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THE LATE BRONZE AGE TO EARLY IRON AGE CHRONOLOGICAL SEQUENCE FROM THE SITE OF THE ASKLUPIS IN THE NORTHEAST KOAN REGION

Salvatore Vitale

This contribution discusses in full for the first time the Late Bronze Age (LBA) and Early Iron Age (EIA) materials from the Asklupis, a prehistoric and protohistoric village located on the hill slopes of Mount Dikaïos in the northeast Koan region. Despite the small sample size and other biases, which are critically addressed in the text, the evidence presented in this article sheds new light on the occupational sequence of the Asklupis and provides insights about the function of the site between the 17th and the 10th centuries B.C.

Recent fieldwork in northeast Kos has demonstrated the existence of a complex network of sites organized around the major settlements of the “Serraglio” and Ayios Panteleimon. As shown by the occurrence of LBA IA, Late Helladic (LH) IIIA2 to LH IIIB, LH IIIC Middle/Late, and Late Protogeometric materials, the Asklupis was one of the second-tier rural sites where human activities intensified during the phases when the “Serraglio” and Ayios Panteleimon flourished. Thanks to the diverse natural resources offered by the surrounding area, the Asklupis provided a convenient seasonal base for different types of endeavors centered around these two major settlements. Moreover, in times of perceived threats, its protected location offered a safe shelter for the larger communities that normally resided at the “Serraglio” and Ayios Panteleimon.

Introduction

This article presents in full for the first time the Late Bronze Age (LBA) and Early Iron Age (EIA) finds from the Asklupis, a rural site located on the hill slopes of Mount Dikaïos in the northeast Koan region (figs. 1-3)¹. The materials derive from old Italian excavations and early survey projects on the island, which were carried out in the 1940's and the 1960's respectively (see below, Research background). Despite the small sample size, the dearth of contextual evidence, and the occurrence of major biases in the methodology of excavation and survey at the times the materials were recovered, the data presented in this study have two important outcomes. First, they shed new light on the occupational sequence of the site. Second, based on our current understanding of settlement patterns on northeast Kos, they provide important

insights about the function of the Asklupis area at different times during the LBA and the EIA.

The data set is analyzed and discussed in six parts. The first is focused on research background. The second examines the location of the site and its key landscape features in terms of subsistence and natural resources. The third, fourth, and fifth sections are devoted to the analysis of ceramics and small finds. Finally, the sixth part discusses the significance of the data and provides some final statements about the main chronological and cultural implications of this study.

This article stems from the work of the “Serraglio, Eleona, and Langada Archaeological Project” (SELAP), a research endeavor directed on Kos by S. Vitale and C. McNamee under the scientific aegis of the Italian Archaeological School at Athens².

¹ This paper could not have been written without the assistance provided by the author's friends and colleagues currently or formerly employed by the Ephorate of Antiquities of Dodecanese, especially M. Chalkiti, T. Marketou, M. Michailidou, F. Seroglou, and E. Skerlou. Additional thanks are due to C. McNamee, F. Nani, B. Rueff, and A. Van de Moortel for their useful comments on the subjects examined within this article.

² SELAP's 2009 to 2023 seasons were made possible through grants from the Ministry of Education, Lifelong Learning and Religious Affairs of the Hellenic Republic; the Institute for Aegean Prehistory (INSTAP); the Shelby White Leon Levy Program for Archaeological Publications; the University of Calabria; the Mediterranean Archaeological Trust; and the Rust Family Foundation. SELAP is also very grateful to the former and present Directors of the Italian Archaeological School at Athens, Emanuele Greco and Emanuele Papi, for logistical and scientific support to the project. For previous summaries of SELAP's research, see Vitale 2012; Vitale *et alii* 2017.

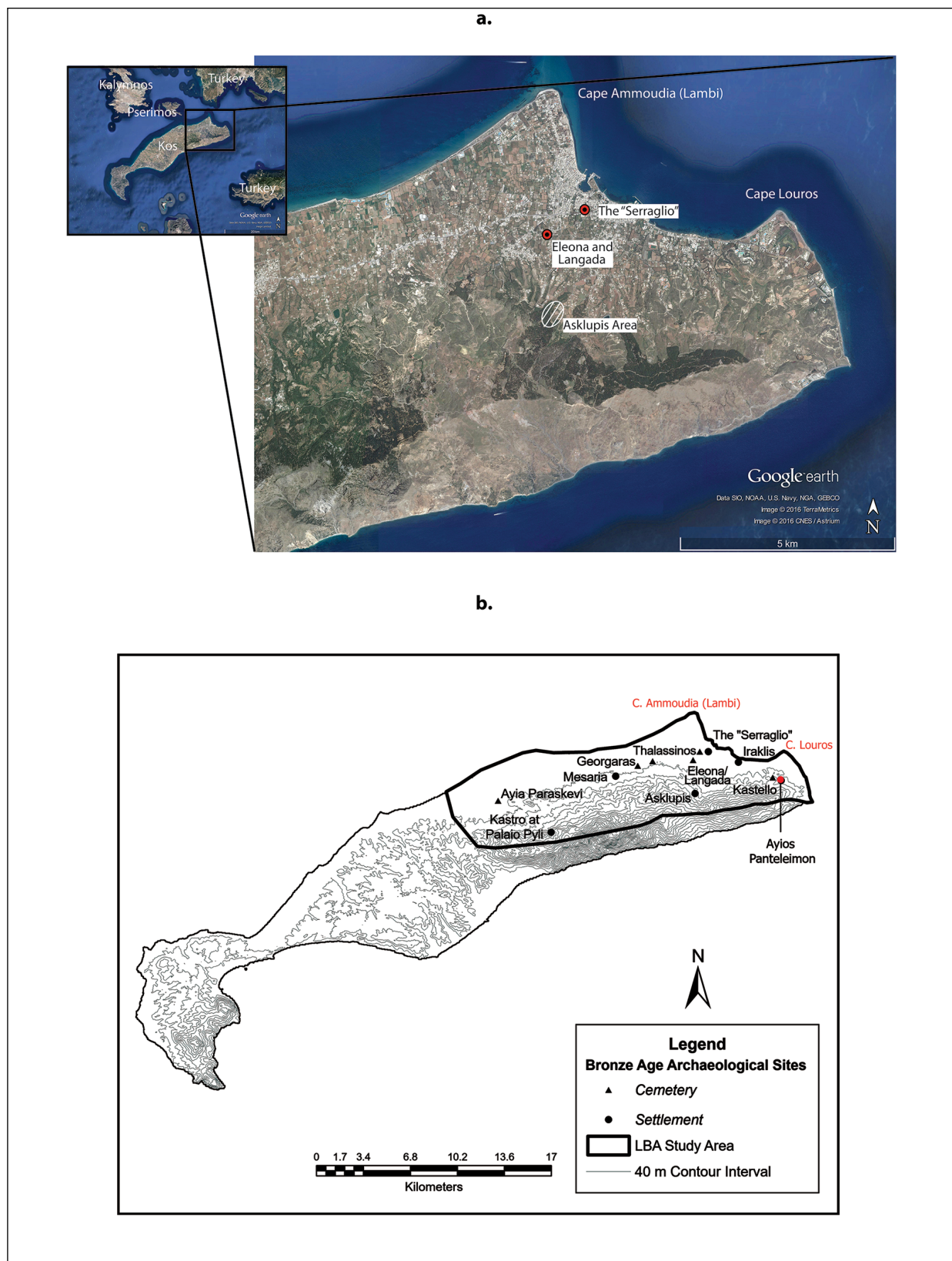


Fig. 1. Maps of northeast Kos including the main sites and areas under SEALP's study, with the addition of the settlement of Ayios Panteleimon from KASP's investigations (a: base map from Google Earth adapted by C. McNamée, S. Vitale, and T. Marketou; b: C. McNamée and S. Vitale).

