

The Early Mycenaeans of Pylos: The Evidence from the Chamber Tomb Cemetery at Volimidia

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Abstract: When Spyridon Marinatos excavated the LH I–II chamber tomb cemetery at Volimidia, among other sites in the region of Pylos (1955–1965), Messenia started to emerge as a prosperous and dynamic region of the early Mycenaean world that contributed essentially to the formation of the elite sites of the Mycenaean Peloponnese.

The cemetery of Volimidia was founded in the transitional MH III/LH I period, and its rock-cut chambers stand among the earliest examples of this type of tomb, probably as a result of successful local experimentation at the time of the foundation of the first tholos tombs in the region.

Despite the fact that the considerable quantity of LH I–II vases from Volimidia were not found in association with the burials they accompanied due to the continuous use of the cemetery until LH IIIC Early, these ceramics constitute the best-preserved assemblage of early Mycenaean pottery from the Pylos region. Their preliminary study points to a local production, consistent with the LH I–II repertoire of northern Triphylia (Elis), but also combining Argive, Lakonian, Kytheran and Cretan elements, which echo the cultural blend thanks to which the hegemonic ‘estates’ of Pylos thrived.

Keywords: Volimidia, Marinatos, Messenia, Pylos, Englianos, Triphylia, chamber tomb cemetery, burial, Late Helladic I–II pottery, Chora Museum

History of Research and Topography

The site of Chora in southern Triphylia is abounding in olive groves and vineyards and lies in the foothills of the Aigaleon, the long mountain range that cuts off the Pylos region from the Pamisos River valley, 4 km away from the palace of Englianos. Spyridon Marinatos, opting not to be involved in the excavations of the palace that Carl Blegen was about to start in 1952,² chose instead to turn his attention to the cemeteries around the palace and the potential discovery of new settlements. He had obviously understood the significance of an exploration that would reveal the historic imprint of the area and the types of settlements in the palatial territory of Englianos,³ “across the region that once was the ‘land of the Pylians’”.⁴

The area of Volimidia extends to the north of the town of Chora, between its outermost houses and Kephalyvryso (or Kephalaria), from where the until recently abundantly flowing water was

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² Marinatos 1955, 473: “The interrupted since 1939 excavations of Pylos became possible to be resumed only in 1952 through a Greek-American collaboration. Professor Carl Blegen continued with the unearthing of the Englianos palace with great results. In place of the late K. Kourouniotis, the author undertook the Greek sector, funded by the Archaeological Society. Mr. Blegen very kindly suggested that I should undertake the excavation of part of the palace. I however thought it would be more advisable to leave the entire palace to the dexterity of its excavator, and rather focus on the research of the necropolises around the palace and potentially the discovery of new towns”.

³ Marinatos (1960, 245; 1962, 113, 116–117) identified the area of Volimidia with *Pylos the old* or *Palaipylos*, a city for which Strabo (8.4.2) states that it was situated at the foot of the Aigaleon Mountain. John Chadwick (1976, 91) identified the site with *pa-ki-ja-ne*, a centre of religious activity, directly dependent on the palace of Englianos, which is attested in the tablets of the palace, a view adopted by Bennet 1999, 145–146, and Hope Simpson 2014, 56, 58–59, site 41 tab. 2, tab. 5, map 2. This identification, however, has not gained universal acceptance, cf. already Marinatos 1962, 116. See Kountouri 2002, 3, 470, 474–475.

⁴ Marinatos 1962, 112.

used for the irrigation of the fertile land.⁵ The area took its name from the dense clusters of tombs, cut in the soft argillaceous-calcareous rocks of the region, the chambers of which were often ‘sinking’ (collapsing), the Greek word for ‘to sink’ being ‘βουλιάζω’.

The chamber tombs of Volimidia – “ogival-roofed circular chambers, as if they were tholos tombs”⁶ – were arranged in clusters, four of which had been intensively excavated by Marinatos in the years 1952 to 1965. A total of 31 tombs was investigated in those years and, since then, in excavations of a smaller scale, another four single chambers have come to light.⁷ The four clusters of the Volimidia tombs were divided by the local Chora-Kephalovryso earthen road that was asphalted in 1965.

Right from the first year of research (1952), the necropolis that Marinatos excavated raised expectations for fresh knowledge on the territory of the Englianos palace because of the short distance between the two locations, but also because of the natural advantages of the site. Marinatos excavated “many clusters of remarkable tombs, which belonged to a large city”, estimating that the city in question was probably “Homeric Pylos”, to which Homer had already referred as lying away from the shore, information that is stated with certainty by Strabo, who describes it as an inland city, affirming that “at the foot of Mt Aigaleo was a city”.⁸ Indeed, the flat area of Volimidia gives way to the first slopes of this mountain.⁹

Traces of the “thriving settlement” to which the tombs belong were looked for by Marinatos in the farmland of the region, producing “illuminating” results only in the Patriarcheas farmland,¹⁰ 100 m south of the Angelopoulos cluster of tombs (excavated in 1953). The test-trench opened there revealed a 1 m-thick LH III stratum with walls, and underneath it a pure LH I stratum, also 1 m thick, with no walls in it, “where cups of the Vapheio type are again abundant”, and finds were so densely arranged as to give the “impression of an *apothetis*”.¹¹

The pottery from the Patriarcheas test-pit has been preliminarily studied by Yannis Lolos, who reached the conclusion that it came from a LH I–IIA and LH IIA mixed deposit.¹² LH I Vapheio cups with spirals, ripple pattern and foliate bands form the bulk of the material.¹³ The LH I–IIA horizon in the Patriarcheas field may not be particularly indicative of a settlement in the immediate vicinity of the clusters of tombs, but the ceramic evidence from it nevertheless points to the same period of use as that of the tombs.¹⁴

In 1964, following the excavation of several tombs at Volimidia, “one of the biggest, possibly the biggest, Mycenaean necropolis”, Marinatos supported the view that either “a major Mycenaean settlement was lying in its vicinity”, or it had been the cemetery of the surrounding hamlets, “because all of the nearby living people chose this site, due to the advantage of its soft, but at the same time durable bedrock”.¹⁵ He also considered the existence of a system of peripheral towns around the cemetery or of a neighbouring core settlement as equally probable.¹⁶

⁵ Marinatos 1955, 473.

⁶ Marinatos 1962, 113.

⁷ Marinatos excavated tombs in the years 1952–1954, 1960 (Marinatos 1962) and 1964 until 1965. Iakovidis 1966, 98–111; Lolos 1987, 196–207; Kountouri 2006, 165–166, with relevant bibliography. More recently, research projects were carried out by the Greek Archaeological Service in two tombs at Kephalovryso (Karagiorga 1976), a third in the L. Rigas plot in 1990 (Arapoyianni 1995), and a fourth one in 1991 in the Athanasopoulos plot, in the vicinity of the Tsoulea-Voria cluster, by Georgios S. Korres.

⁸ The Odyssey indicates an inland location of Pylos, “although, in the poet’s time, sources were already obscure” (Marinatos 1955, 495–496).

⁹ Marinatos 1955, 496.

¹⁰ Marinatos 1956, 248–249.

¹¹ Marinatos 1956, 249, fig. 10.

¹² Lolos 1987, 25, 27, figs. 8–23.

¹³ Lolos 1987, 23–27, figs. 8–14; Antoniou 2009, 56–58, figs. 466–468.

¹⁴ The LH I–IIA *apothetis* (votive pit) – theoretically – could have also belonged to the cemetery, but the overlying LH III walls point rather to the existence of a settlement at this place.

¹⁵ Marinatos 1966b, 78.

¹⁶ At Chora (Kato Rouga), however, Marinatos again located “at the opposite end of the town” the “new necropolis of Ayios Elias”, of which five tombs are known with certainty (Tomb M-1 and the dromos of M-2 have been excavated

As a matter of fact, traces of a second Mycenaean settlement were located in later years at the site of Megambelia, 1 km east of Chora.¹⁷ Probably not linked with the cemetery of Volimidia, this evidence nonetheless substantiates a pattern of dense habitation around the Englianos Hills, where the palatial centre developed.

Surface surveys in recent years did not change the picture much,¹⁸ and the idea remains valid that around the palace a network of settlements structured ‘in hamlets’ (‘κατά κώμας’) had formed, for which the farming character and subsistence economy of the region provided favourable conditions.¹⁹

Tomb Architecture and Burial Customs

With regard to the burial practices in the necropolis of Volimidia, from the LH I to the LH III period it was the norm to bury the first dead on the floor in an extended position. When gradually the tomb filled and room for new burials became sparse, skeletons were deposited in the periphery of the tomb, in small pits (βόθροι/λάκκοι) or niches (κόγχες) opened in the bedrock for this purpose. “This is the reason that quite often the pits contain vases of the LH I period, which were almost never found placed on the floor, where only LH III pottery, right through to its last phase, is to be found”.²⁰

Already in the early stages of research (1952, 1953), Marinatos noted that “only a few funerary offerings accompanied the skeletons, in any case there is no indication of lavish funerary offerings”,²¹ “because the tombs had been stripped of them, due to their long-term use”.²² Indeed, “offerings were carefully removed in the course of succeeding interments”²³ and only “those which were of no value for the living” were left behind.²⁴ He, moreover, made the point that “the form of the tombs appears to be the most important aspect of all”,²⁵ attributing particular significance to their early date as well as to their structural integrity. For a more detailed documentation of the chambers, Marinatos invited Spyros Iakovidis to the excavation, who “with his customary accuracy and sense of aesthetics”²⁶ fully mapped them.²⁷

“The Pylian funerary architects were able to cut into the rock very beautiful tombs and shape them into the canonical geometric form, which was much more strenuously and expensively applied in stone in the case of tholos tombs”. According to Marinatos, the protruding rounded or discoid boss at the top, 10–15 cm in diameter, and a few centimetres deep, might have facilitated the rotation of the pointer, which, in the form of a wooden right-angled triangle, would have

in the Maniatis field). This necropolis, situated not far away from Volimidia, has not been further investigated since, although “its importance lies in that it is later than Volimidia, assigned, on the basis of the up to now presented evidence, to the final period of the Mycenaean civilisation” (Marinatos 1957, 305–306). The site is also known as Ayios Ioannis, see Hope Simpson 2014, Site 41A.

¹⁷ Korres 1981, 725; Kountouri 2002, 9.

¹⁸ Davis et al. 1997; Cosmopoulos 2016, 93–102, 203–213, figs. 53, 59, 114–116.

¹⁹ Vlachopoulos, forthcoming. This picture, after all, is also compatible with the conservative character of the necropolis during the main period of its function (LH IIIA–B), as Kountouri 2002, 468 (LH IIIA), 474–475 (LH IIIB), 482–483, has shown, stressing the lack of weapons, tools, jewellery and other objects of high art in the tombs.

²⁰ Marinatos 1956, 246.

²¹ Marinatos 1955, 495.

²² Marinatos 1956, 238.

²³ Marinatos 1956, 247–248.

²⁴ Marinatos 1956, 242.

²⁵ Marinatos 1955, 494.

²⁶ Marinatos 1957, 299.

²⁷ Marinatos 2014, IX–XI. Selected plans of the tombs that had been excavated and mapped in 1952–1954 were presented by Iakovidis a few years later (Iakovidis 1966), and fully published and edited by the same in a special volume of the Archaeological Society (Marinatos 2014).

assisted in designing the contour of the chamber,²⁸ a view that Marinatos himself revised,²⁹ when he realised that the boss at the top “does not coincide with the geometric centre of the tomb”.³⁰ Iakovidis, more convincingly, suggested that “the peculiarities of the Volimidia tombs constitute an intentional imitation of the shape and the approximate dimensions of the stone-built tholos tombs, where these features reflect structural needs and building methods”,³¹ and he maintained that these cavities are directly related to the key-stone at the top of the built tholos tombs.³² Marinatos, on the other hand, had supported the early date of the chamber tombs with the argument that “there are no tholos tombs of an earlier date than the LH I chamber ones of Pylos”, and therefore “the circular or ‘vaulted’ shape was invented or applied first for the rock-cut tombs and subsequently reproduced in stone, in places where the bedrock was not suitable for safe rock-cut structures”.³³

The issue of the early date of the chamber tombs as opposed to the tholoi of the Pylos region has not been clarified at all, since the two main tomb types of the early Late Bronze Age in the region appear to have followed parallel but distinct trajectories.³⁴ This issue was not determined only by the raw material itself (suitability of soft bedrock or sufficiency of stones), but also by the desire of the community to opt for one or the other type of tomb for its deceased members. The key difference between the two types has to do with the form and potential use of the tombs. On the one hand, a chamber tomb cemetery is an extensive necropolis comprising a number of similar burial chambers for collective burials, and is quite clearly related to a sizeable settlement. The tholos tombs on the other hand appear isolated or in pairs and judging from the large input of human labour required for their construction and that the maximum available space was just sufficient for the dead of a single family or lineage, apparently belonged to prominent members of the society, rulers or regional grandees.

The Layout of the Tomb Clusters

The cemetery of Volimidia was excavated in the years 1952–1954, 1960, 1964, 1965, and four clusters of chamber tombs were unearthed within a small distance from one another.³⁵ The clusters of Marinatos’ excavation were named after the owners of the relevant plot: the Angelopoulou cluster with ten tombs, the Koroniou cluster with six tombs, the Tsoulea/Voria cluster with seven tombs, the Kephlovryso cluster with seven tombs, and the Mastorakis field with one tomb (Fig. 1). However, geophysical prospection conducted at a later stage by Georgios S. Korres has shown that these groups of tombs are not distinct from one another, but together form an extensive single cemetery.³⁶ Unfortunately, this research remains unpublished and no data on the original density of the chamber tombs has been presented so far.

The excavation of the Angelopoulou Chamber Tombs 4–9 revealed that these were hewn into the bedrock (with the chamber in the east and the dromos in the west) in accordance with the principle of exact axis alignment,³⁷ a feature that implies the existence of a road that would have provided access to the cluster under discussion. From this point onwards, the gently sloping

²⁸ Marinatos 1955, 494.

²⁹ Marinatos 1956, 241–242.

³⁰ Marinatos 2014, 36, plan 10.

³¹ Marinatos 2014, 25 n. 2.

³² Iakovidis 1966, 108–111.

³³ Marinatos 1955, 494.

³⁴ The earliest tholos tomb in the Pylia, that of Koryphasion-Osmanaga, dates to MH III/LH I (Iakovidis 1966, 110–111; Lolos 1987, 492–494; Zavadil 2013, 54, 110–112) and is as early or earlier than the first chamber tombs of Volimidia.

³⁵ Marinatos 2014, 2, plan 2.

³⁶ Kountouri 2002, 3 n. 12. See also Zavadil 2013, 203.

³⁷ Marinatos 1956, 240, fig. 1; Marinatos 2014, 35, fig. 2.

