

5 Arm and Shoulder Protection

With the exception of cuirasses, helmets and greaves, few other examples of metal body armour are known. These mainly appear to have been concerned with protecting the hand or arm, where not afforded protected by a shield. The shoulder protection from Dendra (grave 8; cat. no. 120) was discussed in Chapter 3. Another possible arm protection is also known from chamber tomb 12 at Dendra.¹¹⁸³ The size and shape of the formed bronze sheet from Dendra suggests it was more likely used as arm protection, rather than as a greave. Both ends of the cylindrical bronze sheet are bent outwards to reduce the risk of injury from the sharp edges. Approximately one third of the piece appears to be missing, representing the middle section, with both ends having been recovered. Parallel to the edges, a row of small holes to attach the organic inlay is visible (Fig. 5.1.2).

Verdelis mentions two further possible examples of arm protection from Práisos, Greece, which have a similar size and shape as that from Dendra (Fig. 5.1.1).¹¹⁸⁴ A possible hand protector was found together with bronze sheet bands in chamber tomb 15 at Mycenae.¹¹⁸⁵ It also has small holes all along the edge, again likely for the attachment of an inner lining. Two buttons or flat headed rivets permitted the attachment of an organic band around the wrist (Fig. 5.1.4). Metal arm protection is not mentioned by Homer in the *Iliad*, only the, possibly organic, arm protection for working in the fields, when he describes the clothes of Laertes.¹¹⁸⁶ Depictions on the Warrior Vase show the warriors wearing long sleeves which might also be taken to indicate metal or organic arm protection.¹¹⁸⁷

One unique piece of hand protection, which had been manufactured specifically for the left hand, and which appears to have derived from eastern Europe, formed part of the Guttman collection,¹¹⁸⁸ though sadly the current repository is not known. The provenance of the object is unknown. The hand protection (Fig. 5.1.3) would have been attached on to the left hand by means of strips of organic material guided through two holes positioned on the upper and lower ends of the protection. The upper end has holes that are bent upwards to allow the hand a better degree of movement. The pellet and boss decoration of the hand protection suggest a date of Ha A. The depicted motif, a kind of cauldron and bows on the rim of the protection, is, however, unique. It remains possibility, of course, that the piece is a forgery, so it was not catalogued.

Rectangular bronze sheets, with holes positioned along the short edge to allow for organic bands to enable their attachment, are known from Hajdúsámson, Hungary. These might have served as protection for the lower arm.¹¹⁸⁹

¹¹⁸³ Verdelis 1967, 40–41, fig. 9, suppl. 18.

¹¹⁸⁴ Verdelis 1967, 42, fig. 10.

¹¹⁸⁵ Yalouris 1960, 58.

¹¹⁸⁶ *Odyssey* XXIV, 781–782.

¹¹⁸⁷ Verdelis 1967, 41.

¹¹⁸⁸ Guttman collection, inv. no. AG 1001; Born – Hansen 2001, 89–91, 220–221, 263–268, fig. 74, pl. VIII; Molloy 2013, 289.

¹¹⁸⁹ Born – Hansen 2001, 75, fig. 73.1–2.

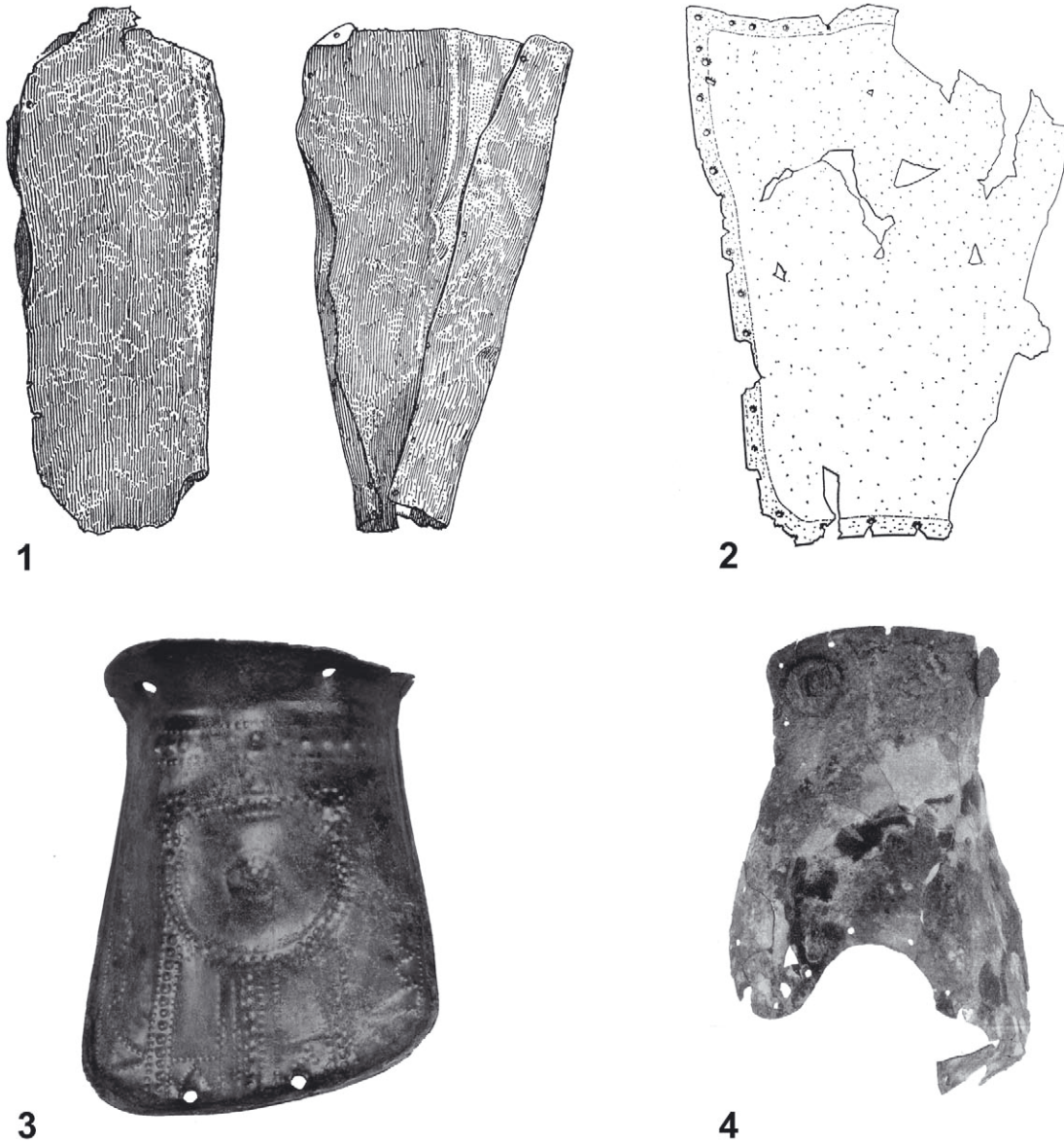


Fig. 5.1 Potential bronze arm protection (1–2; no scale) and hand protection (3–4; without scale). 1. Praistos (Verdelis 1967, fig. 10); 2. Dendra, grave 12 (Verdelis 1967, fig. 9); 3. Unprovenanced (Born – Hansen 2001, fig. 220); 4. Mycenae (after Yalouris 1960, suppl. 26.3).