

HELIKE IV

# ANCIENT HELIKE AND AIGIALEIA

PROTOHELLADIKA

The Southern and Central Greek Mainland



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# Morphology and Distribution of Pottery at the Early Helladic Settlement of Helike

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## INTRODUCTION

The excavations at the Early Helladic Helike between the years 2000-2007<sup>1</sup> have yielded a total of about 18,000 pottery fragments from the entire horizontal and vertical extent of the site (Fig. 1). These include a high number of whole and half-preserved ceramic pots, as well as a considerable number of vessels fully restored from their fragments, which was the fortunate result of the site been sealed under thick deposits, without any further disturbance after its abandonment. This collection of whole pots is an immediate and vivid demonstration of the variety of shapes, sizes and decorations used in the EH Helike, both to the scholar, but also to the local visitor and tourist. The entire ceramic material from the site has a high classificatory and statistical potential for the study and understanding of the settlement, given the variety of its qualitative and quantitative attributes. It also has a high interpretative potential for the chronocultural, spatial-organizational, technological, social and ideological assessments under study, thanks to the precise coordinates of each pot or group of fragments inside the settlement areas and within the vertical stratigraphy. I want to put particular emphasis on the significance of this specificity of *loci* for the Helike pottery, as promising for our studying the very specific social, economic and ideological *momenta* of the residents and users of each such place, alongside their background EH cultural tradition, which they shared with a wider geographical sphere.

In the light of the new data revealed by Helike, it may now be asserted that Achaea is no longer on the fringes of the "heartland" of the EH cultures, i.e. the western regions of Corinthia, the Argolid, Boeotia and Euboea, as Rutter<sup>2</sup> puts it, but, in contrast, is emerging as a central economic and social area of the northwest Peloponnese and the Corinthian Gulf. Most importantly, however, I believe, that Helike provides a further strong reason for us to go beyond the old, bipolar construct of centre-periphery<sup>3</sup> as a tool for understanding and classifying the EH settlements, and highlights an alternative hermeneutic tool for the archaeology of the Bronze Age: the inter-contextual study of the site by phase and *locus*, and the search for the internal processes and articulation of contextual data, not only at the economic, functional and statistical level, but also at the social and ideological level, in a post-processual perspective. Such an approach would enable the cultural *momentum* emerge out of the archaeological context, on the foreground of the historical continuity and the long tradition.

## MORPHOLOGY AND CULTURAL CHRONOLOGY OF THE HELIKE CERAMIC VASES

The EH pottery of Helike may be divided, in terms of gross distinctions in shape, surface treatment and macroscopic fabric, into the following basic categories: the EH III monochrome ware, painted ware, and big storage pithoi,



and the EH II light-colored ware. Of course there are multiple more subtle classes, if we are to take account of the full range of the variability of the Helike pottery features in terms of color, fabrics, surface treatments, shapes and decorative elements, which will be the subject of the final publication of the site rather than the purpose of the present paper. The chronological attributes of the above ceramic groups and their contextual associations with the stratified architectural phases of Helike correspond to concrete and distinctive subphasing within the broader EH ceramic culture attributing the site to the time span ranging from EH III at the upper deposits, to, at least, the middle of the EH II underneath, while the possibility of even earlier phases remains to be confirmed in the future.

### **Monochrome ware of EH III**

This large group includes unpainted tableware, cooking and storage vessels of the EH III period, all handmade, and manufactured with distinct choices in terms of surface treatment, fabric and pottery shapes. Their primary common feature is their slipped or slipped-and-burnished surface, usually dark (black, brown, red-brown, brown-gray, or dark red), such as the Caskey's black, gray-brown or red-brown well-burnished class.<sup>4</sup> However, lighter colors (light brown, yellowish, red) are also present. Sometimes we can observe that a dark slip has covered a light background color.

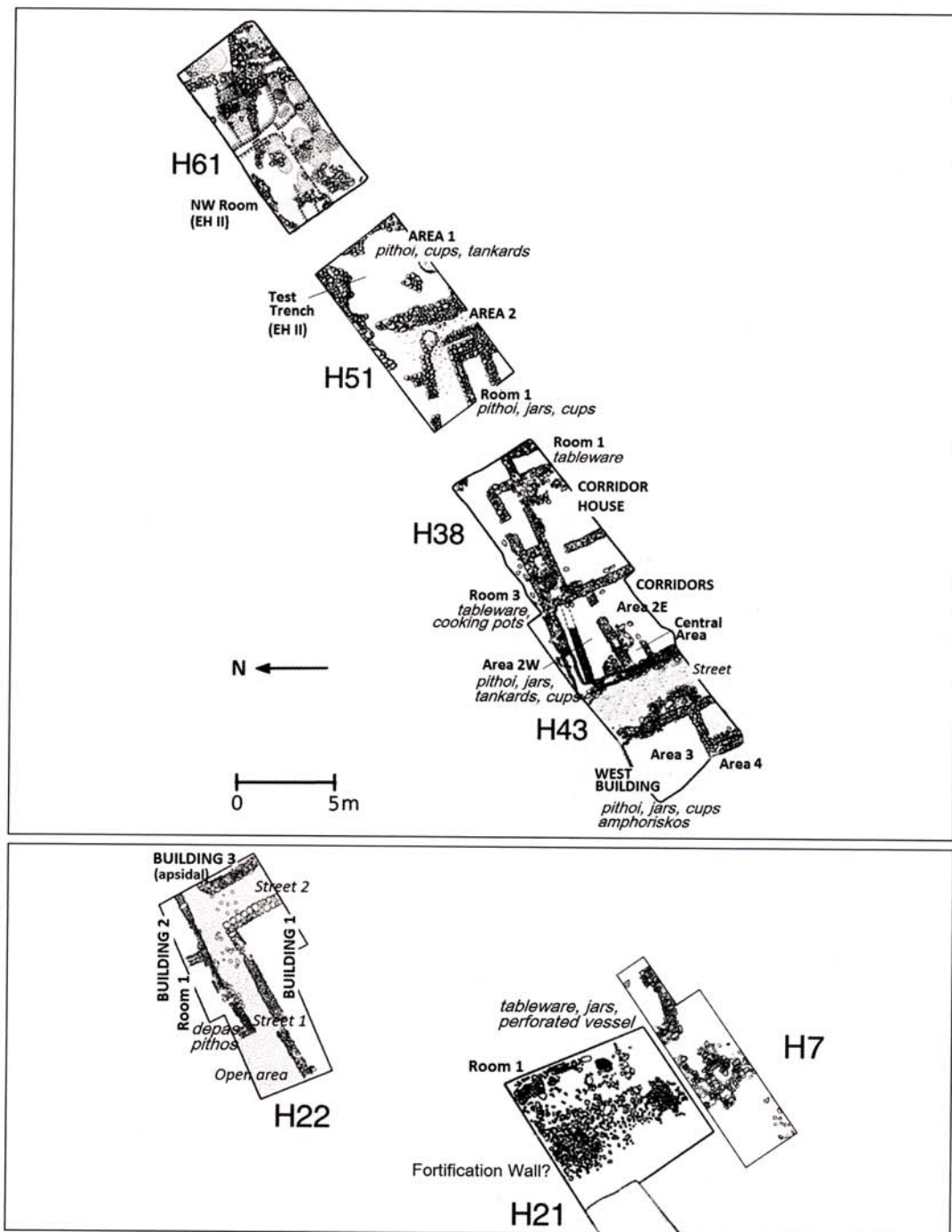
Another essential feature of this group is the medium coarse fabric, characterized by a porous and low-refined argilic part (compared to the finer Helike wares), naturally mixed or deliberately tempered with numerous non-plastic inclusions of fine to coarse grade and red or/and black color, which are macroscopically observed. Their features are comparable with grits in the cores of other Helike ceramic groups, such as the EH III storage pithoi and the EH II light-colored pottery, and have been associated with local geology by recent microscopic analyses. Actually, a usual macroscopic observation is that the lighter surface colors go with finer clay fabrics. Of course, this average macroscopic fabric group clustering demonstrates a wide range of variation towards both the coarser and the finer classes in the microscopic spectrum.<sup>5</sup>

This EH III plain tableware from Helike involves a rich collection of prominent eating and drinking shapes (Fig. 2a), such as Bass bowls, one-rim- or shoulder-handled cups, kantharoi, deep bowls with horizontal handles, tankards, handleless cups, as well as a pedestal-footed cup with perforated body. This tableware is further enriched with deeper serving, cooking and storage vessels, such as larger tankards, amphoras, and wide-mouthed and narrow-necked jars (Fig. 2b). Most shapes consist of small and medium sizes, while really big vessels are much fewer.

The above classified pots are usually contextually associated with floors (H38/Corridor House; H43/Corridors; H51/Room 1 and Area 1; H61/North Building), heavy burnings from cooking fireplaces or destruction fires (H21/Room 1; H22/Building 2: Room 1), and occasionally with immobile large storage pithoi (H43/Corridors and Area 3). We should probably imagine that the tableware was originally placed on wooden furniture, kind of shelves or on mud-brick benches, while the larger vessels may have been placed on the floor, next or aside those features.

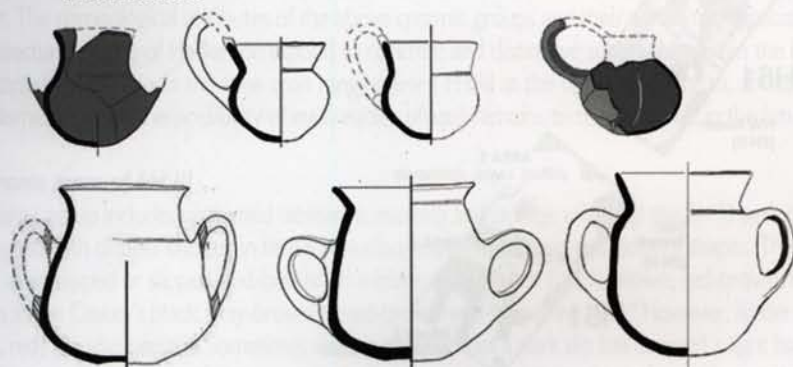
Specifically we count ten restored monochrome tankards (Figs. 2a, 3), which include numerous rim- and shoulder-handled varieties of small and medium size. The rim-handled group from Helike contains small vessels, of light-colored surface and fine fabric. They carry one or two vertical strap handles attached to the rim of a high neck. Their body is convex or squat and has a rounded base. The presence of some single-handled variants in Helike should be particularly accentuated, as this type is generally rare in other sites. To both the single- and double-rim-handled tankards of Helike, we can find some comparable features from Lerna IV, specifically within the type I.1 in terms of the location of handle(s), and the form II in terms of the rim-to-neck-to-body angularity of profile, but also from Tyrins.<sup>6</sup>

The shoulder-handled tankards from Helike are dark colored, of medium size, and have mostly hollowed bases. In terms of profile, they correspond with type III.2 of Lerna IV.<sup>7</sup> Very similar examples also come from Kolonna V,<sup>8</sup> and from Elis (New Museum).<sup>9</sup> Some equivalency can be observed with earlier examples from Aigeira,<sup>10</sup> Korakou,<sup>11</sup> and the Athenian Agora.<sup>12</sup> One of the Helike specimens has a particular stepped transition from neck to body. In general, the Helike tankards tend to have a rather curved and lightly converging profile and lack abrupt angularities.

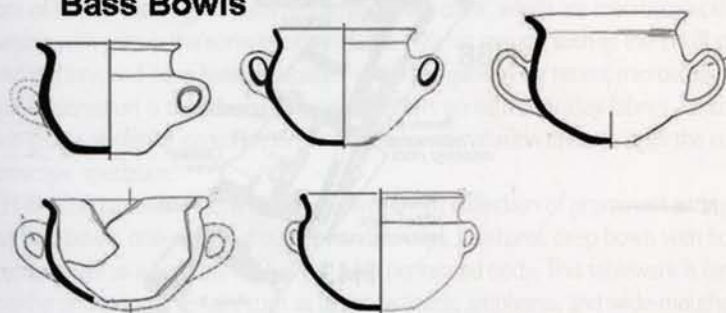


**Figure 1.** The EH Helike excavated trenches, with notification of separate areas, and the pottery found inside (adapted from Soter and Katsonopoulou, 2011: 602, fig. 10).

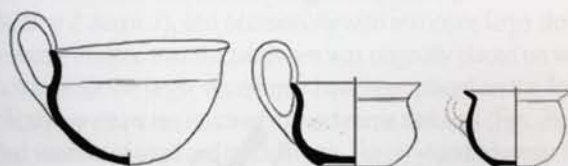
### Tankards



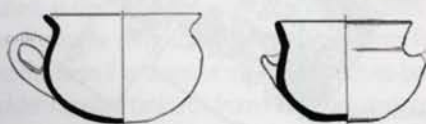
### Bass Bowls



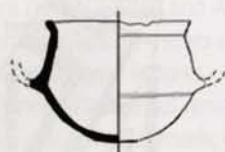
### One-Handled Cups (rim)



### One-Handled Cups (shoulder)



### Kantharos

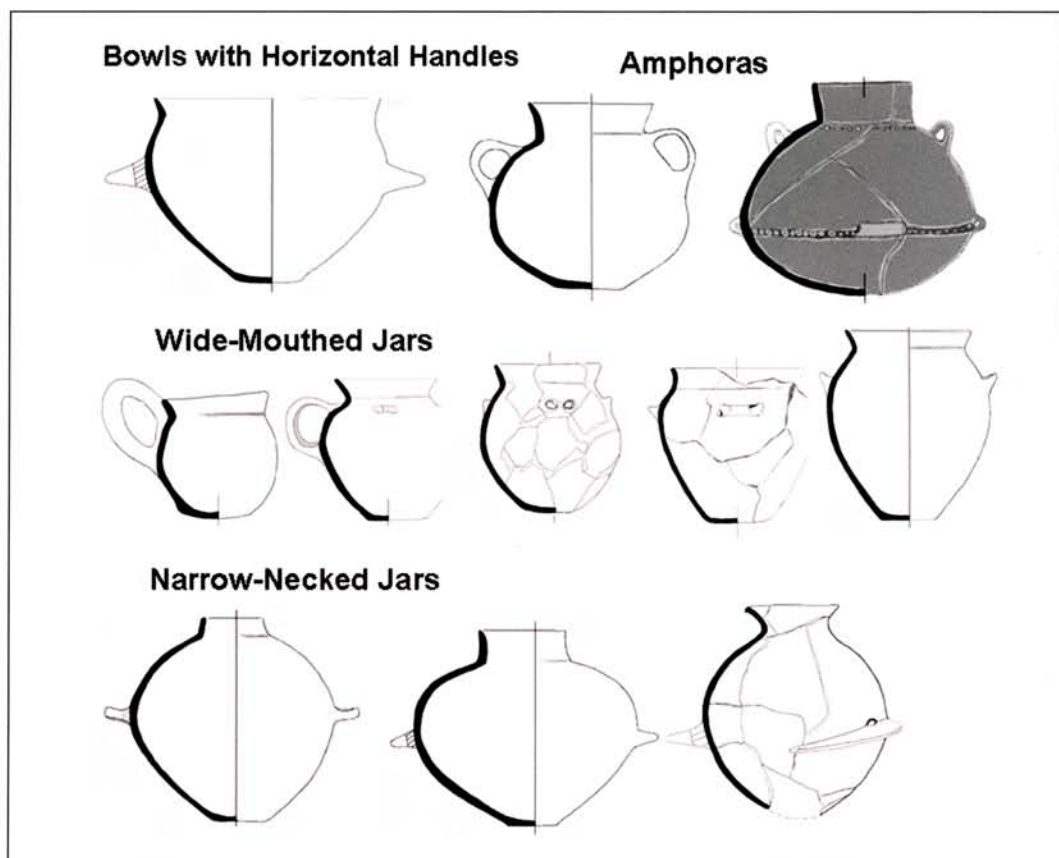


### Perforated cup



Figure 2a. Shape repertoire of the EH III open and closed shapes from Helike.





