

INVESTIGATIONS OF TWO MH I BURIAL MOUNDS AT MESSENIAN KASTROULIA (NEAR ELLINIKA, ANCIENT THOURIA)

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Hope Simpson and Dickinson, in their *Gazetteer of Aegean Civilisation in the Bronze Age* in 1979, mentioned the site of Ellinika about 10 km north of Kalamata.¹

According to their description of the area, a ridge oriented north–south, nearly 1.8 km in length, running parallel to and east of the Kalamata–Tripolis highway, is situated to the east and above the villages of Antheia and, to its south, Aithaia (Fig. 1).² Traces of the Classical and later town had been observed mainly at the north end of the ridge. A Late Helladic (LH) settlement was on the central ridge and its upper west slope. An Early Helladic (EH) II settlement existed near the south end of the ridge and, as mentioned by the authors, possibly near the Pisovrysi spring on the southwest slope above Aithaia. Numerous LH chamber tombs, all robbed, had been examined in the previous decades, in the upper slopes of the ridge and mainly in its east flank above the Xeropotamos gorge.

Opposite, on the upper slope of the east bank of the Xeropotamos, two mounds, the tumuli of Kastroulia, were clearly visible and considered as possible LH tholos tombs (Fig. 1).³

In 1979 Hope Simpson and Dickinson described the two mounds as follows.⁴

The northernmost is ca. 10 m in diameter and 5 m high. The clay capping is partly revealed. The second mound, about 40 m to the south, is ca. 10 m in diameter and about 4 m high. LH III sherds and obsidian were found nearby.

The EH site, according to Hope Simpson and Dickinson, appeared to measure ca. 90 m north–south and 70 m east–west.⁵ There, fine EH II wares could be observed and a stylized figurine (*BSA* 52, 1957, 245 Pl. 50b) was mentioned, too. A Middle Helladic (MH) Grey Minyan sherd and a few LH sherds were found in the area of the EH II settle-

ment, but these may have spilled over from the adjacent LH area.⁶ In making this observation, which follows their remark that “LH III sherds and obsidian were found nearby”, it is clear that Hope Simpson and Dickinson have jumped in their description back to the ridge above the western bank of the Xeropotamos, specifically the EH II site in the central part of that ridge. They make no mention of EH II sherds in the area of the two mounds on the east side of the Xeropotamos gorge.

An instance of illegal digging in the center of the southernmost of the two tumuli in 2000 led Dr. Xenia Arapogianni – Director of the 7th Ephorate of Olympia, responsible for Elis, Zakynthos and Messenia – to undertake rescue excavations of the mound in 2001, assisted by the archaeologist L. Malapani.

On the evidence of reports concerning Kastroulia in the archaeological bibliography, the Greek excavators were convinced that the site of Kastroulia would present yet a further Mycenaean tholos tomb. Indeed, in the fill of the mound of the southernmost tumulus, the staff of the 7th Ephorate collected thousands of sherds of very good quality that appeared, prior to washing, to be Mycenaean.

However, instead of a Mycenaean tholos tomb, they found in the center of the southern tumulus an oval stone enclosure. This enclosure lay at the edge of a large oval pit that had been dug into the hard, clayey, natural earth beneath the artificial fill of the mound.

Initial examination of the sherd material from the fill by the present author led to the unexpected finding that roughly 99 percent of the sherds belonged to EH II fabrics, including many of best quality. Many of these were easily identified as fragments of sauceboats, saucers, askoi, ladles, coarse baking pans and deep bowls with thickened rim and plastic decoration.

¹ HOPE SIMPSON and DICKINSON 1979, 163 D 137.

² For the detailed map of this area, see HOPE SIMPSON 1966, 113–31 fig. 6.

³ Ibid. fig. 6 “burial mounds”.

⁴ HOPE SIMPSON and DICKINSON 1979, 163.

⁵ Ibid. 163.

⁶ Ibid. 163.