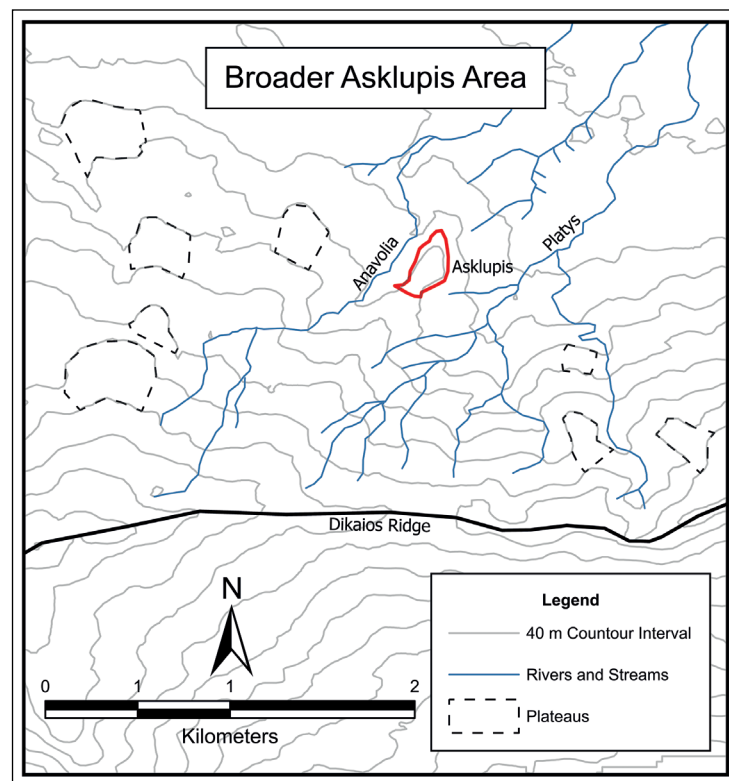


Fig. 2. Significant landscape features characterizing the broader Asklopis area (C. McNamee and S. Vitale).

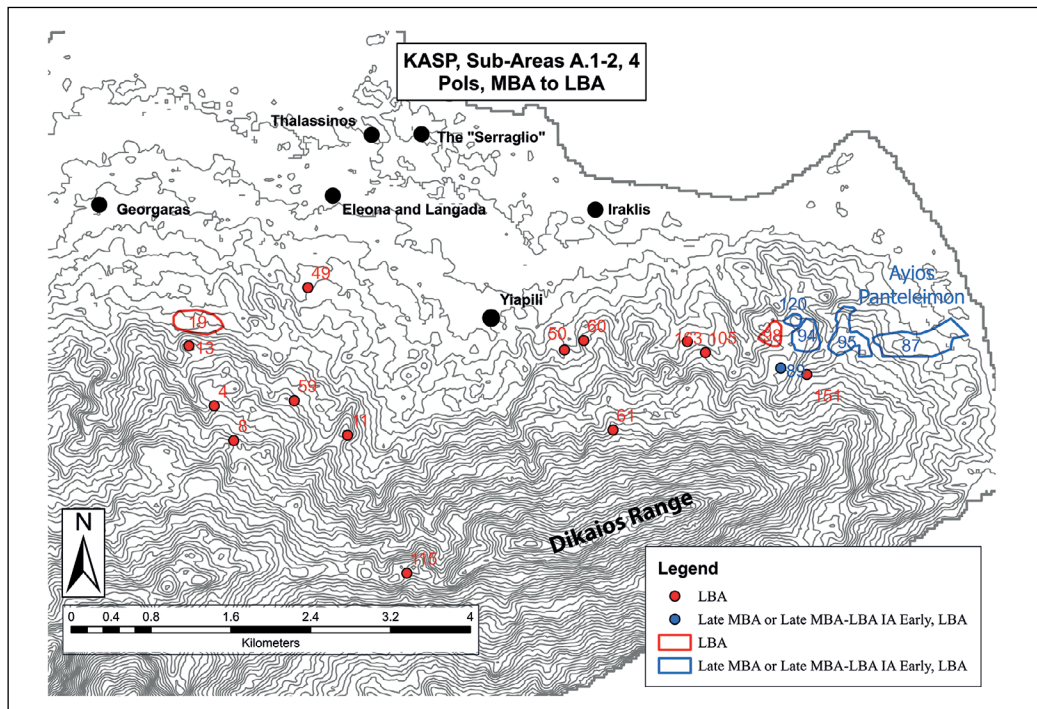


Fig. 3. LBA Places of Interest (PoIs) identified during KASP's 2018 and 2019 field seasons in Sub-Areas A.1-2, 4 (shown in red and blue). PoIs 11 and 120 correspond to the previously identified sites of the Asklopis and Troulli. Other sites identified before KASP's research are added to the original KASP map as black dots (C. McNamee, S. Vitale, and T. Marketou after Vitale *et alii* 2021: 115, fig. 8).

Research background

The archeological site of the Asklopis (figs. 1-3) was first identified in the spring of 1943 by G. Lazzara. Following Lazzara's discovery, rescue excavations were carried out from May 8th to the 12th of the same year by L. Morricone (Morricone 1975: 261-271, figs. 210-224). Subsequently, during the months of June-July 1967 and July 1968, the Asklopis area was again explored in the context of the extensive survey conducted in the Dodecanese by R. Hope Simpson and J.F. Lazenby (Hope Simpson and Lazenby 1970: 55-66, figs. 5-7, pls. 19-20).

Morricone's excavations brought to light four Early Bronze Age (EBA) 2 graves, including three pithos burials and one stone-lined pit, as well as some unstratified materials from a trial trench dug in the vicinity of the tombs. Hope Simpson and Lazenby's explorations resulted in the collection of a small assemblage of surface finds scattered on top and around the Asklopis Hill. The materials from Morricone's trial trench and Hope Simpson and Lazenby's survey had a wide chronological range, spanning from the Final Neolithic (FN) 1 to the Roman period.

In the last 15 years, the published and unpublished prehistoric and protohistoric finds recovered by Morricone and Hope Simpson and Lazenby were re-examined by SELAP³. SELAP's study followed a multi-disciplinary approach that included the following components: landscape analysis; geological prospections; the contextual study of the tombs and their materials (consisting of pottery vessels, human osteological remains, and various types of small finds); the macroscopic fabric examination of all ceramic finds from the graves, Morricone's trial trench, and Hope Simpson and Lazenby's survey; and an on-going program of archaeometric analyses, which are currently in progress⁴. Thus far, SELAP's published work on the materials from the Asklopis was mostly focused on the time span between the FN 1 and the EBA 2 phases, while the LBA and EIA finds, which form the main subject of the present contribution, were

only discussed briefly (Vitale *et alii* 2017: 227-229, tab. I, fig. 2; Vitale 2019: 15, 19, tabs. 1, 4).

Most recently, between 2018 and 2023, the Asklopis region was also explored by the Επιφανειακή Έρευνα στο νησί της Κω - Kos Archaeological Survey Project (KASP). Directed by M. Michailidou and T. Marketou in collaboration with Vitale and McNamee, KASP is the first intensive survey ever conducted on Kos with modern archaeological methodologies (McNamee *et alii* 2021; Vitale *et alii* 2021).

Site location

The toponym Asklopis originally indicated a low limestone hill, located on the slopes of Mount Dikaïos. At the time of Morricone's excavations, the name Asklopis was also used to refer to the wider region situated between the rivers Anavolia, currently called Tsoukalaria, and Platys (Morricone 1975: 261-263, fig. 210), where the pediment gradually transitions into the northeast Koan alluvial plain (figs. 1-3).

Morricone's excavations of the EBA 2 burials and the close by trial trench were executed respectively inside the riverbed and on the banks of a seasonal tributary of the Anavolia River. This small stream, which was called Glykoperama, was located circa 200 meters northeast of the Asklopis Hill (Morricone 1975: 261-271, figs. 210-224; Hope Simpson and Lazenby 1970: 57, with footnote 33). The finds from Hope Simpson and Lazenby's survey, which were collected on and around the Asklopis Hill, indicated that a settlement also existed in the vicinity of the EBA 2 cemetery. This fact was recently confirmed by KASP's work (Hope Simpson and Lazenby 1970: 55-66, figs. 5-7, pls. 19-20; McNamee *et alii* 2021: 81-82, figs. 1-2, 5).

