

**Clay Figurines from Lousoi:
Some Thoughts on Local Production**
*The Ear is Shaky**

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The excavations at the sanctuary of Artemis at Lousoi have brought to light a number of Geometric and archaic clay statuettes representing different types and styles, some handmade, others mouldmade. Some of the statuettes can be compared with and attributed to the Corinthian repertoire. Others coincide with known types from various Peloponnesian centers. But there are some types for which it seems difficult to find parallels. Certain characteristic details lead to the hypothesis that they may have been locally produced.

In this paper some statuettes are presented and the details leading to this conclusion are discussed. In addition to this, further indications for local production in Hellenistic times are added.

Recent publications inform us about the location, functioning and size of terracotta workshops.¹ Usually there is a rule about what indicates local terracotta production: a great number of statuettes, eventually of the same type, or a variety of types; moulds, kiln wasters etc. A safe proof of ceramic production are basins for the preparation of clay and kilns (for pottery and/or figurines). The ideal situation would be to discover figurines lying in or near the kiln, but

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1. Uhlenbrock 1990; Cuomo di Caprio 1992; Barra Bagnasco 1996a, 1996b, 1997; Muller 2000. Workshops were either large-scale installations, situated in the centres of towns favoured by water, consisting of basins for washing, kilns, places for storage etc.; or they were small installations, often based on family organization, working e.g. near a sanctuary, to cover the demand of the visitors. They could also be situated in a house, where moulds were copied and the firing was done in the potter's workshop.

this occurs very rarely indeed. On the other hand, in the case of single or singular pieces, one usually speaks of votive offerings brought by travellers from far away.

It may seem risky to postulate local terracotta-production at Lousoi, when the total number of figurines only amounts to about 400 fragments. I was encouraged, though, to do so, as my attention had been caught by a simple detail, which might be seen as an indication and which will be discussed below.

The provenance of the clay statuettes presented here is restricted to the sanctuary of Artemis Hemera. (Fig. 1) We have no information about the findspots of those which came to light during the old excavations of the Austrian Institute in 1898 and 1899.² However, the provenance of the statuettes of the new excavations since 1983 is defined accurately.³ They come from the following places: 1) the foundation pits of the temple of Artemis; 2) from the thickly packed setting of limestone and rock, which runs along the northern edge of the upper terrace, constructed in order to secure the area, which was to receive the large temple shortly after 300 B.C.; 3) from the small temple, the so-called Eastern Building, dated towards the end of the 4th century; and 4) from the layer covering this building after its destruction. For all of them, the only fixed date is the construction of the new temple in the early 3rd century as a *terminus ante quem*, because wherever they were found, they were fragmentary and already in secondary use. In addition, there are two stray finds from near the sanctuary, and the head Tk 1/2001 from the lower terrace, discussed below.

Parallel examples from other regions permit us to date at least some of them. Votives at Lousoi were offered from the 8th century onwards, with a peak in the 7th, 6th, and to a lesser degree in the 5th and 4th centuries. The terracottas fit into this frame, beginning in the 8th century.

In addition to the 250 clay statuettes reportedly found during the old Austrian excavations,⁴ of which 31 fragments were published in the article by Reichel and Wilhelm in 1901, the new excavations have produced 120 inventoried fragments,⁵ coming from the sanctuary and its immediate neighbourhood.

We cannot estimate the original number of votives offered to the goddess of Lousoi, since unlike the metal objects, which found their way into various museums and private collections, no terracottas from Lousoi have been identified elsewhere.

2. Reichel and Wilhelm 1901. It may have been either the upper or the lower terrace of the sanctuary. In the second case it is possible that they were washed down from the upper terrace.

3. Excavations in the sanctuary took place every year from 1986 to 1990 and from 1995 to 2000. See reports in *ÖJh* from 1987 on, and Mitsopoulos-Leon 2001, *passim* and fig. 1.