**Figure 2b.** Shape repertoire of the EH III open and closed shapes from Helike.

There is one intact tankard as well as several fragmented specimens bearing perforations at the upper part of their strap handles, a feature also observed in Elis<sup>13</sup> and Tyrins,<sup>14</sup> as well as Lerna IV,<sup>15</sup> probably indicating that the vessels could be suspended by a rope.<sup>16</sup>

Helike has produced a rich collection of various flat based cups and bowls (Figs. 1, 4-6), either one- or two-handled, which also fall within the small and medium size. They are mostly dark-colored and from a medium coarse fabric. Most popular are the Bass bowls (8 restored vessels), as is the usual term for the two-shoulder-handled pot with the convex body and the prominent strap handles on either sides. The Helike specimens (Fig. 4) are shallow to medium and have handles of roughly circular or loop profile, which are more or less high-swung. The Helike Bass bowls are reminiscent of types XII.1 (medium) and XII.2 (small and medium) from Lerna IV,<sup>17</sup> but more equivalents are coming from Kolonna V,<sup>18</sup> even the acropolis of Aigeira.<sup>19</sup> There are four vessels of the same rim-body-base profile and size, but being fragmentary and preserving either one handle, or no handle, renders their attribution to the one- or the two-handled category, or even the rim- or shoulder-handled group, quite dubious. By judging though from details of attachment location, thickness, length and inclination, they should be with most probability classified as Bass bowls.

However, numerous examples of other drinking vessels are also recorded (Figs. 5, 6). In fact, there are three examples of one-rim-handled cups, similar to types IV.1a and b of Lerna IV,<sup>20</sup> and probably one of them carries a similarly asymmetrical rim. Some equivalents are recorded from Kolonna.<sup>21</sup> There is also at least one example of the two-

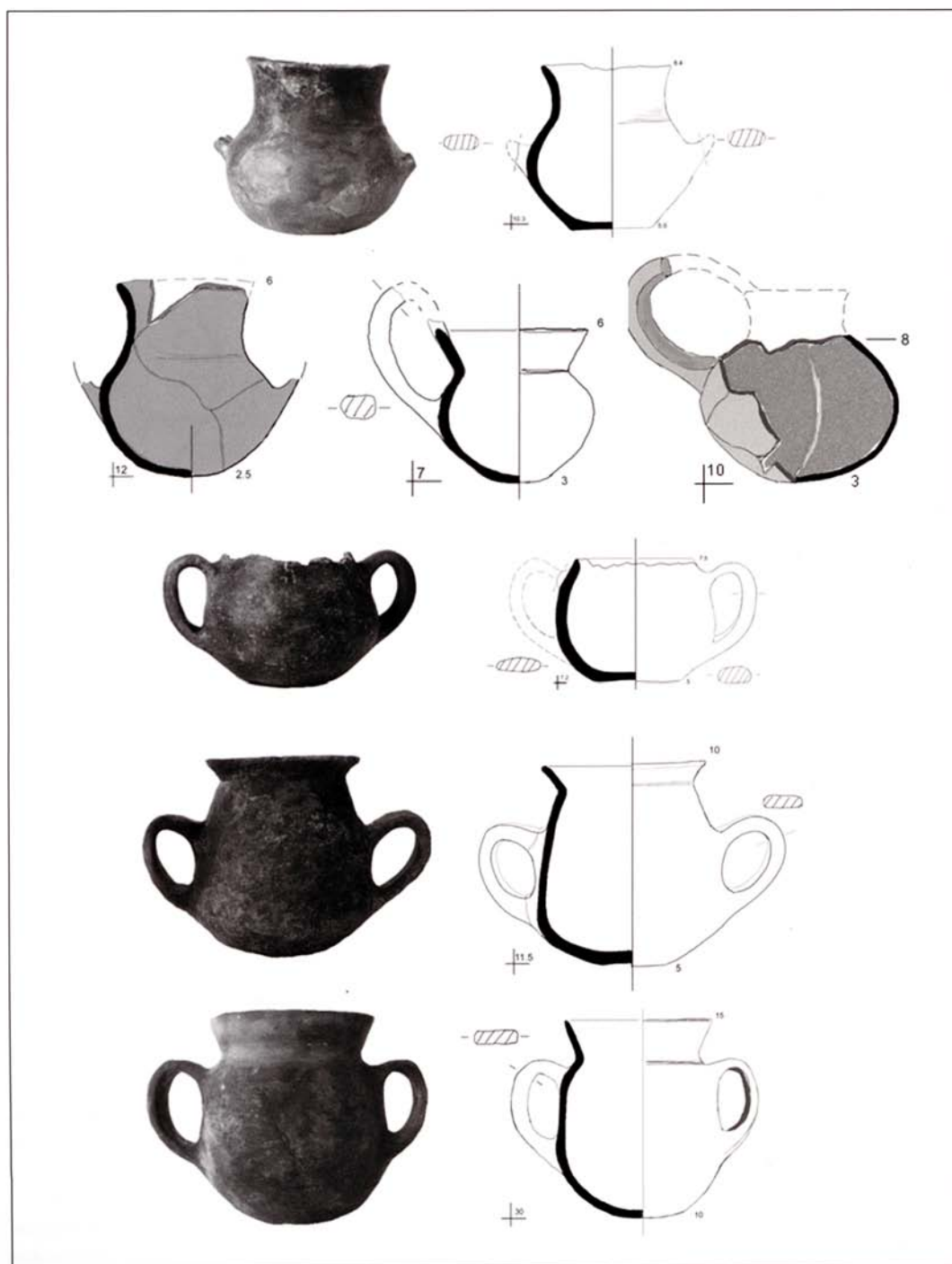


Figure 3. Restored monochrome tankards from Helike.



Figure 4. Selection of Bass bowls from Helike.

rim-handled cup type or kantharos, which is comparable with types XI.1 or 2 (medium) of Lerna IV.<sup>22</sup> Further on, there are at least four specimens of one-shoulder-handled cups which are comparable to Lerna type V.1, but shallower.<sup>23</sup> Vessels with similar profile and one or two handles are also attested in Kirrha.<sup>24</sup> Another such vessel is recorded in Thebes.<sup>25</sup>

The type of handleless bowl is also present, bearing lugs on either side. Finally, a deeper bowl with horizontal trianguloid handles is out of the range of the drinking function, and should be probably considered as more suitable for food preparation or serving. In terms of profile it is similar to type XIII.4 of Lerna IV.<sup>26</sup>

There is one specimen from the peculiar form of the multiple perforated pedestal-footed cup which comes from H21/Room 1 (Fig. 2a). The Helike example consists of an everted rim attached to a shallow hemispherical body which stands on a high foot. The body is pierced by two rows of big roughly circular perforations and carries a single vertical strap handle of almost circular profile attached to its mid-height. The example from Helike is equivalent to type VII.4 of Lerna IV<sup>27</sup> in terms of body profile, but finds no equivalent in terms of foot and handle which rather evokes a shoulder-handled prototype. Rutter has thoroughly discussed<sup>28</sup> the functionality of this vessel type as brazier, censer or smoker of some kind- even lamp? Smoke or essence produced by some particular substance burnt inside the body would spread out of the holes and for that reason one would hold and move the vessel from the handle, and would place it on its pedestal foot on any flat surface. The fact that this pedestal is taper at this particular vessel from Helike, and conical or flaring at similar pots from other sites, rather than cylindrical, makes any claim for the shaft of a wooden pole strongly debated. As also shown by Karageorghis,<sup>29</sup> throughout the Bronze Age the large perforations on clay





Figure 5. Monochrome cups with one handle on rim.

vessels are often used to serve substance burning for purposes of smoking or lighting, and the holding of these vessels is done by the use of strap handles directly attached on the hot receptacle.

Helike has produced a smaller number of deeper and more closed monochrome vases (Fig. 2b) including amphoras (2 vessels) and wide-mouthed and narrow-necked jars (8 and 2 monochrome examples respectively). There is a single typical amphora (Fig. 7) from Helike, which is roughly comparable with type XVI.2 of Lerna IV<sup>30</sup> in terms of size, but has a clearly articulated offset neck and two higher-swung handles, with their attachments placed on the shoulder, their place of attachment not being identical for both indeed.

Particular interest attaches to a light-brown amphoriskos of 18 cm height, with a high collar neck vertically attached on a squat spherical body with a flat base (Fig. 7). The vessel carries two small vertical, both close-curved, strap handles on the shoulder, and probably four (at least 3 preserved) perforated spool lugs, spaced at 90-degree intervals at level of maximum diameter. A row of circular impressions directly on the surface is surrounding the shoulder at the join with the neck, and a roped-relief band is doing so at the height of the lugs. The vase is peculiar and could be regarded as a variant of the narrow-necked jar type XVII.5 of Lerna IV,<sup>31</sup> although the latter is considerably bigger, has a flaring rather than a collar neck, bigger strap handles, and two horizontal handles rather than spool lugs at level of maximum diameter. Type XVII.2b of Lerna IV,<sup>32</sup> on the other hand, is directly comparable to the

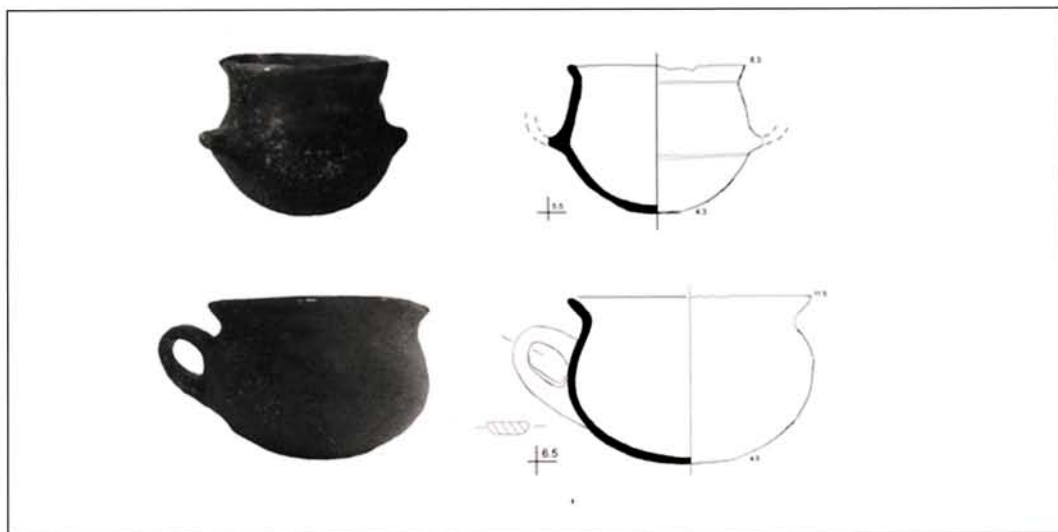


Figure 6. Restored monochrome cups with two handles (above) and one handle (below).

Helike specimen, in terms of the profile and location of lugs. The Helike amphora is therefore comparable with different clay vessels of Lerna IV, and can so far be regarded as a unique example produced out of mixed features.

Medium jars of around 25-30 cm height are also attested within the Helike record, in both wide-mouthed and narrow-necked varieties (Figs. 2b, 8, 9). The wide-mouthed jars (Fig. 8) are usually coarse and of dark or red-brown color. Two of them are one-handled, medium-sized, with a flat-based body carrying an everted rim and a single vertical strap handle attached to the rim at one vase, and to the shoulder at the other. The former is more ovoid, while the latter is rather globular. Their handle and walls are considerably thicker compared to contemporary pottery shapes. Both vessels are very coarse and blackened from contact with fire. The Helike specimens are directly comparable with the vessels of types XXI.1 and 2 from Lerna IV.<sup>33</sup> Parallels are also recorded at the Altis in Elis<sup>34</sup> and at Kolonna IV.<sup>35</sup>

Some medium size wide-mouthed jars from Helike are handleless, with a flat base. They have ovoid body, of very coarse fabric, and four double-mastoid lugs at 90-degree intervals on the upper part of the shoulder. The vessels are comparable with type XXI.4 of Lerna IV,<sup>36</sup> except for their flat base. Jars of similar profiles but of various surface treatments are also recorded at the EH III site of the New Museum in Elis,<sup>37</sup> and at Kolonna at Aigina.<sup>38</sup> Helike has also produced one flat-based wide-mouthed jar of similar, though larger, profile, compared to the lugged vessel, but with two arched handles on the upper part of the shoulder.

A general assessment on the wide-mouthed jars is that they were primarily used as cooking pots.<sup>39</sup> Rutter's observation that smoke-blackening on type XXI.2 of Lerna IV usually occurs away from the handle,<sup>40</sup> is also confirmed on the equivalent from Helike. Their cooking function may also justify the application of scoring, which is usually attested on several fragments of such jars from Helike (also on jars of the EH II deposits of the site, see below), as indeed a way to improve the attachment of fine micaceous earths which were smeared over the exterior surfaces of these cooking jars to reduce the danger of thermal shock.<sup>41</sup>

Finally, a number of narrow-necked jars of about 30-40 cm height have been found in Helike (Figs. 2b, 9). Their way of manufacture is considerably different compared to the 1 m high storage pithoi, which, in addition to the size difference, justifies, I believe, my choice to classify the latter under a separate group (see below). The use of a different term from each group ("jars" compared to "pithoi") is a deliberate choice I took to make this difference more eloquent. The narrow-necked jars of Helike have a voluminous flat-based body, ovoid squat or globular squat, and carry



**Figure 7.** Restored monochrome amphoras.

two horizontal arched handles just above or just below the point of maximum diameter. The more globular vessel is reddish and carries a vertical concave neck, more close to type XVII.3b of Lerna IV.<sup>42</sup> The ovoid vessel is yellowish, with a fragmented seemingly collar, neck, and has no direct parallel within the ceramic repertoire of narrow-necked jars from Lerna IV. There is a rough equivalent (smaller and more squat) from the New Museum at Elis.<sup>43</sup>

Conclusively, the range of monochrome shapes from the EH III Helike is stylistically and typologically comparable with that from other contemporary sites, such as Lerna IV,<sup>44</sup> Aigina-Kolonna V,<sup>45</sup> Tiryns (Unterburg)<sup>46</sup> and Elis (New Museum and Altis).<sup>47</sup> Additionally, there are plentiful parallels of the EH III Helike plain tableware, in terms of fabric, within the dark medium coarse ware from Deriziotis Aloni<sup>48</sup> near Ano Eglanos, Pylos. However, in terms of shapes, the comparable forms are much fewer, and are limited to some everted rims and few rounded-handle profiles on convex ceramic fragments.<sup>49</sup> This discrepancy between the two sites gives a hint on the dating of Helike to the earliest part of the EH III rather than the latest EH III-transitional MH I stage represented at Deriziotis Aloni.