The broader Asklopis area is characterized by sparse groups of low hilltops, easily defensible lands, naturally protected on all sides by Mount Dikaïos, and numerous water courses, which provide good water supplies (figs. 1-3). The Asklopis area also had easy access to grazing lands, small agricultural terraces located along alluvial drainages, and, possibly, wild game (Vitale 2013: 49-51; Vitale *et alii* 2017: 234-236, figs. 5-7).

Recent geological prospections have demonstrated that natural resources for the production of different types of artifacts existed in the uplands around the Asklopis. These included workable rocks for the manufacture of stone tools, such as hammerstones and ground stone tools, as well

³ Vitale 2013; Vitale 2019; Vitale *et alii* 2017; Vitale and Morrison 2018.

⁴ This program includes: (a) Petrographic and neutron activation analyses of the pottery finds; (b) Analyses of DNA and carbon, nitrogen, and strontium isotopes from the human osteological remains from the EBA 2 burials; and (c) Radiocarbon analyses of the bones from the same EBA 2 cemetery (see Vitale *et alii* 2017: 236-238, 246-248, 254-259, tabs. X, XIII, XV-XVIII, figs. 5-8, 18-24).

as raw clays, river sands, and suitable rock tempering materials for the manufacture of ceramic vessels (Vitale *et alii* 2017: 236; Vitale 2019: 10-14, tab. 4, pl. 3).

While easily defensible and provided with a diverse range of resources, because of the hilly terrain, the dearth of large plateaus, and the small size of possible agricultural terraces, the Asklepis area was not suitable for the construction of large settlements. Instead, in the FN 1 to EBA 2, the LBA, and the EIA periods, this region was an ideal setting for small rural villages, which may have been particularly important in certain seasons, for example for upland grazing (Vitale *et alii* 2017: 236; Vitale 2018: 57-62).

Koan Ceramic Classification System

Locally manufactured and imported vessels from the Asklepis can be identified and described according to the Koan Ceramic Classification System (KCCS), a comprehensive analytical tool organized according to four hierarchically applied criteria (tabs. 1-3)⁵. These criteria include: (a) Pottery tradition (Local vs. Entangled vs. Minoan vs. Mycenaean vs. Greek EIA); (b) Decorative treatment (Painted vs. Unpainted); (c) Color (Pale vs. Grey vs. Red vs. Dark vs. Black); and (d) Size of non-plastic inclusions ("Fine" vs. "Medium-Coarse" vs. "Coarse")⁶. The benefits of the KCCS for the initial identification and classification of large pottery assemblages are simplicity, consistency, and flexibility. In addition, this system provides a ready and easy tool to assess and compare major cultural trends in deposits from different contexts and regions (for a similar approach, see Rutter 1995: 13-14, with previous bibliography).

While the cultural associations of Minoan, Mycenaean, and Greek EIA pottery traditions can be easily understood based on their names, some clarification is needed about the character of Koan Local and Entangled Tradition classes (see Vitale 2017: 158; Vitale 2018: especially 27-37). The main features of Koan Local Tradition ceramics

were elaborated during the time span between the FN 1 and the EBA 2 phases, when Kos belonged to a cultural assemblage included in the south-east Aegean-Southwest Coastal Anatolian Region (SASCAR). In this period, the SASCAR shared many common features with west and even central Anatolian cultures, while links with Crete and the Greek mainland were limited. Koan Local Tradition classes continued to be manufactured at least up until the end of the LBA and remained the most widespread component of the island's ceramic assemblage until LBA IIIA1, after which Mycenaean Tradition vessels largely outnumbered all other potting traditions on Kos (Vitale 2017: 161-168; Vitale 2018: 31-32). Entangled Tradition ceramics, on the other hand, were the outcome of processes of cultural fusion between local and Minoan ceramic traditions. They were manufactured on Kos from LBA IA Early to LBA IIIA1 and reflect the occurrence of intense contacts between Kos and Crete between the 17th and the early 14th century B.C. (Vitale 2018: 86-102).

LBA and EIA ceramics

In this section, the LBA and EIA ceramics from Morricone's and Hope Simpson and Lazenby's investigations in the Asklepis area are presented in chronological order, according to their morphology, decoration, pottery tradition, provenance, and function (tab. 4). These materials are all unstratified and thus, for the purpose of this study, they are presented and discussed as a single group, even if they were retrieved in the contexts of two different types of projects (see Vitale and Morrison 2018: 41). Data concerning provenance are established based on the macroscopic analysis of fabrics, surface treatments, paints, and decorative choices.

LBA IA

Two fully or nearly fully preserved vessels and one pottery fragment can be assigned to the LBA IA Early sub-phase (tab. 4). In addition, two whole vessels and one body sherd can be dated to the LBA IA Early to Mature sub-phases.

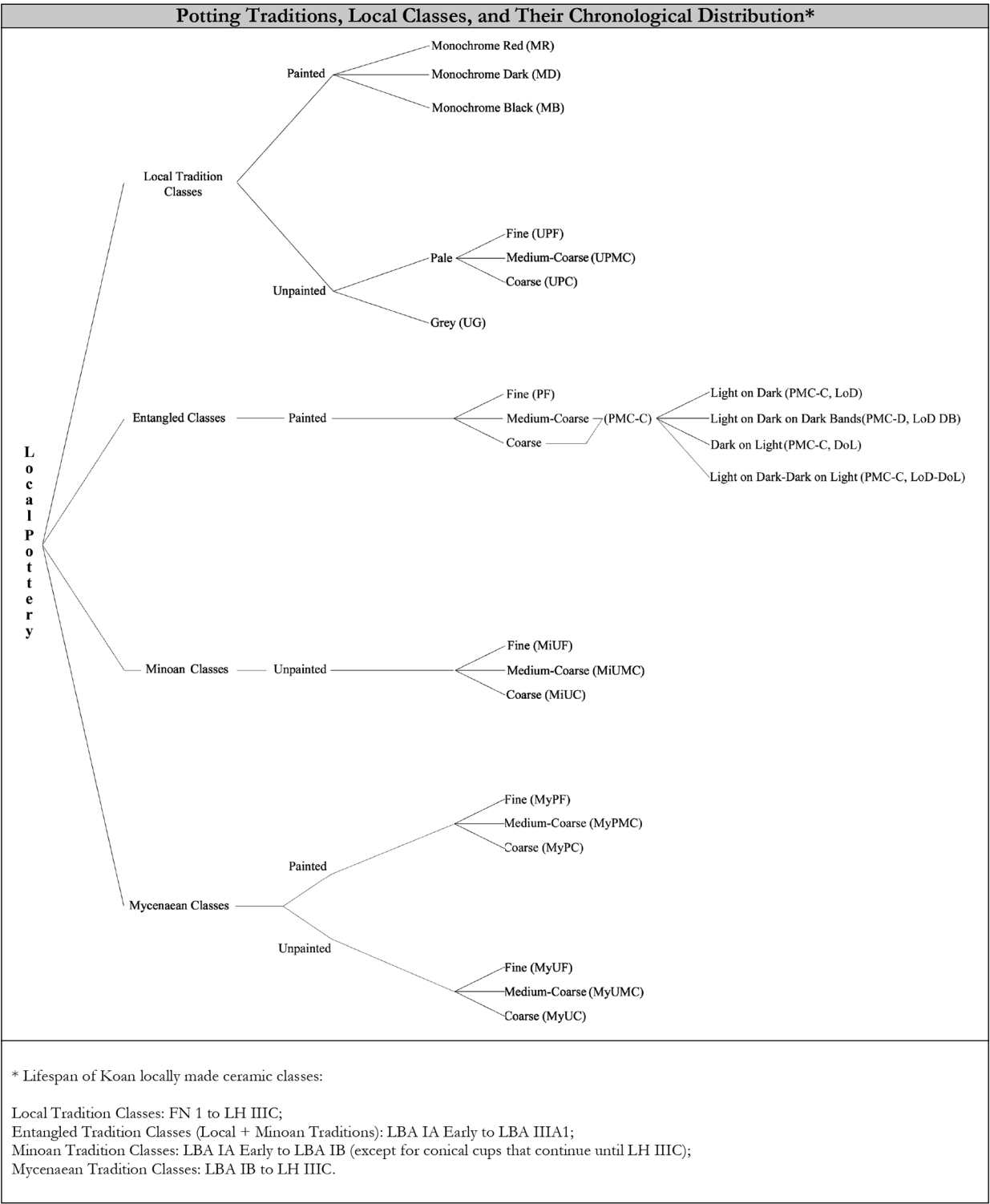
The first LBA IA Early vessel belongs to the Koan Entangled Tradition. It is a Painted Fine (PF) deep semiglobular cup with a vertical strap handle (fig. 4a). This specimen is decorated with a wavy band obtained through the so-called dipped rim technique. PF deep semiglobular cups have many parallels at the nearby settlement of the "Serraglio", where they have been recovered from several stratified LBA IA Early