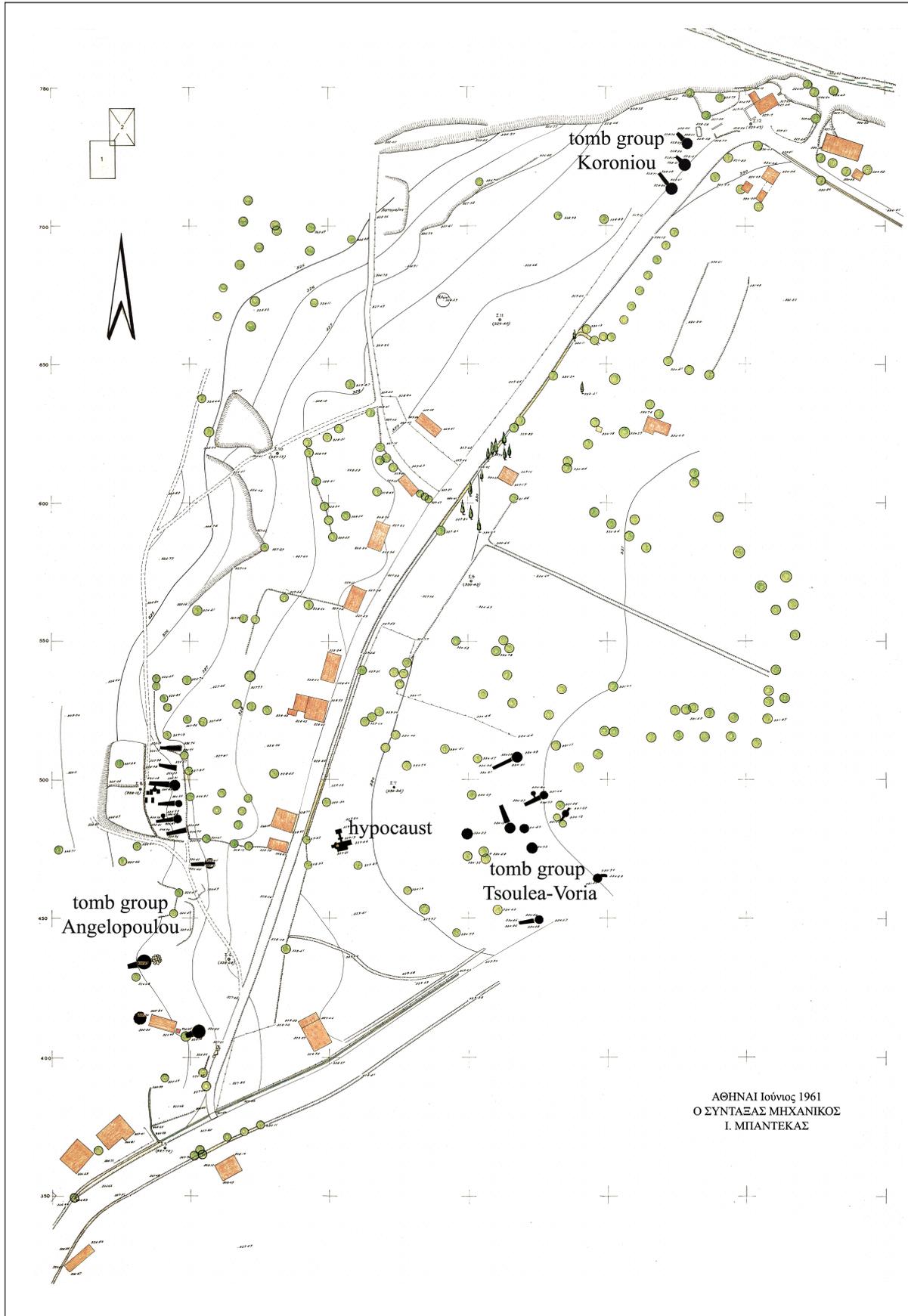


Fig. 1: Plan of the Volimidia chamber tomb cemetery, 1961 (Archive of the Archaeological Society at Athens)

ground leads down to a shadowy torrent, commanding an uninterrupted view westwards.³⁸ A similar layout, but with the dromoi facing northwest, can be observed with the Koroniou cluster in the vicinity of Kephlovryso that underlines the same planning intention and probably shows the existence of a road there as well. In contrast to these two clusters, the layout of the chambers in the Tsoulea/Voria group appears to be coincidental.

In the evaluation of the data from the LH I–II periods at Volimidia, further below, we monitor the chronological and topographic development of the clusters. With the data of the early Mycenaean phases we attempt to define the extent of the first necropolis and trace the chronological and functional relationship of LH I–II funerary vases with the smaller number of MH type or MH tradition, with which they co-occur.³⁹ Since the typology of some vases from the Volimidia tombs can be traced back to a Middle Helladic tradition, there is an apparent need for a comprehensive review of the pottery in the MH tradition in the Pylos region that is mainly based on the relevant excavation contexts. A study of this range will not only bring forward valuable synchronisms between the ceramic production of MH tradition and Mycenaean style, but it will also substantiate the longevity of the Middle Helladic background.

Koroniou Cluster

The cluster includes six tombs and covers the northernmost area of the cemetery. It is the remotest one, lying 200 m northeast of the Angelopoulou and 200–230 m north of the Kephlovryso cluster.⁴⁰

The first reported early Mycenaean sherds (assigned to LH I by Marinatos) from Volimidia are those found in Koroniou Tomb 1 (K-1),⁴¹ which could not be located in the Chora Museum (CM) during the study season. Sherds “of a slightly earlier” than LH III date are mentioned in relation to the very poorly furnished Tomb K-2.⁴²

The “beautiful” Tomb K-3 is of substantial size: it has a 5.30 m-long dromos; its chamber is 5.30 m in diameter and 2.50 m in height, the upper 10 cm corresponding to a protruding rounded boss.⁴³ On the tomb floor there were small shallow pits, semi-circular or elliptical in shape, into which “the bones were placed, occasionally along with some funerary offerings of previous burials, whenever these were moved to make room for new ones”.⁴⁴ The pits were cut into bedrock around the periphery of the chamber, often taking the form of a niche. Tomb K-3 had seven such niches and pits, which contained bones and skulls of older burials in a bad state of preservation as well as a handful of funerary offerings.

In one of the pits two vases were found, the squat jugs CM 43 and CM 44 (FS 87)⁴⁵ in secondary deposition, a co-occurrence possibly reflecting their use as a set of drinking vases that had initially

³⁸ Marinatos 2014, pls. I–II.

³⁹ The MH pottery of the Pylia has been the subject of Aphroditis Chasiakou’s unpublished doctoral dissertation (Chasiakou 2003). On the ‘crucial’ importance of the MH vases and sherds in the Volimidia tombs, see Chasiakou 2003, εισαγωγή (introduction), 21.

⁴⁰ Boyd 2002, 138.

⁴¹ Marinatos 1955, 474; Marinatos 1956, 238. See Marinatos 2014, 5, plan 1.

⁴² Marinatos 1955, 475.

⁴³ Marinatos 1955, 475–481; Marinatos 2014, 8, plan 2; Kountouri 2002, 28–29. The quality of manufacture may be related to the early date of the tomb, which had been partially excavated in 1929 and had yielded “at least three intact vases” and “a statuette of white clay”.

⁴⁴ Marinatos 1955, 477–478.

⁴⁵ Lolos 1987, 199, figs. 338–339; Antoniou 2009 does not examine type FS 87. With Pit 1 Antoniou 2009, 275–280, 664, figs. 1–2, associates the hemispherical bowl CM 52 and identifies it with type FS 111 of LH I. The same vase, according to Kountouri 2002, 28–29, 230–231, belongs to the chamber floor deposit and is assigned by her to type FS 219–220 of LH IIIA1.

accompanied one of the first dead buried in the chamber.⁴⁶ In terms of typology, the two jugs differ only slightly from each other and date to LH I. The two vases appear to be locally made and share the same manufactural principles and ‘syntax’ of decoration, the main motif being spirals (FM 46), which on the squat jug CM 43 (Fig. 2.1–2) encircle a foliate band (FM 64). The fact that this combination of motifs finds an exact parallel in a LH I jug from Grave Circle A of Mycenae⁴⁷ is quite helpful. Tangent spirals with blobs (as on CM 44: Fig. 2.3–4) are a very common motif of LH I,⁴⁸ especially in Messenia⁴⁹ and southern Elis (Kakovatos, Samikon),⁵⁰ echoing the numerous direct contacts that developed very early between the Pylia and northern Triphylia.⁵¹

In another pit, a group of six flint arrowheads was unearthed, while a second group of five arrowheads was found somewhere else on the floor, raising the total of “never-used” arrowheads to eleven. Near the second group a core of brown flint was located, suitable for the extraction of arrowheads.⁵²

Three pits aligned east-west were dug into the chamber floor (one of them covered with slabs) that had all remained undisturbed. The pit at the back of the chamber contained two skeletons.⁵³

Between the knees of the overlying skeleton, which was placed head-to-west, but “not in their original position”, the fragments of two vases were located. When put together they turned out to be a “noticeable cup”,⁵⁴ which is the spectacularly decorated LH IIA goblet CM 46, and a “hand-made” and “contemporaneous to the former”, which is the feeding bottle CM 51, a vase in MH tradition.⁵⁵ Marinatos, however, did not reject the possibility that the two vases had initially belonged to the deceased lying at the bottom of the pit, whom he identified as a “young adolescent”.⁵⁶

The wide-mouthed spouted vase that we conventionally call a feeding bottle (our example, undecorated, 0.19 m high, and equipped with a long spout and a basket handle) is a mainland type that occurs in the Pylos region in LH I (Voroulia)⁵⁷ and later contexts.⁵⁸ At Volimidia it is also encountered in Kephavryso Tomb 7.⁵⁹ On the other hand, the goblet CM 46 (FS 262) (Fig. 2.5–6) corresponds to a typical LH IIA shape known throughout the Peloponnese and mainland Greece,⁶⁰ the motif of the double axe with wavy double stem⁶¹ (FM 35) supports this date.⁶² Moreover, the Volimidia goblet served as a container, not as a ‘goblet-rhyton’⁶³ with a hole at the

⁴⁶ Pairing of vases is an interesting topic in connection with the manner of their use and drinking rituals during the early LH period in the Aegean (i.e. at Akrotiri, Thera), see Nordquist 1999 and Platon, forthcoming. For pairs of stirrup jars of later periods, see Vlachopoulos 2006.

⁴⁷ RMDP, 82, fig. 10.9. For the foliate band in LH I, see RMDP, 53, fig. 82.2 (Lakonia); 307, fig. 104 (Messenia).

⁴⁸ RMDP, 69, fig. 9a; 80–82, fig. 10.1–2, 5, 8–9 (Argolid); 202, fig. 62.3 (Corinthia); 253–254, fig. 82.4, 8–9, 12 (Lakonia); 500, fig. 178.1, 7–8; 867, fig. 353.3 (Keos); 894, fig. 363.6–8 (Melos); 965, fig. 394.2 (Thera).

⁴⁹ RMDP, 307, fig. 104a; 315, fig. 105.5, 7.

⁵⁰ RMDP, 372, fig. 128.3, 7.

⁵¹ RMDP, 369; Nikolentzos 2011, 24, 334–336, 341–342; Eder 2011, 105–110.

⁵² Marinatos 1955, 479, fig. 4 (top left).

⁵³ Marinatos 1955, 480, fig. 5.

⁵⁴ Marinatos 1955, 480, fig. 6, “cup of LH I or earliest LH II, around 1500 BC”.

⁵⁵ For the shape in MH pottery, see Cosmopoulos 2014, 229, fig. 175.

⁵⁶ Marinatos 1955, 481–442, figs. 7–8.

⁵⁷ Lolos 1987, 355–356, fig. 86b; Chasiakou 2003, Εισαγωγή (introduction), 19, σύνθεση δεδομένων κεραμεικής (pottery data synthesis), 21, type 04, 575–578, 1284–1288, 1418–1419.

⁵⁸ Blegen et al. 1973, 196–198, fig. 249.7–9.

⁵⁹ Marinatos 1967, pl. 119ζ.

⁶⁰ Peloponnese: RMDP, 96, fig. 16.65–68 (Argolid); 206, fig. 63.19 (Corinthia); 258, fig. 84.34–35 (Lakonia); 323, fig. 108.25 (Pylos); 509, fig. 180.40–41 (Attica). On other regions, see RMDP, 1999, 1228.

⁶¹ RMDP, 87, fig. 12.24–26; 94, fig. 15.55 (Argolid); 258, fig. 84.28 (Kythera); 502–503, fig. 178.10, 12; 507, fig. 180.35 (Attica); 651, fig. 247.4 (Boiotia); 867, fig. 357.39 (Keos); 894, fig. 363.13; 900, fig. 365.40 (Melos). The motif, however, may also date back to LH I; RMDP, 83, fig. 11.17 (Argolid). For the LH I double axe with single straight stem, see RMDP, 254, fig. 82.13 (Kythera); 867, fig. 353.4 (Keos).

⁶² Cf. Rutter 1993, 60–62, fig. 5.1–2 (LH IIA, Tsoungiza). Double axes featuring in panels filled with dotted lines find a parallel in a LH IIA rhyton from Thermon (RMDP, 799, fig. 1319.3).

⁶³ Lolos 1987, 199, fig. 340; Antoniou 2009, 287–290, cat. no. 23, fig. 37, with thorough discussion of the LM IB prototypes of the shape. See RMDP, 323.

bottom as parallels from Crete and the Cyclades would show.⁶⁴ The macroscopic examination of the vase shows that it is an import from Kythera,⁶⁵ where in the LM IB stratum of Kastri a fragment from the base of a similar goblet has been found, also without hole.⁶⁶

The co-occurrence of the handmade plain feeding bottle of MH type with the LH IIA goblet in the pit of Tomb K-3 attests to the contemporaneity of vases of MH tradition with early Mycenaean painted pottery in Messenia rather than indicating a potential selective survival of MH vases as heirlooms of funerary use. The synchronism of MH ceramic wares with the early Mycenaean pottery in the Pylos region has already been borne out by the closed LH I assemblages from Voroulia near Tragana, from Nichoria and from the East House in Peristeria,⁶⁷ as well as from the funerary assemblages of northern Triphylia,⁶⁸ and it is ascertained even further by the early assemblages of funerary offerings from Volimidia, as will become evident in the present article.

Apart from establishing a chronological and ‘cultural’ synchronism, the co-occurrence of the handmade Helladic spouted vessel with the Kytheran luxury vase provides, quite early in the sequence, illuminating evidence on the functional and customary combination of the “stamnos-jar for wine” (as the feeding bottle has been beautifully described by Marinatos) with a vessel suitable for the consumption of liquids in feasts.⁶⁹ The holes for the attachment of (lead?) clamps on the vertical walls of the goblet, opposite the handle, demonstrate a successful ancient mending but do not restore the functionality of the goblet as a drinking vessel.⁷⁰

Also dated to the LH IIA period is the Vapheio cup CM 45 (Fig. 2.7–8) with its markedly conical upper and the narrow-cylindrical lower profile that was decorated with a stylised foliate band (FM 64). According to the typological classification of the material from Kastri on Kythera⁷¹ it belongs to Type III of these shapes.⁷² It is considered to be the mainland version of this popular Minoan shape, which was widely adopted in LH I.⁷³ The exact findspot of the Vapheio cup CM 45 within the chamber is not known, its presence nevertheless constitutes evidence for at least a third funerary ‘episode’ in the course of the early history of the tomb.

In summary, the two jugs in the pit suggest LH I as the earliest period of use of Tomb K-3, when it was cut into the rock as well. The following archaeologically visible phase is LH IIA that is represented by two vases (feeding bottle and goblet) from a pit in the floor and the isolated Vapheio cup. Moreover, the dating of the earliest period of the tomb’s use matches the typology of the flint and obsidian arrowheads, which were found in another pit as well as on the floor of the chamber.⁷⁴

Tomb K-4 is very little documented.⁷⁵ On the ground plan we see that it has a stepped dromos, two large niches in the periphery of the chamber, while on the chamber floor there is one elongated

⁶⁴ Antoniou 2009, 288–289.

⁶⁵ An archaeometric project for the study of the Volimidia pottery has been envisaged in collaboration with Evangelia Kiriati (Fitch Laboratory, BSA Athens).

⁶⁶ Coldstream – Huxley 1972, pl. 44.109. Birgitta Eder (pers. comm.) also identified the cut-away jug CM 137 (A-8) as an import from Kythera. See Kountouri 2002, 18, 444, pl. 76.

⁶⁷ Lolos 1987, 329. For Voroulia, see Chasiakou 2003, Βορούλια (Voroulia), 4–8, 123–131, 569–662.

⁶⁸ Nikolentzos 2011, 143–144.

⁶⁹ For the shape of the so-called feeding-bottle and the particularly dense distribution of its large-sized versions in the Pylos throughout the Mycenaean period, see Vlachopoulos 2012, 111–112.

⁷⁰ Evidence of metal clamps for mending pottery appears since the Neolithic period on the body of all kinds of vases, with a particularly increased rate of occurrence on luxury or display vases of the Mycenaean period. For this topic, see Vlachopoulos 1999, 76.

⁷¹ RMDP, 248, 253–254. See Lolos 1987, 249–260.