### **Painted ware of EH III**

Helike has yielded a good collection of fine ware with painted dark-on-light patterns. The design is executed in thick-textured, lustrous black. The ground color is off-white or off-yellow, occasionally turned light green as a result of imperfect firing, and is usually the same color as the core fabric. Shapes mostly consist of tankards (3 vessels) and narrow-necked jars (Figs. 10-13) and are handmade, although some wheelmade pots are probable. Recent microscopic analysis confirms local provenance of the raw materials aside to the contemporaneous monochrome tableware presented above.<sup>50</sup>

So far the most outstanding painted vessel from Helike is a fragmented shoulder-handled tankard from H51/Room 7 (Fig. 10). In terms of shape it is similar to type III.2 from Lerna IV.<sup>51</sup> In terms of color, the patterns are lustrous black on a light yellow-reddish background. The lower part of the vessel was solid black which is a usual choice for the aesthetics of pattern-painted pottery, especially for low-gravity vases, and implies that the overall sur-



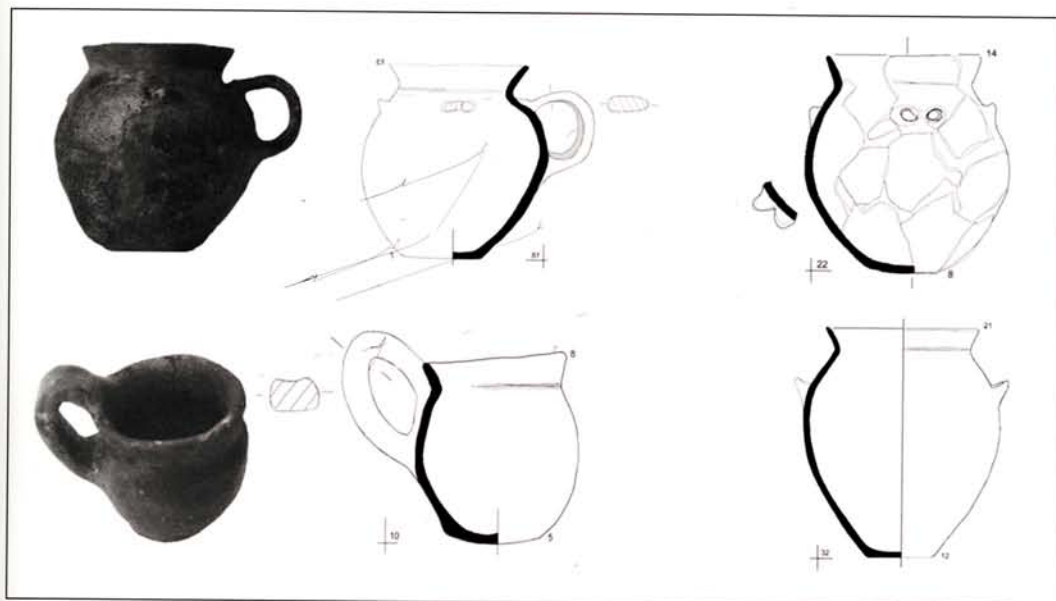


Figure 8. Restored monochrome wide-mouthed vases.

face is perceived as the complement of contrasting fields in terms of background and foreground colors. The reserved patterned band surrounding the upper part of the shoulder contains a composite syntax: wide parallel horizontal bands border from both the top and bottom a horizontal row of panels which contain several alternating motifs, such as solid rectangles, multiple triangles, wide zigzags, and a solid dogtooth. Such motifs are recorded within variable syntaxes in Lerna IV.<sup>52</sup> Also, the vase has repair holes on the belly, suggesting that it was of considerable symbolic value for its owners to extend its life.

On a light-colored shoulder-handled tankard from H5 I/Area 1 we can observe traces of worn dark-on-light bars sloping from left to right and bordering diagonal lines (Fig. 11). Comparable evidence comes from Lerna IV<sup>53</sup> and Kolonna.<sup>54</sup> More fragments of sloping lines syntaxes are found on convex body fragments from various *loci* of the site. A set of parallel lines is evidenced on a flat tankard handle, possible chevrons appear on a vertical strap handle,<sup>55</sup> while dark diminishing angles are painted in groups of three on the small body of a fragmented rim- or shoulder-handled tankard.

There are a considerable number of fragments from vessels of various sizes and wall thickness, their surfaces being all over slipped with the same lustrous black paint. This suggests that several vases existed with a part or the entire surface painted solid black (Fig. 12). Rarely the color of the solid paint is red. In many fragments the solid coat is thick and well applied; in some cases, however, the paint has been unsuccessfully applied to the body and has flaked away. In other fragments, the paint is applied carelessly, so that in the larger fragments it is easy to detect gaps through the light background, brighter and paler areas of black and, of course, the thickness and direction of the potter's brush. From a technical point of view, the black material (either as paint or pattern) appears macroscopically to be thicker, and of a different argillaceous composition, from the clay fabric and slip of the above mentioned dark monochrome tableware, which is rather watery. From this point of view, the solid painted surfaces come closer to (and should probably be considered a variation of) Urfimis technique,<sup>56</sup> meaning that the lustrous paint is in fact a kind of primitive glaze fabricated out of certain compositional elements added in the watery slip, rather than a mechanical luster produced by hand polishing. The solidly painted class is very usual in Lerna IV<sup>57</sup> and occurs on shapes descending from the EH II Urfimis repertoire, implying that it actually constitutes the EH III version of the EH II Urfimis style.

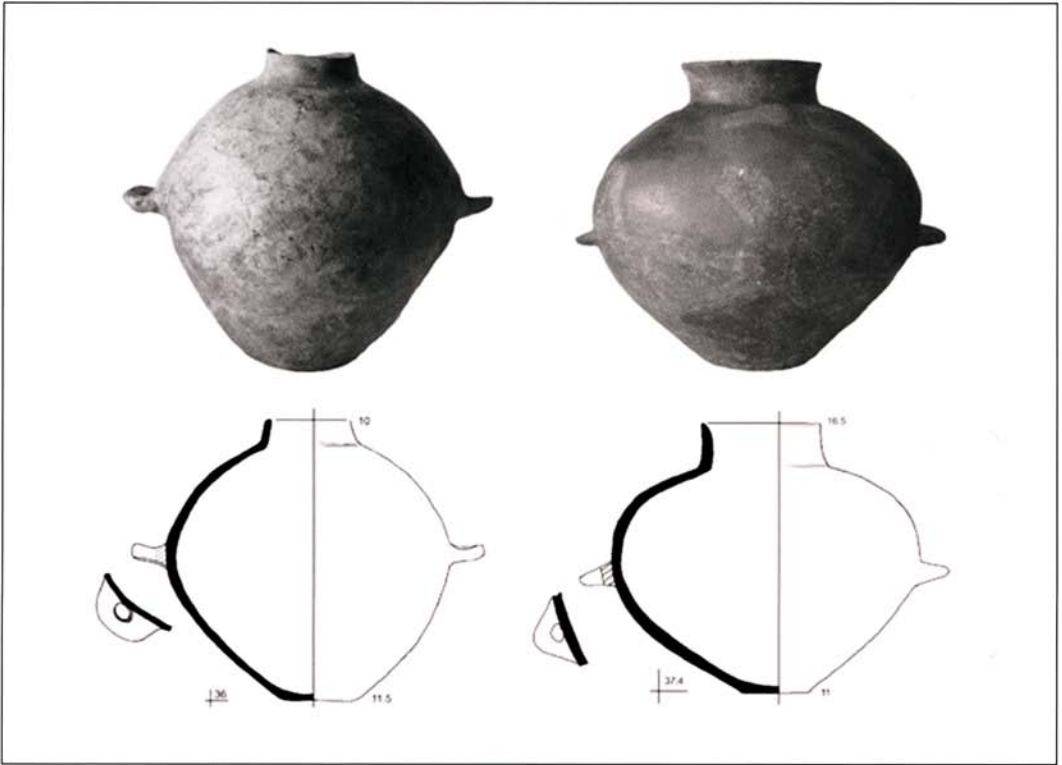
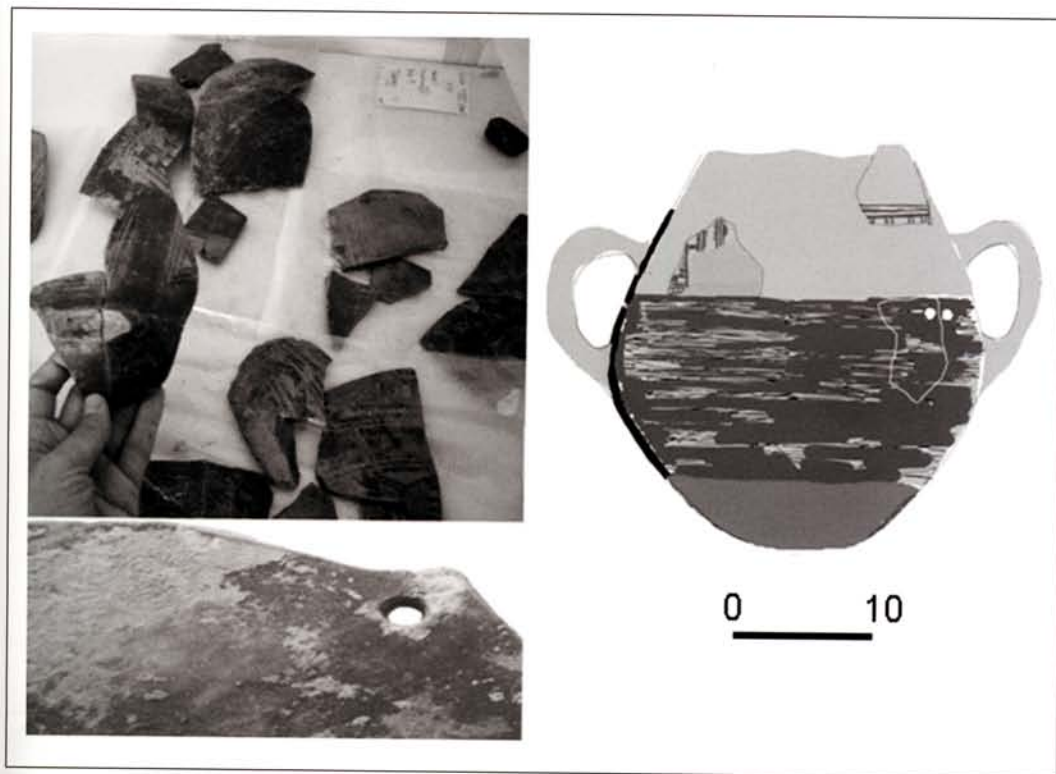


Figure 9. Restored monochrome narrow-necked vases.

The narrow-necked jar from H43/Corridors is a good example where three different surface treatments meet (Fig. 13). From the point of maximum diameter and handles upwards the body is pattern-painted with diagonal parallel lines, but alternating with solid black areas, while from the handles downwards the body is left unpainted to the background color (light brown). The handles themselves are solid black at the upper side, but left unpainted at their underside. The jar has a concave-flaring profile along rim and neck, and, with the exception of the handles, has a comparable profile with type XVII.1 from Lerna IV<sup>58</sup> but is of smaller size. Its handles are indeed a particular feature of this jar: they are flat at their upper side and unusually wide, but also of such a long arched outline, that each handle extends almost all across the half side of the ovoid body. Both handles have long attachments that leave only a small hole in between.

Aside the usual fine-fabric ware for painted decoration, Helike has also produced one painted vase of a medium coarse fabric (Fig. 13). This narrow-necked jar from H43/West Building: Area 3 has a flaring neck on a spherical body ending to a rounded base, which is again morphologically comparable with type XVII.1 from Lerna IV.<sup>59</sup> In terms of form, the particularity of this jar lies on its short vertical close-curved strap handles at the very center of the globular body, instead of the usual horizontal trianguloid handles that one would expect for such a kind of vessel. Indeed, there is little comparable evidence for this combination of body profile, type and location of handles in the repertoire of jars in Lerna IV.<sup>60</sup> If one takes a closer look at the range of features as demonstrated in the whole pottery repertoire of Lerna and other sites in that period, one would find that such close-curved broad straps, located right at the center of the body and the point of maximum diameter, would mostly occur on Bass bowls rather than closed vessels, and are generally less usual compared to the long straps and the loop handles.





**Figure 10.** Possible reconstruction of a fragmented painted tankard found in H5 1/Room 1.

The painted decoration of this certain jar is executed with dark brown paint on a red-brown background, as a variation of the dark-on-light style. The result is obviously less vivid than in the standard dark-on-yellow style of the fine painted ware where a clear contrast between the two grounds is exhibited. The painted design consists of (probably three) fully cross-hatched lozenges adjoining on a horizontal row around the body; each one is starting from the junction of the neck and shoulder, and extending down to the lower part of the body; their lower cross-hatching lines extend out of each lozenge's frame to touch the bottomside of the vessel.<sup>61</sup> Either worn bands of dark paint or solid coat occurs on the inside of the narrow neck.

### ***Large storage pithoi of EH III***

The household equipment of the final architectural phase of Helike is supplemented by large storage pithoi, a group of pottery with several particular features compared to the rest of the ceramic material of the settlement. What is identified as "pithoi" are the extra-large, immobile containers of the site, whose height is estimated around 80 cm to even more than 1 m and wall thickness ranges between 2.0 and 3.5 cm, as demonstrated by one fully restored pithos from the northern Corridor of H43 (Katsonopoulou, fig. 11, this volume). Eight more pithoi from various parts of the settlement are also restorable, while several more pithoi are partly preserved.

In terms of outline, the pithoi of Helike carry strongly flaring rims (45 cm wide) sitting on concave necks that join smoothly to shoulder; the body is voluminous deep ovoid or squat ovoid and sits on a raised flat base. The rim edge can be plain, thickened, or sidelong cut in the interior. Two horizontal trianguloid handles usually occur on the maximum diameter of the body. In one case, a large false handle with big attachments occur instead at the same location,



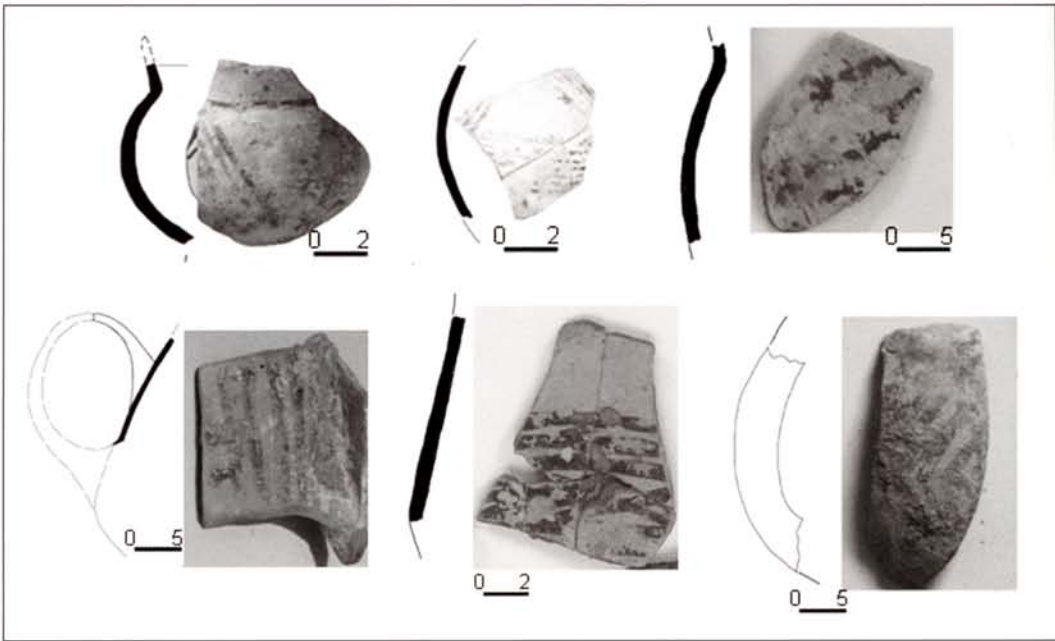


Figure 11. Various ceramic fragments with painted patterns.

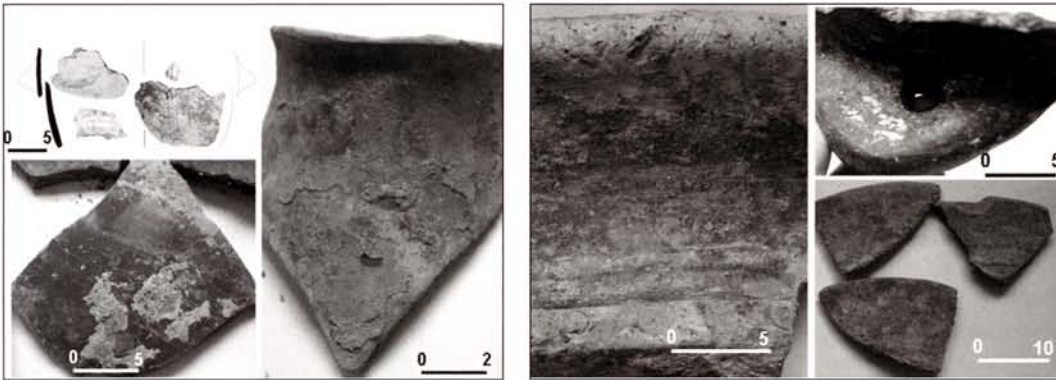


Figure 12. Various ceramic fragments with solid paint.

reminding of the “unperforated spool lugs” on the narrow-necked jar of type XVII.3b from Lema IV.<sup>62</sup> The raised flat bases (about 15 cm wide) are considerably narrow compared to the diameters of rim and body. Actually bases and handles from the above pithoi are very similar to those from the usual jars, and may not be securely distinguished.

