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A NOTE ON SOME PICTORIAL FINDS
FROM THE *DROMOS* OF TOMB 1
OF THE MYCENAEAN CEMETERY OF TRAPEZA
TRACES OF FUNERARY RITES PERFORMED AFTER THE BURIAL
OF THE DEAD



ABSTRACT: This paper concerns two pottery fragments collected in August 2013 and found in a filling layer of the *dromos* of Tomb 1 of the Mycenaean cemetery of Trapeza, near the city of Aigion, in Achaea. Among the finds discovered in the burial area during recent excavations are these two sherds with pictorial decoration. The stratigraphic analysis of the *dromos*, together with the stylistic study of the pottery, provides the opportunity to put forward some proposals, albeit highly hypothetical, concerning the life-history of the sherds, their date, their function and the manner of their disposal. Taking into consideration the funerary provenience of pictorial pottery, it will be possible to relate the theme to the ritual activities practiced in front of the Mycenaean chamber tombs and speak about the existence of special rites carried out through the use of specific vessels. These sherds, as their fragmentary state indicates, represent the remains of a ceremonial performance with clear ritual and symbolic connotation, as part of the so-called liminal and post-liminal rites that took place in the *dromos*.

KEY WORDS: Mycenaean pottery, Achaea, burial customs, *dromos*, liminal rite

INTRODUCTION

The pottery fragments published here were collected in August 2013 and were found in a filling layer of the *dromos* of Tomb 1 of the Mycenaean cemetery of Trapeza, near the city of Aigion, in Achaea, during the archaeological excavation coordinated by Elisabetta Borgna, University of Udine, in the framework of the Greek excavations of the Trapeza area directed by Andreas Vordos for the Greek Ministry of Culture.¹

After a brief introduction concerning the cemetery of Trapeza and the project centred on its re-discovery,

I will analyse the sherds, focusing the attention on the pictorial representation first, and on use and significance of the related pottery shapes later. I will try to discover and explain the symbolic Mycenaean system behind the making of the vessel; the process will consist of description, identification, classification and interpretation.

Through the analysis of those fragments it will be possible to say something about the activities practiced near the Mycenaean chamber tombs and about the probable existence of special rites performed through the employment of vessels used during daily life or created on purpose.

THE TRAPEZA ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECT

The cemetery of Trapeza is located on a gentle, terraced slope of the Trapeza hill named for the summit plateau with the remains of an Archaic temple. The hill is characterized by intense cultivation of olive trees, this has

¹ This paper originates from the research that I am carrying out for my Post-Graduate project at the University of Venice, with prof. E. Borgna as tutor, concerning the study of the pottery materials from the chamber tombs of the Mycenaean cemetery of the Trapeza. To carry on this project I have received the official permission of the Ministry of Culture of Greece. I would like to express my gratitude to the Director of the Museum of Aigion, A. G. Vordos, for giving me access to the material for study and edition, I am also indebted to prof. E. Borgna for her crucial teaching and endless support.

caused, in the past years, the disappearance of some of the tombs but also their partial preservation (Tab. 1a).

The research at the Mycenaean cemetery of the Trapeza site is being carried out, since 2010, in the framework of a wider project, regarding the study of the Eigialeia region, under the direction of A. G. Vordos, of the Greek Archaeological Service, Ephoria of Patras/Aigion Museum and the Ministry of Culture.²

The research, focusing on the Bronze Age occupation of the area, consists of the explanation of the dynamics of human presence in the whole area in pre-historic times, with a special focus on the identification of the Mycenaean funerary area.

The early discovery of the cemetery dates back to 1933 when the Greek archaeologist P. A. Nerantzoulis identified a couple of chamber tombs interpreted as Mycenaean because of the grave-goods found inside.³ The re-discovery of the Mycenaean necropolis took place in 2012, after a preliminary intensive survey conducted during the previous two campaigns, in the area investigated by Nerantzoulis.

Since 2012 and for two successive campaigns, Tomb 1 was dug out utilising the stratigraphic method. The tomb was formed by a long NW–SE *dromos*, preserved for ca 2.7 m in length and 2.20 m wide, provided with unfaced walls cut into the sand and positioned asymmetrically on the eastern side of the chamber, forming a kind of dog-leg entrance to the chamber (Tab. 1b).⁴ The blocking wall was created with a number of big irregular blocks with a huge monolithic threshold. The series of layers recognized in the *dromos*, constituted the complex filling of the *dromos* itself and testified to different events of use and reuse of the tomb. During the investigation, it was noted that the formation of the lower layers, US 256 and US 257, experienced an abrupt interruption due to the first event of reopening; the level of sand,

US 253, is interpreted as an interval before the refilling and closing of the *dromos*. The superficial fillings, US 223 and US 227, testify to a later episode of use before the final closure of the stomion.