⁷² Rutter 1993, 65, fig. 6.15 (LH IIA, Tsoungiza). See, RMDP, 206, fig. 63.14 (Korakou, exact parallel in decoration); 70, 95, fig. 15.60; 323, fig. 108.24; 509, fig. 180.39; 877, fig. 357.43–44; Nikolentzos 2011, 145–146, pl. 67. The type also dates to LH IIB (RMDP, 656, fig. 349.40–41; 701, fig. 269.17; 748, fig. 288.9; 801, fig. 319.13), see Lolos 1987, 199, 539–540, fig. 341 (phase 3 of Messenian LH I).

⁷³ Dickinson 1974, 115; Nikolentzos 2011, 145–146.

⁷⁴ For these (principally) LH II obsidian and flint arrowheads from the tumuli at Vrana, Marathon, see Matzanas 2010, 34–36, pl. 9; Matzanas 2016. Similar arrowheads were found in Tomb K-5 (Marinatos 1956, 238).

⁷⁵ Marinatos 1956, 238; Marinatos 2014, 28–31, plan 7.



Fig. 2: Vases 1-8: Tomb K-3; 9-10: Tomb K-4; 11-12: Tomb K-6; 13-17: Tomb A-1

pit and another one with an in situ burial. Tomb K-4 is not mentioned by Eleni Kountouri⁷⁶ and contained no intact LH I–II vases. It belongs to the K-1, 3, 4, 5 group of tombs with their funerary offerings being “few in number and of common types, because the tombs had been denuded of offerings, due to their long-term use”. “All of these tombs are circular in shape, the dead are placed in an extended position on the floor or in a pit dug into the floor, while the bones of the earlier burials are to be found in small pits or niches cut into the rock around the periphery of the chamber”.⁷⁷

In the storeroom of the Chora Museum two vases were located. The conical cup (without inv. no.) (Pit 6 [?]) (Fig. 2.9) and a cup with raised handle (without inv. no.) (Pit 1) (Fig. 2.10) both dated earlier than LH III. The conical cup belongs to the earlier type of such cups at Volimidia (see below CM 2998). The shallow loop-handled unpainted cup may be an early version (LH IIA) of the dipper (FS 236)⁷⁸ or of the LH IIA–B ring-handled cup (FS 237).

The jug with raised handle CM 61⁷⁹ of MH tradition (from “the inner cave”) and the LH I–IIA Vapheio cup (Type II) CM 57 (from Pit 8) (Fig. 2.11–12) establish the early use of Tomb K-6, with 14 niches and pits in it. The latter is decorated with alternating tangent spirals and dotted blobs,⁸⁰ a motif mainly known from LH I⁸¹ that favours the dating of the vase to this period.

The intact assemblage of bronze and stone tools found in Pit 5⁸² of Tomb K-6 demonstrates that the chambers were not exhaustively looted and that the burials were initially accompanied by valuable funerary offerings as well.

The Koroniou cluster of six tombs, was therefore set up in LH I, with at least two tombs containing secondary burial depositions of the LH I and LH IIA periods and another two preserving traces of early use.

Angelopoulou Cluster

Approximately 200m from the Koroniou cluster of tombs, the Angelopoulou cluster came to light, comprising ten tombs (A-1, A-2, A-4–11),⁸³ while north of it lies the Mastoraki property.⁸⁴ The Angelopoulou, Voria and Kephlovryso tomb clusters extend over a more or less undivided area of the cemetery, measuring 250m east-west by 100m north-south.

Marinatos chose to excavate Tomb A-1 “for its size and beautiful appearance”, although it was thoroughly disturbed.⁸⁵ The chamber measured 6.10 × 5.90m, reaching a maximum of 2.20m in height with steeply rising curvature. It is the biggest tomb of the Volimidia cemetery. Its fill deposit contained 2–3 LH I sherds, and many LH II–III pottery fragments. A handful of vases (alabastra and piriform jars) were found intact or almost intact, “one of which, a three-handled piriform jar, is illustrated”⁸⁶ (CM 300). Among the finds there were also six flint and obsidian arrowheads, all with broken tips, two steatite spindle whorls and a cylindrical agate bead,⁸⁷ making up an assemblage that was not often encountered at Volimidia, where, in general, small finds

⁷⁶ Kountouri 2002.

⁷⁷ Marinatos 1956, 238.

⁷⁸ RMDP, 652, fig. 248.16 (LH IIA, Orchomenos).

⁷⁹ A. Chasiakou, pers. comm.

⁸⁰ RMDP, 253–254, fig. 82.8–11; 307, fig. 104d–e; 315, fig. 105.7; 894, fig. 363.7–10; 1081, fig. 442.1 (LH I); 94, fig. 15.59; 206 fig. 63.15; 877, fig. 357.41–42, 45 (LH IIA); Lolos 1987, fig. 342.

⁸¹ RMDP, 80–82, fig. 10.2, 8 (Argolid); 202, fig. 62.3 (Corinthia); 252, fig. 82.3 (Lakonia).

⁸² Kilian-Dirlmeier 2009, 384, no. 12; Marinatos 2014, 33, fig. 1.

⁸³ Lolos 1987, 196; Boyd 2002, 140.

⁸⁴ Boyd 2002, 138.

⁸⁵ Marinatos 1955, 483–486; Marinatos 2014, 13, pl. 3; see Kountouri 2002, 14–15.

⁸⁶ Marinatos 1955, 483, fig. 9 right.

⁸⁷ Marinatos 1955, 483–484, fig. 4 (lower row and left in the middle).

are sparse, especially in secondary depositions. Of two pits in the floor, the one on the left contained a female burial with a bone pin on her chest, which was broken at its tip.⁸⁸

Tomb A-1 yielded at least five LH II vases, besides the LH IIB three-handled piriform jar CM 300 that was not available for study.⁸⁹ However, due to thorough disturbance no taphonomic data are available and it is therefore impossible to extract any valid information on the potential correlations among the finds.

These vases are the squat alabastron CM 295 (FS 83) decorated with curve-stemmed ivy⁹⁰ (Fig. 2.13–14), the squat alabastron with horizontal banding (without inv. no.) (Fig. 2.15), the upper half of a squat jug (FS 87) or narrow-necked jug (FS 118) CM 296 with ivy decoration (Fig. 2.16), the fragmentary Vapheio cup (without inv. no.) (Fig. 2.17) and the jug with cutaway neck CM 298 (FS 135)⁹¹ (Fig. 3.18–19).

The piriform jar CM 300 was not on display in the showcases of the Chora Museum, nor was it located in the storeroom of the museum. The miniature piriform jar (FS 28, 33)⁹² is 6.7 cm high, decorated in naturalistic combination with ivy (FM 12) and rock pattern (FM 32) (Fig. 3.20). The best parallel is a similar jar from Pylos (LH IIB).⁹³

The presence of the vase types of the alabastron (FS 83), small jug (FS 87 or FS 118), jug with cutaway neck (FS 135) and piriform jar (FS 28) confirms the LH IIB use of the tomb, something that is further attested by the repetition of ivy (FM 12) on all four vases.⁹⁴ The beautiful jug with cutaway neck CM 298 (Fig. 3.18–19) finds a good parallel in the slightly earlier phase (LH IIA) of the Englianos tombs, where the Minoan prototype of this locally made vase is present.⁹⁵ The dense rippling and the pronounced midrib of a Vapheio cup (without inv. no.) indicate that this vase most probably complies with Type III of LH IIA.⁹⁶ On the basis of these arguments, the pottery provides evidence that the chamber was hewn into the bedrock in this period.

Tomb A-4 is “large and beautiful”⁹⁷ (d. 5 m), but was found completely disturbed. It contained the LH I Vapheio cup CM 326 (FS 224)⁹⁸ (Fig. 3.21–22) and the LH IIA squat jug CM 329 (FS 87)⁹⁹ (Fig. 3.23) that were found in Niches 7 and 6, respectively.¹⁰⁰ The Vapheio cup CM 326 is a typical example of the LH I Type I with an exact parallel in terms of shape and decoration (FM 46 tangent spiral) from Ayios Stephanos in Lakonia.¹⁰¹ The squat jug CM 329, decorated with hatched loops (FM 63), is as typical for LH IIA (northern Triphylia,¹⁰² Lakonia,¹⁰³ the Argolid,¹⁰⁴ and Melos¹⁰⁵) as the stylised miniature crocus (FM 10) hanging from the neck band.¹⁰⁶

⁸⁸ Not located in the Chora Museum.

⁸⁹ See above, n. 86; Kountouri 2002, 14, describes the FS 28 “three-handled piriform jar with decoration of wavy curve-stemmed ivy with palm”, of LH IIB. Due to the confusion of labels in the relevant showcase of the Chora Museum, RMDP, 324, refers to this vase as deriving from the Voria-Tsoulea 1 cluster.

⁹⁰ Marinatos 1955, 491, fig. 9 left.

⁹¹ According to Kountouri 2002, 403, pl. 1, the vase dates to LH IIIA1.

⁹² RMDP, 208, fig. 64.38 (LH IIB, Corinthia); 259, fig. 85.41 (LH IIB, Lakonia); 261, fig. 85.53 (LH IIIA1, Lakonia).

⁹³ RMDP, 324, fig. 108.27.

⁹⁴ RMDP, 98, fig. 17.76, 78 (FS 83); 101, fig. 18.86; 209, fig. 65.45 (FS 87); 209, fig. 65.50 (FS 135).

⁹⁵ RMDP, 318–321, fig. 106.16.

⁹⁶ RMDP, 323, fig. 108.24.

⁹⁷ Marinatos 1956, 240, 242; Marinatos 2014, 37, plan 11.

⁹⁸ Lolos 1987, 200, 250, 408, fig. 629e; RMDP, 315 n. 106.

⁹⁹ Lolos 1987, 200, figs. 345, 669.2; RMDP, 318 n. 164.

¹⁰⁰ Kountouri 2002, 15–16; Antoniou 2009, 52–53, 667, figs. 13–14.

¹⁰¹ RMDP, 254, fig. 82.5. For the motif, see RMDP, 69, fig. 9c. On Type I see Antoniou 2009, 588–589, 597–598.

¹⁰² RMDP, 377, fig. 130.19–20. The largest assemblage of such vases comes from Samikon, where the examples range from the MH undecorated version up to the most common decorated type with hatched loops, Yalouris 1966, nos. 10–28, pls. 9–11, 12β–γ.

¹⁰³ RMDP, 255, fig. 83.18–20.

¹⁰⁴ RMDP, 89, fig. 13.35.

¹⁰⁵ RMDP, 896, fig. 364.16.

¹⁰⁶ RMDP, 83, fig. 11.20 (LH I); 748, fig. 288.4–5; 801, fig. 319.8–9; 872, fig. 355.21 (LH IIA).

The fact that vases dated to LH I and LH IIA occur in the tomb demonstrates its continuous use, while the placement of the two vases in two different niches may imply that they were initially associated with distinct primary burial assemblages.

Tomb A-5 contained “a relative abundance of Geometric vases, a bronze double axe, some bronze objects and a few fragments of amber”.¹⁰⁷ Vases of an early period are the plain two-handled goblet CM 370¹⁰⁸ of MH tradition (Fig. 3.24–25) and the LH IIA alabastron CM 367 (FS 89) decorated with dotted pattern (FM 76)¹⁰⁹ (Fig. 3.26–27), which has parallels from the Pylos region.¹¹⁰ The bronze double axe¹¹¹ and the amber objects¹¹² (with a particularly strong presence in the southwestern Peloponnese in LH I–IIA), in some respects are indicative of an early date and compatible with the corresponding ceramic funerary goods.

Tomb A-7¹¹³ features several niches (some double and one three-lobed) cut into the bedrock and densely laid out around the chamber. Two out of the three examined vases date to LH I, namely the Vapheio cup CM 168¹¹⁴ (Niche 10a) (Fig. 3.28) and the globular squat jug CM 172¹¹⁵ (Niche 5) (Fig. 3.29–30). The Vapheio cup CM 169 (Niche 9) was not available for study.¹¹⁶

The Vapheio cup CM 168 belongs to Type II and is part of the mainland LH I production as the frieze of antithetical arcs between linked bars indicates.¹¹⁷ The squat jug CM 172 (FS 87) combines a floral motif (FM 9: lily) with blobs, providing a typical and good example of LH I.¹¹⁸ If, as seems likely, the distribution pattern was one early vase per niche, then it is probable that each niche was allocated to a single secondary burial deposition. This conclusion is further strengthened by the fact that the vases of A-7¹¹⁹ are contemporaneous and could have been placed in the same niche if the secondary burial depositions were conducted in a disorderly manner.

Three more LH IIA vases come from Tomb A-7. CM 159 is most probably a squat jug (FS 87) (LH IIA). Its decoration is worn and much of the vase’s lower body is missing. The density of the hatched leaf-shaped loops (FM 63) around the shoulder point to the motif of hatched leaves growing from vertical stems,¹²⁰ but such a motif does not appear on small vases. It is then likely that this is an idiosyncratic version of individual hatched loops¹²¹ (see CM 329 from Tomb A-4, also with ivy).

The unpainted loop-handled cup CM 171 (Fig. 3.31) is a coarse version of the ring-handled cup (FS 237) (LH IIA–B, see CM 38 from T-5), which in LH IIIA1–2 is classified as FS 238.¹²² The unpainted goblet CM 174 (Fig. 3.32) is typologically unique at Volimidia because of its

¹⁰⁷ Marinatos 1956, 243.

¹⁰⁸ Examined by Chasiakou 2003, Part Γ2, 186–188, 1423 (Voroulia).

¹⁰⁹ RMDP, 89, fig. 13.36 (Argolid); 203, fig. 62.6 (Corinthia); 651, fig. 247.11 (Boiotia).

¹¹⁰ Blegen et al. 1973, fig. 234.21 (Englianos). For the rock pattern, see RMDP, 324, fig. 108.31 (LH IIB).

¹¹¹ The oldest bronze double axes on the mainland were found in the MH I tumuli at Kastroulia of Thouria (Rambach 2007, 145, fig. 23).

¹¹² Maran 2013.

¹¹³ Marinatos 1956, 245 (the tomb is not described); Marinatos 2014, 44, plan 14.

¹¹⁴ Lolos 1987, 200, figs. 347, 633e.

¹¹⁵ Lolos 1987, 201, fig. 346; Kountouri 2002, 17–18; Antoniou 2009, figs. 15–16 (the jug is mistakenly referred to as CM 173).

¹¹⁶ The Vapheio cup CM 169 is undecorated and represents an interesting shape with a small handle, rim with slight carination, high upper body, markedly raised midrib and thin base. Fabric red, height 0.105 m (data from the Chora Museum inventory).

¹¹⁷ RMDP, 69, fig. 9f (Argolid); 306–307, fig. 104f (Messenia).

¹¹⁸ Lolos 1987, fig. 346; RMDP, 307, 314 (Messenia); 373, fig. 128.6–7 (northern Triphylia); 500, fig. 178.8–9 (Attica).

¹¹⁹ The skeletal remains from the tombs were meant to be part of a study programme by S. Marinatos’ team, but the project was never completed. The niches, on the other hand, contained just a small amount of mixed skeletal material, probably not sufficient to supply evidence on the number of the deceased and other aspects of the primary burials.

¹²⁰ Kakovatos, Tholos Tomb A (Lolos 1987, figs. 474, 476; RMDP, 375, fig. 129.1).

¹²¹ Lolos 1987, figs. 506b, 508b, 509b–c, 510; RMDP, 375–377, fig. 130.19–20 (Samikon).

¹²² RMDP, 127, fig. 28.203; Kountouri 2002, 241–242.



Fig. 3: Vases 18–20: Tomb A-1; 21–23: Tomb A-4; 24–27: Tomb A-5; 28–34: Tomb A-7; 35–37: Tomb A-8

vertical rim. In the dromos fill the LH IIB three-handled squat alabastron CM 151 (FS 82) was found (Fig. 3.33–34).

Tomb A-8 was undisturbed, with seven niches at the periphery of the chamber.¹²³ A total of 25 vases were spread across the floor surface. The early pottery of the tomb includes¹²⁴ seven vases from the chamber and one from the dromos that, taken together, comprise the largest number of LH I–II vases ever found in a tomb at Volimidia: the straight-sided cup CM 124, the Vapheio cup CM 125 (Niche 2), the Vapheio cup CM 126 (Niche 4), the piriform jar CM 117, the askos CM 127, the two-handled alabastron CM 110, the three-handled alabastron CM 2597 and two-handled kylix CM 129 (dromos fill).