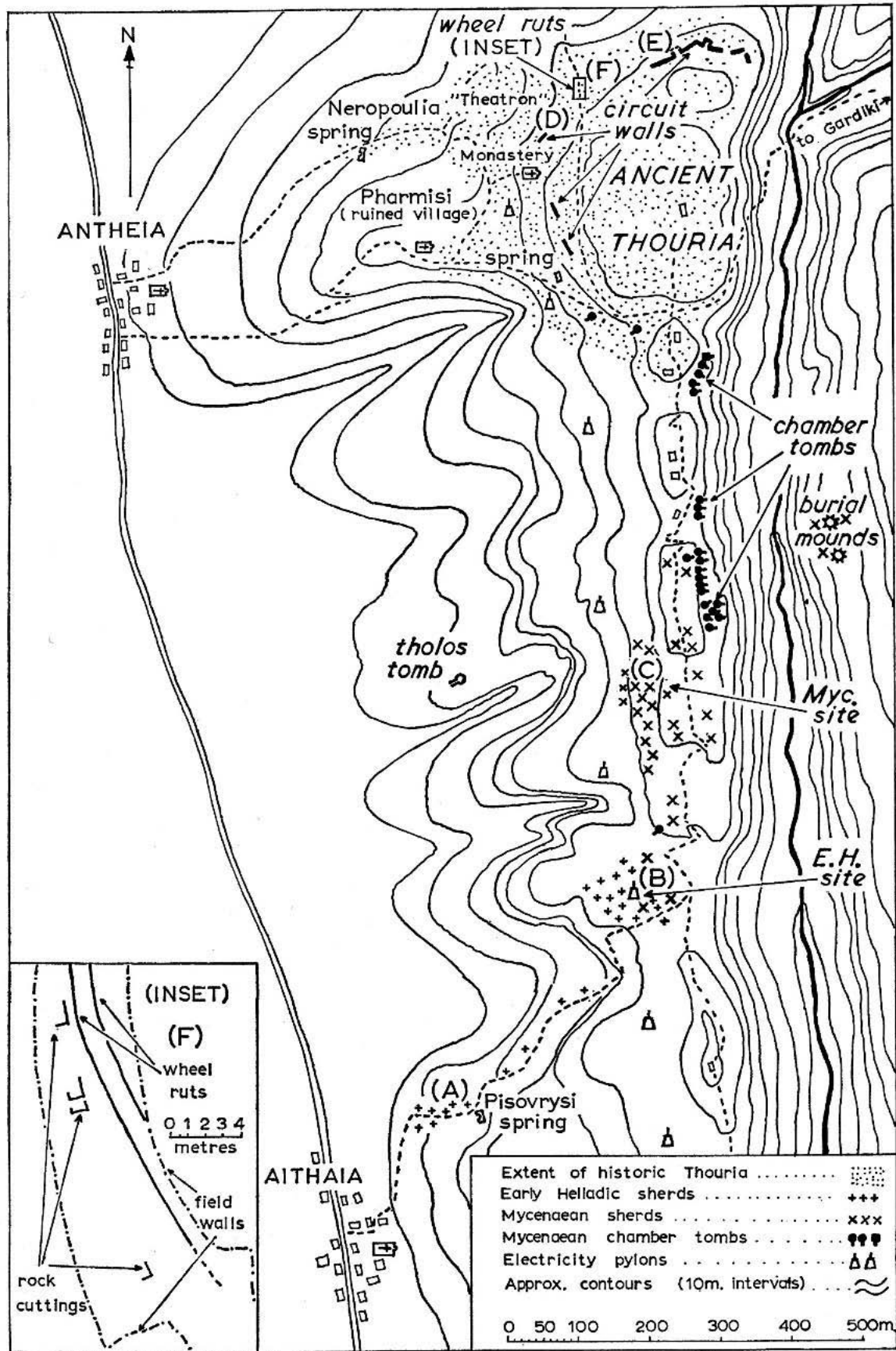


Fig. 1 Map of the surrounding area of Ancient Thouria and the two burial tumuli of Kastroulia.
 After HOPE SIMPSON, R., *The Seven Cities offered by Agamemnon to Achilles*, *BSA* 61, 1966, 113-131 fig. 6

One sherd of blue and yellow slipped and burnished ware, presumably of an askos, carried a zoomorphic protome on the shoulder.⁷

This very impressive quantity of EH II sherds initially suggested that the excavation might uncover a burial mound of EH date.⁸

Because the southern mound at Kastroulia, tumulus I, had been to some degree disturbed at its center by the illegal digging activities, it was decided to begin systematic excavation at the northern mound, our tumulus II.⁹ This mound was also in danger, the owner of the land around it having planted new olive

trees increasingly closer to the circular edge of the mound, which was already “nibbled off” by plowing and other farming activities.

The northern mound, tumulus II, was divided into four excavation areas in order to allow for the drafting of a north-south and east-west cross-section through the center of the tumulus.

The four “quarters”, the *tetartimoria* of the mound, were labeled in the following way: northeast (quarter A), northwest (B), southwest (Γ), and southeast (Δ).