⁵ Vitale 2017; Vitale 2018: 27-32; Vitale *et alii* 2017: 255, tab. XV; Vitale and Morrison 2017: 76, tab. 8:1; Vitale and Morrison 2018: 41, tab. 2.

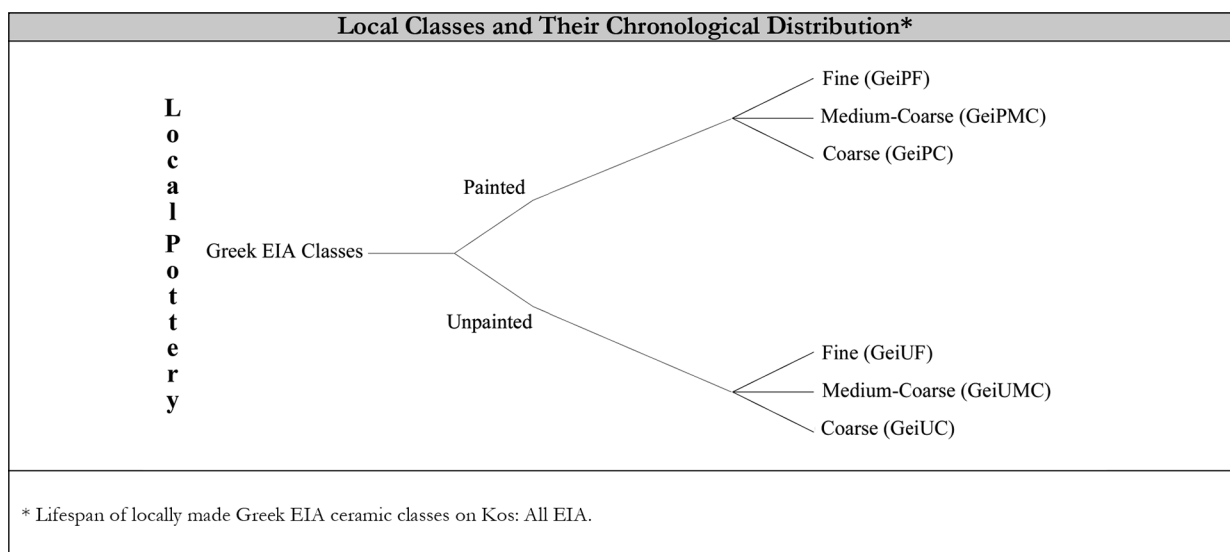
⁶ The term "fine" refers to fabrics with inclusions no larger than 0.002 m. The term "medium-coarse" designates fabrics with the largest inclusions ranging between 0.002 and 0.004 m. The term "coarse" indicates fabrics with inclusions larger than 0.004 m. For these definitions, see also Vitale 2017: 153 (with previous references).

contexts from both Morricone’s and Marketou’s excavations (Marketou 1990: 103, fig. 5:c; Vitale 2018: 29, 86-87, 97-102, col. pls. 3-4, figs. 9:e-h, 13:e-n, 29:c-e, pls. 3:e-h, 8:b-l, 24:c-e, with previous bibliography).

The second LBA IA Early vessel from the Asklopis is a Minoan Unpainted Medium-Coarse (MiUMC) lamp with pinched spout (fig. 4b) that is reminiscent of Middle Minoan III to Late Minoan IA Early specimens from Kommos



Tab. 1. Koan Ceramic classification system: locally made classes (FN 1 to LH IIIC).



Tab. 2. Koan Ceramic classification system: locally made Greek EIA classes.

and Mallia on Crete (Van de Moortel 1997: 213-214, no. C9039, fig. 78; Darcque, Van de Moortel, and Schmidt 2014: 91, no. 2324-001, pl. 81:c). The handle of the Koan lamp is not preserved. The Asklopis spouted lamp has several close parallels from the nearby settlement of the “Serraglio”, although none of them come from a stratified context (Morricone 1975: 283, fig. 247). MiUMC lamps add to the assemblage of locally made Cretan tradition domestic shapes used on Kos in the early LBA period, the most popular of which were Minoan Unpainted Fine (MiUF) conical cups, as well as MiUMC fireboxes, braziers, and tripod cooking pots with flat bottoms (Vitale 2017: 166, pls. 3:a, c-f, 8:d-e, g-i).

The pottery fragment dating to LBA IA Early is the body sherd from a Minoan Imported Painted Fine (MiImpPF) closed shape decorated in a Light-on-Dark (LoD) polychrome technique, which includes the use of added red paint (fig. 4c). The preserved part features the maximum expansion of the vessel and exhibits a red band framed by two white lines.

The LBA IA Early to Mature whole vessels consist of a MiUF conical cup of Furumark Shape (FS) 204 (fig. 4d) and a linearly decorated Entangled Tradition Painted Medium-Coarse (PMC) Dark-on-Light (DoL) beaked jug (fig. 4e). The pottery fragment dating to LBA IA Early to Mature is the body sherd of another linear Entangled Tradition PMC DoL closed shape (fig. 4f). Locally made MiUF conical cups FS 204 were extremely popular at the “Serraglio”, especially in LBA IA Mature contexts. Similarly,