The cup CM 124 is decorated with fine dense rippling (Fig. 3.35–36).¹²⁵ Straight-sided cups are not included in Arne Furumark's shape repertoire and are assigned to LH I,¹²⁶ a period in which rippling is indeed particularly popular across the Pylos.¹²⁷

The Vapheio cups CM 125 (Fig. 3.37) and CM 126 (Fig. 4.38–39) belong to Type II and are decorated with tangent spirals with symmetrically placed blobs (FM 46).¹²⁸ These two vases form an identical 'pair',¹²⁹ albeit differing in terms of fabric and dimensions, and were found in different niches of the tomb. They belong to LH I and reproduce the most common type of decoration of such vases in the area,¹³⁰ with an exact parallel from Kephlovryso Tomb A (Keph-A)¹³¹ (CM 2999, see below).

The decoration on the two-handled piriform jar CM 117 (FS 27) of LH I date is quite similar (Fig. 4.40–41).¹³² The vase is a unique specimen of this kind from Messenia.¹³³

The ellipsoidal askos CM 127 is ascribed to FS 195 with its monochrome circles/loops and oblique lines recalling LH I examples (Fig. 4.42–43).¹³⁴ According to Penelope Mountjoy the solid circles in fact reflect LM IA ceramic prototypes and this illustrates the relations of Messenia with Crete in this period.¹³⁵

The two-handled alabastron CM 110 (Fig. 4.44–45) displays simple running spirals (FM 46) on the shoulder. It falls under the earlier two-handled FS 80 type with a good LH IIA parallel in Lakonia.¹³⁶ The small running spirals also point to a LH IIA date.¹³⁷

The alabastron CM 2597 (FM 32) with curvilinear rock pattern and wheel on the underside of the base (Fig. 4.46), but with rudimentary neck and baggy body, can be dated either to LH IIB or LH IIIA1–2.¹³⁸ However, a LH IIB date is more probable as on later examples the wheel painted on the underside was replaced by circles.

¹²³ Marinatos 1957, 345; Marinatos 2014, 46, plan 16, where the niches are numbered.

¹²⁴ Kountouri 2002, 18, mentions that the tomb contained three LH I vases and one of the LH II period (Lolos 1987, 201–202, figs. 343e, 344, 643a, 343f).

¹²⁵ Lolos mentions that it was found on the floor, not in a niche, a feature that, in conjunction with its shape, points to LH IIA: Lolos 1987, 201–202, 237–238, figs. 343f, 628g (LH I/IIA or LH IIA); however, LH IIA vases also occur in niches at Volimidia.

¹²⁶ RMDP, 316, 374, fig. 128.10 (Samikon); 1226. See also RMDP, 254, fig. 82.13 (Lakonia); 867, fig. 353.4 (Keos), and Lolos 1987, 233–239; Antoniou 2009, 587–588.

¹²⁷ RMDP, 306, 316, 323, fig. 108.24. On the Minoan prototype, see Betancourt 1985, 105, fig. 81, pl. 13C.

¹²⁸ RMDP, 307, fig. 104a. This type is particularly common on Thera, RMDP, 965, fig. 394.2.

¹²⁹ Lolos 1987, 201.

¹³⁰ RMDP, 307, fig. 104a; 315 n. 110.

¹³¹ Karagiorga 1976, 257, pl. 193δ.

¹³² This type has a limited distribution, RMDP, 80, fig. 10.2 (Argolid); 500, fig. 178.1 (Attica). A close parallel (FS 80) was found in Samikon: RMDP, 372, fig. 128.3.

¹³³ RMDP, 312.

¹³⁴ RMDP, 83 fig. 11.14 (Lerna); 314, fig. 105.4 (Pylos). See Lolos 1987, 327–328.

¹³⁵ RMDP, 314, fig. 105.4. The askos from Grave Circle B of Mycenae is Minoan (Mylonas 1972/1973, 154, pl. 133ε).

¹³⁶ RMDP, 255, fig. 83.15; 1217. See RMDP, 87, fig. 12.29 (Argolid).

¹³⁷ RMDP, 375, fig. 129.12 (Samikon); 318, fig. 106.14 (Pylos); 503, fig. 178.14 (Attica).

¹³⁸ RMDP, 324, fig. 108.30 (LH IIB); 325, fig. 109.35 (LH IIIA1); 334, fig. 113.64 (LH IIIA2). For a LH IIA example with curvilinear wheel see RMDP, 698, fig. 268.1 (Euboia).

The fact that each Vapheio cup was found in a different niche with secondary depositions leads to the same conclusion as has already been reached in the case of Tomb A-7. This implies that it is not unlikely that even with secondary burial deposits, each of the earlier burials were ‘honoured’ by the allocation of separate niches. A second conclusion refers to the identical decoration on three LH I vases in the grave, a feature that implies the popularity of certain pottery types and local, probably neighbouring, workshops. A final remark should be made regarding the diversity of the four LH I shapes in Tomb A-7, consisting of two Vapheio cup types and of two closed vases (piriform jar and askos). Such variety of shapes is unparalleled among the LH I chambers of Volimidia.

The unpainted two-handled kylix CM 129 (Fig. 4.47) found in the dromos fill represents a type between the goblet (FS 255) and the early kylix (FS 264) and dates to LH IIIA1.¹³⁹

The sealstone CM 2414¹⁴⁰ is suggestive of the richness (as well as the integrity) of Tomb A-7. It depicts a lion and an aquatic bird and is the work of an important LM I artist, the so-called ‘Jasper Lion Master’. It was found in Niche 1, while there is no recorded information on other finds from the same context.

In Tomb A-9, again three niches at the periphery of the chamber contained three LH I vases.¹⁴¹ The two-handled piriform jar CM 145 (FS 27) was preserved intact in Niche 1 (Fig. 4.48). It is the second case of a piriform jar in the Angelopoulou cluster, its shape being more elegant than that of piriform jar CM 117 from Tomb A-8. It dates to the LH IIA period, and the two rows of running spirals are also encountered on vases from Samikon.¹⁴² The vertical handles, as opposed to the loop-shaped ones of the Samikon vases, could be taken as an indication that the vase from Tomb A-9 was locally produced at a site near to Volimidia.

The LH I squat jug CM 144 (FS 87) was found in Niche 3 (Fig. 4.49). The stylised foliate band (FM 64) is a LH I motif, which is especially popular in Messenia,¹⁴³ Elis (Samikon)¹⁴⁴ and elsewhere.¹⁴⁵

The Vapheio cup CM 147 (Fig. 4.50) turned up in Niche 6. With a markedly raised midrib in the lower part of the body and with groups of lines in perpendicular and horizontal arrangement, which represent a rather uncommon type of decoration,¹⁴⁶ the cup is assigned to Type II¹⁴⁷ and dates to LH I.

The ratio one niche/one vase could further substantiate the concept that, by bringing into the niche one of the characteristic funerary offerings accompanying each one of the dead, niches may have served as an individual, and possibly symbolic, simulation for any secondary burial deposited in them.

The Angelopoulou cluster is hewn into the bedrock in the most “orderly planned” manner within the cemetery, with the chambers placed right next to each other and the dromoi uniformly aligned to the west. Out of the ten tombs in the Angelopoulou cluster, six contained, mainly in niches, remains of early Mycenaean burials (LH I–II), which appear to correspond to an equal number of primary burials that underwent secondary deposition from LH III onwards in response to the ongoing use of the already filled chambers.

The limited number of vases of MH tradition in the Angelopoulou cluster and the good representation of the LH I period with eleven vases in relation to the LH II period (five LH IIA and six LH IIB vases respectively) is in agreement with the spatial and chronological distance that

¹³⁹ RMDP, 331, fig. 111.53 (Pylos); 994, fig. 402.15 (Rhodes).

¹⁴⁰ CMS V.1, 241, no. 304; Aruz 2008, 167, fig. 330.

¹⁴¹ Marinatos 1956, 245 (the tomb is not described); Marinatos 2014, 43–47, plan 14.

¹⁴² Yalouris 1966, 24, pls. 14στ, 15α; RMDP, 375, fig. 129.12.

¹⁴³ RMDP, 307, fig. 104g–i.

¹⁴⁴ Yalouris 1966, 18, pl. 12α (small jug).

¹⁴⁵ RMDP, 69, fig. 9g–j; 80, fig. 10.3; 83, fig. 11.18 (Argolid); 253, fig. 82.2 (Lakonia); 894, fig. 363.9 (Melos).

¹⁴⁶ Lolos 1987, 252, fig. 349; RMDP, 315.

¹⁴⁷ RMDP, 253, fig. 82.5–12.



Fig. 4: Vases 38–47: Tomb A-8; 48–50: Tomb A-9; 51–52: Tomb T-1a; 53–54: Tomb T-5

separates it from the Kephlovryso cluster, which formed the nucleus and starting point of the cemetery in the advanced MH period.

Tsoulea/Voria Cluster

These tombs are situated c. 100 m to the east of the Angelopoulou cluster.¹⁴⁸ The cluster consists of seven tombs (T-1 has two chambers), which were cut into the rock in irregular order with their dromoi aligned differently.

Along with the cutting of the chambers into the rock, it was not uncommon in the early phases of the Mycenaean period to hollow out a second tomb with its entrance aligned perpendicularly to the wall of the dromos of the main chamber tomb.¹⁴⁹ This is the case with the (looted) Tomb Tsoulea/Voria 1a (T-1a), the early date of which is established by the occurrence of “a LH II alabastron”, which forms the only find from this small tomb.¹⁵⁰ However, its rather rough construction, “in contrast to the elaborate and quite often admirable style of rock-cutting in the remaining tombs” indicates that the early chambers were not of more careful work.¹⁵¹

The main Tomb T-1, the cutting of which evidently preceded that of the small Tomb T-1a, was found intact, but nonetheless, “traces earlier than the LH III period are scanty”¹⁵² and include the LH I unpainted cup CM 64 with loop handle (Pit 4) and the LH IIIA alabastron CM 76 (FS 85), which was found in the chamber (Fig. 4.52).¹⁵³

The cup CM 64 (Fig. 4.51) is a hybrid form of the FS 211 cup (see CM 790 from Keph-2), combining the unpainted LH I version (see CM 2940) of the shape with the raised handle seen on the LH IIA one-handed goblet (FS 262) (see CM 46, CM 2989). Its closest parallel at Volimidia is the unpainted cup CM 2993 (from Tomb Keph-B) of MH tradition, with a similar handle. Both vases date to the LH I period.

Vases of the LH II period were also found in the interesting Tomb T-5, which also contained the LH IIIC strainer hydria CM 20 and other vases of this period.¹⁵⁴ The earliest vases of the tomb are: the beaked jug CM 274, the bridge-spouted jug CM 275, the ring-handled cup CM 38 and the alabastron CM 37. The beaked jug CM 274 was found on the floor, the jug CM 275 in a “recess of the floor” and the alabastron CM 37 above Pit 1.

The elegant LH IIA beaked jug CM 274 (Fig. 4.53–54) combines (in respect to body and handle type) features of the jug with cutaway neck (FS 132) and of the beaked jug (FS 141). It is a typical LH IIA vase, which is popular in the Pylos region and probably of local manufacture,¹⁵⁵ displaying clear traits of Minoan influence from the part of the LM IB pottery of the Special Palatial Tradition.¹⁵⁶ Its decoration displays a beautifully executed ogival canopy (FM 13) echoing elements of the similarly Minoanising Arcade Group.¹⁵⁷

The semi-coarse painted bridge-spouted jug CM 275 (Fig. 5.55–56) is a unique shape in Volimidia. The vessel does not correspond to the LH IIA Type FS 103 of fine-ware bridge-spouted

¹⁴⁸ Marinatos 1966a, 200.

¹⁴⁹ Marinatos 1955, 487–491; Marinatos 2014, 18, plan 5.

¹⁵⁰ Marinatos 1955, 491, fig. 9 (left). However, this vase is the alabastron CM 295 from Tomb A-1, as is ascertained by the relevant entry in the museum inventory, as well as by the handwritten indication on the vase.

¹⁵¹ However, size is not a criterion for an early date either. Tomb T-7, 5.25 m in diameter, albeit one of the largest in the cemetery, had limited use, spanning only the LH IIIA–B period (Marinatos 1966b, 79–81).

¹⁵² Marinatos 1955, 490, figs. 12, 13.

¹⁵³ RMDP, 334, fig. 113.64 (see CM 2958).

¹⁵⁴ Marinatos 1957, 303, fig. 2; Korres 1993, 239, 241 fig. 2; Kountouri 2002, 22–23; Marinatos 2014, 56, plan 19; 58, fig. 11. For a special study of the strainer hydria CM 20 and the LH IIIC horizon of Tomb T-5, see Vlachopoulos, forthcoming.

¹⁵⁵ RMDP, 318–320, fig. 106.16 (FS 132); 321, fig. 106.17 (FS 141).

¹⁵⁶ Betancourt 1985, pl. 21A.

¹⁵⁷ RMDP, 258, fig. 84.34–35. See Betancourt 1985, pl. 22A–B.

jugs of Minoan tradition,¹⁵⁸ which shape is also rare in Messenia.¹⁵⁹ LH IIA/B bridge-spouted jugs have a narrow neck, while the Volimidia vase is wide-mouthed, resembling the FS 158 bridge-spouted feeding bottle of LH IIA/B.¹⁶⁰ Moreover, the jug CM 275 is made of a noticeably orange fabric and is possibly imported, although it cannot be attributed to a luxurious pottery production. In any case, it stands out as a hybrid shape, with Minoan elements, from the rich typological variety of LM IA/B jugs¹⁶¹ (thumb impression on the lower end of the handle,¹⁶² plastic fold on the rim).

The alabastron CM 37 (Fig. 5.60–61) belongs to the FS 63 straight-sided type of LH IIA with the motif of a hatched loop (FM 63) on the shoulder. It is painted on the underside of the base and has good parallels from the Englianos tombs.¹⁶³

The elegant ring-handled cup (FS 237) dates to LH IIB,¹⁶⁴ notwithstanding the fact that this shape, which is always decorated with ivy and other plant motifs, appears for the first time in LH IIA¹⁶⁵ as part of the trend to imitate motifs from Crete.¹⁶⁶ In the four-spiked plant motif on the interior of the cup CM 38 (Fig. 5.57–59) we recognise the motif of the ivy leaf, and possibly, too, that of the earliest papyrus flower (FM 11).¹⁶⁷ It has a good parallel from Makryisia (Elis), with twirling ivy stems. It dates to LH IIA and represents, in terms of shape, elements of an early date.¹⁶⁸ The oblique, left-facing flowers that cover the exterior of CM 38 may be stylised crocuses (FM 10) or lilies (FM 8).¹⁶⁹

Halfway between the Angelopoulou and Koroniou clusters lies Tomb Mastoraki 1 (Mas-1), which was found completely looted.¹⁷⁰ On the floor there were three pits and two niches. Among the objects left behind¹⁷¹ were “a few small vases”, including the squat alabastron CM 406 from Pit 1, another one CM 405¹⁷² (Fig. 5.62–63), and the two-handled goblet CM 410 (Fig. 5.64).

The alabastron CM 405 is a typical example of the FS 82.15 shape with the rock pattern (FM 32) of the LH IIB period,¹⁷³ common in Messenia.¹⁷⁴ The unpainted two-handled goblet CM 410 is either from the same period (FS 254) or from LH IIIA1 (FS 255).¹⁷⁵

Kephalovryso Cluster

It is situated 150–200m further east than the Voria cluster, along the east side of the local road to Kephalovryso,¹⁷⁶ which forms a dividing line between the two clusters.¹⁷⁷ The Kephalovryso cluster comprises one ‘shaft grave’ and nine chamber tombs.

¹⁵⁸ RMDP, 90, fig. 14.41.

¹⁵⁹ For a complete jug from Chalkias, see Antoniou 2009, 302, fig. 454, plans 18, 179. See RMDP, 318.

¹⁶⁰ RMDP, 92, fig. 15.50 (LH IIA); 514, fig. 182.69 (LH IIB).