Both the typological study of the pottery and the careful investigation of the filling of the *dromos*, have given evidence of reopening episodes. The thorough study of the stratigraphic and depositional sequence of the *dromos* suggests the early use of the tomb dated to LH IIIA1–2; this period is testified in the chamber only through secondary depositions of human remains and materials. Later pottery, datable to LH IIIC, indicates successive events of reopening and reuse of the tomb with frequent visits by groups of people who left intentional deposition in the upper strata of the *dromos*, maybe in association with the blockage of the door, as part of a huge *krater* indicates.⁵ Among the material from the filling of the *dromos*, some of them could potentially date back to LH IIIB, but this evidence doesn't correspond to the finds from the chamber where this period seems not to be attested. This could be a result of the total removal of LH IIIB material from the chamber or we can suggest that during this period, even if the tomb was not utilized for deposition, the people visited the *dromos* and the area of the cemetery to practice ritual activities traces of which we find now in the filling layers.

The pottery sherds analysed in this paper come from the filling layer US 227 that belongs to the second episode of reopening of the grave. During the excavation, about fifty sherds have been collected in this stratigraphic unit, a couple of fragments from a huge piriform jar, can be dated not later than LH IIIA2, most of the material is painted and belongs to open shapes dated to LH IIIC. From the study of the content of this and other strata, it can be noted that the bulk of material found in each layer is never homogeneous, the lack of uniformity is, on the contrary, the result of mixing of older material with the new artefacts. This is extremely significant because it means that later communities who visited and re-used the tomb did not totally remove the previous objects, but allowed the mixing of the old material with the products of their actions. Therefore what remains in the *dromos* is a miscellaneous set of material resulting from different depositional processes.

Among those sherds are the two pieces chosen to study and present here. They are small fragments, maybe part of a big vessel distinguished by singular pictorial decoration. The vessel was perhaps used during the rites practiced in the *dromos*.

2 VORDOS 2002, 217–234; 2008.

3 This discovery has attracted little scholarly attention also because the location of the tombs rapidly disappeared and the only remaining evidence was represented by the material finds, pottery, metals and jewels. Nerantzoulis was not able to publish his discovery due to his premature death, we have just preliminary information by Kyparisses who explains where the cemetery is (KYPARISSES 1939) and by Åström that gave us sparse information concerning the ceramic finds (ÅSTRÖM 1964).

The finds, now preserved in the Aigion Archaeological Museum, in part exhibited and in part in the storerooms, have never been published systematically, with only partial presentation in the past (ÅSTRÖM 1964, PAPADOPOULOS 1979, MOUNTJOY 1999). The pottery has been recently reconsidered in the framework of the current project which culminated in the present author's post-graduate dissertation which aimed to give a total presentation of this material (LICCIARDELLO 2012–2013).

4 DE ANGELI 2015, 59–78; BORGNA, DE ANGELI 2016, 447–458; in press.

5 See BORGNA 2015 in press.

CATALOGUE

1. Body fragment of an open shape, slightly curved. (Tab. 2a) H. 2 cm – W. 2.6 cm – Thickness 0.3 cm. Almost pure light reddish brown clay (2.5 YR 7/4), with pinkish slip outside (5 YR 7/3), reddish-brown paint (2.5 YR 4/4), interior totally painted. The preserved decorated zone shows the representation of a paw or a foot moving right and two parallel lines upon it. The image is painted in an outline style.
2. Body fragment of an open shape, slightly curved. (Tab. 2b) H. 2 cm – W. 2.5 cm – Thickness 0.3 cm. Almost pure light reddish brown clay (2.5 YR 7/4), with pinkish slip outside (5 YR 7/3), reddish-brown paint (2.5 YR 4/4), interior totally painted. The ornamental motif preserved is a typical bivalve shell (FM 25).