At the northeast of the mound, an attempt at illegal digging undertaken long before had left traces of an old north-south trench cut into the fill and extending from the north to the center of the mound, as far as the southwest corner of our quarter A. Apart from a row of fieldstones near the periphery of the fill, the huge number of EH II sherds in the tumulus earth were the only substantial find.

The southeast quarter presented the same picture, no finds above bedrock other than fill rich in EH II sherds. Near the center of the southeast quarter, however, cut into the natural ground, we uncovered a shallow pit containing scant remains of a young child (Fig. 2). This inhumation was furnished with a plain



Fig. 2 Kastroulia, Tumulus II, quarter Δ, burial of a child (grave 1), from South-West (apart from Fig. 1 all the photos for Figs. 2–32 were made by the author)



Fig. 3 Kastroulia, Tumulus II, quarter Δ, burial of a child (grave 1), gravegifts: matt-painted kantharos and plain jug

⁷ RAMBACH 2003, 225–55 esp. 251, 255 fig. 12; 13 a–c.

⁸ Until now there has been no clear evidence of EH II burial mounds in the southern or central Greek mainland. It is still doubtful whether the burial mounds at Lakonian Pellana are to be dated to the EH II period. For Pellana, see SPYROPOULOS, 1998, 28–38 esp. 35–7 fig. 2.19–22. For the huge EH II “Ritual” Tumuli at Lerna and Olympia, see FORSÉN 1992 232–7; RAMBACH 2002, 177–212; RAMBACH 2004, 1199–254; RAMBACH 2003, 225–55 esp. 241–6 and Beilage 14, with further references. For the small EH II burial mounds at Steno in Leukas, see DÖRPFELD and GOESSLER 1927, 206–50;

GOESSLER 1927, 275–338 esp. 286–309; MARAN 1998, 102–4; ZACHOS and DOUZOUGLI 2003, 30–41. For prehistoric tumuli in Greece, generally, see MÜLLER 1989, 1–42; For the mounds at Steno see KILIAN-DIRLMEIER 2005, 1–181.

⁹ The present author was responsible for constructing the excavation grid, in 1 m² units, for the drawing of all plans and sections and for the general progress of the excavation. The author is very grateful to Dr. Arapogianni for the permission to publish the results of the excavations at Kastroulia. Thanks for good cooperation to L. Malapani.

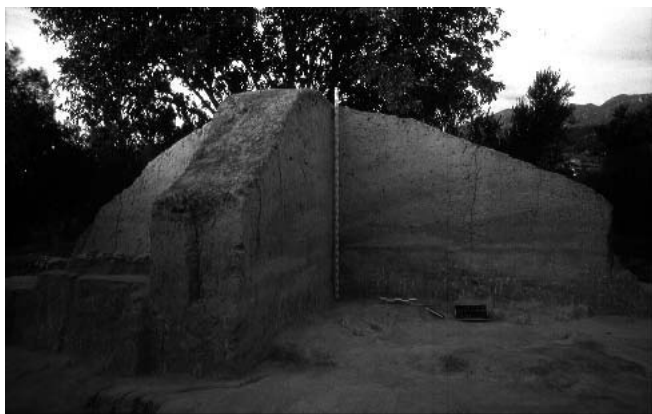


Fig. 4 Kastroulia, Tumulus II, quarter Δ, stratigraphy of the West- and North-section of this quarter, from South



Fig. 5 Kastroulia, Tumulus II, quarter Δ, stratigraphy of the West-section of this quarter, from East

jug and a matt-painted kantharos, clearly of MH I date (Fig. 3). Approximately 1 m above the burial was a small pile of fieldstones apparently serving as a grave marker. Study of the stratigraphy indicated clearly that a small mound initially erected above the grave had been later covered by the fill of the greater tumulus (Fig. 4 and Fig. 5).

Excavation next in the southwest quarter of the tumulus, in the eastern vertical section of this quarter, soon presented indications of a disturbance. It was clear that soil here had fallen from a higher level, presumably in the collapse of the ceiling of a cavity that had been dug further below. Indeed, a bit lower down, excavation revealed a horizontal rectangular platform constructed of river pebbles of roughly the size of tennis balls. The platform was built about 10–15 cm above the hard, greenish, clayey natural ground (Fig. 6). The platform measured approximately 2.40 m north-south and approximately 2 m east-west.