¹⁶¹ Betancourt 1985, 123–124, fig. 94D, pls. 17A–B, G; 18G.

¹⁶² RMDP, 872–873, fig. 356.25 (Keos, LH IIA).

¹⁶³ Blegen et al. 1973, figs. 234.10, 21; 250.6; RMDP, 318, fig. 106.15. For a parallel from Lakonia, see RMDP, 256, fig. 83.21.

¹⁶⁴ RMDP, 324.

¹⁶⁵ RMDP, 95, fig. 15.61 (LH IIA); 101–103, fig. 19.91 (LH IIB).

¹⁶⁶ RMDP, 70–71.

¹⁶⁷ See the LH IIA Vapheio cup from Samikon: Yalouris 1966, pl. 14e; RMDP, 377, fig. 130.25 (LH IIA).

¹⁶⁸ Lolos 1987, figs. 578–581; RMDP, 378.

¹⁶⁹ See RMDP, 83, fig. 11.20 (LH I); 212, fig. 66.73 (LH IIB); 656–657, fig. 249.42–43 (LH IIB).

¹⁷⁰ Marinatos 1957, 305; Marinatos 2014, 60, plan 20.

¹⁷¹ Tongue-like dagger, beads made of glass paste and carnelian.

¹⁷² According to Kountouri 2002, 29, the two alabastra are of the LH IIB period and were found on the floor.

¹⁷³ RMDP, 98, fig. 17.73 (shape); fig. 17.74 (motif).

¹⁷⁴ RMDP, 324, fig. 108.30. For decoration on underside of the base, see RMDP 324, fig. 108.28–30.

¹⁷⁵ RMDP, 835, fig. 334.40–42; 880, fig. 359.57–60 (LH IIB); 113, fig. 23.135; 332, fig. 111.53; 1227 (LH IIIA1). On the globular LH IIA type FS 263, see Rutter 1993, 66, fig. 7.23–24 (Tsoungiza).

¹⁷⁶ Marinatos 1966b, 79–81.

¹⁷⁷ Boyd 2002, 138.



Fig. 5: Vases 55–61: Tomb T-5; 62–64: Tomb Mas-1

The most important funerary monument in it is the MH ‘Shaft Grave’ Keph-1¹⁷⁸ that determines the first chronological horizon when tombs were set up in the area of Volimidia. It also demonstrates that the mature MH stage (MM III) of its construction is earlier than and different from that of the first LH I chamber tombs at Volimidia, when vase shapes and decorative styles of MH tradition and early Mycenaean type were contemporaneously in use.¹⁷⁹

At a short distance to the southeast of Keph-1, Marinatos refers to an elongated pit as ‘shaft grave’ and to a circular pit to the southeast.¹⁸⁰ Albeit imperfect, this piece of evidence – with the validity of Marinatos’ field observations – conveys the picture of the ‘nuclear’ concentration of the MH graves and probably associated funerary activities in the area of Kephlovryso, from where the organised cemetery of chamber tombs of the LH I period developed. This manifests a conscious choice for continuity and ancestral reference as the strikingly early pottery of these tombs suggests in comparison to the neighbouring clusters.

A total of seven chamber tombs was excavated by Marinatos (and, later on, another two by Theodora Karagiorga: Keph-A, Keph-B¹⁸¹), but the location of quite a few chambers, in contact with or underneath the paved road, prevents the complete reconstruction of the cluster.¹⁸²

An overall topographic plan of the cluster, which was excavated in 1964 and 1965, was never produced. The only topographic plan of the Volimidia cemetery is that from 1961 (Fig. 1). Tomb Keph-5 was situated a few metres north of the ‘Shaft Grave’ Keph-1,¹⁸³ adjoining the chamber of Keph-7.¹⁸⁴ Next to (the northwest corner of) tomb Keph-1 was Keph-6.¹⁸⁵

In Keph-2, an interesting group of LH I–IIA vases had been deposited.¹⁸⁶ Underneath a skeleton in an extended position was a “pit or two pit-like cavities, where, albeit not in association with a skeleton, only LH I–II vases were found”.¹⁸⁷ Marinatos illustrates the spouted cup CM 775¹⁸⁸ and two cups with tortoise-shell rippling (CM 788, CM 790).¹⁸⁹ The same pit, however, contained yet another cup (CM 789) as well as a stemmed one (CM 791). Eight niches were arranged around the periphery of the chamber, and the first one to the right contained the “Keftiu cup” CM 792.¹⁹⁰ Six of the niches “contain many bones, which were left to be cleaned away by Prof. E. Breitingner”. On the floor, among groups of LH IIIA–B vases, a small-sized undecorated spouted jug with straight spout¹⁹¹ was uncovered, a type known from LM IA prototypes,¹⁹² but, in this case, as Kountouri has pointed out, it is in fact a painted LH IIIA1–early IIIA2 vase.¹⁹³ The dromos niche contained a LH IIIA child burial. In the chamber a cattle sacrifice had taken place in the historical period.

The five ripple-decorated cups CM 775, CM 788, CM 789, CM 790, CM 791 from the same pit are associated with remains from the relocation of older burials in the chamber. However, if we

¹⁷⁸ Marinatos 1966b, 79, 86–89, fig. 1, pls. 82–83, 89–90, 91α; Marinatos 1967, 107, fig. 3, pl. 116; Lolos 1987, 203, figs. 350, 353, 356; Boyd 2002, 139; Zavadil 2013, 93–94, 334–337. For pottery of the tomb, see Lolos 1987, chapter 3 *passim*, figs. 357–366; Chasiakou 2003, Β’ Μέρος (2nd Part), B.I.10, 58–62, 837–847, 1690–1720.

¹⁷⁹ RMDP, 303.

¹⁸⁰ Marinatos 1967, 107, fig. 3, pl. 116α.

¹⁸¹ Karagiorga 1976, 256–258; Lolos 1987, 207.

¹⁸² In 1965, “the road from Chora to Kephlovryso is paved with asphalt” extending alongside the road tombs (Marinatos 1967, 102). “The largest of them all in the cluster” is Tomb Keph-4 (Marinatos 1967, 103, fig. 1). See Lolos 1987, 203–207; Boyd 2002, 139–140.

¹⁸³ Marinatos 1967, 104.

¹⁸⁴ Marinatos 1967, 105, fig. 2.

¹⁸⁵ Marinatos 1967, 106, fig. 3; Lolos 1987, fig. 353; Boyd 2002, 139.

¹⁸⁶ Marinatos 1966b, 83–85; Lolos 1987, 204; Boyd 2002, 139.

¹⁸⁷ Marinatos 1966b, 83, pls. 91δ, 93β–δ.

¹⁸⁸ Marinatos 1966b, 83, pl. 91δ.

¹⁸⁹ Marinatos 1966b, 83, pl. 93β. The plate illustrates the cups CM 790 (left) and CM 788 (right).

¹⁹⁰ Marinatos 1966b, 83, pl. 93α.

¹⁹¹ Marinatos 1966b, 84, pl. 91γ. The vase, according to Lolos 1987, 204, 301–302, fig. 371, dates to LH I–IIA and is a unique specimen of its kind on the mainland.

¹⁹² Betancourt 1985, 133, pl. 17F–G.

¹⁹³ Kountouri 2002, 26 n. 71.

consider what we know from the Angelopoulou cluster, it would not seem unlikely that this group of vases derived from a single relocation. No matter how it was formed, this, in terms of context, sealed group is exceptionally helpful for the study of the early Late Bronze Age material from the Pylos region. It is easily identified as the earliest LH I assemblage in the cemetery of Volimidia. Of particular interest also is the absence of vases of MH tradition in this tomb.

The elegant spouted cup CM 775 (FS 211) (Fig. 6.65–67) has a hemispherical body,¹⁹⁴ is decorated with a widely-spaced ripple pattern (FM 78), and is plain on the inside. The shape is popular in Messenia, but its protruding spout is not encountered anywhere else in the region, bearing a close resemblance to Minoan prototypes.¹⁹⁵ That shape imitates metal prototypes in all its features. The carination of the rim, the shaping of the wide spout imitating a hammered metal sheet, the handle with metal midrib and the ripple decoration that recalls the fluted surface of hammered vessels indicate the successful reproduction of a metal shape in clay.¹⁹⁶ The group of ripple decorated vases from the same pit substantiates the conclusion that ripple decoration appears on shapes indebted to metal prototypes (Vapheio cups, straight-sided cups and cups), and evidently emulates the gleam of the folds hammered into the gold sheet of the corresponding shapes.

The cup FS 211 is a Minoan (LM IA) shape,¹⁹⁷ its distribution reaching as far as the Cyclades and Kythera, and it was introduced on the mainland in the last phase of the MH period.¹⁹⁸ The earliest one in the Volimidia assemblage is the cup from ‘Shaft Grave’ Keph-1 and from Lolos’ point of view represents a Minoan import.¹⁹⁹ According to the same scholar, “the ‘ripple cups’ from Kephlovryso T. 2 [...] may on good grounds be attributed to the opening phase of the local LH I period. This stage, foretelling, it would appear, the full emergence of the Messenian LH I pottery style, seems to be marked by an increase in the number of Minoan or Minoanising imports into Messenia and by the first attempts by the local potters to reproduce some characteristic LM IA vase-types”.²⁰⁰

The two cups CM 788 and CM 791²⁰¹ of the FS 212 type of stemmed cups also belong to the earliest examples of the shape on the mainland that imitate Minoan prototypes.²⁰² The cups CM 788 (Fig. 6.68), CM 789 (Fig. 6.69–70), CM 790 (Fig. 6.71–72) and CM 791 (Fig. 6.73–74) are monochrome painted on the inside, a Minoan trait that reaches the hinterland together with the imitations of Cretan prototypes.²⁰³

The contribution of Kythera and of the Lakonian shores (Ayios Stephanos) in this process of ‘Minoanisation’ has been sufficiently demonstrated. What is currently being examined, however, is the parallel involvement of the coastal region of the Argolid (Lerna).²⁰⁴ In any case, the assemblage of ripple-decorated cups from Volimidia, as well as other contemporaneous examples from

¹⁹⁴ RMDP, 314–315, fig. 105.5. See also RMDP, 253, fig. 82.3–3 (Lakonia); 502, fig. 178.10 (Attica).

¹⁹⁵ Antoniou 2009, 589, 591, 595. The type is not commented upon by RMDP, 314–315.

¹⁹⁶ Such cups made of silver form part of the Tôd Treasure (Amenemhat II reign, 1919–1885 BC), see Pierrat-Bonnefois 2008. For metal Vapheio or Keftiu cups, which served as prototypes for their counterparts in clay, see Thomas 2016.

¹⁹⁷ Betancourt 1985, 105, fig. 77, pl. 13E (MM III); 131, fig. 99B, E (LM IA).

¹⁹⁸ Lolos 1987, 261–262, with bibliography; RMDP, 83, fig. 11.16–18 (Argolid); 965, fig. 394.1 (Thera); 1225.

¹⁹⁹ Lolos 1987, 262, figs. 360c, 635a.

²⁰⁰ Lolos 1987, 266, 517, 533–534.

²⁰¹ Lolos 1987, 264–265. In general, the stemmed cup rarely occurs before LH IIA, see RMDP, 83, fig. 11.19 (Argolid).

²⁰² Antoniou 2009, 589; Girella 2010, 869. “An early-looking ripple-decorated example from Grave Gamma in Circle B [...] is very likely to be LM IA” (Lolos 1987, 264–265, with discussion). See Mylonas 1972/1973, 67, pls. 52e, 231; Betancourt 1985, 113–114, fig. 87, pl. 15C–E. For more recent evidence on the production of the new motif of tortoise-shell ripple during MM III, see Hatzaki 2015; Betancourt et al. 2016.

²⁰³ Lolos 1987, 262. See Betancourt 1985, 131, fig. 99B (LM IA).

²⁰⁴ Lolos 1987, 265–266; Dickinson 1992, 110–111; RMDP, 19–20, 68, 247–248; Kiriatzi 2010, 690–693. See also Korres 1993 (Messenia); Dickinson 2014 (Lakonia).

the Pylos region (Nichoria, Routsis),²⁰⁵ would perhaps leave open the possibility of a more active and direct participation of Messenia in this process.

Assigned to the immediately succeeding stage of LH I²⁰⁶ is the Vapheio cup CM 792²⁰⁷ of Type II, which is decorated with metopal spirals (FM 46)²⁰⁸ (a variation of the same motif appears on the Vapheio cup CM 326 from Tomb A-4). A fragment from a similar cup with the same motif (but with a differently aligned set of obliquely linked bars), may belong to a second vase from the same deposit in the niche.

Tomb Keph-2, then, contained important vases of LH I (early and mature phase), and possibly of LH IIA, which display an array of Minoan elements as well as their quite interesting Helladic versions.

The intact Tomb Keph-3 is of particular interest with regard to the LH I–II period.²⁰⁹ The early squat jug CM 805 (λεβητοκούθιον) was lying over the head of a young female, who was buried in a deep pit approximately in the middle of the chamber, corroborating the practice of burials with only one funerary offering that we have suggested in the case of the niches of the Angelopoulou cluster.²¹⁰ Two more shallow pits were found empty. Around the periphery of the chamber there were eight niches filled with bones and skulls. One niche contained two knives, another one a small amphoroid jar with vestigial lugs and a small jug with cutaway neck, whetstones and tools. Yet another niche included a small two-handled closed jar, 0.10 m in height. Niche 8 produced two stone arrowheads. The squat jug and the vases from the niches date to LH I–II, the remaining vases to LH IIIA.²¹¹

The small amphoroid vase CM 803 and the jug with cutaway neck CM 801 were found in Pit 1, together with whetstones and tools, a probably redeposited group of funerary offerings from one and the same burial. The vases are undecorated. The jug with cutaway neck is a common shape of the latest MH/early LH I and LH I times, well documented in the Pylos region, where the shape appears either plain or matt-painted.²¹² The amphoroid vase with flask-like body, wide conical neck and two loop handles down the neck is, according to Lolos' view, idiosyncratic with MH elements.²¹³ Neither vase can be later than LH I.

The small jar CM 804 is a wide-necked stamnos with curved strap handles, ovoid body, cylindrical neck and flat rim as well as two holes at opposite ends under the rim.²¹⁴ The holes were opened before the firing of the vase and were meant for fitting a dowel through them, probably facilitating the application of a lid. The vase dates to the latest MH/early LH I times.

The squat jug CM 805 (Fig. 6.75–76), which accompanied the burial in the pit, is a LH IIA vase,²¹⁵ quite identical with the jug CM 329 (from A-4). The hooked spirals hanging from the neckband and the one standing left of the handle form a common subsidiary theme of this decoration.²¹⁶

Keph-4 had the largest chamber in the Kephlovryso cluster. It is 3.80 m in diameter, with one pit (Pit 1) in the floor of the chamber and two pits (Pits 2, 3) at the periphery.²¹⁷ Above Pit 1, the beaked jug CM 2926, decorated with horizontal bands and a zig-zag band (Fig. 6.77) was found,

²⁰⁵ Lolos 1987, 265–266, 426–430, fig. 392.

²⁰⁶ On the three 'stages' of the Messenian LH IA (according to Y. Lolos' classification), see Lolos 1987, 533–540.

²⁰⁷ Lolos 1987, 204, 408, fig. 370.

²⁰⁸ RMDP, 307, fig. 104c.

²⁰⁹ Marinatos 1966b, 81–83, pl. 94α–δ.

²¹⁰ A plain squat jug was the only funerary offering for the burial of Grave B in the Samikon Tumulus (Yalouris 1966, 8, pl. 9β).

²¹¹ Marinatos 1966b, 82; Lolos 1987, 204–205; Kountouri 2002, 26–27.

²¹² Lolos 1987, 205, 358–359, fig. 372a. For parallels see Lolos 1987, figs. 70, 86a, 192, 206.

²¹³ Lolos 1987, 205, 365, fig. 372b.

²¹⁴ Lolos 1987, 205, 369–370, fig. 373.

²¹⁵ Lolos 1987, 205, fig. 374.

²¹⁶ RMDP, 87, fig. 12.29 (Argolid); 375, fig. 129.13 (Samikon).