4. Now kept in the National Museum in Athens.

5. The finds from the new excavations are partly kept at the Ephorate in Patras and partly in the local storage facility.

The statuettes belong to a few general groups with more or less distinct characteristics:

- hand-made crude statuettes, some of them showing the well-known ‘page-boy’ haircut
- protomai
- standing females with epiblema
- females with applied chains and amulets
- Corinthian types of Artemis and Spes, standing
- enthroned goddesses
- nude girls
- two heads and one fist of statuettes of larger dimensions
- hydriaphorai
- animals
- figural vases.

Some of the statuettes can easily be compared with and attributed to the Corinthian repertoire. Others fit with known types from various Peloponnesian centers, as Tegea, Tiryns, Argos, Laconia etc. But there are definitely some types for which it seems difficult to find direct parallels. The following selection includes some of the more remarkable terracotta statuettes from the sanctuary.

The first example to be presented is the small head of a young person.⁶ (Fig. 2) It was found lying face down on the lower terrace. At first sight it might be rejected as a forgery. However, in some respects it is a fine piece, and furthermore, who would go to so much trouble as to drop a single piece in such a remote place?

Conserved are the head and part of the chest, the rest is broken away. The clay is brown with light and dark inclusions, some voids; it is the clay mainly used for statuettes at Lousoi. There are traces of black colour on the face and hair. The face has a spontaneous expression. It is oval. The eyes, not quite at the same level, are surrounded by thick lids, the line of the lower lid of the left eye being shaky. The mouth is smiling. The hair is parted above a remarkably high forehead and adheres tightly to the head, arriving to just above the ears. It is divided into narrow strands with a fine, wavy surface, partly indicated by small parallel lines. The hair stops abruptly, the strands of hair which would usually fall to the shoulders, are missing. Just a tiny irregularity of the surface behind the right ear and a trace under the left ear indicate what may have been the mass of hair falling to the shoulders.

Having paid attention to the unusually high forehead, we should now take a second look at the mouth. The upper lip is curved and lifted up at the ends, whereas the lower lip is pulled too far to the right side of the face. It is out of balance, and the lower contour is corrected by an added line. However, most of

6. Tk 1/2001: total height 0.06 m, of the face from top to chin 0.032 m.

all we are intrigued by the treatment of the ears. The lower lobe of the left one is missing; the right one is positioned far too low, it is clumsily added where the hair ends, and adheres tightly to the cheek.

One gets the impression that only the face was taken out of a mould, together with the tightly fitting hair on the forehead and along the cheeks. The ears were evidently added later and pressed separately into the new mould, the left one only partly. The mouth did not turn out properly and was corrected.

If we overlook those faults, caused by a clumsy and hasty hand, we recognize this little head as a piece of rather good quality. It seems difficult, though, to find any parallels in terracotta for it. Perhaps one quite striking feature may lead to the solution: this is the rendering of the surface of the hair. Those finely indicated details, the narrow, slightly ribbed strands of hair, are not characteristic of terracotta sculptures; they belong to the field of bronze-working. And here examples for comparison are more easily found.

We mention the statuettes of standing, slender girls from Laconia, some of them carrying mirrors, the statuettes of *kouroi* used as vertical handles, or the busts of girls decorating the rim of vases.⁷ The oval face, closely fitting hair, large and heavily framed eyes, the expressive mouth, are characteristics of the lady on the lid of the Vix crater.⁸ The same can be said for the girl from Hermione.⁹ The *kouros* serving as handle of a hydria in Boston¹⁰ shows the same features. In addition, we find here the large, unarticulated ear and a very high, pointed, triangular forehead. The finely ribbed strands of hair are seen on a bust which decorates the rim of a vase.¹¹

So, whereas parallels in terracotta for our little head seem to be absent, several good pieces in bronze demonstrate that a similar example may have been used as prototype. If the head was meant to represent a work in bronze, the black colour on the face and hair would support this theory.