Toward the middle of the platform, the original pebble layer was destroyed. An extension measuring

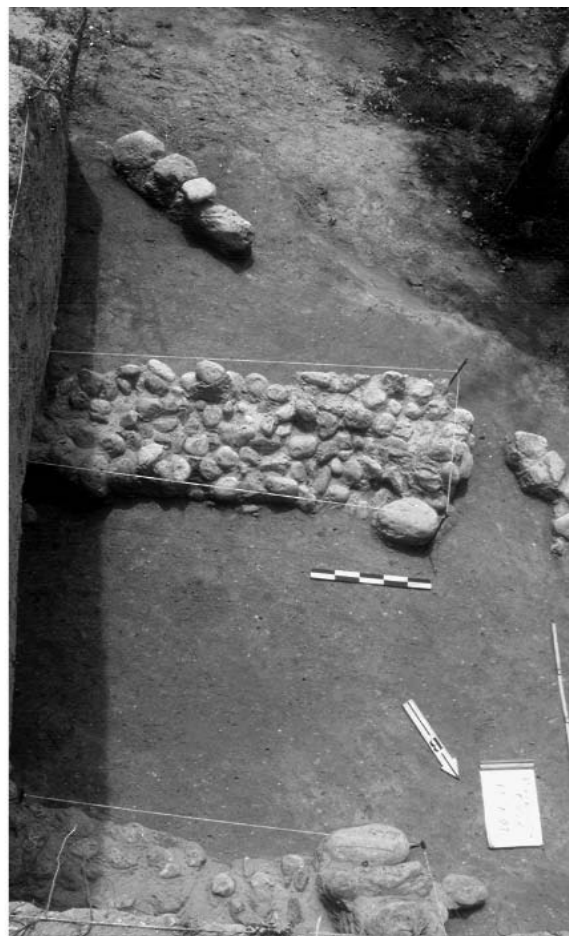


Fig. 6 Kastroulia, Tumulus II, quarter Γ, undisturbed parts of the pebble-build platform above grave 2, in the middle intrusive earth in the area of the grave-chamber or grave-shaft

approximately 2 m east-west and 1.20 m north-south contained intrusive earth from higher levels of the fill, doubtless an indication of an unrobbed grave lying beneath.

No objects identifiable as grave gifts were found on the pebbles of the preserved areas of the platform. Bordering the western edge of the platform, however, was a row of larger river pebbles laid side by side with an east–west longitudinal axis (Fig. 7). This was the only find of larger river pebbles within the soil that had collapsed onto the floor of the grave chamber. The floor itself, cut into the hard, clayey, natural ground, was reached about 1 m beneath the platform.

On the floor of the grave chamber, apart from the intrusive earth containing a great number of river pebbles from the destroyed part of the platform, was found a female skeleton in contracted position, the head placed toward the east and the face turned southward (Fig. 8). The entrance to the grave evidently was in the west, toward which the grave shaft extended approximately 1 m beyond the pebble platform.



Fig. 7 Kastroulia, Tumulus II, quarter Γ, row of larger and higher river-pebbles at the western edge of the platform above grave 2, from South-West



Fig. 8 Kastroulia, Tumulus II, quarter Γ, grave 2, female skeleton in contracted position and some of the grave-offerings, from West

It is not entirely clear whether the grave had been cut as a shaft from above, and subsequently covered with wooden beams topped with the platform, or had been cut as a chamber tomb, with the entrance from the west, and tunneled from there into the extremely hard, clayey, natural ground. No traces of wooden beams or posts were observed.¹⁰

Use of chamber tombs in the Peloponnese from EH I times is attested by the recently discovered cemetery of Kalamaki in Kato Achaia and also by the EH I cemetery in ancient Elis, recently investigated by the 7th Ephorate.¹¹

The female burial in this grave - grave 2 of tumulus II - was furnished with more than 30 clay vases,



Fig. 9 Kastroulia, Tumulus II, quarter Γ, grave 2, female skeleton in contracted position and some of the grave-offerings, from West

many of them with incised or painted decoration. Most of the vases were found around the head of the decedent or along the southern side of the grave in front of the body. Other vases lay near the feet, immediately behind the back, and above the body (Fig. 9).

The following pottery vessels were observed:

1. Several two-handled biconical bowls with flat, sharply offset everted rims in Grey Minyan or dark burnished fabric (Fig. 10). The shape can be identified among bowls of Lerna VA.¹² Similar profiles of bowls are also known from Nichoria MH I, Group C contexts.¹³

¹⁰ The fact that the “shaft” extended some 1 m further to the west than the pebble platform suggests the form of a chamber tomb. The greater length would have not been necessary for the deposition of the (a) skeleton, whether in contracted or extended position.