²¹⁷ Marinatos 1966b, 83; Marinatos 1967, 102–104, fig. 1, pl. 115α; Kountouri 2002, 27, associates the feeding bottle CM 2931 with this tomb, but this vase in fact originates from Keph-7.



10cm

Fig. 6: Vases 65–74: Tomb Keph-2; 75–76: Tomb Keph-3; 77: Tomb Keph-4

while a second plain one (CM 2927) is reported from the tomb without reference to its specific find spot. Pit 2 produced the one-handed cup CM 2929 of MH tradition.

Beaked jugs feature among the most popular pouring vessels of the Bronze Age, uninterruptedly produced from the 3rd millennium BC onwards. In Messenia, the shape is attested in the MH period forming the prototype of the LH I beaked jug,²¹⁸ which subsequently developed into its LH IIA fine-ware ‘Minoanising’ version (see CM 274 from T-5). The two specimens from Keph-4 date to LH I, a period when both painted and plain versions of the beaked jug occur.

Keph-5 had an unusually elliptical chamber, its maximum length being 3.20 m and its width 1.40 m. It contained a large number of skulls and four vases, “all of them, though, of early Mycenaean local craftsmanship”.²¹⁹ One skull is associated with two whetstones, five boar’s tusks and a stone axe.²²⁰ It is not recorded whether some of the vases were found in the two niches and the one pit of the chamber. A straight-sided cup, a jug and two squat jugs form the vase assemblage from the tomb.

The straight-sided cup CM 2933 (Fig. 7.78) is monochrome painted on the interior and bears rudimentary band decoration on the body and the back of the handle.²²¹ The type appears to be the oldest one at Volimidia, with MH–LH I parallels from Tourkokivoura in Karpophora (one of these parallels is also monochrome painted on the interior and was probably imported).²²² Indicative of a similar degree of antiquity is the straight-sided cup and the two-handed amphora of MH tradition, which accompanied a burial in the tumulus of Samikon (Elis).²²³

The jug CM 2936²²⁴ (Fig. 7.79), with rudimentary band decoration on the upper parts of the vase and on the belly, conforms clearly to the Helladic character of MH matt-painted jugs.

The most interesting vases of the tomb are plain squat jugs CM 2934 (Fig. 7.80) and CM 2935 (Fig. 7.81), the former wide-mouthed, the latter rather narrow-necked. A shape of non-Minoan origin, the squat jug (FS 87) is the second most popular shape in the southwestern Peloponnese after the Vapheio cup.²²⁵ These “two very early-looking squat jugs of reddish clay”²²⁶ are plain, belonging to the group of undecorated (and sometimes handmade) examples in the Pylos region and in Triphylia.²²⁷

According to Lolos the four vases of Keph-5 are “certainly no later than LH I”,²²⁸ and, despite the fact that there are no data available on the taphonomy, it seems that Keph-5 is the next oldest chamber tomb at Volimidia after Keph-7, both tombs being slightly later than the late MH ‘Shaft Grave’ Keph-1.

The most revealing tomb of the early periods of the cemetery is Keph-6,²²⁹ which almost adjoined the ‘Shaft Grave’ Keph-1 situated a few metres to the north of Keph-5. The tomb is analogous to Keph-5 with a similar spade-shaped dromos aligned to the south, while its chamber is semi-circular, 3.20 m in diameter.²³⁰

²¹⁸ For the shape and its evolution from MH to LH I, see Lolos 1987, 358; Kountouri 2002, 134–135.

²¹⁹ Marinatos 1967, 104, fig. 2, pl. 120β; Lolos 1987, 205, figs. 375a–d, 376.

²²⁰ Marinatos 1967, 104–105, pls. 144β, 118, 119α. The boar’s tusks bear neither holes nor signs of having been processed in a manner suggesting connection with a boar’s tusk helmet. This funerary offering, though, is important even as a hunting trophy.

²²¹ For the shape, see CM 124 (Tomb A-8).

²²² Lolos 1987, 236, figs. 196–197, 628a–b. See also Girella 2010, 863.

²²³ Yalouris 1966, 10, pls. 5γ–δ, 14α, 20δ (Tomb ΙΔ’).

²²⁴ Lolos 1987, 205, 360–361, figs. 375b, 376a.

²²⁵ Lolos 1987, 274–285, figs. 637–638 (plain and matt-painted), 639–642 (decorated).

²²⁶ Lolos 1987, 205, 275, figs. 375a, c; 637g–h.

²²⁷ Yalouris 1966, 8, pl. 9β; Lolos 1987, 274, 278–282.

²²⁸ Lolos 1987, 279, 361.

²²⁹ Marinatos 1967, 107, fig. 3, pl. 116β; Lolos 1987, 206, figs. 353–354; Boyd 2002, 139.

²³⁰ The short spade-shaped dromos of the Volimidia chamber tombs under discussion does not seem to be an indicator of an early date, but, in all probability, is the result of adaptation to the terrain, or a manufacturer’s choice. See Zavdil 2013, 98–101; Papadimitriou 2015, 85, 101, 105, 109.



Fig. 7: Vases 78–81: Tomb Keph-4; 82–90: Tomb Keph-6; 91: Tomb Keph-7; various sherds 92–93; arrowheads 94: Tomb Keph-A

Between the stones stacked in front of the tomb entrance (in fact, above them) a sacrifice had taken place. Among the animal bones and the burnt stones of the pile were fragments of a small number of vases “almost all of them mugs”, as well as a medium-sized “skyphos-krater of local imperfect craftsmanship and firing”, “all vases clearly evoking a MH tradition”.²³¹ The ‘skyphos-krater’ from the rough stone packing of the entrance is the plain two-handled goblet CM 2943,²³² 0.12 m in height, a vase “certainly no later than LH IIA (LH I?)”,²³³ with parallels in Messenia in LH I or mixed LH I–II contexts. Its co-occurrence “almost always with mugs” (probably Vapheio cups?) implies drinking practices as part of the customary sealing of the tomb. The evidence for the offering of a sacrifice in front of the entrance adds to an otherwise small number of relevant references to chamber tombs of the LH I period.²³⁴

The chamber did not contain undisturbed burials, only a few bones and skulls were preserved. All the small vases from the tomb, which featured two pits and three niches, are early Mycenaean.²³⁵

In Pit 2 lay the bronze pin CM 2937, the squat jug CM 2938 as well as the plain one-handled cup CM 2940, an interesting assemblage of LH I–IIA. The pin is 0.112 m in length, has a conical head, a knob and perforation. “Such pins appear only in late Mycenaean tombs, but here their occurrence is attested in a proto-Mycenaean environment”.²³⁶

On the east side of the floor of the chamber the following vases were found: the LH I rounded cup CM 2941,²³⁷ two painted vases of MH tradition, that is, the jug with cutaway neck and raised handle CM 2944 and the askos CM 2939, as well as, on its west side, the unpainted LH I squat jug CM 2942. It is interesting to note that the chamber of Keph-6 contained vases of the LH I–II period, which are contemporaneous to those of Pit 2, while also in the chamber two painted vases of MH tradition had been deposited, along with a luxuriously decorated cup and a plain Mycenaean one. This picture then captures all three ceramic traditions found in the early Mycenaean culture of the Pylos region.

The LH I rounded cup CM 2941 (FS 211) (Fig. 7.84–85) is one of the few cups with pictorial decoration featuring the crocus motif (FM 10) and has good parallels in the Pylos region,²³⁸ in Triphylia (Samikon)²³⁹ and the Argolid.²⁴⁰ The plain version of the shape includes the rounded cup CM 2940 (Fig. 7.83).

The LH IIA squat jug CM 2938²⁴¹ (FS 87) (Fig. 7.82) has been discussed together with the squat jugs CM 43 and CM 44 (Tomb K-3) and the other decorated examples from Volimidia. Close parallels from Samikon and Makryisia stress the strong local preference for the shape along the coastal zone of the southwestern Peloponnese.²⁴² The shape of the plain squat jug CM 2942 (Fig. 7.90) has been examined in the context of the jugs CM 2934, CM 2935 from Keph5. A particular feature of the present vase is its rudimentary disc base, which causes problems of stability. Perhaps these vases were not for everyday use and used only as funerary offerings.²⁴³

The jug with cutaway neck and raised handle CM 2944 (Fig. 7.86–87) of noticeably yellow clay that strongly recalls the MH Yellow Minyan Ware is an important vase, first for the elegance of its shape, but also because of its decoration: three bands encircle the shoulder just above the

²³¹ Marinatos 1967, 107.

²³² Marinatos 1967, 107, pl. 120ζ.

²³³ Lolos 1987, 206, 340–342, figs. 375h, 377.

²³⁴ Papadimitriou 2015, 92–93, 102.

²³⁵ Marinatos 1967, 107, pl. 120γ–ε.

²³⁶ Marinatos 1967, 107, pl. 119β.

²³⁷ For a discussion of its shape, see cup CM 775 (Tomb Keph-2).

²³⁸ Lolos 1987, 447–448, figs. 379, 507, 667.3–5.

²³⁹ RMDP, 373, fig. 128.6.

²⁴⁰ RMDP, 69, fig. 9g–j; 83, fig. 11.20; 315.

²⁴¹ Lolos 1987, 206, figs. 375i, 375k, 378–379.

²⁴² Lolos 1987, 274–285.

²⁴³ At Samikon (Grave B) a plain squat jug was the only funerary offering in a burial, see Yalouris 1966, 8, pl. 9β.

point of the maximum diameter. The straight perpendicular line defined by the back of the handle, the biconical body and the rendering of the spout place the jug among the most beautiful specimens of the shape in the Pylos region.²⁴⁴ According to Lolos, the vase “has an early appearance and is distinguished by a MH-type high-swung handle”, which finds parallels in LH I at Karpophora-Akones²⁴⁵ and at Samikon,²⁴⁶ as well as in examples from Englianos, which are later than the LH I period.²⁴⁷

Also, the roughly shaped askos CM 2939²⁴⁸ (Fig. 7.88–89) bears a decoration with horizontal bands and a large hatched (?) loop in between, which is filled with lines of a linked bars motif. The vase is wide-mouthed like its parallels of MH tradition. The body is ovoid/squat and somewhat spindle-shaped – bird-like – an impression accentuated by the raised mouth, the basket-like handle and the painted decoration that seems to indicate the wing of a bird.

The squat alabastron CM 2958 (FS 85), found between the upper black and the lower porous limestone stratum, probably dates to LH IIIA,²⁴⁹ and indicates a succeeding, isolated episode in the sequence of the use of the tomb. The fact, though, that the goblet from the stone packing of the entrance is no later than LH IIA, would suggest a date of the alabastron under discussion to the same period.

Due to the difficulties of the excavation, Keph-7 is scantily documented. Judging from its ground plan, it appears to have an elliptical chamber, which was cut into the rock immediately west of the chamber of Tomb Keph-5 extending right next to it or serving as a second chamber of that tomb. “It gave a few common finds, among which a one-handled cup with narrow base” (CM 2932, height 0.065 m, rim diameter 0.11 m) “and a sizable feeding bottle”²⁵⁰ (CM 2931) deserve mention. The latter (of 0.23 m in height) preserves traces of banding. According to Lolos, it “may be not later than LH I”²⁵¹ (Fig. 7.91). The third vase of the group is the beaked jug CM 2930 restored to a great extent, 0.33 m in height, 0.243 m in diameter, also of MH tradition (see CM 2926, CM 2927 in Tomb Keph-4).

Tombs Keph-5, Keph-6 and Keph-7 were found much less disturbed, even preserving funerary offerings in groups, which, besides vases, included some finds of particular importance (such as boar’s tusks, stone artefacts, the bronze pin as well as pottery). Keph-7, with undecorated vases of MH tradition, appears to be the earliest of the three tombs. Keph-6 dates to LH I–IIA, Keph-5 to MH/LH I.²⁵² The tombs of this cluster, therefore, contained burials no later than LH II.

In the case of Keph-5, a cattle sacrifice was performed on the stone packing of the entrance. The early vases from the area of the sacrifice do not necessarily establish a similar dating for that event, but they, nevertheless, testify to a sacrifice in memory of the dead.

These observations, when considered in combination with the proximity of the Tombs Keph-5, Keph-7 and Keph-6 to the ‘ancestral’ ‘Shaft Grave’ Keph-1 (and the hitherto hardly understood equivalent neighbouring shaft of similar construction), confirm on the one hand the early date of the Kephlovryso cluster in relation to the succeeding gradual expansion of the cemetery. On the other hand, the eminent significance that the earlier tombs of this cluster may have had for the

²⁴⁴ Lolos 1987, 359, fig. 375e (referred to as plain).

²⁴⁵ Lolos 1987, 359, fig. 206.

²⁴⁶ Yalouris 1966, 11 no. 1, pl. 6γ.

²⁴⁷ Blegen et al. 1973, figs. 249.20, 250.7.

²⁴⁸ Lolos 1987, 206, 327–328 (lustrous painted), figs. 375g, 380b, 654c (referred to as undecorated). For askoi of MH tradition, see Lolos 1987, 374, fig. 195 (painted).

²⁴⁹ Marinatos 1967, 107, pl. 120ε (left); Lolos 1987, fig. 380a. According to Kountouri 2002, 28, 503, pl. 178, the vase dates to LH IIIA1–2.

²⁵⁰ Marinatos 1967, 104, fig. 2; Lolos 1987, 207, fig. 352; Boyd 2002, 142.

²⁵¹ Marinatos 1967, 104, pl. 119ζ; Lolos 1987, 207, 355–356.

²⁵² Boyd 2002, 234, refers to Keph-5 and Keph-7 (as well as to Keph-A) as LH I, and to Keph-6 as LH I–II (including the LH IIIA alabastron). Cf. also Zavdil 2013, 342–346: Keph-5 (MH III/LH I), Keph-7 (LH I?), Keph-A (LH I), Keph-6 (LH I; LH IIIA).

descendants of the community, may have caused them to leave these intact when conducting the interments of their own dead.

The storeroom of the Chora Museum houses large quantities of sherds from the Volimidia tombs. In the course of the first sorting, the following fragments were selected: Box ‘Voria/Tsoulea Tombs (T-5, T-6), Kephlovryso Tomb (Keph-5)’:

Sherd no. 1: Sherd of a Vapheio cup (FS 224) with midrib and ripple decoration²⁵³ (Fig. 7.92 left) which indicate a probable classification as Type III (LH IIA).²⁵⁴

Sherd no. 2: Three joining fragments with a perpendicularly arranged plant motif of racket leaves (Fig. 7.93). The fragments belong to a LH IIA hole-mouthed jar (FS 101),²⁵⁵ rather than to a jar (FS 14), and bear the motif of the ‘racket leaf tree’,²⁵⁶ i.e. of hatched loops (FM 63) growing from vertical stems.²⁵⁷ The naturalistic version of this motif (as on a LH I jar from Voroulia²⁵⁸) recalls the foliate band on the gold cup from Shaft Grave IV at Mycenae.²⁵⁹

Sherd no. 3: The sherd of a squat alabastron (FS 83), decorated with lily (FM 9) or crocus (FM 10)²⁶⁰ (Fig. 7.92 right) dates to LH IIA or LH IIB.²⁶¹

As the excavation of Volimidia progressed, its goals were set more clearly and its means improved, probably out of Marinatos’ desire to develop a pioneering inter-disciplinary research project of an extensive Mycenaean cemetery. The presence of the anthropologists, Emil Breiting and Egon Reuer, with their assistants, facilitated the study of the skulls, and in the years 1964 and 1965 “almost all skulls have been unearthed by the anthropologists themselves”.²⁶² Furthermore, Marinatos makes clear that “the abundance and importance of the anthropological material from the excavation of Volimidia (Palaipylos), as well as from other Pylian excavations, will necessitate the presence of the valuable colleagues during the upcoming period, too”.²⁶³ However, the excavations stopped, probably because of the priority Marinatos gave to the excavations at Akrotiri, Thera, at that time, and none of the anthropological research material was ever published.