The next type to be discussed is represented by five statuettes, one complete, four body fragments, and one head.¹² (Fig. 3) The lower body is either flat or

7. Some of the bronze statuettes are Laconian, some attributed to Corinth, to Ionia, some to ateliers in South Italy or Etruria, where similar features are found. Eyes, which are not set at the same level, and unarticulated ears, are characteristic for Laconian heads; see Stibbe 2004.

8. Rolley 1994, 245, fig. 244; Stibbe 2000.

9. For the Laconian girls carrying mirrors, cp. Rolley 1984, 100-4, fig. 81; Herfort-Koch 1986, 33, K 58, pl. 8.4; Stibbe 2000, 84, fig. 16.

10. Politis 1936, 166, no. 6, fig. 23; Comstock and Vermeule 1971, 99.460, 286, no. 411; see also Politis, 166, no. 5, pl. 4; Comstock and Vermeule, 85.515, 285, no. 410.

11. Kouleimani-Vokotopoulou 1975, 31, no. 56, fig. 17 b, pl. 23 a, b, g, dated 520-510 B.C.

12. Tk 22/87, Tk 12/96 plus Tk 21/97, Tk 11/97, Tk 29/97, Tk 3/99, Tk 1/98; Mitsopoulos-Leon 2001, pl. 16, fig. 6.

cylindrical; the lady is wearing a tightly fitting *peplos*, with a belt around the waist and a cape on the shoulders, the *epiblema*.¹³ This series is well known from several centres of the 7th and 6th centuries.¹⁴

The face resembles the above mentioned head with a *polos*, but the top of the head is different. The face is crowned by an interesting headdress, consisting of a row of flowers and above that, something which looks like a flower or the corolla of an opium poppy or a pomegranate. This seems to be the local version of decorating heads, as e.g. sirens and plank-shaped statuettes¹⁵ elsewhere are crowned with large decorative discs.

But what mainly interests us in this special context, is the poor treatment of the features of the face. The eyes are not clearly cut. The mouth has been placed too far to the right under the nose, drooping on one side. There is some shaky correction of the surface on the left side of the chin. Whereas the left ear is well carved, the right one does not come out clearly. Some manipulation can also be detected on the right shoulder, which bulges as if something, perhaps a wing, had been cut away. These details give the impression that a mould was brought from elsewhere and was rather clumsily copied, including some alterations.¹⁶

The third example is a very fine female protome.¹⁷ (Fig. 4) The type differs slightly from the known types of the northern Peloponnese and Phokis discussed by Croissant¹⁸ and usually present at Lousoi. It is closed above and open at the back. On the schematically indicated, rolled hair above the front sits a low *polos*. Behind the ears, three strands of hair fall to the breast. The face is beautiful; with its low forehead and heavy lower part with a strong chin, a strong nose, big eyes surrounded by heavy lids, slightly upwards turned and vaguely smiling lips, it reminds us of pieces of a large-scale sculpture. Again our attention is caught by the ears: the left one is fully formed, but shaky and clumsy. The right one is only barely visible, but it is wearing a round earring, which was probably pressed separately into the the mould.

13. See Davaras 1972, 58-65.

14. Important parallels for the Lousoi pieces are similar statuettes found in Arcadia and specially in the sanctuary of a female goddess, probably Artemis, at Gortsouli; see Karagiorga-Stathakopoulou 1989.

15. Schürmann 1989, 30, no. 42, pl. 11 (from Boeotia, last quarter of the 6th century); 92, no. 313, pl. 53 (from Metapont, last quarter of the 6th century); Higgins 1967, 45-6, pl. 19 B, early 6th century; Thompson 1939, 306, from Boeotia.

16. If we examine the other head, with *polos* (Tk 1/89), we cannot overlook the fact that there is also a fault, like a long scar, on the left cheek.

17. Tk 7/99.

18. Croissant 1983, 329-32, types P1, P2: regions of Delphi, Chaironeia, Argos.

Again we have the impression that someone copied negligently from a mould of good quality. In the course of the work, the back and lateral parts were added by hand, as were the rolled hair and the polos.