Similar large pithoi are also recorded in Korakou,<sup>63</sup> Eutresis,<sup>64</sup> and Thebes.<sup>65</sup> In Lema IV the evidence of such extra-large vessels is present, but their preservation is so fragmentary that no accurate profile could be reconstituted.<sup>66</sup>

The surfaces of the pithoi from Helike were usually left unslipped and coarse, after their rudimentary smoothing. One example is slipped red, and others show evidence of wash. Some fragments of pithoi found in H43/*West Building: Area 3* have had their light background smeared with dark paint, either thick or diluted (Fig. 14); there are well distinguishable bands of paint within the careless smear, but not any specific motif can be determined.

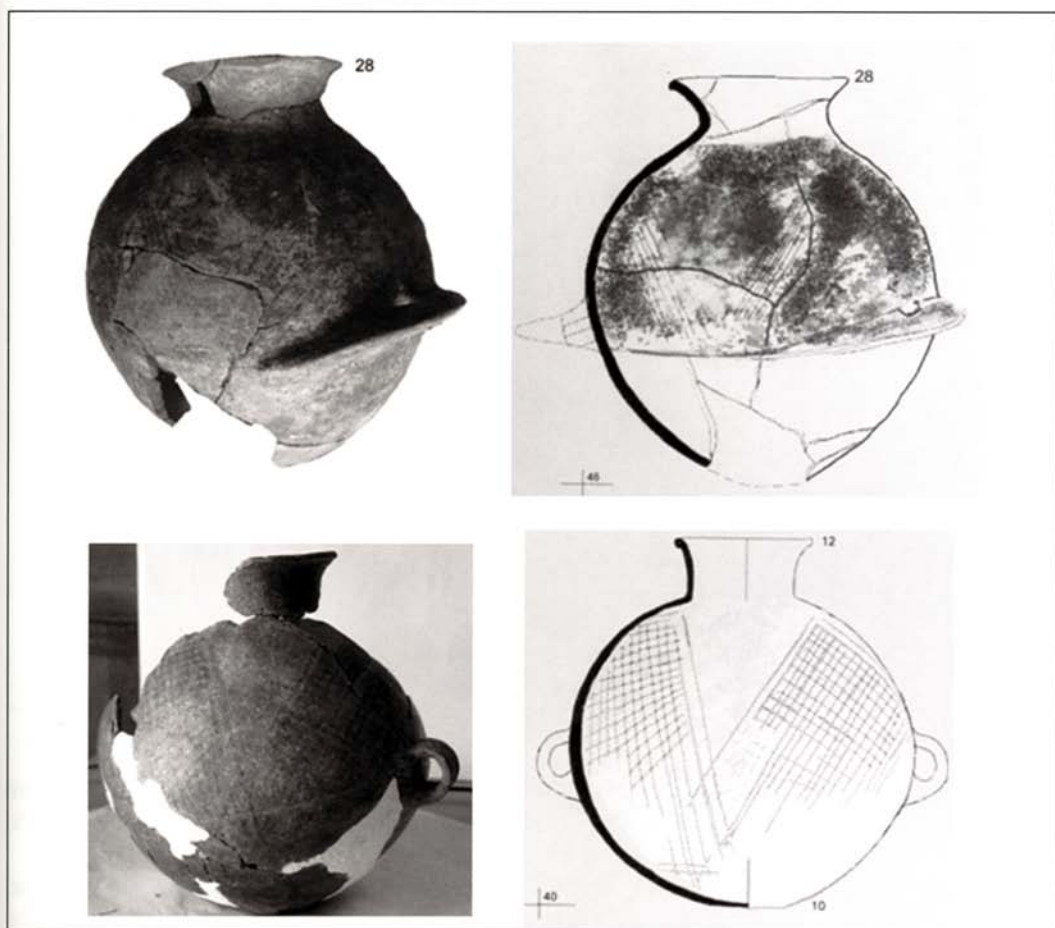
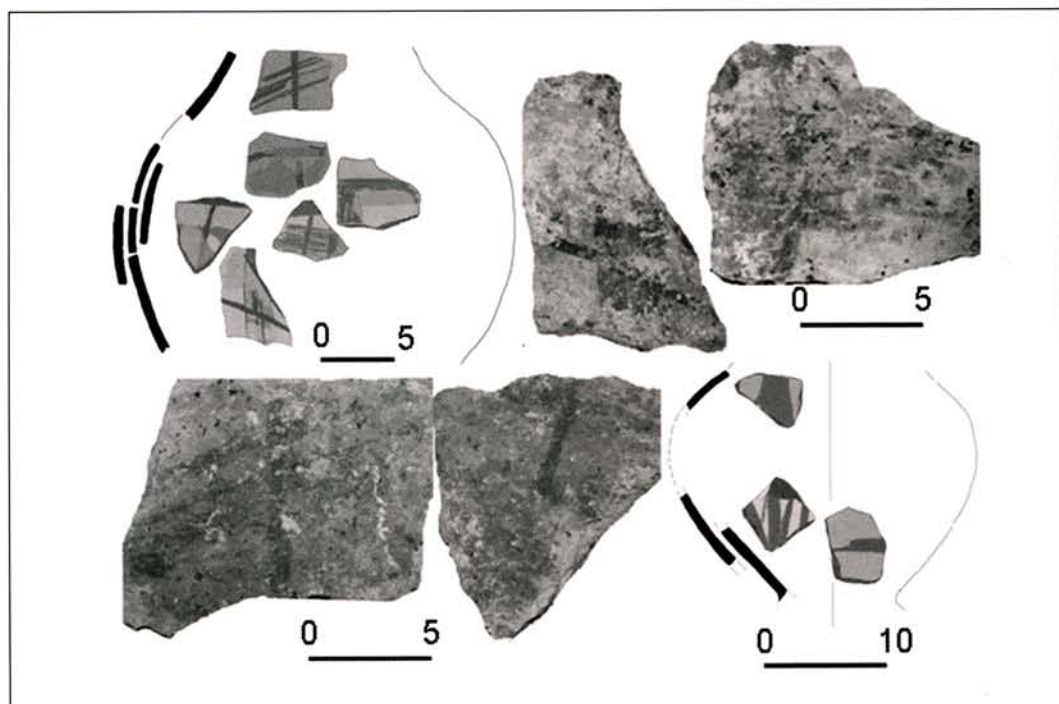


Figure 13. The pattern-painted narrow-necked jars from H43.

The main decorative features of these pithoi are the finger-impressed plastic bands (Figs. 15-17) imitating rope. They are usually horizontal, surrounding the vessel at the join between neck and shoulder and at the point of maximum diameter where the handles are located. Occasionally such vertical bands may connect the parallel bands between neck and body, and intertwine around the handles. Several vessels have also such decoration on their rim side. The rope impressions on the pithoi from Helike are pointing to different methods of manufacture, i.e. by finger- or tool, or even by incision, usually on a plastic band or even on the surface of the pot. The ornaments' width, diameter and depth are varying. Rarely the plastic bands are plain. Within the settlement, roped ornaments mainly occur on the pithoi from H43/Corridors, H51/Room 1 and H51/Area 1. Helike presents a wide variety of rope imitations with similarities in Lerna IV,<sup>67</sup> Elis,<sup>68</sup> also Kirrha.<sup>69</sup> The acropolis of Aigeira to the east has also produced some similar fragments from pithoi with roped bands, dated to a mixed context of EH III and MH.<sup>70</sup>

The great size and thickness of the pithoi from Helike, combined with their fragmented preservation, enables us to observe in their cross-sections, several technical steps taken by the EH III craftsmen during manufacture. Specifically, it is apparent from the discrete joins of parts of the walls that these pithoi were built up gradually from superimposed coils that were leveled to slabs and were pressed to fuse them. Clay layering is very usually observed in the sections of the





**Figure 14.** Evidence of smeared paint on pithoi.

wall, neck or base fragments of such vessels (Fig. 18a-d). Additional clumps of clay were selectively applied to form rim edges (Fig. 18e). At the points where different parts join, such as the neck to the shoulder or any attachments applied to the body, such as handles, lugs or the base, additional reinforcing strips of clay were usually put (Fig. 18f).

There is one case of a handle from a pithos in H43/Corridors, where the application of a horizontal trianguloid handle is better secured by the use of pegs at both its attachments, which would pierce better this way through the walls of the body (Fig. 18g). A similar fragment is documented from Deriziotis Aloni, Pylos.<sup>71</sup> The scoring of the surfaces of either parts before they were attached, in order to secure a better join, was another such technique. Despite those techniques, many lug and handles have anyway become detached, betraying that the two parts had dried slightly more than required before being joined, and confirming the occasional inability of prehistoric potters, attested as early as the Neolithic, successfully to manage the balance between the dampness and dryness of the clay.

Macroscopic examination of their cross-sections has shown that the large storage pithoi were tempered with crushed red, black and dark brown grits of chert (Fig. 19) available locally.<sup>72</sup> Thin sectioning has confirmed their local provenance and their standardized fabric.<sup>73</sup> The examples with untreated surface in particular attest to the inclusions being so coarse that can be easily observed with naked eye. Characteristically, there is a thick layer of such smashed temper adhering to the underside of many of the bases of these pithoi (Fig. 19) which presumably suggests that the vessels had sat on a layer of these fragments to model or to dry.

Some of the pithoi also seem macroscopically to have exactly the same temper composition (density, size and type) as each one. This similarity may suggest that more than one pithoi may have been modeled together from clay of the same composition, as part of the same manufacturing episode. There is more adequate evidence on this implication: large storage jars would be built with the long-term in mind; in order to secure the desired capacity and their advantages for storage, they may conceivably not have been movable items, but fixed architectural features of



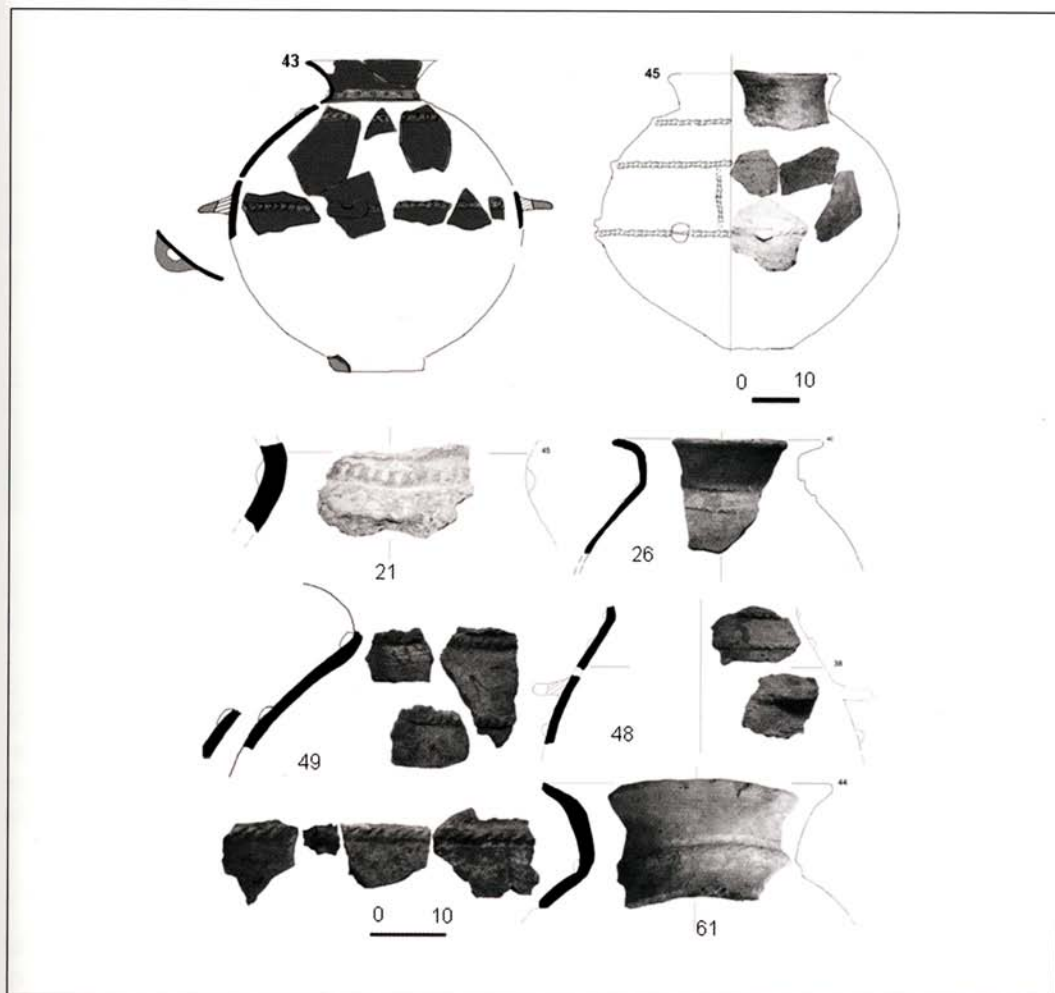


Figure 15. Reconstructed pithoi, with roped bands.

the space, like walls, hearths and floors. The pithos found adjoining to a kind of bench at the corner of H22/Building 2: Room 1, for example, as well as the pithoi in the corners and between the walls of Area 3 of the West Building of H43, and within the structures of H61, probably belong to this category. Moreover, the assemblage of storage pithoi along the west wall of the narrow rooms inside the Corridors in H43 probably points to an even more systematic planning of the space.

Given therefore the height, width and weight of the large pithoi, it is fairly possible that they would be built inside any certain building as fixed items in accordance with a specific architectural design, rather than manufactured in a potter's workshop and then carried to their destined location through the doors of any certain structure. Moreover, their friable composition, which points to low temperature firing, may be interpreted as a further indication of an open, short and improvised firing, i.e. a firing that was exposed to the air like that inside the interior of a building which was almost finished or erected up to some height rather than the firing inside the pottery workshop. As a matter of fact, it is most impossible that the extra-large pithoi from Helike, at least these coming from contemporary

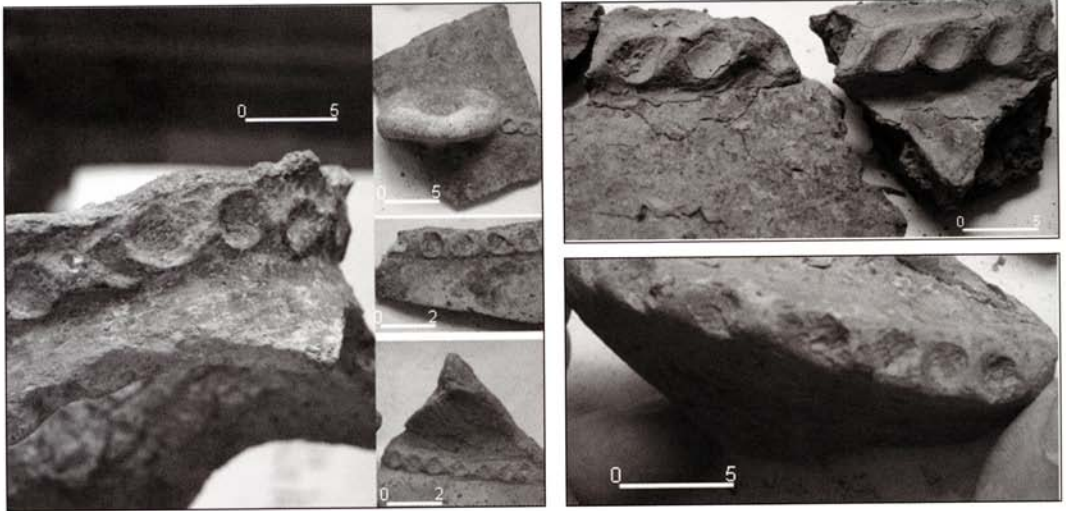


Figure 16. Roped bands on neck fragments from pithoi.

buildings of the last architectural phase of the settlement, were “built” all at once, i.e. from the same clay mixtures fabricated out of one pile of raw materials, as part of a single manufacturing project, immediately depending to the building of the walls and the layering of the floor of each structural complex.

From this point of view, it is also likely that the manufacturers of these pithoi were not the same potters who manufactured the movable pottery of the settlement, but rather specialized workers of a different craft: maybe builders or even members of such itinerant groups of pithos-makers as the one identified by Wiencke in the EH Argolid.<sup>74</sup> It should be noted, by the way, as suggested by various formless lumps of clay excavated in Helike, that there were more clay structures inside the buildings, such as plastered walls, which could have been associated with the same building projects, and have well been the product of the same craftsmen.

