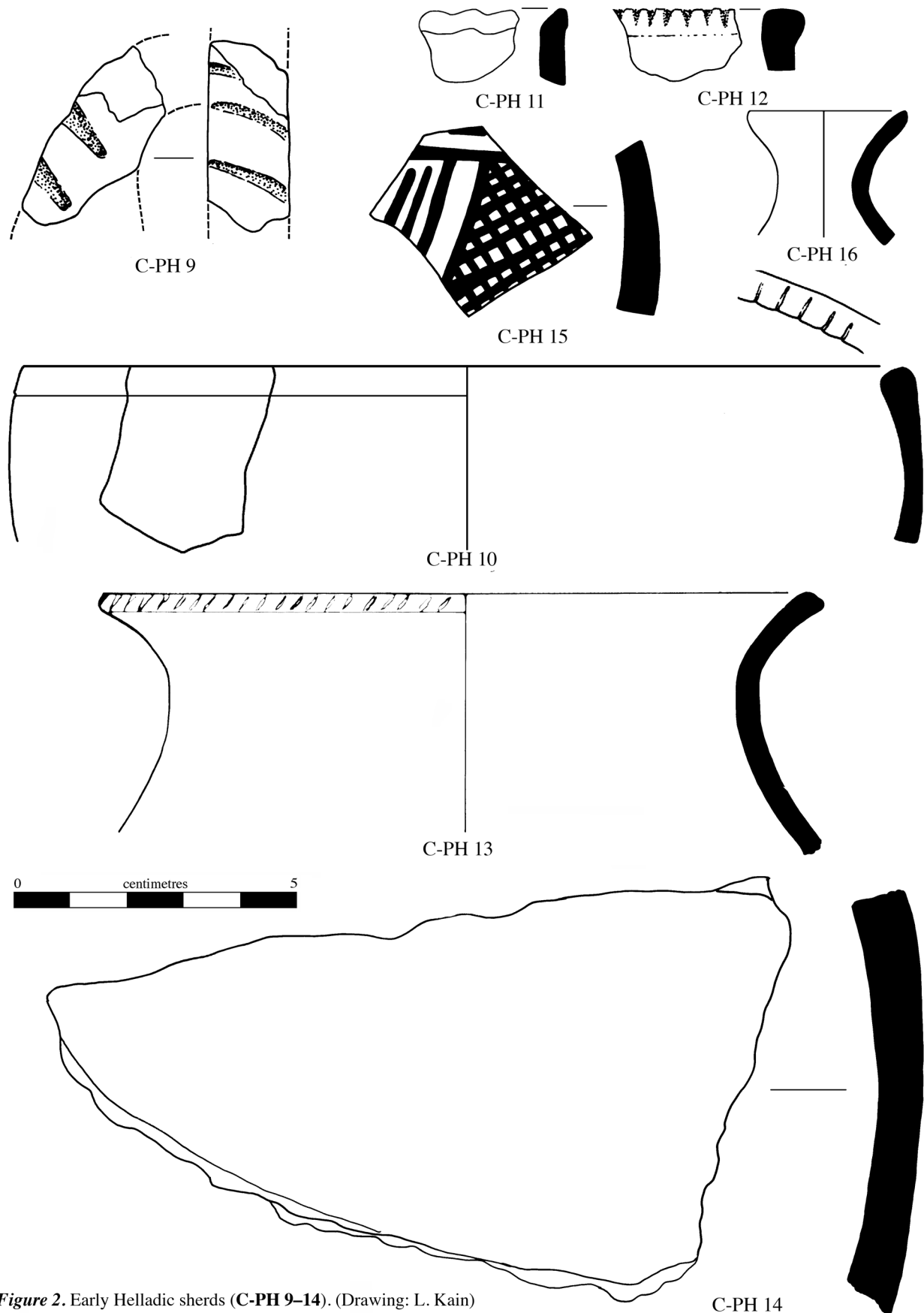


Figure 2. Early Helladic sherds (C-PH 9–14). (Drawing: L. Kain)

C-PH 7*Fig. 1; Pl. 1*

Body sherd, probably from a closed vessel. Large, stacked multiple zigzags incised on exterior. Plain, very coarse ware. Fabric: reddish yellow (7.5YR 7/6), many large, red (5YR 5/6) inclusions. Preserved dimensions: 3.6 H × 3.7 W cm.