No exact parallels to this piece are known to me, but some examples of minor quality and later date may be mentioned.¹⁹

If my suggestion that these pieces were moulded in a hasty, negligent way is accepted, we still do not know where this activity may have taken place, or whether the pieces were brought to Lousoi or fabricated there. Perhaps another group of statuettes may help to proceed further: While the pieces so far discussed show the procedure of using a mould, albeit not in a perfect way, the following ones are results of simple hand-modelling,²⁰ and they are directly linked to the tradition of the sanctuary.

These little hand-made statuettes are already well known from the first excavations. The group is best represented in the sanctuary. Some examples show the closely fitting 'pageboy' haircut, the line of hair above the forehead cut straight and melting with the root of the nose, giving the impression of a helmet. The statuettes are either standing, sitting or riding sidewise on horseback.²¹ From the old excavations five heads have been published;²² from the new ones we recognize 14 fragments of this type, either heads or upper parts of the bodies, four standing. One standing statuette is of special interest, reminding us of a *xoanon*.²³ The arms of the statuettes are either wide open or bent downwards; in one instance the left arm was bent forward. The faces differ slightly, there are two groups. Some are long and narrow, some short; they seem to be carved in wood. In some cases the features, e.g. nose and mouth, are indicated, but mostly they are not, with just the chin and nose protruding. We believe there is reason to regard this type of little statuettes as locally produced and to connect it with the cult statue of the goddess. The hairstyle lives on in bronze statuettes of the 5th century also related to the sanctuary.²⁴

There are no exact parallels in clay known from other sites, for comparison with our clay statuettes. But we see close connections with a distinct group of small bronzes, showing similar haircuts and similar faces.²⁵ These are the horse-

19. Delphi, Chaironeia, Argos etc.; see Croissant, *supra* n. 18.

20. Muller 2000.

21. The type of the riding goddess studied by Voyatzis 1992.

22. Reichel and Wilhelm 1901, figs. 26-9 and 31.

23. Tk 32/87; see Mitsopoulos-Leon 2001, pl. 16, fig. 5.

24. Chance finds from clandestine excavations, having found their way to museums and private collections: Mitsopoulos-Leon 1993.

25. I have already discussed this case (Mitsopoulos-Leon 2001, 136-7), but it should be repeated in this context.

guiding warriors holding a sword and standing on cauldron handles. Claude Rolley assigns two strikingly similar examples, one from Delphi and one from Dodona, to a northwestern Greek region.²⁶ Their empty faces and short haircuts are repeated on some of our little heads. As the bodies and arms of the statuettes from Lousoi are not fully preserved, not much can be said about their posture. Could some of our figurines resemble these bronze warriors, displaying a militant character? It is interesting to remark that terracotta statuettes from Metapont are said to represent the armed Artemis, holding a sword.²⁷

Two parallel cases can be mentioned:

Emil Kunze already mentioned a remarkable similarity between a terracotta head from the Amyklaion and a bronze statuette from the Acropolis in Athens, which wears a helmet and held a lance in its raised, right hand.²⁸ He reconstructed a similar statuette for the Amyklaion head, relating it to the statue of Apollon Amyklaios.²⁹

In Argos³⁰ attention is drawn to bronze statuettes of the 8th and 7th centuries which served as examples of imitation for terracotta statuettes, thus initiating local Argive coroplastic production.

We shall add one more hand-made head, of slightly larger dimensions, to the group mentioned above.³¹ (Fig. 5) The tightly fitting hair, cut across the forehead and textured in a zig-zag pattern, reminds us of wood carvings and, of course, of the hairstyle of the little bronze warriors.³² The features are roughly rendered. The head is a crude piece of work, but extremely lively and impressive. One does not hesitate to ascribe it to what we generally call the 'Arcadian' background.