After the end of Marinatos’ investigations, rescue excavations were continued to a limited extent. Two chamber tombs were excavated by the Archaeological Service at Kephlovryso (1972),²⁶⁴ a third one at the L. Rigas plot (1990)²⁶⁵ and a fourth one in the Athanasopoulos property, near the Voria/Tsoulea cluster by G. S. Korres (1991).²⁶⁶

Kephlovryso Tombs A and B (Excavations Th. Karagiorga)²⁶⁷

At a distance of 10.50 m northeast of Keph-3, to the west of the road to Kephlovryso, the central part of the chamber of Tomb Keph-A was located.

Due to the thorough documentation of the excavation, even though the vault had sustained damage by a bulldozer, it was established that the tomb contained but a few finds, all of them

²⁵³ For the Vapheio cup (FS 224), see the cup (without inv. no.) from Tomb A-1.

²⁵⁴ RMDP, 323, fig. 108.24.

²⁵⁵ RMDP, 89–91, fig. 13.40 (Argolid); 799, fig. 319.2 (Thermon).

²⁵⁶ Peristeria, Tholos Tomb 2 (Lolos 1987, figs. 434–437).

²⁵⁷ Kakovatos, Tholos Tomb A (Lolos 1987, figs. 474, 476; RMDP, 375, fig. 129.1).

²⁵⁸ Lolos 1987, figs. 116–117, 669.1.

²⁵⁹ Lolos 1987, fig. 627.

²⁶⁰ For the squat alabastron (FS 83) with plant motif, see CM 295.

²⁶¹ RMDP, 88, fig. 12.30 (LH IIA); 98, fig. 17.76–78; 324, fig. 108.28–29 (LH IIB).

²⁶² Marinatos 1967, 108. Marinatos also mentions that the material was sorted systematically and arranged “into special, custom-made boxes” in the Museum of Chora.

²⁶³ The following year (1966) Marinatos conducted excavations of limited scale in the Pylia (Chandrinos: Kissos; Soulinarion: Tourliditsa), see Marinatos 1968, 119–132.

²⁶⁴ Karagiorga 1976.

²⁶⁵ Arapoyianni 1995.

²⁶⁶ See Vlachopoulos, forthcoming.

²⁶⁷ Karagiorga 1976, 256–257, plan 1, pls. 193–194.

early Mycenaean. Pits 2 and 4 were dug into the chamber floor beneath the horizon of unfurnished burials and secondary burials. Another three pits and one niche were opened on the periphery of the tomb. The pits were filled with bones, piled up in disarray, and only in Pit 1 (the biggest one), amongst the accumulated bones, were three obsidian and three flint arrowheads (CM 3003α–σ) found (Fig. 7.94). The successive burials in the pits imply frequent episodes of relocation, which, though, were devoid of funerary offerings. There were a few long bones and the LH I Vapheio cup CM 2999 (FS 224) in the niche.²⁶⁸ The cup belongs to Type II, decorated with tangent spiral with blob fill (FM 46) with an exact parallel in Nichoria.²⁶⁹ Quite interesting is that whenever this motif occurs on one-handled cups or squat jugs, the stem that joins the spirals slopes up from bottom left to top right following a ‘straight alignment’ towards the handle.

In the same year, as part of the same rescue excavation, Chamber Tomb Keph-B was investigated, 13.30m southwest of Keph-A, along the west margin of the road, at a distance of 9.50m to Keph-3.²⁷⁰

The burial stratum of the chamber, underlying the unfurnished skeletons, contained the burials of three individuals in an extended position, accompanied by their funerary offerings, which consisted of nine vases “to a great extent intact”. The deceased in the middle had been offered two LH IIIA2 vases, the small stirrup jar CM 2991 and the miniature hydria CM 2987.²⁷¹ The one to his/her left, probably an adolescent, was holding the cylindrical alabastron (CM 2997) of LH IIIA2–B date in his left hand.²⁷² A pair of three-handled squat alabastra (CM 2995 and CM 2996: FS 83, 84), which were found next to the pelvis and the skull of the skeleton “towards the side of the wall of the vault” date to the LH IIB or IIIA1 period.²⁷³ The alabastron CM 2995 has an indiscernible decoration, while the alabastron CM 2996 features a monochrome painted triangular theme between the handles.²⁷⁴

The hybrid one-handled goblet CM 2990 with conical body (FS 262?) of possibly LH IIA–B date belongs to a burial which was pushed aside. It was recorded near the doorway of the tomb.

The following vases, which were probably moved from their original position, were associated with the third jumbled skeleton, which lay in the southern part of the chamber: the three-handled stirrup jar CM 2982, the jug CM 2984 and the piriform jar CM 2983, the latter containing a conical cup (CM 2998). This group of vases is chronologically heterogeneous, as it includes a LH IIA stirrup jar (FS 169), a LH IIIA1 piriform jar (FS 44)²⁷⁵ and a LH IIIA2–B1 jug (FS 110).²⁷⁶

Of greater interest is the three-handled stirrup jar CM 2982 (Fig. 8.95–96), with close parallels for its shape from Englianos, Routsis and Nichoria.²⁷⁷ The three-handled stirrup jar (FS 169) is a Minoan shape and particularly popular in LM IA/LC I Akrotiri and LH IIA Ayia Irini, where the stirrup jar CM 2982 finds a close parallel for its scale pattern decoration.²⁷⁸ Decoration with variations of scale pattern (FM 70)²⁷⁹ is also encountered in Attica (Thorikos,²⁸⁰ Ayios Kosmas²⁸¹) and Aigina,²⁸² demonstrating a clear preference of the mainland Mycenaean production centres for

²⁶⁸ Karagiorga 1976, 256–257, plan 1-A, pl. 193δ.

²⁶⁹ RMDP, 315, fig. 105.7. For the theme, see the Vapheio cup CM 57 and the squat jug CM 44.

²⁷⁰ Karagiorga 1976, 256–257, plan 1-B.

²⁷¹ Kountouri 2002, 358–359 (stirrup jars). Hydriae, handmade or painted, draw upon MH tradition and occur mainly from LH IIIA1 onwards (RMDP, 750, fig. 289.26; 754, fig. 291.44). The miniature handmade parallels are difficult to date.

²⁷² Kountouri 2002, 358–359.

²⁷³ RMDP, 324, fig. 108.28–29 (LH IIB, Pylia); 325, fig. 84.109 (LH IIIA1, Nichoria).

²⁷⁴ For monochrome painted triangles on an alabastron, see Kountouri 2002, fig. 28 (CM 46).

²⁷⁵ RMDP, 325, fig. 108.32–34.

²⁷⁶ RMDP, 118 (LH IIIA2), 134, fig. 31.233–234 (LH IIIB1).

²⁷⁷ RMDP, 321, fig. 107.19–20.

²⁷⁸ Cummer – Schofield 1984, no. 1555; RMDP, 873, fig. 357.32–33. For Melos, see RMDP, 898, fig. 365.25–28.

²⁷⁹ RMDP, 506.

²⁸⁰ Servais-Soyez – Servais 1984, 59, fig. 31.

²⁸¹ Mylonas 1959, fig. 136.1.

²⁸² Hiller 1975, pl. 20.202–203.



Fig. 8: Vases 95–99, 102–103, 105–106; knife 100; arrowheads 101; dagger 104: Tomb Keph-B

this theme of Minoan inspiration.²⁸³ One of these centres is Messenia as the occurrence of net pattern on stirrup jar CM 2991 from the same tomb and on other examples indicates.²⁸⁴

As in the islands, it is also difficult in Messenia to distinguish the Cretan imports of three-handled stirrup jars from the markedly ‘Minoanising’ local examples.²⁸⁵ The three-handled stirrup jar CM 2982 is the only example of the shape at Volimidia highlighting it among the early Mycenaean vases from the tombs. The co-occurrence of the LH IIA three-handled stirrup jar with later vases in the chamber would not exclude the reuse of this beautiful vase as an heirloom in a later burial in Tomb Keph-B.

A walled-up niche to the right as one enters the tomb is the most interesting feature of the chamber. The walling had been partially demolished, an event that seems to be related to the positioning of the intact LH IIIA2–B1²⁸⁶ wide-mouthed jug CM 2985 (FS 105 or 110) and the contemporaneous small (strainer) hydria CM 2986 (FS 129) in the niche.²⁸⁷ “Both vases are associated with libations and may be characterised as complementary funerary gifts or as an offer by those who conducted the burials on the chamber floor to the preceding dead of the niche”.²⁸⁸ What is of particular interest is that the small hydria CM 2986 was intentionally transformed into a strainer hydria: three holes with different diameters, very close to one another and opposite the vertical handle were pierced through its body. This action, the last episode in the biography of the roughly fashioned vase with rudimentary linear decoration, highlights the funerary or ritual aspect of the hydria, in a period when strainer hydriae began to be produced and spread on the mainland.²⁸⁹

Inside the niche were a skull and “some fine bones” (i.e. secondary burial[s]), the cup CM 2992, the plain earless bowl CM 2994 and the bronze knife CM 3000 (length: 0.183 m) (Fig. 8.100).

The LH IIA cup CM 2992 (FS 218) (Fig. 8.97–98) with large tangent spirals with double stems (FM 46) is monochrome painted on the inside. An identical one was found at Englianos.²⁹⁰ The Minoan influence of the internally monochrome painted cups has already been discussed in the case of cup CM 790 (Tomb Keph-2) and this feature, as would be expected, is also encountered in northern Triphylia (Kakovatos and Kleidi-Samikon).²⁹¹

The plain earless bowl CM 2994 (Fig. 8.99) is a unique specimen of the earless version of the FS 211 cup at Volimidia (see CM 790, further below CM 2993).

On the floor of the tomb, four pits were arranged around the periphery of the vault, containing “the relocated bones and funerary offerings of the first burials”. Pit 1 (with a skull and a few bones) produced an obsidian arrowhead and another one made of flint (CM 3002 α – β) (Fig. 8.101), the plain one-handled goblet with raised handle CM 2989 (Fig. 8.102), the plain cup with a similar handle CM 2993 (Fig. 8.103) and the bronze dagger CM 3001 (Fig. 8.104).

The plain goblet with raised handle (CM 2989) (FS 262) dates to LH IIA (see CM 46), although this plain vessel might be of an earlier date (mature LH I). The plain cup CM 2993 is a close variation of the cup CM 64, a hybrid shape of MH tradition (LH I).

Pit 2 also contained a skull and scattered bones, sherds and an intact Vapheio cup (CM 2988) (Fig. 8.105–106). The Vapheio cup CM 2988 has dense ripple decoration and a midrib. It belongs

²⁸³ For the LM IA theme, see Betancourt 1985.

²⁸⁴ For the motif in Messenia, see Kountouri 2002, 325, 359–360, fig. 88.

²⁸⁵ RMDP, 321 n. 179–180.

²⁸⁶ Kountouri 2002, 358–359. See RMDP, 323, fig. 24.157 (LH IIIA2); 133, fig. 31.233–234 (LH IIIB1). See above, CM 2987 (Tomb Keph-B).

²⁸⁷ For similar vessels from the Argolid cf. RMDP, 119, fig. 25.168–171 (LH IIIA2); 136–138, fig. 33.246 (strainer hydria, LH IIIB1).

²⁸⁸ Karagiorga 1976, 257.

²⁸⁹ For strainer hydriae, see Vlachopoulos, forthcoming.

²⁹⁰ Blegen et al. 1973, fig. 249.27; RMDP, 323, fig. 108.22.

²⁹¹ My thanks to Birgitta Eder and Jasmin Huber for this remark.

to Type III (LH IIA) and has exact parallels from Englianos²⁹² and other sites of the Pylos region²⁹³ and northern Triphylia.²⁹⁴ The presence of only one funerary offering in the pit reiterates the setting that we have commented upon in the case of the secondary burials of the Angelopoulou cluster, where an equivalent vase is quite often used as a single funerary offering.

In Pit 3 only bones were found and Pit 4 contained two skulls and bones in disarray along with a “shallow earless bowl”, which is one of the conical cups CM 2998. The five conical cups in Tomb Keph-B raise some questions concerning the overall limited presence of the shape in the rest of the necropolis. The dating of this plain and mass-produced cup in Crete (MM III–LM IA) is linked to the LM IA period outside Crete (appearing in large numbers at Akrotiri and elsewhere in the Aegean), but in Messenia it is not popular, like all Minoan undecorated shapes.²⁹⁵ At Volimidia the conical cup is attested at least until the LH IIIA2/B period²⁹⁶ (one example was found inside the LH IIIA1 piriform jar CM 2983). The slender example from Tomb Keph-4(?) belongs to an earlier type (see further below).

To conclude, Tomb Keph-B produced seven vases that have been dated to LH IIA and two vases of LH IIB or a little later. Furthermore, two vases (piriform jar and conical cup) are assigned to LH IIIA1 and six to LH IIIA2, some of them (vessels for carrying liquids) possibly dating to LH IIIB1.

The location of another two tombs underneath the road pavement, which were not investigated, sheds light on the tomb distribution density of the necropolis, as S. Marinatos repeatedly remarked.

Although the two Tombs Keph-A and Keph-B differ as to the quantity of finds and taphonomic evidence, they have provided helpful information to supplement the picture of the Kephlovryso cluster and of Volimidia in general.

With identifiable LH I evidence, Keph-A probably remained out of use after that period. Keph-B was set up in LH IIA and regularly used during the LH IIIA1 and LH IIIA2(B?) periods. A niche with a stratified sequence indicating activities of the epigones of the earlier dead and two pits containing secondary burials revealed interesting taphonomic evidence for the early Mycenaean years.

Synthesis of Data

“The necropolis of Volimidia, one of the biggest and most important ones known to date”,²⁹⁷ “perhaps the biggest of them all”.²⁹⁸ – Marinatos excavated systematically and methodically the tombs of Volimidia recognising right from the first year (1952) the significance of the necropolis for understanding the shaping of the early Mycenaean civilisation in one of the regions where it would appear a little later in its most mature and brilliant palatial aspect.

Despite the fact that the LH I and LH II burials were found in the state of rearranged secondary burials in the pits and niches of the chambers, their excavation attracted Marinatos’ interest, who studied quite adequately the accompanying vases and illustrated the most important of them. Long before the opening of the discussion on ‘Minoanisation’ and the assessment of the role of Kythera for the understanding of the LH I/LM IA synchronisms,²⁹⁹ the future excavator of Akrotiri perceived the significance of the LH I vases from the older inhumations, pointing out in

²⁹² RMDP, 323, fig. 108.24.

²⁹³ Lolos 1987, 44–45, figs. 63b, 664.7 (Peristeria, East House, late LH I). For ‘Phase 2’ of Messenian LH I, see Lolos 1987, 539–540.

²⁹⁴ RMDP, 377, fig. 130.26 (Samikon).

²⁹⁵ Antoniou 2009, 586–587.

²⁹⁶ Kountouri 2002, 228–230.

²⁹⁷ Marinatos 1966a, 198.

²⁹⁸ Marinatos 1966b, 78.

²⁹⁹ Coldstream – Huxley 1972.

particular the contribution of Vapheio cups in the tracing of international contacts that the early Mycenaean of the Pylos region had developed with the Italian West.³⁰⁰ Marinatos' enthusiasm for Volimidia, expressed in his words quoted above, was based on these considerations and the admirable manner in which the chambers of the extensive unlooted necropolis were cut into the rock. The tombs had been hewn out of the soft bedrock that dominates the flat land of Volimidia and feature circular chambers, tholos-imitating roofs, shallow stomia and short dromoi with vertical walls widening towards the entrance. Their architecture was comprehensively studied by Iakovidis³⁰¹ on the basis of the plans he had drawn in the course of the excavations, putting forward the view that the chambers imitate the tholos tombs of the region, a topic that is still vividly discussed in the research community.³⁰² The early date of the LH I chamber tombs of Volimidia and the fact that they form the most extensive cemetery of the early Mycenaean period³⁰³ highlights the uniqueness of the assemblage, its great architectural importance and certainly deserves separate consideration.³⁰⁴

The interesting 'Shaft Grave' Keph-1 stands out as a typological unicum in the context of Volimidia, although Marinatos reported that there probably was a similar monument just next to it (therefore, a pair or cluster of 'shaft graves').³⁰⁵ The setting of the unlooted idiosyncratic 'shaft grave' in an area that favoured the construction of chambers, implies, on the one hand, that this type of monument derived from the MH tradition of cist and shaft graves known from the mature stages of the period (see those of Grave Circle B at Mycenae). On the other hand it was suitable for the individual burial that had been deposited in the Kephlovryso grave. In this context it would be quite interesting to compare Keph-1 with the LH IIA stone-built cist 'Griffin Warrior Grave' on the (palatial) hill of Englianos,³⁰⁶ which was preferred to the monumental vaults that were set up in the region from the end of the MH and completely prevailed by LH II.³⁰⁷

The distinct morphology of the built Shaft (?) Grave Keph-1 (a funerary mound or a simpler grave in Michael Boyd's view³⁰⁸) with the richly furnished burial of the hunter/warrior it contained, and its clear-cut dating to MH III, in all probability point to this unique funerary monument as the 'starting event' for the establishment of the neighbouring cluster of chamber tombs, which were set up at the onset of the LH I period in close proximity to it. Of those tombs which are close to Keph-1, Tomb Keph-6 is the nearest and one of the earliest in Volimidia. In the immediate vicinity of Keph-1 lies also Tomb Keph-5, which was probably already established in the MH III period.³⁰⁹

³⁰⁰ Marinatos 1956, 248, fig. 9; Marinatos 2014, 48, fig. 9. "It might turn out to be something more than mere coincidence that on the opposite side of the Mediterranean fragments of this pottery were found on the Lipari island by Dr. B. Brea" (Marinatos 1956, 248). See also Marinatos 1962.