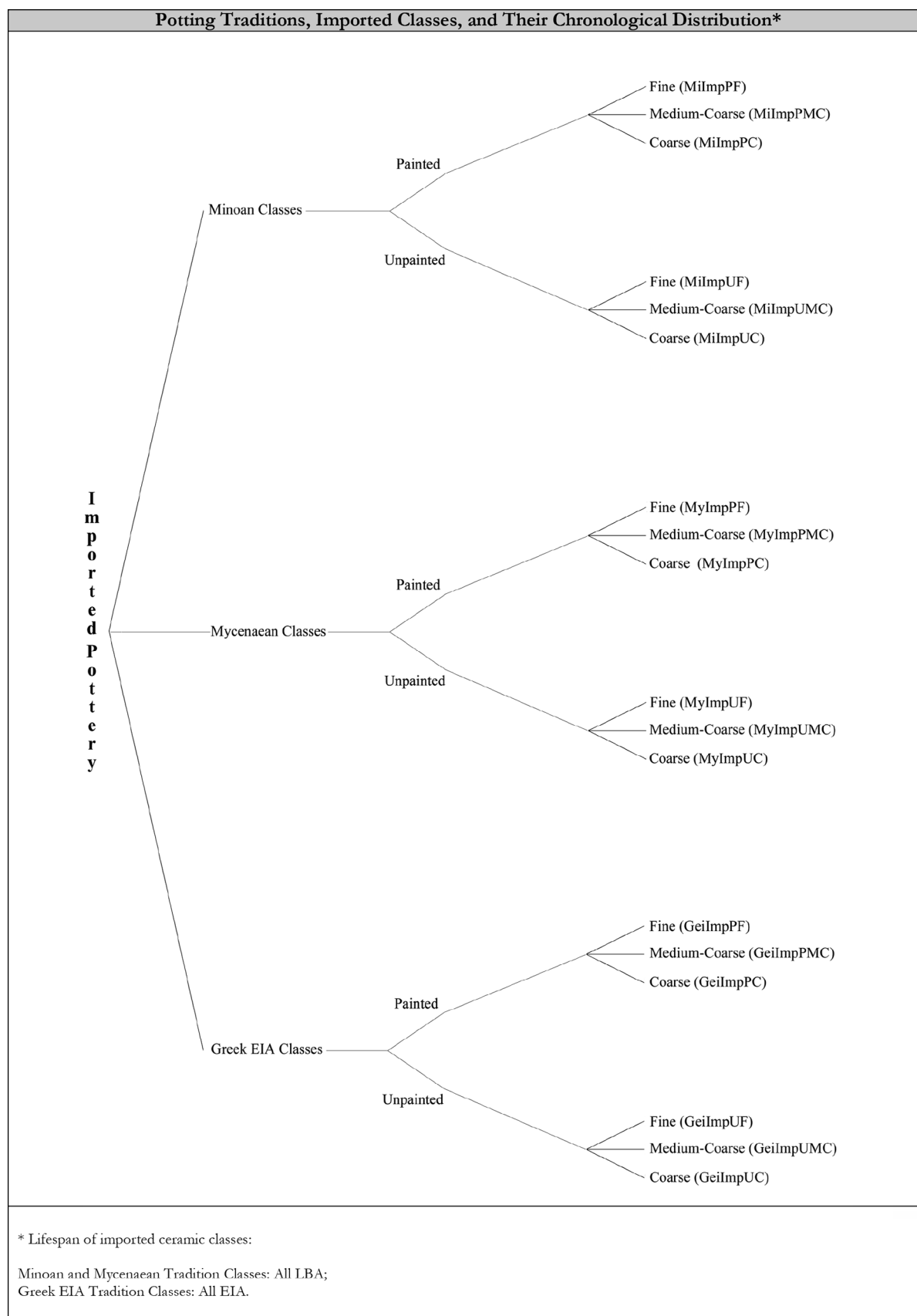
Koan PMC vessels have many parallels from the “Serraglio” and the wider Aegean, where they have been retrieved from a variety of stratified contexts. PMC shapes began to be manufactured on Kos in LBA IA Early and had their production peak in LBA IA Mature, where the best parallels for the Asklopis specimens belong (see Marketou 1990: 104; Marketou 2010: 764; Vitale 2018: 29-30, 87-97, 98-102, col. pls. 5-7, 11:a, 12:b, 13, figs. 9:a-b, d, 10:b, 11:a-b, 12, 13:a-c, 15-17, 18:a-f, 19-28, 30-38, pls. 3:a-b, d, 4:b, 5:a-b, 6-7, 8:a, 9-12, 13:a-f, 14-23, with previous bibliography).

As far as function is concerned, almost all the LBA IA materials from the Asklopis belong to fine or medium-coarse tableware or tableware/storage vessels for drinking or serving purposes (tab. 4). The only exception is the MiUMC spouted lamp, which can be classified as a domestic utilitarian vessel. It is interesting to notice that the LBA IA pottery from the Asklopis reflects exclusively Minoan and Entangled traditions. All vessels were locally made, except for the MiImpPF LoD polychrome closed shape, which is a Cretan import.

Late Helladic (LH) IIIA2 to LH IIIB

LH IIIA2 and LH IIIB sherds, dating to the Palatial phases of Mycenaean civilization on the Greek mainland, are well represented at the Asklopis (tab. 4). No whole vessel assignable to these periods survives from the site.

The most common shape is the kylix FS 264/265/266/267 (fig. 5a-d), which totals four My-



Tab. 3. Koan Ceramic classification system: significant imported LBA and EIA classes.

Shape	Function	Furumark Shape	Decorative Treatment	Furumark Motif/Decoration	Maximum Date Range		Tradition - Provenance	Class	Inventory Number	Figure Number
Seniglobular cup	Tableware, Drinking	-	Patterned	Wavy band	LBA IA Early	LBA IA Early	Entangled - Local	PF	1281	Fig. 4a
Lamp	Domestic, Utilitarian	-	Unpainted	-	LBA IA Early	LBA IA Early	Minoan - Local	MUMC	1342	Fig. 4b
Closed shape	Tableware, Serving	-	Linear	-	LBA IA Early	LBA IA Early	Minoan - Crete	MImpPF	06-01-006	Fig. 4c
Conical cup	Tableware, Drinking	204	Unpainted	-	LBA IA Early	LBA IA Mature*	Minoan - Local	MiUF	06-10-001	Fig. 4d
Beaked jug	Tableware/Storage, Serving	-	Linear	-	LBA IA Early	LBA IA Mature*	Entangled - Local	PMC, DoL	1290	Fig. 4e
Closed shape	Tableware/Storage, Serving	-	Linear	-	LBA IA Early	LBA IA Mature*	Entangled - Local	PMC, DoL	06-01-005	Fig. 4f
Kylix	Tableware, Drinking	264/265/266/267	Unpainted	-	LH IIIA2	LH IIIB	Mycenaean - Local	MyUF	06-03-004	Fig. 5a
Kylix	Tableware, Drinking	264/265/266/267	Unpainted	-	LH IIIA2	LH IIIB	Mycenaean - Local	MyUF	06-03-006	Fig. 5b
Kylix	Tableware, Drinking	264/265/266/267	Unpainted	-	LH IIIA2	LH IIIB	Mycenaean - Local	MyUF	06-03-005	Fig. 5c
Kylix	Tableware, Drinking	264/265/266/267	Unpainted	-	LH IIIA2	LH IIIB	Mycenaean - Local	MyUF	06-03-003	Fig. 5d
Deep Bowl	Tableware, Eating	284	Unpainted	-	LH IIIB	LH IIIB	Mycenaean - Local	MyUF	06-03-007	Fig. 5e
Bowl, miscellaneous	Tableware, Eating	-	Unpainted	-	LH IIIA2	LH IIIB	Mycenaean - Local	MyUF	06.03.002	Fig. 5f
Stemmed krater	Tableware, Mixing	8/9	Monochrome	-	LH IIIA2	LH IIIB	Mycenaean - Local	MyPF	06.04.001	Fig. 5g
Jug/Amphora	Domestic, Cooking	65/66	Unpainted	-	LH IIIA2	LH IIIB	Mycenaean - Local	MyUMC	06.05.001	Fig. 5h
Amphora/Jug/Hydria	Tableware, Serving	69/115/128	Unpainted	-	LH IIIC Middle/Late	LH IIIC Middle/Late	Mycenaean - Local	MyUF	06-03-001	Fig. 6a
Amphora/Jug/Hydria	Tableware/Storage, Serving	69/106/128	Patterned	FM 53, Wavy band	LH IIIC Middle/Late	LH IIIC Middle/Late	Mycenaean - Local	MyPF	06-01-001	Fig. 6b
Closed shape	Tableware/Storage, Serving	-	Patterned	?	LH IIIC Middle/Late	LH IIIC Middle/Late	Mycenaean - Local	MyPF	06-01-004	Fig. 6c
Closed shape	Tableware/Storage, Serving	-	Linear	-	LH IIIC Middle/Late	LH IIIC Middle/Late	Mycenaean - Local	MyPF	06-02-008	Fig. 6d
Closed shape	Tableware/Storage, Serving	-	Patterned (7+ concentric circles)	-	LPG	LPG	Greek EIA - Local	GeiPF	06-10-002	Fig. 6e

Abbreviations for classes:
 PF: Painted Fine; MiUMC: Minoan Unpainted Medium-Coarse; MImpPF: Minoan Imported Painted Fine; MiUF: Minoan Unpainted Fine; PMC DoL: Painted Medium-Coarse Dark-on-Light; MyUF: Mycenaean Unpainted Fine; MyPF: Mycenaean Painted Fine; MyUMC: Mycenaean Unpainted Medium-Coarse; GeiPF: Greek EIA PF.