26. Rolley 1969, 32, pl. 5, fig. 11 (Louvre, Br 83), and *ibid.*, 32, fig. 12, from Dodona (Athens National Museum, Karapanos collection).

27. Olbrich 1979, 80 no. 124, pl. 31. For another interpretation of the type, in various centers, see Barra Bagnasco 1997, 208; for the relation between Achaia, the sanctuary at Lousoi and Metapont, see Bakchylides, 11th *epinikion*.

28. Kunze 1930, with pls. 42, 43.2, 44 and 45.

29. For the identification of a statue, holding spear and bow, clad in a long chiton and wearing a helmet, with Artemis Orthia, on coins of Cleomenes III (235–222 B.C.), see Lambri-noudakis, *LIMC* II, s.v. Apollon, 196, 55 b = Kahil, *LIMC* II, 742, s.v. Artemis, II.2: 3 a, following the interpretation of Grunauer-v. Hoerschelmann 1978, 39 e, 99, 190.

30. Sarian 1969, with an appendix by C. Rolley on a bronze statuette of a warrior from the Ortiz Collection.

31. Tk 15/97; see Mitsopoulos-Leon 2001, 136-7.

32. The impressed zig-zag decoration on regionally produced vases, known from Ano Mazaraki and Aigion, is also attested at Lousoi; see Schauer 1998, 267-9, figs. 20-1; Gadolou 2003. There are also some human figures with hair indicated in zig-zag pattern from the sanctuary of Artemis at Ano Mazaraki; see Gadolou 313-4, pls. 34-6.

For these hand-made statuettes there is an additional indication of production at Lousoi: some of them are decorated with horizontal stripes like the vases, decorated in the same way, which were certainly locally made: the small votive pyxides in the shape of the Geometric stamnos pyxis with fixed or movable lid.³³

These examinations lead, as I think, to a first conclusion. The excavations in the sanctuary of Artemis at Lousoi have brought to light a small number of Geometric and archaic clay statuettes representing different types and styles, some hand-made, others mould-made. For each group we detect a different way of receiving influence or of direct copying.

Making copies out of moulds was, as Arthur Muller points out, the simplest way of terracotta fabrication.³⁴ The work could be done by untrained workmen or apprentices. That explains the discrepancy between the clumsy mistakes and the mostly good to excellent quality of the original mould. Clay figurines were copied from terracotta moulds, but also from metal moulds, as many examples show.³⁵

Hand-modelling required more skill; our little hand-made statuettes are simple, yet some of the heads are remarkably expressive. Coroplasts may have worked with or near potters, especially in small scale workshops.³⁶

We now have to go one step further and study another issue concerning the organization of terracotta-production,³⁷ resuming what we know today about the possible production of statuettes, vases and other objects in clay in Lousoi.

Various objects found in the houses in Phournoi in Hellenistic and early imperial times provide proof of local production.

There are several kiln-supports and moulds for long petal bowls as well as for

33. See Schauer 1998, 269, figs. 15-7.

34. See *supra* n. 1.

35. Thompson 1949; Züchner 1950-51; Zervoudaki 1968, 3-6 and *passim*, with literature; Reeder Williams 1976; Scheibler 1983, 94-8; Uhlenbrock 1990; Barr-Sharrar 1990; Merker 2000, 14.

36. Muller 2000, 96-9; Barra Bagnasco 1996b, 182-4.

37. Muller 2000, 96-9, describes several methods of producing figurines: either the master coroplast and his assistants worked in a special workshop for coroplasts, or statuettes were produced in a potter's workshop, the original moulds being bought from sculptors or just copied. In the third case the work could be done in a small workshop, with casual and limited production. For the preparation of metal votives, see Kilian 1979. He defines the "landschaftsgebundenen Stil" and distinguishes between the following three situations concerning objects found in sanctuaries: bronzes produced on the spot in local style; products of local workshops in foreign style; and imports from other areas, which could also be produced in the sanctuary by migrating technicians. Rolley 1963, 483, studying a group of Peloponnesian bronze vases of the 6th century, states: "dans le Peloponnèse du Nord, la situation est plus claire : nous y trouvons des importations de Sparte, des imitations directes et des oeuvres plus originales."

terracotta statuettes and other votive objects. In addition to this, bone utensils for working clay, leather or bone were produced in Lousoi. The same motif of an acanthus decorating antefixes and one of the large-size household objects, a *hestia*, also points to the practice of copying.