COMMENTARY

It is presumed that these sherds belong to the same open shape vessel because of the fabric, the treatment of surface and the colour of the painting. Unfortunately the tiny dimensions of these sherds and the extremely fragmentary nature of the material do not allow the reconstruction of the vessel shape with certainty. Considering the different vessel categories found in the filling layers of the *dromoi* of chamber tombs, these fragments probably belong to three main categories: drinking, mixing and pouring vessels.⁶ Taking into consideration the thickness of the fragments and the slight inclination, it is suggested that the sherds cannot be part of a drinking vessel, but of a rather big open shape, such as a *krater* or a deep bowl, that are, among open shapes, frequently uncovered before or under the walled entrance or in the *dromos* packing fills.⁷ Vessels of this kind are also the most frequent shapes on which we can find pictorial representations.⁸

The fragmentary state of the pictorial sherds prevent exact dating but, although the stratigraphic evidence dates the layer to LH IIIC, the decorative style would allow a presumable dating between late LH IIIA2 and LH IIIB by comparison with other Mycenaean examples, from different funerary contexts, as will be demonstrated.⁹

The Mycenaean Pictorial Style flourished within a range of time from 1400 to 1150 BC and it

is represented by images painted on large vessels.¹⁰ Regarding the subjects, the 14th century produced scenes of chariots and men, bulls, birds, a few fish; in the 13th century the repertory was enlivened with the addition of archers, boxers, sphinxes, griffins, more hunting scenes. The themes evolved with visible changes from the start: chariots and bulls were not so common at first, but there were scenes with human figures dancing or fighting and birds. After the middle of the 13th century, the painting became more adventurous and exciting, with war scenes and hunts. So the 14th and 13th centuries BC are usually considered periods characteristic of pictorial works among Mycenaean vessel painters and it is not unlikely that the Trapeza sherds may be referred to this range of time.

Since it is not clear what subject is depicted on the first fragment, we may try to find parallels among representations of animals. The first Trapeza sherd might be comparable with the depiction of confronted griffins and sphinxes (FM 8) on a bell *krater* from Enkomi, Cyprus, because of the same manner in which the paw is drawn (Tab. 3a).¹¹ This *krater* is dated between the 14th and 13th century B.C., during LH IIIB, the presence of mythical animals is included in the traditional iconography of the funerary world.¹² So the theme of fantastic creatures, such as griffins or sphinxes, appear in Aegean iconography either as a natural element, or can have funeral connotations, being probably the symbol of a deity's epiphany.¹³ Those animals have a funerary significance since the beginning of their popularity in Aegean art and they were the most frequent themes chosen for funerary purposes.¹⁴

Hybrid creatures constitute an important element of the metaphysical realm of Aegean societies, the presence of griffins in Aegean iconography can be included in the category connected to the mythological or liminal sphere.¹⁵ Birds are frequently depicted in association with imagery of sacrifice or libation or with allegories of the underworld.¹⁶ The fact that birds and other mythical animals are frequently depicted

6 TOURNAVITOU 1992, 181–210; FOX 2009, 71–82.

7 ÅSTRÖM 1977; 1987, 215.

8 FURUMARK 1941; DEMAKOPOULOU, CROUWEL 1992, 491–500.

9 As regards the iconography of these sherds, the motif of bivalve shells was quite popular until LH IIIB, but seems not to occur later. This fact can be assumed as *terminus ad quem* for the dating of the pottery.

10 VERMEULE, KARAGEORGHIS 1982; CROUWEL 1991; SAKELLARAKIS 1992; RYSTEDT, WELLS 2006.

11 MURRAY, SMITH, WALTERS 1900, 7, 8, 45; VERMEULE, KARAGEORGHIS 1982, 202, fig. V.27.

12 The most common motifs of pictorial pottery in funerary assemblages are birds and scenes with men fighting or hunting (RYSTEDT, WELLS 2006).

13 BLAKOLMER 2016, 61–68.

14 VERMEULE 1979.

15 FRANKFORT 1936, 106–122; BISI 1965; REED 1976; BLAKOLMER 2016, 61–69.

16 NILSSON 1950, 330 ss.

on funerary objects associated with libations or feasting scenes could denote the presence and participation of the chthonic deity or the dead in the ritual acts.

The sphinx played an important role in the funerary iconography of Mycenaean mainland. During the LH IIIA–B period, its religious significance was adopted in funerary iconography. Its symbolic presence was connected with the establishment and consolidation of a set of religious acts in honour of the dead.¹⁷

The lack of other close similarities with mythical animals depicted on vessels, made necessary an expansion of the area of research, interpreting the subject painted on the sherd as a human foot. In this light, the first Trapeza sherd could be compared with a fragment from the Acropolis of Athens with the depiction of a female human figure of which remains the skirt above the feet represented in silhouette (Tab. 3b).¹⁸ The dating of this sherd is disputed, because the context is dated to LH IIIC but the iconographic elements suggest it could be dated to LH IIIB1 and other material in the same layer belong to LH IIIA2. This kind of representation is generally associated with amphoroid *kraters* from the Dodecanese, Cyprus and the Near East and it may be compared with the Trapeza sherds too not only because of the representation of the foot, but also the presence of the long robe depicted, in the first Trapeza sherd, with the two parallel lines that can be seen above the leg.