* LBA IA Mature is the most likely date for this specimen.

Tab. 4. Tabular catalogue of LBA and EIA pottery finds.

cenaean Unpainted Fine (MyUF) examples (Hope Simpson and Lazenby 1970: 57; Vitale 2021: 534, fig. 8). There are also: an unpainted (as preserved) base to a MyUF deep bowl FS 284, exclusively datable within LH IIIB (fig. 5e); a rim sherd to a MyUF miscellaneous bowl (fig. 5f); and a monochrome (as preserved) everted rim to a Mycenaean Painted Fine (MyPF) stemmed krater FS 8/9 (fig. 5g). Finally, a short-everted rim sherd to a Mycenaean Unpainted Medium-Coarse (MyUMC) cooking jug or amphora FS 65/66 (fig. 5h) should also date between LH IIIA2 and LH IIIB.

Most of the LH IIIA2 to LH IIIB materials from the Asklopis belong to fine tableware drinking/eating and mixing vessels (tab. 4). The only exception is represented by the MyUMC jug/amphora FS 65/66, which can be classified as a domestic cooking vessel. It is also worth noting that all LH IIIA2 to LH IIIB vases from the Asklopis were locally made and reflect Mycenaean potting traditions.

LH IIIC Middle/Late

At the Asklopis, the Postpalatial phases of Mycenaean civilization are represented by four fragments (tab. 4), all of which belong to closed shapes (for LH IIIC Middle/Late pottery from Kos, see Mountjoy 1999: 1079-1081, figs. 1106-1125, figs. 452-461; Vitale 2023). They include: a hollowed rim to a MyUF amphora/jug/hydria FS 69/115/128 (fig. 6a); one MyPF amphora/jug/

hydria FS 69/106/128 decorated with a wavy band of Furumark Motif (FM) 53 on the handle (fig. 6b); one unidentified MyPF body sherd with an unknown patterned decoration (fig. 6c); and one unidentified MyPF body sherd with a linear decoration (fig. 6d). The amphorae/jugs/hydriae FS 69/106/115/128 can both be stylistically assigned to LH IIIC Middle/Late. As far as the unpainted fragment is concerned, such a chronological placement is based on the occurrence of the hollowed rim (fig. 6a). In the case of the patterned fragment, the LH IIIC Middle/Late date is based on the wavy band FM 53 decoration and the surface treatment (fig. 6b). The latter is typical of the final phases of LH IIC on Kos, when motifs were often executed with a shiny black to brown paint on a yellow slipped background (Vitale 2023: 69-70, figs. 13-14).

The other two body sherds from closed shapes (fig. 6c-d) have a similar surface treatment to that of the patterned amphora/jug/hydria FS 69/106/128. For this reason, they should also be assigned to the LH IIIC Middle/Late phase, although an earlier date within LH IIIC cannot be completely ruled out.

All the LH IIIC Middle/Late materials from the Asklopis belong to fine tableware or tableware/storage serving vessels (tab. 4). They also all reflect Mycenaean potting traditions and were all locally made.

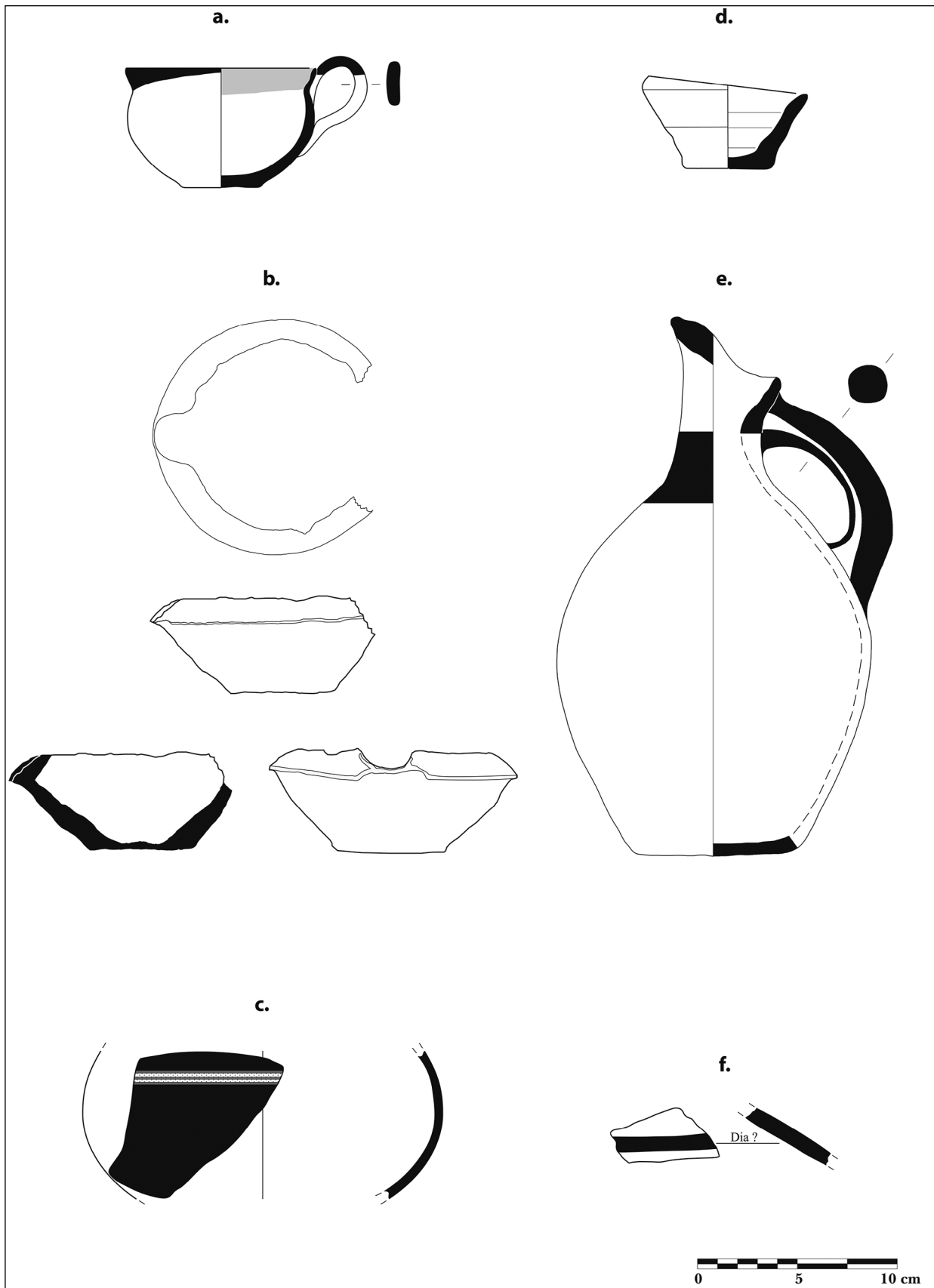


Fig. 4. LBA IA pottery from the Asklopis (M. Rossin, S. Regio, A. Trecarichi, C. McNamee, T. Ross, and C. Kolb).