In order to answer this question of major importance we mention a thick layer of earth preceding the construction of the Hellenistic stoa and reused in later phases, in what we now recognize as the *polis* centre of Lousoi. It contains thick pieces of clay discarded from kilns. Those 21 kiln-supports which were also found at the same occasion, seem to indicate terracotta or vase production.

In addition to this, the results of an archaeometric survey made by professor Papamarinopoulos in 1987 near the source of Vetelino, in the neighbourhood of the stoa, and still rich in water today, support the possibility that kiln activity took place in this region of Lousoi.

We conclude: Small hand-made statuettes, representing the largest number of terracottas in Lousoi, could have been made in the workshop of a local potter; they reflect the original cult image of the goddess, but at the same time followed the general stylistic trend of the time, which is also seen in examples in bronze. For the second group, we imagine clay and metal prototypes being copied and adjusted locally for the needs of the sanctuary, by migrating technicians, if there were any, or, more probably, by hasty or untrained Lousiotic hands. This might explain the discrepancy of quality between the original and the result, and the evident singularity of some pieces.

It is generally accepted³⁸ that sanctuaries located in the vicinity of a strong production centre (Athens, Corinth, Argos, Tegea) imported to a large extent what they needed for votive offerings, whereas remote places mainly produced their own material.

Lousoi certainly may have developed some independence in the supply of votives for the sanctuary as well as objects for daily life. But it was also extensively frequented by visitors from other Peloponnesian centers, who brought precious and beautiful votives for the goddess.³⁹ There must have been good material giving inspiration for copy and imitation.

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38. Peppas-Papaioannou 1985, 212-3.