¹¹ For KALAMAKI see VASILOGAMBROU 1998, 366–99; ALRAM-STERN 2004, 680 pl. 40–1; RAMBACH in press.

¹² For parallels see ZERNER 1978, fig. 3, D602, 1; 11, BD419, 2; 11, BD410, 4; 12, BD155, 3.

¹³ HOWELL 1992, 43–204, fig. 3–13 P2185; 3–14 P2192.



Fig. 10 Kastroulia, Tumulus II, quarter Γ, grave 2: one of several two-handled biconical bowls with sharply offset everted rims in Grey Minyan or Dark Burnished Fabric



Fig. 11 Kastroulia, Tumulus II, quarter Γ, grave 2: one of several biconical kantharoi with flat, sharply offset everted rims in Grey Minyan or Dark Burnished Fabric



Fig. 12 Kastroulia, Tumulus II, quarter Γ, grave 2: Depas Amphikypellon in Grey Minyan Ware



Fig. 13 Kastroulia, Tumulus II, quarter Γ, grave 2: one of the two rounded cups with high swung handle in Dark Burnished Ware



Fig. 14 Kastroulia, Tumulus II, quarter Γ, grave 2: large matt painted askos



Fig. 15 Kastroulia, Tumulus II, quarter Γ, grave 2: large painted jar of Lustrous-Decorated Ware



Fig. 16 Kastroulia, Tumulus II, quarter Γ, grave 2: one of the two depata with matt painted decoration



Fig. 17 Kastroulia, Tumulus II, quarter Γ, grave 2: one of the two matt painted kantharoi



Fig. 18 Kastroulia, Tumulus II, quarter Γ, grave 2: two-handled tankard with incised decoration, Grey Burnished Fabric



Fig. 19 Kastroulia, Tumulus II, quarter Γ, grave 2: narrow-necked jar with two upright horizontal handles on the shoulder

2. Several biconical kantharoi with flat, sharply offset everted rims in Grey Minyan or dark burnished fabric (Fig. 11). These bowls again are similar in shape to vases from Lerna VA.¹⁴ Bowls with similar profiles occurred also in Nichoria MH I, Group C contexts.¹⁵

3. One depas amphikypellon in Grey Minyan ware with incised decoration (Fig. 12). Sherds with similar incised motifs are known, for example, from Nichoria MH I, Group C.¹⁶

4. Two rounded cups with high-swung handles in

dark burnished ware (Fig. 13). A similar but less rounded cup with incomplete handle has been published from Nichoria MH I, Group B.¹⁷ Known from Lerna VA is a small incomplete rounded bowl with inturned rim and with missing handle(?).¹⁸

5. A large matt-painted askos (Fig. 14). This wonderful piece is presumably furnished with an Aeginetan style of decoration.

6. A large jug in Lustrous Decorated ware (Fig. 15), very common in Lerna VA.¹⁹

¹⁴ ZERNER 1978, fig. 18, 1.5; 19, BE45, 1.

¹⁵ HOWELL 1992, fig. 3–14 P2190.

¹⁶ Ibid. fig. 3–16 P2212.

¹⁷ Ibid. fig. 3–4 P2089.

¹⁸ ZERNER 1978, 76 fig. 6, D591, 1.

¹⁹ Ibid. 159–67. For lustrous decoration in Nichoria MH I, Group B and C, see HOWELL 1992, 48 (P2117) pl. 3–4 P2117; 49 (P2132) fig. 3–7 P2132; 54–5 (P2296–P2310, P2389) fig. 3–21 P2296–P2297, P2300, P2307, P2310 pl. 3–15 P2296–P2310; 3–20 P2389.



Fig. 20 Kastroulia, Tumulus II, quarter Γ, grave 2: Depas Amphikypellon in Grey Minyan Ware



Fig. 21 Kastroulia, Tumulus II, quarter Γ, grave 2: one-handed bowl with flat, Kastroulia, Tumulus II, quarter Γ, grave 2 sharply offset everted rim

7. Two depata with matt-painted decoration (Fig. 16).²⁰

8. Two matt-painted kantharoi (Fig. 17).

9. One two-handled tankard in Grey Minyan fabric with incised decoration (Fig. 18). This is a unique shape for the early MH period. In shape, this vase is a clear descendant of the EH III shoulder-handled tankards.²¹

10. One narrow-necked jar with two upright horizontal handles on the shoulder (Fig. 19). Not a very common shape in the early MH period, but a vase of this type is previously known in Aegina Fundgruppe XVIIIa, Stadt V, EH III.²²