### Pottery of EH II

Pottery of the EH II was mainly recorded in the lower deposits underlying H43/Corridors, H51/Room 1 and Test Trench, and in H61. It is characterized by certain distinct features compared to the pottery of the EH III, such as finer-grained fabrics, toughness of cores suggesting higher firing temperatures, and more homogeneous lighter colors throughout surface and core (Fig. 20). Surfaces are usually slipped or can be mottled, burnished and lustrous (flaking in a characteristic way); occasionally they are Urfirmis painted and only rarely can they be left completely unpainted. The usual range of colors in the EH II varies between yellow and light red to brown, except for the Urfirmis which is dark on the foreground, but light in the background. Backgrounds in the EH II are generally of light color.

There is a distinct macroscopic group of orange fabric which is easily identifiable within the ceramic material of Helike and represents an approximate 10% out of the total quantity of pottery fragments from the EH II of the site, without any evidence of localized distribution. Sherds of this group exhibit a characteristic orange color in their core where a fine argillaceous part seems to have been mixed with sparse grits of non-calcite temper. The “orange” fragments, to put it simplistically, are usually of soft and porous texture and exhibit higher erosion in the core, more examples of rounded edges, and more severely worn off exterior and interior surfaces, compared to the coexisting tough and fine-grained other monochrome groups of pottery. They always attest to some slip of contrasting color to orange, such as dark brown or red. In terms of profile, this “orange” group is mainly associated with cups and bowls of medium size and depth, both thin- and thick-walled; few circular handles and some bases have also been pre-



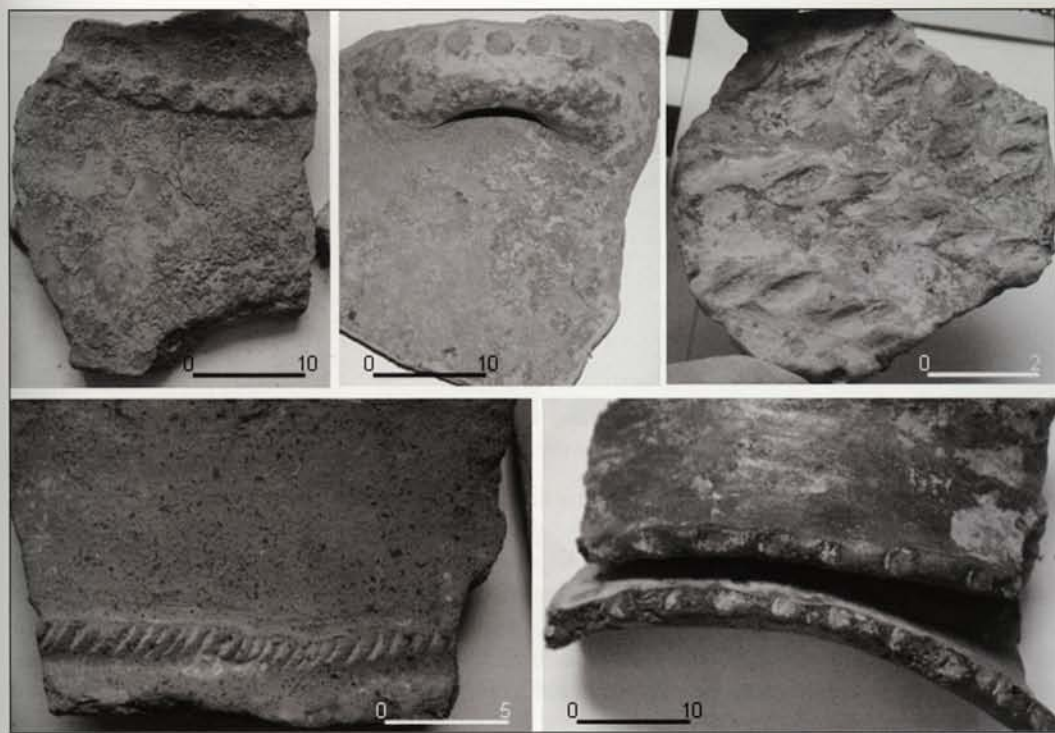


Figure 17. Impressed decoration on pithoi.

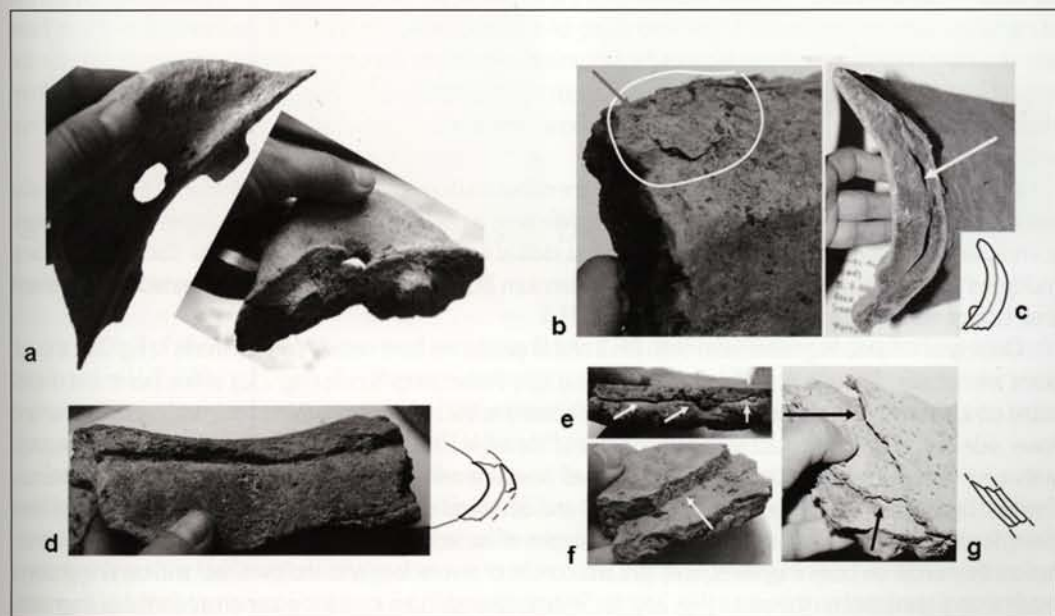
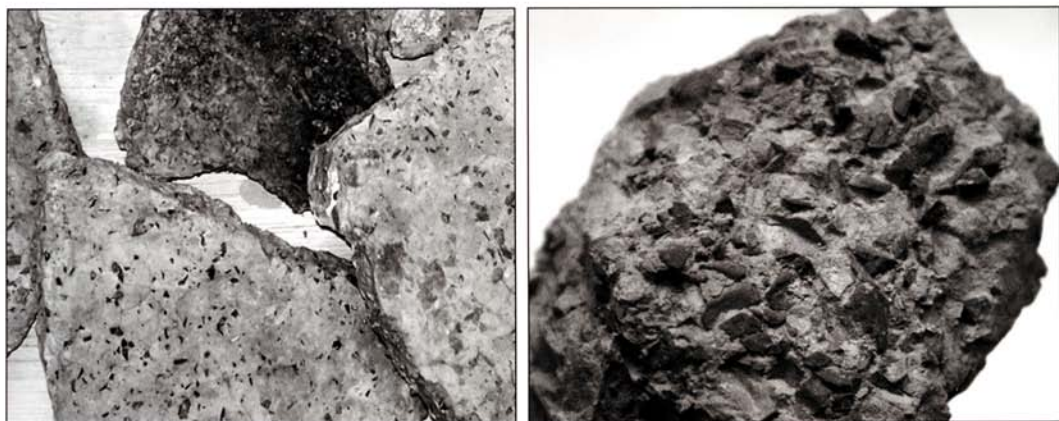


Figure 18. Evidence of manufacture techniques on Helike pithoi.





**Figure 19.** Macroscopic observation of temper in walls and on the underbase of pithoi.

served. Petrographic analyses have shown considerable difference of composition for this group also putting a question of local provenance.<sup>75</sup>

The Helike EH II ceramic record is considerably fragmented compared to that of the EH III and is classified in terms of identifiable pieces rather than whole pots: although fragmented it however provides evidence for the existence of a quite wide range of open and broad-mouthed deep vases, which are directly comparable to Lerna III culture. In particular, main identifiable shapes attest to saucers (Fig. 20c, d),<sup>76</sup> deep hemispherical bowls with inverted<sup>77</sup> or triangular rims,<sup>78</sup> wide vertical strap handles on closed bodies,<sup>79</sup> numerous lugs of the horizontal ledge type, and ring bases.<sup>80</sup> The EH II deposits from the area of H43 and H51 in particular have yielded fragments of medium-sized jars for cooking or storage, made of coarse fabric and with reddish core. Some thickened rounded rims on converging shoulders regularly carry rope-like ornaments on the rimside or the shoulder (Fig. 21),<sup>81</sup> manufactured by the use of overlaying discs rather than by finger-impressing on a plastic band as in the EH III. Several coarse sherds have scored surfaces (Fig. 22), i.e. bear dense and intercutting linear marks from the brush the potter had used for the levigation of the surface. The technique is usual in both the mainland and the Aegean. Among the specimens from Helike we can reconstruct part of a wide and deep bowl with spherical body, lugs on shoulder, and an everted rim with finger impressions along its top (Fig. 22).

As a general remark, the jars from Helike EH II are rather medium in size, and are far from having the extra size and number found in the latest EH III deposits. This difference is possibly important for us to draw further economic implications about the two overlying settlements at Helike: it is a possible indication that the storage surplus was multiplied by a sudden increase in the latest 3rd millennium BC, while the production of cultivated foodstuffs and their storage was considerably lower and limited in EH II.

On several ceramic fragments from both EH II and III phases we have noted “potter’s marks” (Fig. 23), though some are not safe. A secure potter’s mark occurs on a light brown strap handle (Fig. 23a) of fine fabric and is executed on a vertical axis: it consists of an incised angle opened to the right and two incised diagonals at the upper and lower side of it, each inclining according to one side of the angle. The incisions are semi-shallow and are executed with a pointed tool. Marks of the same type have well been attested within the record of many EH (Orchomenos, Eutresis, Lithares, Korakou, Zygouries, Tyrins, Lerna) and EC (Akrotiri, Ayia Irini, Kynthos, Phylakopi) sites and have been discussed by several authors.<sup>82</sup> Some other examples of incised marks are less secure, but still show deliberate action: they occur on body fragments from jars and consist of several long and shallow linear and curving grooves made with a blunt tool on the other (Fig. 23b, c). Several other random incisions occur on a handful of fragments from Helike.

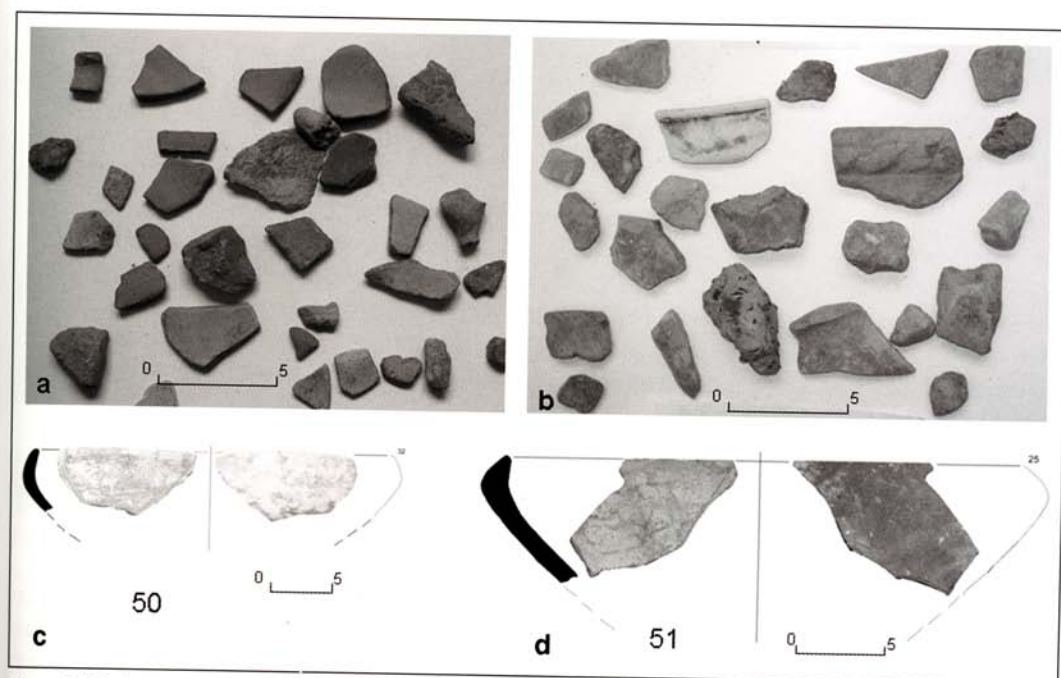


Figure 20. Eroded fragments and sections of saucers from the EH II deposits.

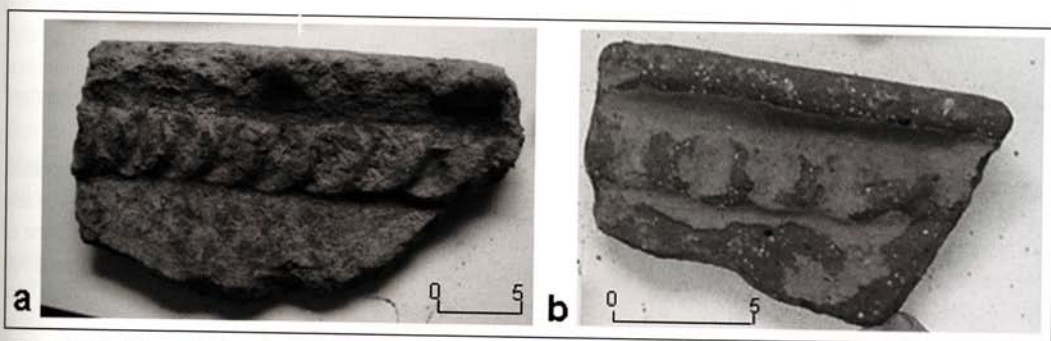


Figure 21. Roped decoration from jars of the EH II.

To the end of the EH II belongs the most exotic vase from Helike, the high double-handled drinking cup or *depos*, found in H22/Building 2: Room 1. A thorough description of the profile and decoration of this very special vessel is given in another article of this volume<sup>83</sup> but a brief mention should take place at this point as a contribution to the chronological scheme of the site throughout the EH II and III periods.