Inv. no. 4557. Location, F. no.: BIT/20-1 (outside Building 2).

Date: EH I–II

Parallels: E.J. Holmberg, *The Swedish excavations at Asea in Arcadia (SkrRom 4^o, 11)*, Lund and Leipzig 1944, 57–8, fig. 61.i; 81 fig. 83.f; 82–3, fig. 84.a; Felten and Hiller 1996, 61, pl. 13.1.

C-PH 8*Fig. 1; Pl. 1*

Large loop handle set horizontally on rim of a shallow bowl. Burnished exterior and interior surface. Fabric: very pale brown (10YR 8/3), core pink (5YR 7/4), very smooth; small to large, white inclusions. Preserved dimensions: 10.4 L × 7.0 W cm.

Inv. no. 5029. Location, F. no.: E1S/125-13 (bothros, Level B-5).

Date: EH I or early II (or late MH? see discussion above).

Parallels: Fossey 1969, 66–7, fig. 6 (phase Z, bowl no. 2).

C-PH 9*Fig. 2*

Jug or jar handle from a vessel with diagonal slashing. Plain. Fabric: light red (2.5YR 7/6), medium-sized white and coarse inclusions. Preserved dimensions: 3.65 H × 1.6 W cm.

Inv. no. 5197. Location, F. no.: E1S/133-8 (bothros, Level B-8b).

Date: EH II early

Parallels: Dousougli 1987, 193 nos. 109–110, fig. 20; Wiencke 2000, 388 no. P455, fig. II.24; 620 (Lerna IIIB).

C-PH 10*Fig. 2*

Rim from a small, incurving bowl. Incurving rim thickened and flattened lip bevelled towards the interior. Short incised lines around inner edge of lip. Plain. Fabric: reddish yellow (5YR 7/6), many small to medium dark inclusions. Preserved dimensions: 3.4 H × 2.4 W; D 15–16 cm.

Inv. no. 5068. Location, F. no.: E1S/127-23 (bothros, Level B-4).

Date: EH II

Parallels: Pullen 1985, 161 no. 229 (shape).

C-PH 11*Fig. 2*

Rim of open vessel bevelled towards the interior. Taenia on exterior with short vertical incisions; upper edge pinched like a pie crust. Plain fabric: light brown (10YR 6/3), large and medium white inclusions. Preserved dimensions: 1.5 H × 1.9 W cm.

Inv. no. 4969. Location, F. no.: E1S/116-18 (bothros, Level B-2).

Date: EH I or II

Parallels: Pullen 1985, 11–2, 15, 155 no. 119.

C-PH 12

Rim from a deep bowl with possible taenia band of overlapping discs to right. Hint of dark brown paint on exterior surface. Fabric: reddish yellow (5YR 7/6), many grey inclusions and pieces of mica. Preserved dimensions: 1.45 H × 2.2 W cm.

Inv. no. 4988. Location, F. no.: E1S/119-12 (bothros, Level B-3).

Date: EH II late

Parallels: Wiencke 2000, 416 no. P659, fig. II.36; 427 no. P727, fig. II.42; 548–9 (Weisshaar type b3), 619–20.

C-PH 13*Fig. 2*

Small narrow-necked jar (probably) with rim beveled to exterior. Plain, with some evidence of smoke blackening on exterior surface. Diagonal fingernail impressions on lip. Fabric: pale brown (10YR 6/3), some white and dark inclusions. Preserved dimensions: 4.35 H × 7.45 W cm.

Inv. no. 4942. Location, F. no.: E1S/114-13 (bothros, Level B-2).