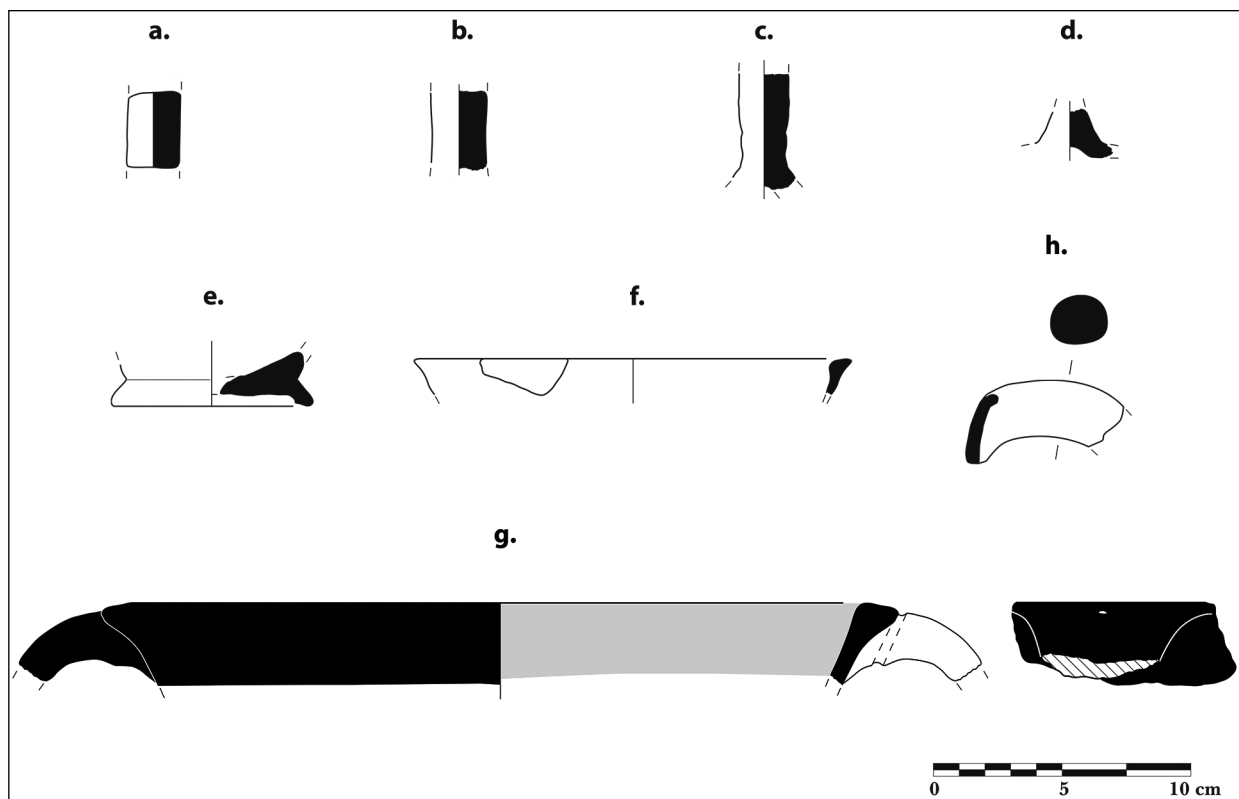


Fig. 5. LH IIIA2 to LH IIIB pottery from the Asklepis (M. Rossin, C. Kolb, T. Ross, and C. McNamee).

EIA

The only fragment from the Asklepis dating to this period is the body sherd from a Greek EIA Painted Fine (GeiPF) closed shape decorated with 7+ concentric circles (tab. 4; fig. 6e). This piece can be stylistically assigned to the Late Protogeometric (LPG) phase. In terms of function, the GeiPF vessel from the Asklepis is a tableware/storage serving vessel (tab. 4; for LPG pottery from Kos, see Morricone 1982; Lemos 2002: 22-23, pls. 58-59; Vitale 2023). It was locally manufactured following traditions and styles originating on the Greek mainland.

LBA Small finds

In addition to pottery, two LBA stray bronze tools (fig. 7) were also recovered at the Asklepis, a “balance scale” and an “ear-scoop” (Vitale 2019: 15, 17, tab. 4, pl. 4:b-c). The former consisted of a chain and a pan (fig. 7a), while the latter was provided with a spoon-like end on one side and a tip on the other and was decorated with multiple grooves (fig. 7b). Balance scales are known from LBA tombs and hoards from the Greek mainland, Crete, and Cyprus. The Asklepis ear-scoop is very

similar to another stray specimen from the “Ser-raglio”, dating to the LBA (Blackwell 2011: 253, 276, 472-473, fig. 5:1-2; Vitale *et alii* 2017: 272, tab. XIX, fig. 25:k; Vitale 2019: 15).

A weighing function has been suggested for balance scales, while a cosmetic purpose has been proposed for ear-scoops, although scholars do not unanimously agree on what the actual use of these items was, besides their traditional names. It has been hypothesized that the Asklepis specimens could have been used in connection to one-another, with the content of the spoon-like end of the ear-scoop being poured and/or spread on the balance pan, in order to be weighted (Vitale 2019: 15). This suggestion remains highly speculative, considering that the find spot of each of these items is unknown. While the LBA chronology assigned to the Asklepis small finds is certainly correct, it is impossible to provide a more precise date within this broad range for these objects.

Discussion and final statements

The materials presented in this article provide useful information about human activities in the

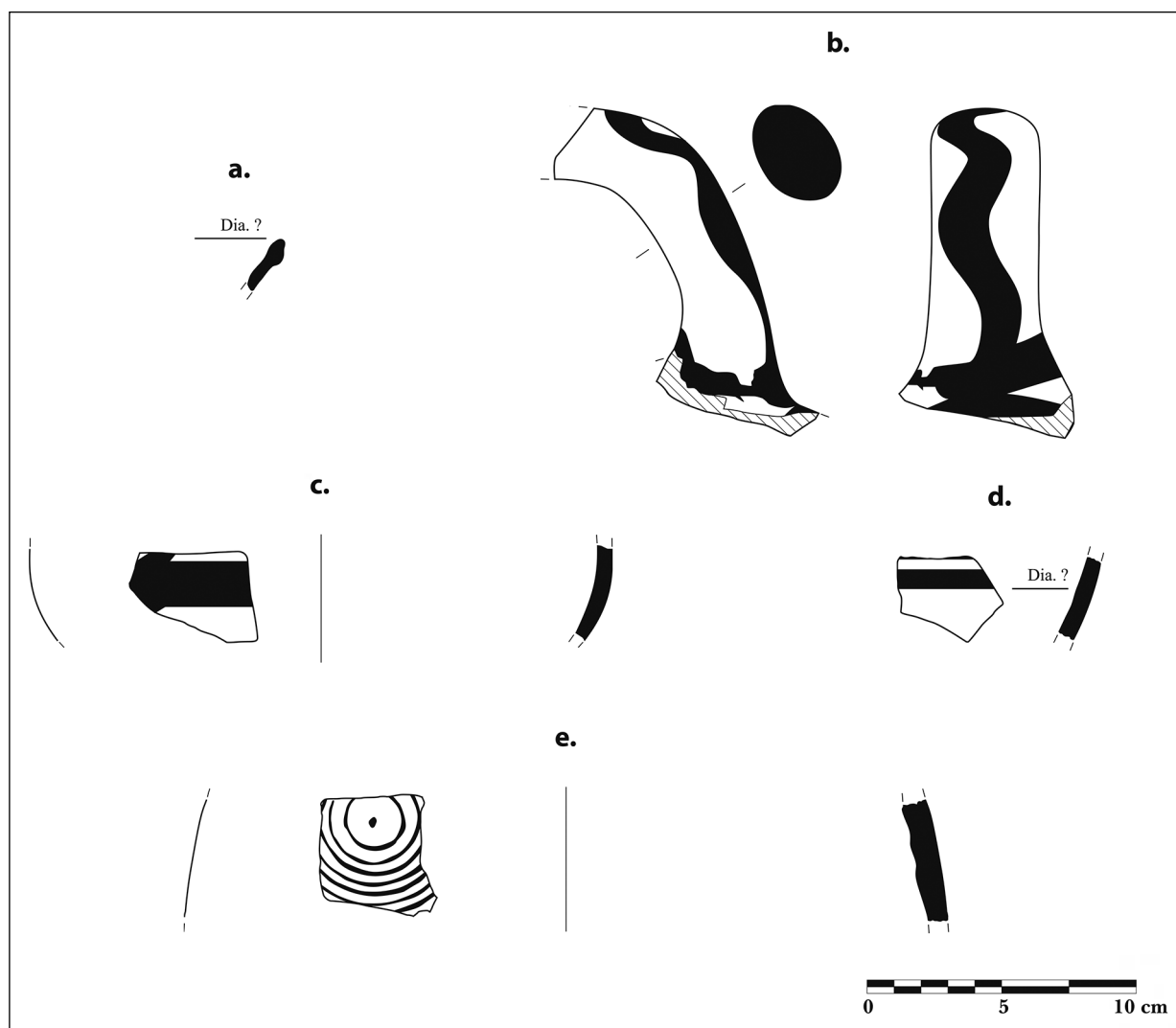


Fig. 6. LH IIIC Middle/Late and LPG pottery from the Asklopis (M. Rossin, S. Regio, A. Trecarichi, and T. Ross).