Indeed, chronologically the *depos* from Helike points to the orientalizing influence introducing a rich new set of pottery vessels to the Aegean and most of the Greek mainland, namely the distinguished Lefkandi I-Kastri culture, which occurred a little after the middle of the 3rd millennium BC for about 150-200 years. What is chronologically important about the Helike *depos* is that it does not seem to come from a separate Lefkandi I context at Helike, but from a yet generally perceived EH III context of typical Lerna IV pottery, where no other orientalizing features have so far been recorded. The discovery of this single example of Lefkandi I at Helike provides support for the general



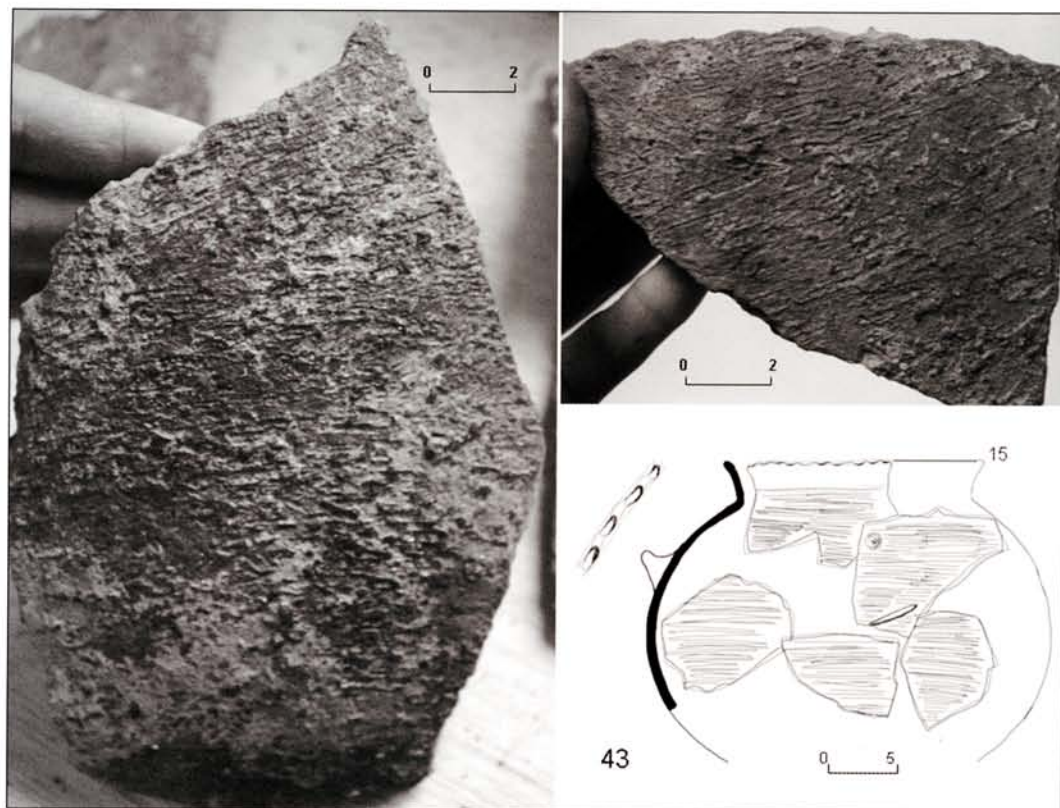


Figure 22. Fragments of a jar with scored surface.

observation that Lefkandi I is absent from the Peloponnese, and that EH III may begin without it (in Lakonia, indeed, EH III may be completely absent and replaced by a long EH II phase).<sup>84</sup> The one and only example at Helike also lends support to Rutter's view<sup>85</sup> that the cultural fermentation that links the Lefkandi I culture with EH III in a line of direct descent took place outside the Peloponnese—in Central Greece, for example, where Lefkandi I is found alongside EH II few centuries earlier.

### STRATIGRAPHIC SEQUENCE OF HELIKE POTTERY GROUPS

Assessing the above, we come to the conclusion that the EH settlement of Helike has produced two general typological phases of pottery, each with its discrete and diagnostic features: the later phase is the EH III or what Renfrew<sup>86</sup> called "Tiryns culture", dominated by dark coarse wares, dark-on-light patterned painted pottery and large storage pithoi with flaring necks and rope decoration, contemporary with Lerna IV and Kolonna V; the underlying phase is dated to the EH II, with fine light-colored tableware, including the unique *depas* as a momentum of an absent culture in Helike, rather than the product of a full sub-phase.

The typological attributions to the EH II and III cultures are well confirmed by their distinct stratigraphic location within the deposits. Concerning the EH III, the most characteristic pottery groups come from the areas H7-H21/Room 1, H22/Building 2: Room 1 and the unified trench H43/West Building and Corridors to H38/Corridor House through H51/Room 1 and Area 1 (Fig. 25). EH III pottery from this horizon, and specifically from the above locations, is characterized by the preservation *in situ* of many whole vases and their assemblages, as well as by the small



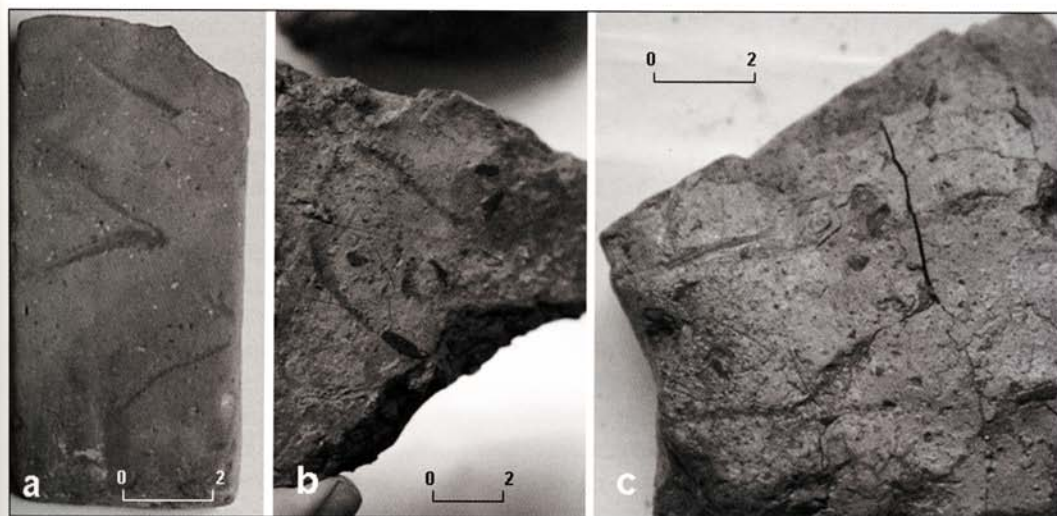


Figure 23. Possible “potters’ marks” on ceramic fragments.

radius over which joining fragments are scattered. As a result, the possibility to reconstruct the original location of most of the ceramic vessels inside or outside the rooms and buildings of the latest EH settlement at Helike, is very realistic. Such preservation of the surface building phase suggests that the settlement experienced an unexpected, and brief, violent end during which the population abandoned it in haste and forever, leaving behind its ceramic vessels and their contents in place, or at least where they had fallen during the violent upheaval. For the cause of the upheaval and abandonment, some evidence of shifted walls and burnt levels are pointing to seismic phenomena and/or extensive fires.<sup>87</sup> For the present archaeological record, it is a fortunate circumstance that no population group ever returned to the site and that there was never any rebuilding, and therefore any disturbance of the final use of the surface structures. Moreover, the abandoned settlement seemed to have rapidly submerged in a coastal lagoon, possibly as the result of an earthquake, and was later buried by brackish freshwater sediments.<sup>88</sup> As a consequence, the final picture of the pottery scattered throughout the settlement has been preserved as a living, historical episode.

Beneath the surface level, Helike has produced a dense succession of many building phases which go back to mature EH II. At least six such phases have been recorded in trenches H51/*Room 1* and *Test Trench*, and in H61. In several drillings in the area of the EH settlement<sup>89</sup> deposits containing pottery fragments have actually been located several meters below the EH II horizon uncovered to date, and the possibility that the chronological spectrum of the settlement extends further back (early EH II, EH I, possibly even Neolithic) is therefore open for future investigation. It is anyway evident that the building complexes of the final EH III phase (i.e. H38/*Corridor House*, H38-H43/*Corridors*, H43/*West Building*, H51/*Room 1*, H61) were actually first founded during the EH II, and were since then continually occupied to the end of the settlement in EH III, whatever the modifications of their plans and the changes of their function might have been. In Helike, we thus have documentation for an uninterrupted continuity in the occupation of the site, indeed without any material indication of a destruction that would in any way interrupt the stratigraphic, architectural and pottery sequence between EH II and III. A similar observation is also discussed for the site of Kolonna in Aigina.<sup>90</sup> In contrast, evidence for some kind of destruction before the end of the EH II has been recorded in a briefly excavated site at Aigion,<sup>91</sup> as well as at Kirrha at the opposite side of the Corinthian Gulf in Phokis,<sup>92</sup> at Thebes,<sup>93</sup> and also further afield at Lerna<sup>94</sup> and Tiryns.<sup>95</sup>

In Helike, the underlying phases of the EH II are characterized by the considerable fragmentation and dispersal of the pottery, making it more difficult to identify the relationship of each fragment to the architectural features of

the site. A significant degree of wear and erosion to the edges and surface of the pottery may also be observed (Fig. 21a-b). This dispersal and fragmentation seem to be the result of the building activity of the overlying levels (rather than of post-depositional processes), because later builders modified or demolished earlier architectural features (walls, floors, hearths) in order to form the new living level. Representative examples of this are the ceramic fragments found inside the stone rubble of the fortification (?) *Wall 2* in H21, in the floors of Streets 1-2 in H22, in the floor of Room 1 in H51, and in the floors in H61. The EH II pottery in Helike is consequently participating in the constant building activity and intensive use of the site by playing a changing role, from the functional object (container) to the recyclable building-binding material.

It should be mentioned that EH II fragments are not entirely absent from the final phase. In fact, small quantity of the characteristic fine and light-colored tableware of EH II is found alongside the dark burnished ware of the latest deposits, such as in H7-H21/*Room 1* and H22/*Building 2: Room 1*. A converse chronological contradiction is to be found in the *Corridor House* of H38, which, though a typical architectural form of EH II, in Helike contains ceramic equipment of the EH III, as excavated so far.

Stratigraphy makes evident that the EH III pottery of Helike was produced and consumed in a densely built environment of intensive use in the second half of the 3rd millennium BC. Given the ceramic typology of the pottery, Helike is possibly abandoned no later than roughly the middle of the EH III, thus well before the end of this phase and the beginning of the Middle Bronze Age. In terms of absolute dating this event should have supposedly taken place around 2150/2100 BC, given the estimated time span of the EH III from 2200/2150 to 2050/2000 BC.<sup>36</sup> The corresponding phase at Helike is probably brief as implied by its single building and ceramic horizons. Definitely numerous are the building phases constituting the underlying EH II deposits of Helike containing various ceramic sub-phases. In terms of absolute dating, we estimate as probable time span for that period the centuries towards the middle of the 3rd millennium BC and even backwards -earlier phases remain to be confirmed by future research.

## CONTEXTUAL ASSESSMENT OF HELIKE CERAMIC VASES

The density of built space in Helike should imply that spatial clustering of pottery in terms of quantity and variety of fabrics and shapes may indicate that considerable spatial variations existed aside the chronological ones. Towards that direction the study of the locations (indoor or outdoor) where pottery vessels were found inside the EH settlement of Helike has led to the following preliminary observations in terms of space use:

- In trench H7-H21, to the south-west of the settlement, inside *Room 1*, which is contiguous with the extra-thick *Wall 2*, probably a fortification wall,<sup>37</sup> numerous fragments of vases of coarse and fine fabrics<sup>38</sup> were found, predominantly of EH III date, though some pottery of the EH II was also present. Pottery fragments were scattered along *Wall 2* of the room, which is parallel with the "fortification wall" to the south. A greater density of fragments was observed around an extensive area of burnings (probably a destruction level) located at the center of *Room 1*, among which are fragments of a number of vases: one narrow-necked jar, two deep bowls with horizontal handles, one small bowl, and one vase with a perforated body (lamp), dating from EH III, were preserved intact. The wide range of the finds points to usual household uses related to food preparation, serving and consumption, also possibly some short-term storage. The quantity of pottery diminishes in the east part of the room (area of trench H7). The cleaning of the stone walls around *Room 1* has yielded ceramic fragments of fine light-colored fabrics, dating from EH II.

- In H22, to the west of the settlement, several pottery fragments were found inside the corner of *Room 1*, part of *Building 2* which is located on the west side of *Street 1*. Among them a broken pithos was located, which was probably supported by stones and was associated with a bench surrounded by some indication of a floor. Scattered pieces of coarse dark burnished ware of EH III, again from storage jars, were recovered from this point, among a layer of burnt charcoal and baked earth, probably owed to a long-used hearth. The presence of the large pithos, in combination with the smaller vases, points to mixed uses for the preparation, consumption and storage of foodstuffs. In the



corner between the outside wall of *Room 1* and under the intermediate wall with the adjoining room, the *depos*, dating from the end of EH II, was discovered, underlying the surface level.<sup>99</sup> The pottery from *Building 1* and 3 (apsidal), which were revealed on the opposite side of the crossroads between *Streets 1* and 2 in the same trench, has mixed EH II and III features. Fine-grained pottery of EH II was retrieved from the floor of *Streets 1-2* and from the open area in the south-west of the trench.

- The densest and most distinctive assemblage of EH III pottery in the entire part of the Helike settlement excavated so far was recorded in the unified trench H43-H38 and in H51. The adjoining structures, partly revealed in trenches H38 and H43, need further clarification as for their plan and architectural phases. Inside both areas, several concentrations of table, cooking and storage ware came to light. In the *Corridor House*, it is in two locations where such concentrations were found: one at the east corridor (*Room 1*), the other just outside the west corridor (*Room 3*), which was uncovered partly in H38 and partly in H43. *Corridors* of H43 appear to be divided into three long and narrow areas: of these, the northwest (*Area 2W*, which includes also *Room 3* of H38) and central rooms are flooded with vases, while the east room (*Area 2E*) did not reveal any pottery of note, despite the fact that it contains some important architectural features (floor, platform). It should be noted, however, that only part of the room was uncovered inside trench H43, the rest extending outside it to the E.

At this point a significant difference should be noted between the shape repertoire of the vessels from the main *Corridor House* (H38) and those from the united *Room 3* and the adjoining *Corridors*: a row of 5 large storage pithoi, some with roped bands, was located along the west wall of the long narrow room of *Area 2W*. The numerous items of table and cooking ware were dispersed on the floor in front of them (H43/*Area 2W*) and in the northern side (H38/*Room 3*). Such ceramic record provides our study with strong evidence that the *Corridors* had hosted the systematic and long-term storage of large quantities of surplus, along with a food-preparation-and-consumption use. The *Corridor House* instead shows no evidence of storage and is predominantly abounded with pottery for food preparation and consumption. It should be noted that abundant EH II pottery of fine reddish, orange and yellowish fabrics was also found in the deeper levels of the *Corridors*.

- Further to the south of H43, in the *West Building* across the street, we observe a difference in number and shape repertoire of the ceramic vessels found in the two adjoining rooms (*Areas 3* and 4). *Area 3* contains about 15 items of table and cooking ware scattered over its entire space: one tankard, several Bass bowls, one rim-handled cup, along with at least three large pithoi and one wide-mouthed jar were located near the wall of the room; the peculiar amphoriskos with roped bands was found here, but in the central area. *Area 4*, in contrast, contained very little pottery - the full ground plan of the room has not yet been revealed, however, extending outside the trench to the E. This difference probably points to a corresponding difference in the functions of these two rooms of the same building complex, probably suggesting that *Area 3* was mostly destined to serve the preparation, consumption and storage of food.

- In trench H51, to the north-east of the *Corridor House*, another building (*Room 1*) was excavated and produced evidence (floors) from four successive phases. From the upper horizon, two to four storage jars were excavated inside the limited space of this small room, together with smaller vases of the EH III, including a tankard with lustrous black-on-light painted patterns. In the deeper levels of the same place, scattered saucers and inverted rims dating from EH II were collected in fragments.

A large room (*Area 1*) was excavated further to the north in the same trench, the full extent and ground plan of which are not clearly defined extending outside the trench to the N. and E. In the center of *Area 1* and near the thick, long wall that bounds it on the W-E axis, at least 3 large storage pithoi with roped-impressed bands, and a deep wide-mouthed jar of the EH III, were found next to a layer of burnings. Around the center of *Area 1*, in the context of a burnt layer, a significant concentration of smaller vessels was discovered, including one shoulder-handled tankard, four small rim- or neck-handled tankards, several Bass bowls and cups. Given the large number of the pithoi and their arrangement next to the wall, here is another spot of the settlement where the practice of systematic stor-



age is evidenced, together with the *Corridors* in trench H43. In the *Test Trench* excavated through deeper layers in the north-west side of *Area 1*, significant EH II pottery was found.

- In the successive floors revealed in the *Northwest Room* in H61 at least two storage pithoi of the EH III, with indications of a fixed position, were found. The coexistence of pithoi with smaller vessels, such as two tankards and one shoulder-handled cup confirms the pattern of “pithoi-plus-tableware” already attested above. The excavation of the underlying sequence of floors has yielded EH II pottery, badly fragmented and eroded. In the lowest excavated level were found inverted and triangular rims, crescent lugs and Urfimis wares of mature EH II, and possibly with some hints of early EH II feature, making this building the earliest occupation area of the EH Helike, excavated so far.