Another possible comparison could be found in the *krater* from the cemetery of Evangelistria, in Nafplio, decorated with a lyre-player (Tab. 3c).¹⁹ The *krater* is differently dated to the end of LH IIIA or to the beginning of LH IIIB, moreover the vessel was found in a tomb and it is supposed that the drawing represents a real performance executed during funerary rituals in which the *krater* was used.²⁰ Looking at the way the musician is depicted and considering the vessel shape and the probable dating, there is more than one similarity with the sherd from Trapeza.

In order to conduct a fuller analysis, the investigation could be broadened to include also examples of Mycenaean pictorial style in other media, such as the clay *larnakes*. It is possible to observe how the detail depicted on the Trapeza fragment is very similar to the representation of human figures on clay *larnakes*

of Tanagra, Boeotia.²¹ Most *larnakes* show images related to funerary scenes, involving ritual activities connected with burials, there are scenes of procession of mourners, scenes of sacrifice and cult scenes with the presence of fantastic animals, like sphinxes.²² The Tanagra *larnakes* bear quite schematic representations of human figures. Among them we can distinguish those depicted in silhouette and those in outline style, both are dressed with skirt, or long robe that often have a vertical or diagonal border and come almost to the ankle showing the feet (Tab. 3d–e).²³

According to S. Immerwahr, the figures characterized by bordered robes, not in silhouette but in outline style, can be interpreted as male figures, maybe priests (Tab. 3f).²⁴ Men were present in scenes connected with burials and were involved in a processional or panel arrangement. In this light, examination of the Trapeza sherd suggests the possibility of interpreting the depiction as the bottom part of a male figure, maybe in a processional scheme. The image may belong to a mourner or to a figure engaged in ritual activities, but in either case it is impossible to say with certainty anything about the reconstruction of the subject.

An extremely interesting feature is that each parallel with the sherd is connected with the ritual and, especially, funerary sphere, so the related vessel would have not only a funerary purpose, but also a funerary depiction with a scene that maybe really happened.

Regarding the second sherd illustrated, the schematised bivalve seashell is a decorative pattern which evolved from the papyri motif. It seems probable that this pattern was created through a combination of different advanced versions of the multiple stem pattern and the Mycenaean III flower.²⁵ It was frequently found in LH IIIA1–2 pictorial compositions on *kraters* and on conical rhyta.²⁶ It can be found isolated, interspersed or arranged in chains, but always as an accessory motif. These types of design were essentially ornamental.²⁷ These accessory elements may also in-

17 For sphinxes see Dessenne 1957; Crouwel 1991; BLAKOLMER 2016, 61–69.

18 SAKELLARAKIS 1992, 22, fig. 4.

19 DRAGONA-LATSOUE 1977, 86–98, pl. 20; VERMEULE, KARAGEORGHIS 1982, pl. IX 1.4.1.

20 CARTER 1995, 293–295.

21 DEMAKOPOULOU AND KONSOLA 1981.

22 Vermeule 1965, 123–148; Immerwahr 1995, 109–121; Kramer-Hajos 2015, 627–667.

23 This kind of representation has a good parallel with a *krater* fragment from Lefkandi (POPHAM, SACKETT 1968, fig. 37; CROUWEL 2007, 80–81, fig. 17) showing the depiction of a sphinx near a human figure wearing a decorated long robe that recalls those worn in cultic contexts. The depiction of the foot is not so far from the style of the sherd from the Trapeza dromos.

24 IMMERWAHR 1995, 113–114.

25 FURUMARK 1941, 312–315, fig. 53.

26 See MOUNTJOY 1986, 69; cf. the rhyton from Vourvatsi decorated with chains of bivalve seashells MOUNTJOY 1999, 531, fig. 190:156; cf. the rhyton from Brauron PASCHALIDIS 2001, figs 1–3.