11. One depas amphikypellon in Grey Minyan Ware, consisting of two small jugs with low globular body and high flaring neck/rim (Fig. 20). The shape could be interpreted as a late descendant of the so-called Trojan Cup of the late EH II period²³ or as a typological forerunner of the late MH/early LH squat jugs.²⁴



Fig. 22 Kastroulia, Tumulus II, quarter Γ, grave 2: one of three footed braziers or strainers in Grey Minyan Ware with incised and punctate decoration

12. One one-handed bowl with flat, sharply offset everted rim (Fig. 21), a characteristic shape of Lerna VA and Nichoria MH I, Group C.²⁵

²⁰ For a parallel of this form from tumulus A of Voidokoilia in Messenia, found standing on remains of EH II walls in front of burial pithos 4 or 5, see KORRES 1990, 1–11 esp. 6 pl. 4, 1; KORRES 1987, 711–43 esp. 734 with note 40 fig. 14.

²¹ For EH III shoulder-handled tankards, see RUTTER 1995, 270–1; 281–305 (form III); 640–54.

²² For the vessel from Aegina see WALTER and FELTEN 1981, pl. 92, 195 XVIIIa.

²³ For “Trojan Cups”, see RENFREW 1972, 454 (one-handed cup) fig. 20.4, 1–4; 20.5; MARAN 1998, 57 with note 608 (“Trojan Cup”), 97–8 (einenkliger Trichterhalskrug), pl. 11, 7–8; RAMBACH 2000a, pl. 23, 3–5; 36, 7; 48, 2; 53, 10; 69, 1; 125, 4–9; 126, 1; RAMBACH 2000b, 345–56. New finds from the EH I cemeteries of Kalamaki near Kato Achaia and from the area of the town of ancient Elis, however, demon-

strate that depata of similar shape were in use in the western Peloponnese as early as EH I; see ALRAM-STERN 2004, 680 pl. 41 bottom. An unpublished example from excavations of the EH I cemetery of ancient Elis, carried out by the 7th Ephorate in Olympia, is somewhat more similar in shape to our depas than the example from Kalamaki. RAMBACH in press

²⁴ For squat jugs of the late MH/early LH phases, see LOLOS 1987, 274–85.

²⁵ For parallels of this shape in Lerna VA, see ZERNER 1978, fig. 13 deposit BD 399 and BD 406; 14 deposit B 1247 and deposit B 1487, 1; 16 deposit BE 426, 2; 18 deposit BE 429, 2; 19 deposit BE 45, 3. For Nichoria MH I Group C, see HOWELL 1992, fig. 3–14 P2192 pl. 3–8 P2192. This fragment could, however, belong to a kantharos.



Fig. 23 Kastroulia, Tumulus II, quarter Γ, grave 2: four bronze pendants in the shape of the Minoan double axe. At the central perforation of one of these pendants small parts of brown threads are preserved, which belong to the original string used for the suspension of these four pendants in a vertical row



Fig. 24 Kastroulia, Tumulus II, quarter Γ, grave 2: two spindle whorls with incised decoration

13. Three footed braziers or strainers in Gray Minyan ware with incised decoration and, in two of the three cases, also punctate decoration (Fig. 22). Numerous sherds in Minyan ware from Nichoria MH I, Group C which seem to have belonged to strainers appear very similar to these in decor and shape.²⁶

Found near the breast of the decedent were, in addition, four bronze pendants in the shape of the Minoan double axe (Fig. 23). Collected in the soil around the head were two spindle whorls with incised decoration (Fig. 24), some stone beads and dozens of very tiny beads, presumably bone, which may perhaps have been part of a veil.

Near the southern edge of the pebble platform of grave 2 was found another grave (grave 3) with single inhumation (Fig. 25), presumably of a male. This grave was partially destroyed, apparently as a result of modern planting activities. Under a mass of collapsed fieldstones, were uncovered scanty remains of a skeleton (Fig. 26).

As grave gifts, in addition to a bronze knife (Fig. 27) and a small bronze dagger (Fig. 28), were five clay vases, as follows.