39. Some fine bronzes had found their way to the sanctuary of Artemis in Lousoi.

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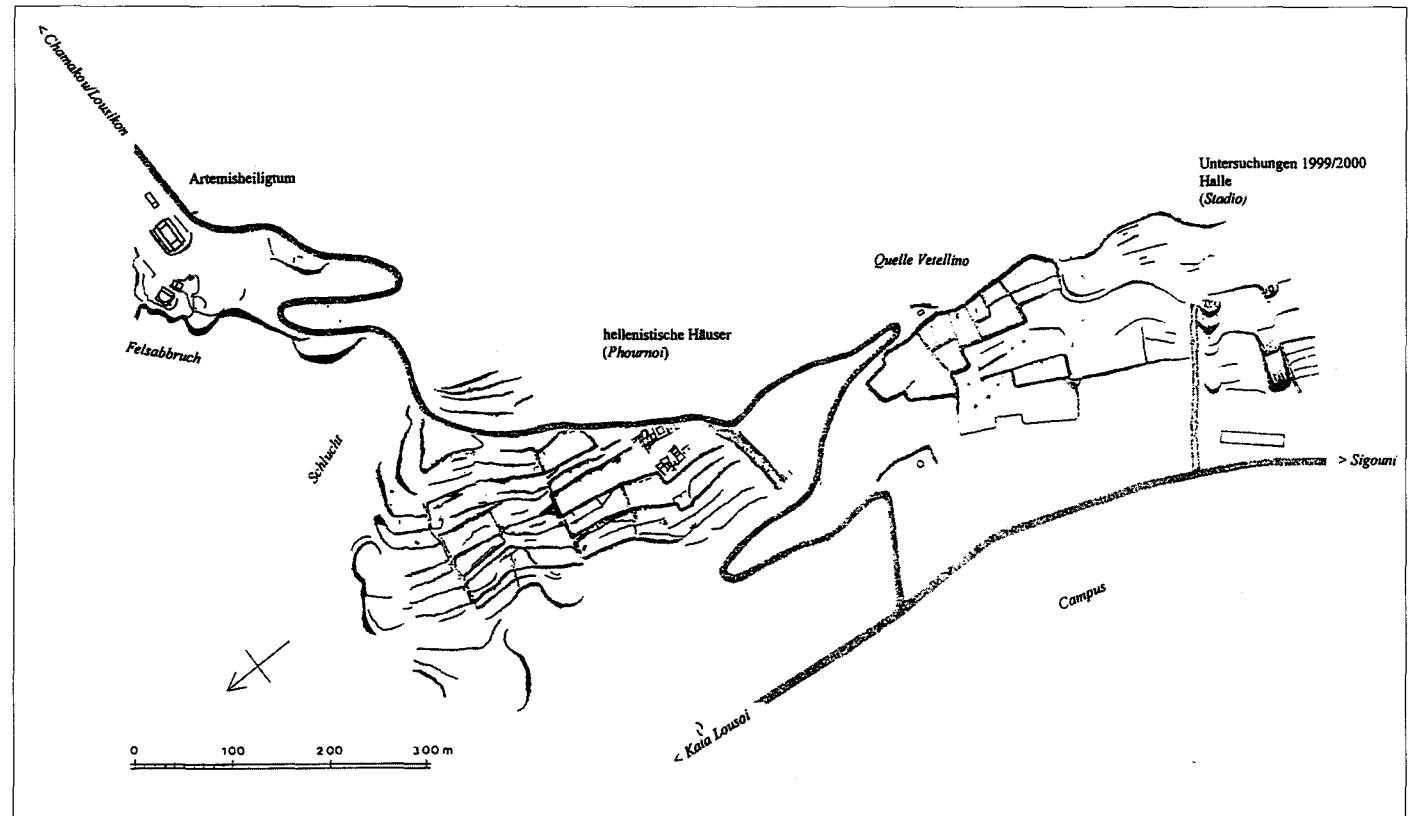


Fig. 1. The sanctuary, the area of the houses and the polis centre of Lousoi. (Based on the topographical map by Professor Franz Glaser (1983), updated by Dr. Georg Ladstätter (2001).)

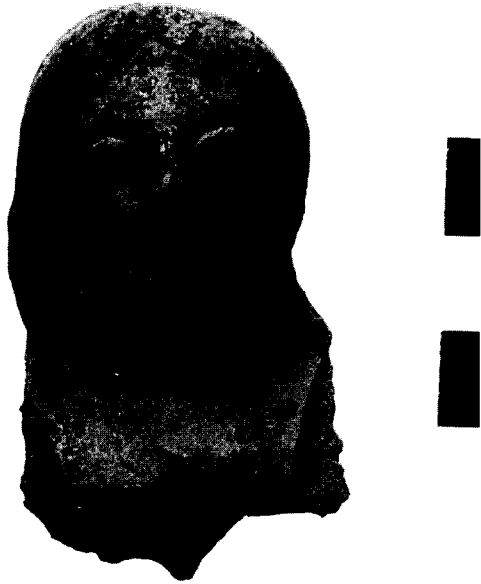


Fig. 2. Tk 1/2001. (Photo: Dr. K.-V. v. Eickstedt, Österreichisches Archäologisches Institut, Athens.)



Fig. 3. Tk 12/96 plus Tk 21/97. (Photo: Dr. K.-V. v. Eickstedt, Österreichisches Archäologisches Institut, Athens.)



Fig. 4. Tk 7/99. (Photo: Dr. K.-V. v. Eickstedt, Österreichisches Archäologisches Institut, Athens.)



Fig. 5. Tk 15/97. (Photo: Dr. K.-V. v. Eickstedt, Österreichisches Archäologisches Institut, Athens.)