27 VERMEULE, KARAGEORGHIS 1982, III.17, III.18 and IV.1 Enkomi, XII.7; ÅKERSTRÖM 1987, pl. 24:1c.

dicating a landscape, as vegetation motifs or Nilotic elements, or be space fillers to combat a *horror vacui*, and are often found in these positions among representations of birds, horses and bulls.²⁸

This pictorial representation falls within the features of the traditional iconography from the 14th century BC onward, additionally the subjects of pictorially decorated vessels are quite close to those of *larnakes*. Themes such as octopuses, papyri, flowers, birds, bivalves, fish, are identically painted on *kraters* and on *larnakes* and have symbolic and ritual meanings.

Pictorial pottery doesn't seem particularly common in Achaea in comparison with other Mycenaean Greek regions, indeed, one can cite only a few pieces of decorated vessels with representation of animals and human figures discovered in funerary contexts and mainly dated to the Post-Palatial period.²⁹ The sherds discussed here, together with a stirrup jar with the depiction of a fish, are the only examples of pictorial decoration found so far in the Trapeza cemetery.³⁰

The main production centre in the region could have been Voudeni, an extremely important Mycenaean site, in the eastern part of the region, characterized by a settlement and a rich cemetery used since the 16th century B.C. to the Submycenaean period. From this funerary area come some huge vessels decorated with pictorial representations of animals, such as birds, dogs and human figures, but none of these show close comparisons with our first sherd because the site became a pottery production centre during the Post-Palatial and not in the phase to which the sherds can be dated.³¹ Furthermore, the lack of published material from this cemetery and others, such as Portes, does not permit a careful comparison of the vessels; for this reason it seems essential to look at other sites, such as Attica, Corinthia or the Argolid, places where the phenomenon of pictorially decorated pottery originated.

It is impossible to say whether the pictorial representations from Trapeza have a narrative function, their meaning could be purely decorative. Too little survives to reconstruct the original design on this vessel and this crude style of execution makes it difficult to find a good parallel. It should be stressed that the fragmentary available data only allows purely hypothetical proposals that are far from a definitive identification of the subject and of the syntax depicted

on them. However whatever the reconstruction of the representation on the sherds is, it must be regarded as more than a mere hypothesis that the deposition of this type of pottery may have had a ritual function as support and means to practice rites that served to promote a peaceful transition of the deceased between one world and the other and, at the same time, the reintegration of the mourning community in the living world. This leads on to the next theme to be discussed here, that is the function of the pottery found in the *dromos*.

USE AND FUNCTION OF THE POTTERY

As previously stated, the sherds belong to an open shape and are the remains of a ceremonial performance practiced during funerary rites. These kind of performances can be associated with Van Gennepe's tripartite burial rites, especially with liminal and post-liminal rites.³² The liminality is a place between *dromos* and chamber, the living used this sphere to feast with the dead, but also to re-aggregate themselves in the social world and give a last farewell to the deceased after the burial. In the *dromos* fill we can find remains of broken pottery that symbolize the fragmentation and destruction of objects used during these post-liminal acts.

These sherds cannot be seen as the remains of vessels originally put in the chamber and later left in the *dromos* after cleaning operations for successive depositions because among the grave-goods found in the chamber, there are only closed shapes with a total lack of the open vessels which are instead typical of the filling of the *dromoi*.

In most cases, the distinction between the primary remains of rites performed at the time of the burial and the material concerning reuse and successive visits to the tomb is difficult to recognize but, in the case of Trapeza, the stratigraphic analysis of the *dromos* of Tomb 1 allows the evidence to be attributed to the post-funeral rites. The pottery remains found in this layer are related to an episode of reopening of the tomb, they represent the traces of a series of performances made after the deposition of a deceased in the chamber including mixing, pouring and consumption of some precious liquid, like wine. The sherds considered here are mixed with material differently dated from LH IIIA to LH IIIC, this signifies that the people who reopened the tomb, or simply visited it, performed ceremonial activities that left traces in secondary depositions in strata manipulated by the users of the tomb over the course of time.

28 See e.g. PASCHALIDIS 2001; FURUMARK 1941, 432, 434, 439; VERMEULE, KARAGEORGHIS 1982, IV.40; BENZI 1992, pl. 84:c, 158:b.