³⁰¹ Iakovidis 1966; Marinatos 2014, 3–76. See Papadimitriou 2015, 84–85.

³⁰² For the topic of tomb architecture, see Kountouri 2002, 10–13; Boyd 2002; Zavadil 2013, 98–110; Papadimitriou 2015.

³⁰³ In LH I, chamber tombs also appear in the Argolid (Mycenae, Prosymna, Kokla) and in Lakonia (Epidauros Limera), but their number is very small compared to that of the Volimidia tombs (Papadimitriou 2015, 83–85, 109–110). Papadimitriou 2015 considers the origin of chamber tombs as Helladic. For the possibility that this type developed in Messenia, through Kythera, see Dickinson 1994, 225; Bennet – Galanakis 2005. See also Gallou 2020, 95–97; Galanakis, this volume.

³⁰⁴ This study is going to be included in the complete publication of the Volimidia cemetery by E. Kountouri and the author.

³⁰⁵ Marinatos 1966b, 86–89; Marinatos 2014, 80–81, fig. 18, plan 21.

³⁰⁶ Davis – Stocker 2016. For the architecture of the grave and its difference from the Shaft Graves of Mycenae, see Davis – Stocker 2016, 628 n. 5. The Griffin Warrior Grave resembles the tomb located under Room 97 in the Palace of Nestor (Blegen et al. 1973, 312–314). For the 'shaft graves' underneath the tholos tomb of Nichoria, see Wilkie 1992, 244–246, 249–252.

³⁰⁷ Iakovidis 1966, 110–111 (see n. 34 above); Lolos 1987, 492–494; Zavadil 2013, 54, 110–112; Papadimitriou 2015, 101, 107–108.

³⁰⁸ Boyd 2002, 41–42, 139, 141–142.

³⁰⁹ Boyd 2002, 139; Zavadil 2013, 111. On the basis of this early dating, Boyd 2002, 42, argues that as long as the settlement (in the Patriarcheas field) is referred to as LH I/IIA and quite a few tombs are earlier than that (LH I),

The evidence shows that twenty out of the 34 excavated Volimidia tombs (a rate of 59%) were in use in the LH I–II periods.³¹⁰ If Tombs K-1, K-2 (reported by Marinatos) are also taken into account, the number of the LH I–II tombs rises to 22, without having made allowance for the potential occurrence of LH I–II sherds in the abundant stored material, the study of which has not been exhaustive.

The LH I period is clearly documented in nineteen out of the twenty tombs mentioned above, but five of them (A-9, T-1, Keph-5, Keph-7 and Keph-A) were in use only in LH I. It is then interesting that five out of the twenty Volimidia tombs (a rate of 25%), cut in the rock in LH I, were not used in LH IIA–B, with three of them being grouped together in the Kephlovryso cluster. Only three tombs appear to have been used exclusively in LH II (T-1a, T-5, M-1), a fact indicating that they were constructed in the same period. No matter how debatable the available data are, due to the extensive disturbance of the chambers in LH III and later periods, the picture emerging from the Volimidia cemetery is the following:

- Nineteen out of the thirty-four (a rate of 56%) excavated tombs have supplied evidence of use in LH I and were therefore cut in the rock in the period between 1675–1600 BC,³¹¹ clearly forming part of the coordinated works for the establishment of a necropolis by a nearby settlement. This number may increase considerably when the study of the sherd assemblage from the chambers is completed.
- Altogether only three tombs provide firm evidence that they were set up in LH IIA and LH IIB (1600–1400 BC). However, in that period, a total of fifteen out of the twenty tombs of the LH I period continued to be in use. This picture represents population stability, continuity of kinship ties and regularity in habitation patterns.
- Maximum intensity of use for the LH I–II periods is recorded in the Kephlovryso cluster (nine out of nine chamber tombs), with Keph-6, acting, in terms of chronology, as a bridge between the MH III ‘Shaft Grave’ Keph-1 and the neighbouring LH I chamber tombs. It is followed by the Angelopoulou cluster with six out of the ten chamber tombs (or seven out of eleven, if the adjacent Mastoraki tomb is included), where the LH I and LH IIA periods predominate. Next in the sequence comes the Koroniou cluster and last of all appears to be the Tsoulea/Voria cluster. Its late date is probably explained by the fact that it forms the westward extension of the (early) Kephlovryso cluster.
- The considerable distance between the Koroniou and Angelopoulou clusters and the close-knit layout of the chambers in each of them indicate that this ‘neighbourhood of tombs’ reciprocates a conscious and distinct planning choice of the community, possibly on the basis of kinship ties or proximity relations in the settlements. The fact that some of the graves were excluded from the excavation due to the given circumstances (especially those lying under the modern road) shows, on the contrary, that the (excavation) clusters of Kephlovryso, Voria/Tsoulea and Angelopoulou had no well-defined boundaries and probably constituted groups of the same extensive cemetery.
- The chronological development of the cemetery to the west of the Kephlovryso ‘funerary nucleus’ comprises the Voria/Tsoulea and Angelopoulou clusters, where the majority of the dromoi have a fixed orientation to the west. The Koroniou cluster, which is the remotest one, deviates from this spatial planning principle.³¹²

the installation/settlement may postdate the setting up of the cemetery. However, Lolos 1987, 535, states that “most, if not all, of the LH I decorated sherds from the Patriarcheas sounding” belong to Phase 2 of LH I. Our poor knowledge of the extent as well as of the period in which the ‘settlement’ was founded, does not, as yet, allow us to draw this kind of conclusions.

³¹⁰ These are: two (or four) chambers out of the six Koroniou tombs, six out of the ten Angelopoulou tombs, three out of the eight tombs in the Voria-Tsoulea cluster, one tomb in the Mastoraki property, and eight out of the nine tombs in the Kephlovryso cluster.

³¹¹ With small adjustments, by Manning 2010, 23, tab. 2.2.

³¹² For this topic, see Boyd 2002, 38, and Zavadil 2013, 35–37.

- Anthropological data are missing from all tombs. The tombs appear to belong to families and their diachronic use is indicative of uninterrupted continuity in the habitation of the region. Despite the need to make more space for later burials and the less than careful removal of the previous ones, it seems that they were treated respectfully in regard to their original funerary furnishings. It is likely that the vases (and other offerings) may even have moved into the niches and pits of the chambers as intact assemblages.
- The LH I–II tombs closest to Volimidia are those around the palace of Englianos.³¹³ Their ongoing restudy³¹⁴ bears evidence of an equivalent early date of its clusters. If their demographic data are also similar, then two populous settlements were established in this region during the LH I and LH II periods, in the developed phases of which the ‘palatial’ generations of the palace era inhabitants probably originated.

The tombs of Volimidia, overall, are poor in funerary offerings. Quite remarkable is the dearth of jewellery and the total lack of bronze weapons of all periods, especially so in the LH IIIA intact burials. This picture perhaps ‘exonerates’ the descendants of the relocated LH I–II dead from the act of selective removal of valuable metal funerary offerings. Most of the funerary offerings reported from the tombs are tools made of stone and metal. These, as a matter of fact, are mainly related to early burials, since, as a rule, they were found with secondary burials. The lack of jewellery, weapons and hairstyle or costume accessories makes one think of a community of limited wealth, implying that the deceased practised in life the occupations of craftsmen, farmers or hunters rather than indicating an attempt to display the status of the dead. An interesting exception is the case of the relatively numerous flint and obsidian arrowheads, a funerary custom that acts as a bridge between the MH III unlooted burial in the ‘Shaft Grave’ Keph-1 and some of the burials in the LH I–II chamber tombs.

Among the small quantity of finds of the early Mycenaean period, two sealstones are worth mentioning. Both originate from the Angelopoulou cluster, one ‘talismanic’ with a representation of fish (?)³¹⁵ comes from Tomb A-6 (Pit 2), which, however, contained no early Mycenaean pottery. The other one from Tomb A-8 (Niche 1) shows the representation of a lioness, a bird and a bucranium.³¹⁶ A small number of the remaining finds (i.e. double bronze axes and amber from Tomb A-5) constitute funerary offerings of special display or allude to the status of the dead.

The “strictly homogeneous in style”³¹⁷ chamber tombs of Volimidia with their “stereotypic and idiosyncratic”³¹⁸ architecture indicate that, in all probability, the entire cemetery was established in the LH I period,³¹⁹ while a few tombs of the Kephlovryso cluster dating to MH III might have been earlier. At Volimidia we probably have the opportunity to observe the transition from the built – rectangular – shaft grave to the chamber tomb with dromos. The burials of the “early Pylions” were furnished with vases that started to be produced in the cradle of the Pylion MH III in order to continue into the early local Late Bronze Age as products of the same tradition.³²⁰ This pottery coexisted with the new products of the Minoan-inspired fine Lustrous Decorated Ware, which circulated in the south of the mainland as ‘Mycenaean’ LH I pottery.³²¹

³¹³ Blegen et al. 1973.

³¹⁴ Restudy of Bronze Age tombs around the ‘Palace of Nestor’ is in progress by Joanne Murphy; cf. her contribution in the present volume.

³¹⁵ CMS V.1, no. 303. The representation has been identified as masts of a ship by Marinatos 1956, 248.

³¹⁶ Marinatos 1956, 248. CMS V.1, 241, no. 304. From the Angelopoulou cluster also comes the third sealstone (A-4), in the type of a stone bifacial ‘scarab’, imported and dated to the 8th century BC (CMS V.1, 241, no. 302).

³¹⁷ Iakovidis 1966, 100–101.

³¹⁸ Boyd 2002, 144.

³¹⁹ Iakovidis 1966, 109–110, suggested that their construction took place in the “advanced LH I, towards the end of the period”, based on his dating of the earlier pottery.

³²⁰ Lolos 1987, 524–532.

³²¹ For LH I pottery in relation to MH III and the synchronisms with LM IA Crete, see Mathioudaki 2014, with full bibliography. For the earlier synchronisms (MH III/MM III), see Girella 2010. For the role of Kythera, see Kiriati 2010, 690–693; Dickinson 2014.

The absence of LH I Mainland Polychrome Ware in Volimidia, which is attested in the shaft graves of Lerna, as opposed to the presence of LH I Lustrous Decorated pottery,³²² demonstrates that there are certainly degrees of ceramic technology, aesthetic entities and synchronisms that are missing not only from Volimidia, but from southwest Messenia in general.³²³ The presence of a greater variety of ‘lustrous ware’ styles (white-on-dark etc.), Minyan ware, ‘Aigina’ ware, as well as of unpainted wares in the well-stratified LH I deposit of Korakou,³²⁴ all absent in Volimidia, manifests how many aspects of trade and cultural as well as social contacts are not documented in the material concisely presented in this study.³²⁵ Similar discrepancies, especially with regard to the degree of ‘Minoan’ influence in the course of the MH III/MM IIIB–LM IA, LH I/LM IA and LH IIA/LM IB periods, occur at Volimidia in relation to nearby sites, such as Ayios Stephanos and Kythera, including even the much closer site of Nichoria.³²⁶ We should not, in any case, forget that, in terms of archaeology, “LH I, just like LM IA, is a period of strong ceramic regionalism”.³²⁷

Vases that accompany the dead in LH I–II are usually small or medium drinking vessels, among which Vapheio cups and squat jugs prevail. These vases are often deposited together with other drinking vessels, of both ‘Mycenaean’ and ‘Middle Helladic Tradition’ ware categories, such as goblets, cups and jugs, in their role as partitive containers furnishing the dead’s symposium. This type of behavioural ‘sets’ seems to conform to the funerary rites of northern Triphylia, namely those recorded in the burials at Samikon, where Vapheio cups and squat jugs are often paired with ladles and jars.³²⁸

The great majority of vases are locally made and only a single prestige goblet was imported from Kythera (?). Cretan influence in shapes is limited and even more so in motifs. Therefore, local potters have apparently copied only some of the Minoan ceramic ‘fashions’ in their Helladic versions. The LH I–IIB material of Volimidia shares strong similarities with that of northern Triphylia (Kakovatos, Makryisia and Samikon), pointing to a manufactural, decorative, and after all aesthetic, homogeneity that might echo an early Mycenaean *koiné* of clustered ‘states’, stretching from south of the Alpheios to modern southern Triphylia, that is, to Englianos and Volimidia. The limited presence of ‘Minoanising pottery’ at Volimidia when compared to Lakonia³²⁹ and the total lack of original Cretan vases³³⁰ are parameters that confirm the above formulated conclusion and bring forward an idiosyncratic cultural stage that appears to connect the history of the Pylos region and northern Triphylia in the LH I and LH II periods. If much still remains to be clarified before the material fingerprint of the LH I phase in the region can be defined, the LH IIA and LH IIB phases have already been illuminated, to a great extent, by the gleam of the lavish gold vessels from the unlooted tombs (of Englianos, Routsis, Peristeria etc.) and the well-structured hegemonic iconography of the signet rings that so interestingly link Kakovatos to Englianos and vice versa.³³¹

³²² Lindblom 2007, 117, figs. 2, 6. For the Argolid in general, see Girella 2010, 865–867.

³²³ LH I Polychrome Ware appears also at Samikon, see Yalouris 1966; Lolos 1987, pls. 490–491.

³²⁴ Davis 1979. For relevant differences with the LH IIA pottery of Tsoungiza, see Rutter 1993.

³²⁵ RMDP, 20: “The Mycenaean pottery forms only a very small percentage of the LH I repertoire, other wares, such as Grey and Yellow Minyan and matt painted wares, continuing to make up the bulk of the corpus.”

³²⁶ For the network of imports and Minoan influence in the Pylos region and the southern Peloponnese in general, see Antoniou 2009, 582–587, 599–601; Girella 2010, 862–863; Kiriatzi 2010, 697–699, fig. 1; Dickinson 2014. On the earlier date of the Tholos IV of Pylos indicated by MM III pottery, see Davis – Stocker 2016, 635–637.

³²⁷ Mathioudaki 2014, 15.

³²⁸ Yalouris 1966, 9–10, pls. 5β, 14γ, η, 19ζ (Grave I); pls. 5γ–δ, 14α, 20δ (Grave IA’).

³²⁹ Antoniou 2009, 599–601; Girella 2010, 863–864.

³³⁰ RMDP, 306 (LH I): “although import and some imitation of Minoan pottery takes place”. On the origin of the LH I style, see RMDP, 19. See also Antoniou 2009, 615–618. In LH IIA, RMDP, 308, 318–321, fig. 106.16–17, notes that there have been no direct imports of vases to Messenia from Crete, but the strong Minoan influence rather led to the local production of pseudo-Minoan vases.

³³¹ Vlachopoulos 2020.

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Illustrations

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Fig. 1: Plan of the Volimidia chamber tomb cemetery, 1961 (Archive of the Archaeological Society at Athens)

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Fig. 2.3–4: Tomb K-3, squat jug CM 44

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