Asklopis area between the 17th and the 10th century B.C. (tab. 4). They indicate that the site was surely used for most of the LBA and in the EIA

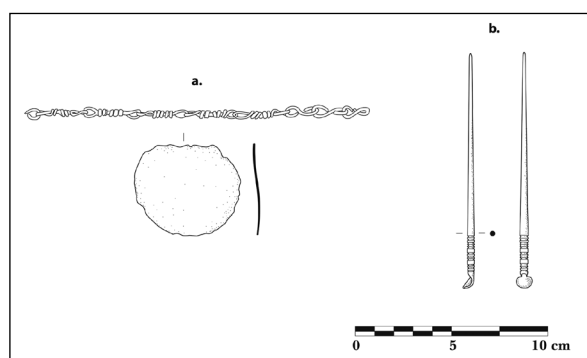


Fig. 7. LBA small finds from the Asklopis (S. Regio and T. Ross).

(tab. 5). They also show that recovered ceramic fragments were almost all locally manufactured and belonged to several distinct potting traditions, including Entangled, Minoan, Mycenaean, and Greek EIA classes. In the available sample, the lack of Koan Local Tradition vessels is noteworthy. Moreover, except for the MiUMC lamp and the MyUMC cooking jug/amphora FS 65/66, all examined sherds were tableware or tableware/storage vessels for eating, drinking, or serving purposes.

These data must all be considered in the light of the biases affecting the evidence at our disposal. The lack of Local Tradition vessels and the scantiness of domestic shapes, covering storage, cooking, and other miscellaneous utilitarian functions, are most likely due to the sample size, as well as to Morricone's discard and Hope Simpson and

Lazenby's collection strategies. After excavations, Morriconi may have simply gotten rid of most unpainted and medium-coarse to coarse sherds, especially if not immediately resembling Minoan, Mycenaean, and EIA shapes. Hope Simpson and Lazenby may have operated in similar ways, picking up mostly painted fragments or fine unpainted feature sherds.

The absence of LBA II-LBA IIIA1, LH IIIC Early, Early Protogeometric, and Middle Protogeometric materials should not be considered as definitive proof for occupational gaps in these periods (tabs. 4-5), but rather as the outcome of the limited number of available materials and the dearth of contextual data. In fact, represented phases, including LBA IA, LH IIIA2 to LH IIIB, LH IIIC Middle/Late, and LPG (tabs. 4-5), may simply reflect the most intense periods of cultural, demographic, economic, and socio-political expansion at the nearby major settlements of the "Serraglio" and Ayios Panteleimon (figs. 1, 3)⁷. The emphasis in the occurrence of Minoan and Entangled Tradition vessels during LBA IA and in the presence of Mycenaean Tradition vessels during the time span between LH IIIA2 and LH IIIC Middle/Late also follows similar cultural trends to those known from the "Serraglio" and Ayios Panteleimon (Vitale *et alii* 2021: 122-124, figs. 17-21, tabs. XII, XIV; Vitale, McNamee, and Dudlik 2022: 156-158, 160-162, with previous bibliography).

Recent fieldwork by KASP has demonstrated the existence of a complex network of second tier sites in the northeast Koan region, which were organized around these two urban centers (Vitale *et alii* 2021: 117-119, figs. 9, 11). While Ayios Panteleimon was larger than the "Serraglio", the hierarchy between these settlements still needs to be fully established. It is evident, however, that the "Serraglio" and Ayios Panteleimon controlled the western and eastern ends of the wide gulf extending from Cape Ammoudia, also known as Lambi, and Cape Louros (figs. 1, 3). In this respect, they did not only overlook the rich agricultural resources

Chronological Sequence		Approximate Synchronisms	
Phases with Human Activities	Asklopis	Crete	Greek Mainland
I	FN 1-EBA 2	FN I-EM IIB (beginning)	FN I-EH IIB (beginning)
GAP	EBA 3-MBA	EM IIB-MM IIIA	EH IIB-MH III Early
II:1	LBA IA Early-LBA IA Mature	MM IIIB-LM IA	MH III Late-LH I
GAP (?)	LBA IB-LBA IIIA1	LM IB-LM IIIA1	LH IIA-LH IIIA1
II:2	LH IIIA2-LH IIIB	LM IIIA2-LM IIIB	LH IIIA2-LH IIIB
GAP (?)	LH IIIC Early	LM IIIC Early	LH IIIC Early
II:3	LH IIIC Middle/Late	LM IIIC Late Subminoan	LH IIIC Middle-Late
GAP (?)	EPG-MPG	Subminoan-EPG	EPG-MPG
III:1	LPG		LPG
Keys Kos. FN: Final Neolithic; EBA: Early Bronze Age; MBA: Middle Bronze Age; LBA: Late Bronze Age. Crete. FN: Final Neolithic; EM: Early Minoan; MM: Middle Minoan; LM: Late Minoan. Greek Mainland. FN: Final Neolithic; EH: Early Helladic; MH: Middle Helladic; LH: Late Helladic. All. EPG: Early Protogeometric; MPG: Middle Protogeometric; LPG: Late Protogeometric.			

Tab. 5. The FN 1 to LPG chronological sequence at the Asklopis.

es of the northeast Koan alluvial plain, but also controlled the economically crucial trade routes that connected Rhodes and Miletus via Kos (Vitale *et alii* 2021).

Current data suggest that during phases of growth at the "Serraglio" and Ayios Panteleimon, the number of LBA secondary sites around them also increased, marking an expansion of dispersed small rural locations on the pediment, as well as on the hill slopes and ridges of Mount Dikaioi (Vitale *et alii* 2021: 126-127). As indicated by the materials presented in this article, the Asklopis must have been one of these locations and possibly one of the most active and enduring sites.

The importance of the Asklopis during the LBA and the EIA (tab. 5) was possibly based on three distinct factors. First, the site was known since the FN 1 to EBA 2, when it represented one of the most vibrant villages on northeast Kos (Vitale and Morrison 2018: 60-61). Second, because of the natural resources provided by its region, including access to fresh waters, grazing lands, and raw materials for the manufacture of pottery and stone tools, the Asklopis may have provided a convenient seasonal base for different types of LBA and EIA activities centered around the "Serraglio" and Ayios Panteleimon. Last but not least, in times of perceived danger, the naturally protected location of the Asklopis, overlooking the channel that separates Kos from Anatolia, would have provided a valuable shelter for the communities normally residing at the two larger northeast Koan settlements of the "Serraglio" and Ayios Panteleimon (see McNamee *et alii* 2021: 83-84).

Concluding this brief contribution, one final observation can be added concerning the broader

⁷ Vitale *et alii* 2017: 238-241, 243-247, 278-279; Vitale, McNamee, and Dudlik 2022: 156-157, 161-162; McNamee and Vitale 2020: 240-244; Vitale 2021: 529-545, 553-555.

implications of SELAP's research. Besides the chronological sequence of the Asklopis, this article demonstrates how, through new multidisciplinary approaches, the dormant value in legacy data can be revived and provide fresh insights into current cultural questions (e.g. trends in LBA and EIA Koan settlement patterns). Indeed, as long as biases are critically considered and interpretative efforts are kept within the boundaries drawn by the limited data set, old archaeological investigations can still be relevant for our current understanding of ancient human societies.

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