The distribution of the ceramic vases in the various indoor and outdoor areas of the settlement at Helike, and the statistical counts of the qualitative features *per locus* predominantly indicate domestic functions related to food. Areas are mostly multifunctional, in the services of cooking (wide-mouthed vessels), serving and consumption of solid foods and liquids (tankards, cups and bowls), preservation and short-term storage of foodstuffs (necked jars) at one time. This is the picture we get especially from the areas at H7-H21/*Room 1*, H22/*Building 2: Room 1*, H51/*Room 1*, and H61/*Northwest Room*, were big concentrations of all the above types were found mixed onto carefully laid floors. In terms of ways of placement inside the rooms, we can imagine that the smaller pots occurred on some wooden tables or shelves on the walls, which, in combination with the pebble floors and probably a number of raised platforms, would have supplemented the domestic equipment of the rooms.

Certain areas of Helike can be distinguished, however, as they show signs of a more targeted use. Specifically, a larger concentration of pithoi is observed in H43/*Corridors* and in H51/*Area 1*, together with the usual big concentration of the smaller vases associated with the cooking and serving of food. Again in these rooms the floors were carefully laid with pebbles on which big concentrations of burnings and animal bones were found. The arrangement of the pithoi in rows next to the walls of the *Corridors*, in particular, in association with their narrow plan, is a strong indication that this particular room housed a specialized use as a storage place, aside the full range of the rest daily functions, as posited for the other rooms. This argument is further strengthened by the observation that pithoi are so large that can only be of a predetermined fixed position, which in this particular narrow rooms of the *Corridors* can be but deliberate, as well as when they are placed near the walls (H43/*West Building: Area 3*) or in corners (H22/*Building 2: Room 1*) of other rooms.

In contrast to *Area 2*, the *Corridor House* itself presents a different pattern of space use: there are no large pithoi, but an abundance of all range of smaller vessels in a kitchen-and-living-room context, concentrated in only two specific locations of the building. The pottery repertoire is creating the picture of an area not devoted to long-term storage, but used rather for the preparation and consumption of meals.

This picture recalls similar observations made by Wiencke in the case of the *House of Tiles* in Lerna, where no storage jars were recorded and the pottery rather pointed to social gatherings associated with feasting.<sup>100</sup> Wiencke however does not rule out the possibility that the place at Lerna housed redistribution practices of surplus, to explain why seals were found inside the building.<sup>101</sup> At Kolonna of Aigina, in contrast, the equivalent *Haus der Pithoi* did contain storage jars.<sup>102</sup> In the case of Helike, we may keep in mind, as a provisional conclusion, that the *Corridor House* and its adjoining *Corridors* were both used for the preparation and consumption of food, but that the *Corridors* alone were also used for long-term storage. The identities, chronological and social, of the users of the two adjacent areas and their social composition (family, elite, community?) are still to be identified.

## THE NEIGHBORING CERAMIC ASSEMBLAGES

In order to put Helike ceramic material in a broader context in the neighboring area of northwestern Peloponnese, we should note the contemporary assemblages from as close as Aigion<sup>103</sup> to the west, Aigeira<sup>104</sup> to the east, the cave of Lakes<sup>105</sup> at the uplands further to the south, while we should not neglect the settlement of Kirrha<sup>106</sup> on the other side of the Corinthian Gulf.

In the broader area of Aigion, at the northern border of the modern city, near the sea older rescue excavations by the Ministry of Culture have recorded ceramic assemblages of the EH II in the lowest level, and of the EH III in the upper level. According to the brief publication,<sup>107</sup> the former contain typical vessels of the "Korakou culture", while there is not any further explanation of what the EH III means in terms of pottery. It is interesting that there is an intervening destruction phase before the end of the EH II, a subsequent gap of occupation, an EH II/III interface and a last destruction at the end of the reoccupied EH III. Few more EH sites are excavated to the west as far as Patras, but they are very briefly mentioned in literature.<sup>108</sup>

The cave of Lakes to the south has produced some pottery of the EH II,<sup>111</sup> proving contemporary with the lower phases of Helike. Obviously it belongs to a different geographical zone and a different occupation pattern, as it is part of the mountainous uplands where pastoral communities lived seasonally, most probably in summertime. However we can assume the existence of indirect contacts of those herders with the littoral "urban" population of Aigialeia via exchange networks distributing their products. It is also possible that littoral Achaea was the lowlands where these highlanders were transferring their livestock from the mountains of Helmos, with the changing of seasons.

To the east of Helike, Korinthia is an old field for the EH culture thanks to Blegen's old investigations and publications (see Korakou, Tsoungiza and Zygouries), though attesting to the EH II rather than Lefkandi I or the EH III. On the western part of Korinthia the newly found settlement at Derveni was partly excavated on the occasion of the new Railway.<sup>109</sup> The site has yielded big pottery assemblages of domestic function, including tableware and storage vessels within solid and complex architecture indicating the existence of an important residential and economic centre in western Korinthia. The ceramic typological features show that the settlement is contemporaneous with Helike during the EH II, but that it stops before entering the EH III phase.

The acropolis of Aigeira further west from Derveni has produced some EH I deposits underlying a horizon of the latest EH III mixed with MH I.<sup>110</sup> Pottery from this transitional phase at Aigeira corresponds to a period when Helike had already been abandoned, however it exhibits some developed versions of the dark ware fashion. Conversely during the long period of EH II-III when the Helike settlement was at its peak, the acropolis of Aigeira experienced a considerable gap of use.

Finally, the settlement of Kirrha across the Corinthian Gulf<sup>112</sup> is an urban complex within the Lefkandi I culture, therefore synchronous to Helike along the late EH II and maybe the beginning of the EH III. It should be clarified that what the excavators of Kirrha call as "EH III" in their old publication in fact corresponds to the orientalizing Lefkandi I culture of the central Greek mainland and not to the EH III dark ware phase of Helike style which never appears to Kirrha. The settlement attests to an abrupt catastrophe and abandonment after fire, which is analogous to the episodes known from Helike and other mainland sites. Certainly those geological turbulences of the EH II-III did not occur once but in waves and repeatedly within a short period of time, which makes it difficult for us today to answer whether the abandonment of Kirrha occurred at the same time with that of Helike. In other words whether the EH III fashion of dark metallic wares is even partly synchronous to the orientalizing styles is still an open issue. This discussion is particularly useful in relation to the Helike *depos* given that Kirrha is the nearest Lefkandi I site to Helike.

## THEORIZING HELIKE POTTERY

The variability and quantity of the Helike material in the EH III, in association with its stylistic correlations with contemporary sites such as Lerna IV, Kolonna V, Tiryns and Elis, places Helike of Achaea at a central point within the network of the late EH pottery cultures in the southern Greek mainland. Helike attests to all predominant fashionable traits of this culture, such as the high everted or flaring rims and necks, the squat bodies with a distinct shoulder and low center of gravity, the angular or strongly curved transitions at the points where different parts join, the vertical strap handles between rim or shoulder and body, the horizontal arched handles on the maximum diameter, the complementary lugs, and the flat bases. One of the mainstream features which Helike follows in the EH III, providing us



with a secure argument for its cultural chronology, is the deliberate choice of dark burnished surfaces for the tableware in particular. Helike is therefore part of this broader ceramic tradition imitating metal prototypes (in terms of both color and profiles), which overwhelmed the Greek mainland since the orientaling phase of the EH II, and matured in the EH III to become a precursor of the subsequent Middle Helladic Minyan ware.<sup>113</sup> This pre-“metallic” aspect of the EH III pottery has led several scholars to advance interpretations involving population invasions.<sup>114</sup> The debate on how far the morphological changes, such as those attested by the orientaling Lefkandi I phase or by early EH III pottery, reflect migration episodes, either peaceful or violent, is long.<sup>115</sup> How would we approach such interpretations today?

My approach to the migration hypothesis is that the imitation of metallic forms in the EH III is not only a matter of tradition or collective choice imposed to any single individual, but is as equally a deliberate decision taken by any single potter of Helike, who decides to follow the social norms. The argument<sup>116</sup> for example that the stylistic change observed in the EH III was owed to a change of population or customs, or even to a technological innovation such as the introduction of the potter’s wheel, is primarily functional and does not explain why the EH potter would finally choose to imitate these certain metallic shapes specifically after the end of the EH II, rather than any other shape or color that could have been equally suitable.

To automatically equate stylistic changes of pottery with the intrusion of a new population is to forget that no local population remains the same, and that change is inherent within the same group, either as broad as the entire population of a village or as narrow as a single individual. Against this theoretical background, and given the strong evidence for the intensive occupation of the very same geographical location at Helike throughout EH II and III, the EBA settlement of Helike seems to incorporate the qualities of long, peaceful occupation, social continuity, and local tradition, therefore the qualities of an indigenous population with ancient roots in the certain place, rather than that of a migrated population. Morphological changes of pottery should rather be referred to modifications of meanings and their material expression by the local people, resulting from the constant immediate influences between them and the outside world. This “outside world”, however, either as a geographical, environmental or social factor, is not imposing: the location of Helike on the coast, for example, had certainly facilitated contacts *to* and *from* the outside world, but does not necessarily mean that all these influences would have been imposed on and/or adopted by the Helike society. There is a filter posed by the inside, the very people of Helike, as of any site, which determines what shall get through and what shall not – the ideological criterion of the local society, formed from the complex symbols and perceptions that define their choices.

Therefore, the answer should not be sought within migrationist and functionalist explanations, but would rather lie on the conceptual world of the society and of any single potter. It would in fact lie in the deep ideological, symbolic and conceptual reflections that metals in particular have created in his or her mind since earlier periods, which is out of the scope of the present paper to analyze. What is important to note is that when any single potter starts to manufacture, he or she becomes an active agent who accepts or denies the predominant fashions or traditions, and blends them with his or her individuality to produce the final product. In the above described typology of forms from Helike, we may find several such features demonstrating the creative initiative of the local potters on the backbone record of tradition.

Including this primary statement of post-processual theory, we can formulate an integrated theoretical perspective to explore the role of Helike’s pottery in any collective and individual domestic, economic or social context of the site. Given that food, cooking and their products are the main fields where individual and social connotations are expressed;<sup>117</sup> as the relationship of pottery to food-diet is one of interdependence,<sup>118</sup> EH pottery technology should be perceived as meaningful, directly reflecting the cultural values of the individual and its proto-urban society, and materializing its meanings and symbols,<sup>119</sup> rather than merely expressing their functional or subsistence needs.

In that sense, it is not adequate to conclude that the pottery of Helike plays a primary role in the practical management of foodstuffs, which are the valuable economic capital produced by farmers and herders in the catchment



area around the EH II and III settlement of the Achaean coast. Indeed the food content has a primary economic and social significance for the residents of Helike, producers and consumers, immediately dictating the modes of its production (e.g., individual or collective production, storage, redistribution). Within this scope for example should we approach the phenomenon of pottery morphological standardization which extends as a backbone agent behind the ceramic fashions of the EBA.

Indeed, although handmade, the EH III pottery of Helike is manufactured in close accordance to certain morphological rules attesting to a narrow range of variability of sizes, profiles, curvatures and attachments, as well as of surface techniques. Indeed such standardization (elsewhere described as uniformity, conformity, imitation, mechanical reproduction of style, fashion, or whatever one would like to call it), having appeared as a very distinct trait as early as the EH II culture, evidences to the advanced degree of specialization and division of labor within the EH society of Helike, which could sustain,<sup>120</sup> by the mutual exchange of surpluses, separate craftsmen such as potters, to engage in their craft as full-time task, and therefore to cultivate their skills and increase their output to the level of mass production.<sup>121</sup> Apart from pottery, even the management of foodstuffs may itself have been specialized,<sup>122</sup> along with farming, metalworking, chipped-stone tool manufacture or trade.

At the same time and further beyond, the significance of this food is broader than any need for survival and economic wealth, and may attain to complex levels of symbolism. Food theory<sup>123</sup> has proven that solid and liquid foodstuffs incorporate condensed social meanings, and are ultimately associated with several modes of intercourse, collaboration, offering, feasting and festivity, very often even approaching sanctity.<sup>124</sup> The choice for certain foods instead of others, the methods of handling and cooking them, and any changes in these choices are imbued with meaning, and are therefore subject to change, if this meaning changes.<sup>125</sup>

An extended debate on the social role of pottery is already taking place for Neolithic Greece,<sup>126</sup> and has posed the base for an updated theoretical response by the EBA studies. Indeed, as early as 1972, Renfrew<sup>127</sup> asserted that differences in the EBA pottery were determined by the intensification of farming and specialization in the production of the "Mediterranean triad" (cereals, vines, olives), at a first level, and by the priorities for the redistribution of the foodstuffs that were set by social hierarchy, at a second level. Against this background, Wiencke<sup>128</sup> suggests that the pottery variability of drinking cups in EH II may not reflect functional needs, but subjective principles for drinks of heightened significance (e.g. wine?) and new ethics with symbolic links to the increasing social complexity.<sup>129</sup> And Sherratt,<sup>130</sup> in a comprehensive review, has asserted in some detail that the diet, and by extension the pottery of the EBA, e.g., the standardized jug-and-jar complex also mentioned by Renfrew,<sup>131</sup> incorporated, and in a way reflected, the ideological changes that led to urbanization and the emerging hierarchical society of the 3rd millennium BC.

Integrating the above theories, indicatively cited here among many other, foods in general, in the EH Helike should be expected to serve expediciencies that may be blunted, or may intensify social competition, and the sense of ownership and recognition. Consequently Helike pottery is expected to be the materialization of this world of collective or individual meanings. In other words, the EH ceramic vessels of Helike should not be regarded as impersonal, as products of adaptation and technological advances; they would not be predetermined products, not products of the social subconscious, certainly not only objects for survival and functional purposes. It is clear that a very single mesh of meanings should have determined the final form of any single ceramic vase preserved to the present day out of any single context from Helike. Those meanings were, at a specific moment in time, attributed to this ceramic object by a specific potter and another specific user, inside a specific location of this coastal NW Peloponnesean site.

Against this theoretical approach, every tankard, cup and storage jar at Helike has registered a history-biography characterized by small or large personal moments, meanings and feelings, in the hands of certain people who lived and acted inside the building complexes so far excavated. In this biography each vase is not recorded as a passive index, but as an active agent who interacts with the human environment, and determines absolutely the continuity of the biography of both. The EH pottery from Helike, its modes of production, function and circulation, should carry

some of these biographies, including the social relations between people and episodes from their daily lives inside those places. Also these biographies may vary per building context.

Even the site itself as landscape and place may contain a fair degree of meaningfulness: this choice by EH II and III populations of Helike to persist on the dense and intensive use of the same geographical location for their settlement, where reconstructions were constant and local, rather than move nearby, may indeed imply some ideological-symbolic significance for the relation of these people to their certain space.<sup>132</sup> This is probably a deep conceptual perception of their long, unchanged continuity on this certain place, and may have inspired a specific identity and specific history related to it. In that concept, the use of space at Helike may not be random, but may be defined by symbols of memory, historicity and tradition of its occupants, that contributed to the construction of their social identity within their broader social sphere of urban centers on one hand, and the emergence and survival of any "political" hierarchy inside the settlement of Helike itself, on the other. Actually, given the fact that, already in EH II the social distinctions had acquired permanent forms and involved a larger number of individuals aspiring to superior status also through objects, the building complexes of Helike should be the context for intense social interaction, where the meanings of ceramic vases and their material contents would be multiplied and would mutually influence each other against an interplay of competition and power.

Does the tableware from the domestic contexts reflect any social status, for example? But does it also betray any special moments or individualized actions? Is there such a thing as the good serving set among the ceramic vessels of the *Corridor House*? Does dense tableware from the *Corridors* demonstrate some significance of this room compared to the *House*? What indications does pottery provide for the management of food and redistribution practices? Do we see how the Helike residents performed their last dinners before the catastrophe has urged them to leave? What messages are expressed by the linear-painted patterns or the incised marks on the vases? Could they be regarded as historically meaningful visual narrations? Would each serving vessel, such as the linear-painted tankard or the unusual amphoriskos, be attributed some personified character within the broader set of tableware, for example reflect somebody's particular moment as a special gift, a beloved preference for serving, or a piece of a potter's pride? What is the social identity of the owner of the exotic *depas*?