One kantharos (Fig. 29), a so-called Nichoria bowl (“Nichoria kantharos”), a shape that is a hallmark of



Fig. 25 Kastroulia, Tumulus II, quarter Γ, grave 3: collapsed pebble-covering above the partially destroyed burial of presumably a male person, from South. In the background the pebble build platform of grave 2



Fig. 26 Kastroulia, Tumulus II, quarter Γ, grave 3: scanty remains of a skeleton and funeral-gifts, from South-West

²⁶ Compare HOWELL 1992, fig. 3–16 P2211–P2212, P2216–P2217; 3–17 P2233, P2236, P2243; pl. 3–9 P2211–P2212, P2216–P2217; 3–11 P2233–P2248. For a

footed brazier from the “southern grave”, a stone-built cist grave, in tumulus A of Voidokoilia, see KORRES 1990, 7 pl. 4, 2; KORRES 1987, 735 with note 47 fig 15.



Fig. 27 Kastroulia, Tumulus II, quarter Γ, grave 3:
bronze knife



Fig. 28 Kastroulia, Tumulus II, quarter Γ, grave 3:
small bronze dagger



Fig. 29 Kastroulia, Tumulus II, quarter Γ, grave 3:
kantharos of the so called 'Nichoria bowl'-type

the early MH period. This peculiar shape is very common in Nichoria MH I, Group C and is also known from Lerna VA and from pithos grave 11 in tumulus A of Voidokoilia in Messenia.²⁷ The example from Kastroulia is furnished with two strap-handles, each formed of six parallel rods of clay bedded in a thin, flat clay-strap. Strap-handles made of rods of clay are not uncommon in Nichoria MH I, Group C.²⁸

Two large narrow-necked jars with two vertical handles on the shoulder, with matt-painted decoration (Fig. 30). This shape was already popular in



Fig. 30 Kastroulia, Tumulus II, quarter Γ, grave 3: one of two large narrow necked jars with two vertical handles on the shoulder in matt pattern-painted fabric

Aegina Fundgruppe XVIIIIf, town V (EH III),²⁹ and in Olympia it occurred in apsidal house III (toward the end of EH III).³⁰

One small biconical narrow-necked jar, with double perforation beneath the rim (Fig. 31). This is a very popular shape in Lerna VA.³¹

A large jug with horizontal ribs on the shoulder (Fig. 32). This vase shape seems to show some influence from Minoan pottery tradition.³²

CONCLUSIONS

To highlight the significance of the archaeological evidence of tumulus II in Kastroulia, we stress the following points.

²⁷ For Nichoria MH I, Group C, see Howell 1992, 51, 71 fig. 3–6 P2119–P2120; 3–11 P2151, P2154. For a bowl (kantharos) of this type from Lerna VA, see ZERNER 1987, pl. 13 above left (dark burnished ware). For the example from pithos grave 11 in tumulus A of Voidokoilia, see KORRES 1978, 323–60 esp. 353–4 pl. 212α.

²⁸ See HOWELL 1992, 51 fig. 3–13 P2176 pl. 3–8 P2176–P2178.

²⁹ See WALTER and FELTEN 1981, pl. 92, 192, XVIIIIf.

³⁰ See WEEGE 1911, 163–92, fig.19; RAMBACH 2001, 327–34 esp. 330 with note 33.

³¹ For close parallels in shape from Lerna VA, see ZERNER 1978, fig. 12 deposit BD 155, 4, 10; 14 deposit B 1487, 8; 17 deposit BE 426, 11, 13; 19, deposit BE 45, 4.

³² P. WARREN and M. CULTRARO considered this jug as a possible Minoan import from the Mesara.



Fig. 31 Kastroulia, Tumulus II, quarter Γ, grave 3: small narrow necked jar with double perforation beneath the rim

Tumulus II provided us with three burials, each a single inhumation. These were furnished with rich or even very rich grave gifts, a circumstance extremely rare among early MH tumulus burials. Graves 2 and 3 of tumulus II are the richest burials of the early to mature MH period so far known in Messenia.³³ The three graves of tumulus II represent true “closed deposits” and may therefore be highly helpful in studies of chronological issues. Both tumulus I and II are to be dated to the late MH I period. Tumulus II seems to have served as a burial place for a single family: in grave 2, near the center of the tumulus, a woman of high social status, perhaps a priestess or an “archontisa”; and in graves 1 and 3, closer to the periphery of the tumulus, a child and a man, respectively.³⁴ The preserved archaeological evidence indicates use of both tumuli exclusively in MH I. No traces of burials of later MH or LH phases were observed.