Date: EH III

Parallels: Rutter 1995, 159 no. P703, fig. 43; 404–9 (probably shape XVII.1).

C-PH 14*Fig. 2*

Body sherd of a large, wide-mouthed jar. Burnished exterior surface. Fabric: reddish yellow (5YR 7/6), core light brownish grey (10 YR 6/2); medium to large, dark inclusions. Preserved dimensions: 12.6 H × 7.1 W; Th 1.0 cm.

Inv. no. 5045. Location, F. no.: E1S/126-17 (bothros, Level B-6).

Date: EH III2–3

Parallels: Rutter 1995, 28-9; 448–51, tab. S.104.a (shape XXI.4, large); J. Forsén in J. Forsén, B. Forsén *et al.*, *The Asea valley survey (SkrAth 4^o, 51)*, Stockholm 2003, 173 no. 106, fig. 122.

C-PH 15*Fig. 2*

Shoulder of a narrow-necked jar. Dark on light pattern of cross-hatched rectangles on shoulder next to three vertical lines and below two horizontal lines. Fabric: light grey (2.5Y 7/2), a little porous. Preserved dimensions: 3.4 H × 3.75 W cm.

Inv. no. 5108. Location, F. no.: E1S/129-34 (bothros, Level B-7).

Date: EH III

Parallels: Felten and Hiller 1996, 58, pl. 12.3.

C-PH 16*Fig. 2*

Small shoulder-handled tankard (11 pieces, including neck and rim). Smoothed exterior surface; no decoration. Fabric: light grey (10YR 7/1), unevenly fired; many brown and white inclusions. Preserved dimensions: 3.0 H × 2.8 W; D 2.8 cm.

Inv. no. 4943. Location, F. no.: E1S/114-14 (bothros, Level B-2).

Date: EH III?

Parallels: Rutter 1995, 27; 226 no. P1143, fig. 94; 285 tab. S.96 (shape III.2, small).

Literature:

Dousougli 1987 = A. Dousougli, “Makrovouni-Kefalari Magoula-Talioti. Bemerkungen zu den Stufen EH I und II in der Argolis,” *PZ* 62, 1987, 164–220.

Felten and Hiller 1996 = F. Felten and S. Hiller, “Ausgrabungen in der vorgeschichtlichen Innenstadt von Ägina – Kolonna (Alt-Ägina),” *ÖJh* 65, 1996, 29–111.

Fossey 1969 = J.M. Fossey, “The prehistoric settlement by Lake Vouliagmeni, Perachora,” *BSA* 64, 1969, 53–69.

Pullen 1985 = D.J. Pullen, *Social organization in Early Bronze Age Greece: a multidimensional approach* (PhD diss. Indiana university), Ann Arbor 1985.

Rutter 1995 = J.B. Rutter, *The pottery of Lerna IV (Lerna 3)*, Princeton 1995.

Tzavella-Evjen 1985 = H. Tzavella-Evjen, *Lithares, an Early Bronze Age settlement in Boeotia*, Los Angeles 1985.

- Vitelli 1999 = K.D. Vitelli, *Franchthi Neolithic pottery 2, The later Neolithic ceramic phases 3 to 5* (Excavations at Franchthi cave, Greece 10), Bloomington and Indianapolis 1999.
- Wiencke 2000 = M.H. Wiencke, *The architecture, stratification, and pottery of Lerna III, Part 1–3 (Lerna 4)*, Princeton 2000.
- Zerner 1993 = C. Zerner, “New perspectives on trade in the Middle and Early Late Helladic periods on the mainland,” in C. Zerner (ed.), *Wace and Blegen, Pottery as evidence for trade in the Aegean Bronze Age 1939–1989* (Proceedings of the international conference held at the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Athens, December 2–3, 1989), Amsterdam 1993, 39–56.



C-PH 1



C-PH 7



C-PH 3



C-PH 8

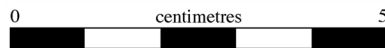


Plate 1. Neolithic and Early Helladic sherds.