Such narratives emerging out of the prehistoric world of the EH Helike certainly improve its aspect of historicity. This historicity should not however be conceived as a grand evolutionary series of migrations to the Peloponnese, but instead as the expression of the many individual minds of each one of the men, women and children of Helike, who created contextually meaningful, constantly changing situations out of the constant dynamic interaction between them and their material, natural and cultural surroundings. Such contextual reality ultimately depends not on vague primordial labels and collective categories, but on close inter-personal relations involving conflicts, rivalries, friendships, kinships, and female or male identities<sup>133</sup> inside the excavated locations, that decided which of the new would enter and which of them would remain excluded, as an expression of a concrete, yet fluid cultural situation.

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## NOTES

1. Katsonopoulou (2002); Katsonopoulou (2005) 33; Katsonopoulou (2007, 119); Katsonopoulou, this volume.
2. Rutter (1993) 759.
3. Champion (1995) 13-18.
4. Caskey (1960) 296.
5. Iliopoulos et al, this volume.
6. For Lerna, see Rutter (1995) 271-273, 279-281. For Tiryns, see Weisshaar (1981) 256, fig. 90:4.
7. Rutter (1995) 284-289.
8. Gauss and Smetana (2004) pls. 9, 10; Gauss and Smetana (2001) 475, fig. 3:3; 476, fig. 4:2; 477, fig. 5:2. See also Walter and Felten (1981) pls. 94-96.
9. Koumouzelis (1980) especially fig. 37.
10. Alram-Stern (2006) 41, pl. 19.
11. Blegen (1921) 10.
12. Immerwahr (1971) 57 and pl. 16.
13. Koumouzelis (1980) fig. 37:3.
14. Tiryns, see Müller (1938) pl. XXVI:15.
15. Rutter (1995) 289.
16. See above.
17. Rutter (1995) 355-367.
18. Gauss and Smetana (2004) pl. 9; Gauss and Smetana (2001) 477, fig. 5:3-4. See also Walter and Felten (1981) pls. 98, 103.
19. Alram-Stern (2006) pl. 19:230-233.
20. Rutter (1995) 309-317.
21. Walter and Felten (1981) pl. 97:230, XVIIIc and 231, XVIIIa; Gauss and Smetana (2004) pl. 9.
22. Rutter (1995) 348-354.
23. Rutter (1995) 321-324.
24. Dor et al. (1960) pl. XXIII: no 7.
25. Konsola (1981) 125, fig. 4.
26. Rutter (1995) 385-388.
27. Rutter (1995) 331-332.
28. Rutter (1995) 328-330.
29. Karageorghis (1999) 501-508.
30. Rutter (1995) 403-404.
31. Rutter (1995) 420-421.
32. Rutter (1995) 410-415.
33. Rutter (1995) 442-447.
34. Dörpfeld (1935), pls. 10, 12.
35. Gauss and Smetana (2003) 473, fig. 1:1.
36. Rutter (1995) 448-452.
37. Koumouzelis (1980) fig. 31.



38. Gauss and Smetana (2004) pl. 11:1.
39. Rutter (1995) 446 and 452-454.
40. Rutter (1995) 446.
41. See discussion in Rutter (1995) 22.
42. Rutter (1995) 416-418. Some similar examples are recorded in Aigina Kolonna, see Walter and Felten (1981) pls. 85: 129, IX and 91.
43. Koumouzelis (1980) fig. 36.
44. Rutter (1995).
45. Walter and Felten (1981), Gauss and Smetana (2001) and (2004).
46. Müller (1938) and Weisshaar (1981), (1982) and (1983).
47. Dörpfeld (1935) and Koumouzelis (1980), but also review by Rambach (2004).
48. Stocker (2003) 362, and fig. 24:P124-126.
49. Stocker (2003).
50. Iliopoulos et al., this volume.
51. Rutter (1995) 282, type III.2 the large one on the left, and 284-290. Also compare Konsola (1981) 125, fig. 4:A.
52. Rutter (1995).
53. Resembling motif 13 in Lerna IV, see Rutter (1995) 511. The horizontal bars are slightly sloping from right to left, which Rutter (1995) 508 also notes is common in Lerna IV.
54. Gauss and Smetana (2003) 474, fig. 2:1.
55. Rutter (1995) fig. 4:11. Compare also Kolonna V, Gauss and Smetana (2003) 474, fig. 2:4.
56. See similar observations by Rutter (1995) 22.
57. Rutter (1995) 21-22.
58. Rutter (1995) 407-410.
59. See above note 58.
60. In Lerna IV there are several body fragments from large pithoi with similar broad vertical straps, see Rutter (1995) 460, P250, P621-P623.
61. The motif has no exact equivalent within the patterns of Lerna IV. See Rutter (1995), 580, pattern XI: lozenge, where all examples occur with bordering bands and no interlocking lines. As a rough equivalent to the idea of the extending hatching diagonals at the lower part of the motif, also see Rutter (1995) 556, the variants of pattern VIII: multiple triangles.
62. Rutter (1995) 416-418.
63. Blegen (1921) fig. 8.
64. Goldman (1931) fig. 153:3.
65. Konsola (1981) 125, fig. 4:5.
66. Rutter (1995) 460, form XXIII.
67. Rutter (1995) 632-635.
68. Koumouzelis (1980) fig. 40.
69. Dor et al. (1960) pl. XXIV:no 8.
70. Alram-Stern (2006) pl. 22:260.
71. Stocker (2003) 363, fig. 18:P57.
72. Dercourt (1964); Trikolos and Alexoudi-Leivaditi (2004) 1570.
73. Iliopoulos et al., this volume.
74. Wiencke (1989) 506.
75. Iliopoulos et al., this volume.
76. Wiencke (2000) 596, fig. II.93.
77. Wiencke (2000) 540, fig. II.76:b-d. Comparable in Elis, see Koumouzelis (1980) fig. 4.
78. Wiencke (2000) 540, fig. II.76:m-o; Koumouzelis (1980) fig. 17.
79. Goldman (1931) 92.

80. Wiencke (2000) 543, fig. II.78:h,f.
81. For similar profiles and ornaments, see pottery from Elis in Koumouzelis (1980) fig. 5: profiles 6-8, and fig. 13.
82. See indicatively, Lithares: Tzavella-Evjen (1984) 165-168; Zygouries: Blegen (1928) 107; Korakou: Blegen (1921) 5; Tyrins: Weisshaar (1981) 235, 243-244, 250; Lerna: Wiencke (1989) 507. See also monographs by Bikaki (1984) on the record from Ayia Irini, Keos, and by Lindblom (2001), which is however mostly oriented to the record of MH and LH periods from Aegina.
83. Katsonopoulou (this volume). See also older references in Katsonopoulou (2005) 39.
84. Rutter (1993) 773.
85. Rutter (1993) 764.
86. Renfrew (1972) 203.
87. Katsonopoulou (2007) 120; Katsonopoulou (this volume).
88. Soter and Katsonopoulou (2005); Alvarez-Zarikian et al. (2005); Alvarez-Zarikian et al. (2008); Katsonopoulou (this volume).
89. Soter and Katsonopoulou (2005); Alvarez-Zarikian et al. (2005) 189, fig. 4; Alvarez-Zarikian et al. (2008) 121, fig. 6.
90. Walter and Felten (1981) 10.
91. Papazoglou-Manioudake (1984) 94 and 98.
92. Dor et al. (1960) 30.
93. Konsola (1981) 118.
94. Caskey (1954) 23-24.
95. See review by Forsén (1992) 30-156; see also discussion by Maran (1995).
96. Manning (1995).
97. Katsonopoulou (2005) 38-39 and 55-56, figs. 21-22.
98. Katsonopoulou (2005) 57, figs. 23-24.
99. Katsonopoulou (2007) 120 and fig. 3; Katsonopoulou (this volume).
100. Wiencke (1989) 505.
101. Wiencke (2000) 651.
102. Walter and Felten (1981) 21-22.
103. Papazoglou-Manioudake (1984) 94 and 98.
104. Alram-Stern (2006) 39.
105. Katsarou (1997).
106. Dor et al. (1960).
107. Papazoglou-Manioudake (1984).
108. For a review see Alram-Stern (2004): Achaia.
109. Sarri (this volume).
110. Alram-Stern (2006).
111. Katsarou (1997).
112. Dor et al. (1960), 65-69.
113. Rutter (1983) 342. The MH period is however absent from Helike.
114. For a review see Forsén (1992), 10-22; see also Maran (1995).
115. See above n. 113.
116. Rutter (2008).
117. Mintz and Dubois (2002).
118. Arnold (1985) 128.
119. Miller (1985) 5-12; Tilley (1999) 57.
120. Renfrew (1972) 344; Wiencke (1989) 503, 506; Wiencke (2000) 648.
121. Wiencke (2000) 648.
122. Sherratt (2002) 63.
123. Wright (2004); Halstead and Barrett (2004).
124. Sherratt (2002) 62-63.



125. See papers in Dietler and Hayden (2001).
126. Halstead (2004) 152; Pappa et al. (2004).
127. Renfrew (1972) 280.
128. Wiencke (1989) 503.
129. Wiencke (1989) 503; Rutter (2008) 461; Knapp (2008) 116.
130. Sherratt (2002) 63.
131. Renfrew (1972) 284; Sherratt (2002) 69.
132. Kotsakis (1999) 74.
133. I borrow from Kotsakis (2000) 17; see also Knapp (2008) 373-375.

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## ABSTRACT

### MORPHOLOGY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POTTERY AT THE EARLY HELLADIC SETTLEMENT OF HELIKE

The excavations at the Early Helladic Helike yielded large pottery assemblages of high qualitative and quantitative significance for the chronological, cultural, spatial, technological, and social analysis of the site. So far two clear stratigraphic horizons have been recorded with an equivalent distinction of the pottery: the surface deposit dating to early EH III, with many intact vases and pottery of low fragmentation in situ resulting from the immediate abandonment of the site and all ceramic vessels left or burnt in site; the underlying middle and late EH II building phases, extensively dispersed due to the continuous building activity on site.

Pottery repertoire of the upper phase contains dark tableware featuring one-handled cups, Bass bowls, tankards and one perforated vessel. It also contains wide-mouthed cooking vessels and necked jars, dark-on-light pattern-painted pottery and big storage pithoi manufactured with locally tempered fabrics. All vessels show strong profile similarities with Lerna IV, Kolonna V, as well as with contemporary pottery from Elis and Tiryns. A *depas* coming from a late EH II deposit is an exotic Lefkandi I intrusion probably coming from a contemporary center of the Aegean. The EH II deposits of Helike contain rather fine light-colored pottery and medium or small jars of the broader Lerna III culture.

The Helike repertoire served the preparation, serving, consumption and storage of foodstuffs and meals. The distribution of the vessels in the various buildings and spaces of the settlement indicates that most areas were of multipurpose use, hosting both storage jars along with tableware. Certain rooms though show signs of a more targeted use in terms of storage, as indicated by the presence of big permanent pithoi in rows along the walls; one such example comes from the west corridors of the *Corridor House*, in contrast to its central part rather testifying to meal cooking and consumption.

Given the anthropological significance of food and meal choices, the EH containers within certain rooms and corners in Helike should be regarded, further to their typological, stylistical and temporal characteristics, as materializing local social and individual identities and dialogues between the population, and therefore as illuminating local micro-histories, circumstantial fluidity of choices and eventfulness within the broader context of the standardized EH mainland culture.



## ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ

ΜΟΡΦΟΛΟΓΙΑ ΚΑΙ ΚΑΤΑΝΟΜΗ ΤΗΣ ΚΕΡΑΜΙΚΗΣ  
ΣΤΟΝ ΠΡΩΤΟΕΛΛΑΔΙΚΟ ΟΙΚΙΣΜΟ ΤΗΣ ΕΛΙΚΗΣ

Οι ανασκαφές στον Πρωτοελλαδικό οικισμό της Ελίκης έφεραν στο φως μεγάλες συγκεντρώσεις κεραμικής που περιέχουν σημαντικές ποιοτικές και ποσοτικές πληροφορίες για τη χρονολογική και πολιτισμική αναγνώριση της θέσης, αλλά και για την εξαγωγή συμπερασμάτων σχετικά με τις χρήσεις των χώρων, την οικονομία, την τεχνογνωσία και τις κοινωνικές σχέσεις. Συγκεκριμένα η κεραμική διακρίνεται, πρώτον σε ένα ανώτερο χρονο-πολιτισμικό ορίζοντα που χρονολογείται στην αρχή της ΠΕ ΙΙΙ και περιλαμβάνει ολόκληρα ή μικρές θραύσης αγγεία που βρέθηκαν στη θέση τους μετά την εγκατάλειψη του οικισμού, δεύτερον σε παλαιότερους κεραμικούς ορίζοντες που φτάνουν πίσω στη μέση και ύστερη ΠΕ ΙΙ, οι οποίοι χαρακτηρίζονται από σημαντική διάβρωση και θραύση των κεραμικών αγγείων επειδή αποτίθενται (αλλά και χρησιμοποιούνται δομικά) στην πυκνή επάλληλη οικοδομική δραστηριότητα του οικισμού.

Τα σχήματα της κεραμικής στις ανώτερες φάσεις περιλαμβάνουν μόνωτα κύπελλα, κύπελλα τύπου Bass, αμφοροειδή αγγεία καθώς και ένα αγγείο με διάτρητο σώμα. Περιλαμβάνουν επίσης ευρύστομα μαγειρικά σκεύη, στενόλαιμα πιθάρια, γραπτά λεπτά και παχιά αγγεία με διακοσμητικά μοτίβα ή ολόβαφες επιφάνειες καθώς και μεγάλα αποθηκευτικά πιθάρια με σχοινοειδή διακόσμηση και επιθέματα, που κατασκευάζονται από τοπικά μείγματα πηλών. Τυπολογικά τα αγγεία της Ελίκης παρουσιάζουν ομοιότητες με την κεραμική από τη Λέρνα ΙV, την Κολόννα V, αλλά και τις σύγχρονες φάσεις από την Ηλιδα και την Τίρυνθα. Ένα σπάνιο «δέπας αμφικύπελλον» της ύστερης ΠΕ ΙΙ (φάση Λευκαντί Ι) αποτελεί προφανώς εισαγωγή από κέντρο του ανατολικού Αιγαίου. Στα αρχαιότερα στρώματα η κεραμική της ΠΕ ΙΙ είναι ανοιχτόχρωμη και περιλαμβάνει κυρίως μικρά και μεσαία βαθιά αγγεία και φιάλες του πολιτισμού τύπου Λέρνα ΙΙΙ.

Το κεραμικό σύνολο της Ελίκης εξυπηρετούσε την προετοιμασία, σερβίρισμα, κατανάλωση και αποθήκευση τροφίμων και φαγητού για τον πληθυσμό του οικισμού. Η κατανομή των αγγείων στα κτήρια και τα επιμέρους δωμάτια υποδηλώνει ότι οι περισσότεροι χώροι εξυπηρετούσαν ταυτόχρονα κάποιες από αυτές τις χρήσεις. Λ.χ. ακόμα και σε εξειδικευμένους αποθηκευτικούς χώρους όπου μεγάλα πιθάρια είναι εγκατεστημένα σε σειρές δίπλα στους τοίχους, αγγεία φαγητού και πόσεως έχουν βρεθεί παραπλεύρως στον ίδιο χώρο: τέτοια είναι για παράδειγμα η περίπτωση των νότιων διαδρόμων του Κτηρίου των Διαδρόμων, σε αντίθεση με τον κεντρικό του χώρο που περισσότερο περιρίζεται στο μαγείρεμα και την κατανάλωση φαγητού.

Με δεδομένη την ανθρωπολογική σημασία των τροφίμων και του φαγητού ως νοσηματοδοτημένων πολιτισμικών προϊόντων, τα ΠΕ δοχεία που βρίσκονται σε κάθε δωμάτιο, ανοιχτό ή κλειστό χώρο του προϊστορικού οικισμού της Ελίκης εκφράζουν τα ατομικά νοήματα και τις συλλογικές ταυτότητες και σχέσεις των συγκεκριμένων ντόπιων προϊστορικών κατοίκων. Οι συνάφειές τους μέσα στον οικισμό, μας διευκολύνουν να αναζητήσουμε αυτές τις ιδιαιτερότητες σε επίπεδο μικρο-ιστορίας και συγκυρίας αναδεικνύοντας έτσι τις μικρές σε χρόνο και τόπο παραμέτρους που συνθέτουν τον πολιτισμό πάνω στο υπόβαθρο της μακραίωνης παράδοσης.