The two tumuli of Kastroulia clearly demonstrate the existence of a hierarchically divided society in this part of Messenia as early as the beginning of the MH period. The female burial in the extraordinarily rich grave 2 of tumulus II was furnished with a complete set of tableware, easily imagined to have been used for feasts and banquets during the lifetime of the decedent. Most of the pots in this assemblage designed for drinking or eating were manufactured in a mainland Helladic pottery tradition. The three vessels made to be used as pouring vessels, however – two



Fig. 32 Kastroulia, Tumulus II, quarter Γ, grave 3: large jug with horizontal ribs on the shoulder. The lower part of the handle is thrust through the body wall of the vessel

jugs from grave 2, and one from grave 3 – include a possible import from the wider Aegina-region (the matt-painted patterned jug) and minoanizing products or perhaps even true imports from Crete (the jug with horizontal plastic ribs from grave 3). These jugs obviously were products of high value and high prestige for the owner. It is perhaps no coincidence that vessels for pouring were particularly favored as items brought from abroad,³⁵ since a pouring vessel would have been readily noticed by each participant in a feast or banquet, having come close at least once to everyone taking part in the event. With its rare and foreign design and decoration, such a vessel could easily have been used as a means of achieving prestige for the owner by demonstrating his ability, knowledge and connections for gaining access to a

³³ For Kephlovryson, grave 1 (Chora, Volimidia), Ayios Ioannis Papoulia and Voidokoilia, see KILIAN-DIRLMEIER 1997, 97–8, 101–4. For Kephlovryson, grave 1, see also LOLOS 1987, 196–207 esp. 203 fig. 350, 353, 355–66.

³⁴ The anthropological examination of the skeletal remains from Kastroulia has been assumed by Professor M. Michalodimitrakis of the University of Crete and by Prof. M.Y. Iscan of the University of Istanbul. After an initial

study of the skeletal remains from graves 1–3, he agreed with the identification of the sex and age (child) of the three decedents found in tumulus II. DNA analyses are in progress.

³⁵ Compare the remarks of KILIAN-DIRLMEIER 1997, 104 for the MH II shaft grave in Aegina. For the commercial connections of Messenia in the Bronze Age see KORRES 1993, 231–48. See also RUTTER and ZERNER 1984, 75–83.

product presumably available to only a very limited number of persons and hence of high value.

The pottery of Helladic tradition among the grave gifts from Kastroulia presents strong resemblances in shape, decoration and manufacture with the pottery of Nichoria and Lerna VA. In contrast, not a single vessel of the so-called Adriatic incised ware was found among the assemblages,³⁶ and there is no evidence among the incised decorated pottery of Kastroulia of foreign decorative motifs of Cetina type known from MH I Nichoria and from late EH III to earliest MH I Olympia.³⁷

The bronze pendants in the shape of the Minoan double axe from grave 2 may be the earliest known finds of this shape *in corpore* and in metal on the Greek mainland.³⁸ Whether these pendants indicate strong Minoan influence, perhaps even of religious nature, or whether they are to be considered a phenomenon of mainland tradition with roots in the EH II period is a question for debate.³⁹ It is perhaps noteworthy, in this respect, that bronze pendants of this shape became very popular on the mainland in the Mycenaean and, especially, in the Geometric period.⁴⁰

³⁶ For the term “Adriatic Incised Ware”, see RUTTER 1982, 459–88 esp. 460 with note 5. See also RUTTER 1995, 632–4; RAMBACH 2001, 330–3 pl. 1, 2ab.3–4.

³⁷ See RAMBACH 2001, 333 with note 56. MARAN 1998, 18–25, 323–9; RAMBACH 2002, 177–212 esp. 178–80, 192–8.

³⁸ For two votive terracotta double axes from Lerna V, see ARAPOJANNI, RAMBACH and GODART 2002, 63 note 175. One of these could be dated to Lerna VD, a later subphase of the MH development at Lerna; see Banks 1967, 656–8 pl. 21; compare also CASKEY 1957, 142–62 esp. 146 fig. 2. For the depiction of an incised double axe motif on a pebble of

MH III context from Kavkania, see ARAPOJANNI, RAMBACH and GODART 2002, 6–8, 61–6 fig. 2, pl. 13 S1–S2 and GODART 2002, 213–40 fig. 2.

³⁹ For large “ceremonial” hearths, with a central cavity in the shape of a double axe head, of the EH II period from Building BG in Lerna and from the Megaron House in BERBATI, see CASKEY 1958, 125–44 esp. 130 pl. 32 c–d; CASKEY 1959, 202–7 esp. 206 pl. 42 a; Säflund 1965, 96–106 figs. 80–2.

⁴⁰ See KILIAN-DIRLMEIER 1979, 243–58 esp. 254–8 (Doppelbeile mit Klingenausschnitten).

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