29 See e.g. PAPADOPOULOS 1979; GIANNPOULOS 2008; KOLONAS 2009.

30 See BORNA, DE ANGELI 2016, 447–458.

31 KOLONAS 2009; LICCIARDELLO 2015, 158–159.

32 VAN GENNEPE 1909, 127–144.

Mycenaean drinking, toasting and libation ceremonies performed around the grave and in particular in the *dromos*, are attested across the entire Peloponnese since the beginning of the LH period onward and continued into the LH IIIA–B phases.³³ The long-term effect of funerary actions transformed the *dromos* into an increasingly standardized space with multiple symbolic connotations and where actions to satisfy ritual needs would be undertaken.³⁴

The focus on drinking and pouring ceremonies in Mycenaean funerary rituals is very strong and we can imagine that such rituals were highly significant to the people involved in the funeral and played a central role in the burial process.

Drinking ceremonies accompany liminal rites, but the *stomion* and the *dromos* themselves are often characterised by liminal symbolism too.³⁵ The *dromos* was a boundary zone, the final earthly passage through which the deceased was carried “from the visible society to the invisible.”³⁶ This area belongs neither to the world of the living, nor to the world of the dead, but consists of a special zone with a little from one world and a little from the other. Several performances in honour of the dead took place in the *dromos*, which was the focal point of ritual activities, such as sacrificial and libation ceremonies associated with the liminal rites. The *dromos* was a space of transition, a place where living and dead could meet and could also terminate their relationship through the gesture of breakage of the pottery used during drinking and toasting ceremonies.³⁷ Apart from huge and broken open vessels, quantities of broken kylikes and cups have been found near the doorway or on the floor of the *dromos*, this evidence can represent a post-liminal rite performed by the community and individuals too.³⁸

Libations and drinking rituals, commonly identified in Mycenaean tombs, reflect the desire of human beings to communicate with the realm of the beyond

through the recipients of the offerings. So the vessel has to be interpreted as a receptacle to be used to mix a liquid for the living and for the dead; the vessel serves as intermediary between one world and the other, it is the materialization of the liminal zone.³⁹

We can imagine the users of the tomb carried out a drinking ritual, mixing and serving wine or other precious liquid put in the crater and then, at the end of the ritual we can also imagine the breakage of the huge vessel with the partial scattering of the sherds. We are looking at a transformational mode of deposition through which the material is incorporated into the funerary record after a series of activities that have taken place for specific and symbolic purposes. The vessel is invested and heaped with a potential use that goes beyond practical use, toward a symbolic significance.

CONCLUSIONS

The study of these sherds has given the opportunity to analyse the pattern of creation of the filling layers in the *dromos* of Tomb 1. This kind of study prompted other important research concerning the reconstruction of ritual activities, practiced in the *dromos* that involved specific vessel categories. This type of research necessitates taking into consideration the total body of the material in these layers, in order to have a complete picture of the past actions. This study can be seen as a starting point to investigate mortuary practices that might otherwise have remained hidden.

This kind of evidence has been very useful for collecting significant evidence regarding the community who used the tomb. As mentioned above, pictorial pottery is not commonly present in funerary contexts, but it can be seen as a sign of the social status of a more or less restricted part of the community, a status made even more evident by the findings within the chamber. Considering the comparisons and the assumptions made, it seems possible that the found sherds belong to a big *krater* used during funerary rites performed by the community to honour the deceased and the deities during a very difficult time after the loss of an important member of the group.

33 See CAVANAGH, MEE 1998; SOLES 1999, 787; SHELTON 2001, 77–78; BOYD 2002, 87–88; PAPADIMITRIOU 2015, 101–103. *Dromoi* acquired symbolic importance and started being used for ritual purposes only when they became sufficiently long and flat, that is at the very end of LH I, not only in chamber tombs, but also in tumuli and tholoi.

34 The awareness of the importance of the *dromos* and of pottery fragments found in it, was not always immediate. In most of Achaean cemeteries, investigated several decades ago, the data regarding the fills of *dromoi* was often overlooked, without investigating the nature of those fills, in favour of the study of the grave goods preserved in the chambers. This is true, for example, for the cemeteries of Aigion, PAPADOPOULOS 1976, or Klaus, PASCHALIDIS, MCGEORGE 2009, 85–86.

35 VAN GENNEPP 1909; GALLOU 2005, 82–ss.

36 HERTZ 1960, 80.

37 GALLOU 2005, 88–90.

38 CAVANAGH, MEE 2014, 51–56.

39 Some years ago Konsolaki-Yannopoulou presented new data regarding the practice of libation during funerary ceremonies and supposed a communicative function of the used vessels to satisfy the desire of human beings to transcend their limitation and keep in touch with the Other world and with the dead. KONSOLAKI YANNOPOULOU 2001, 213–220.

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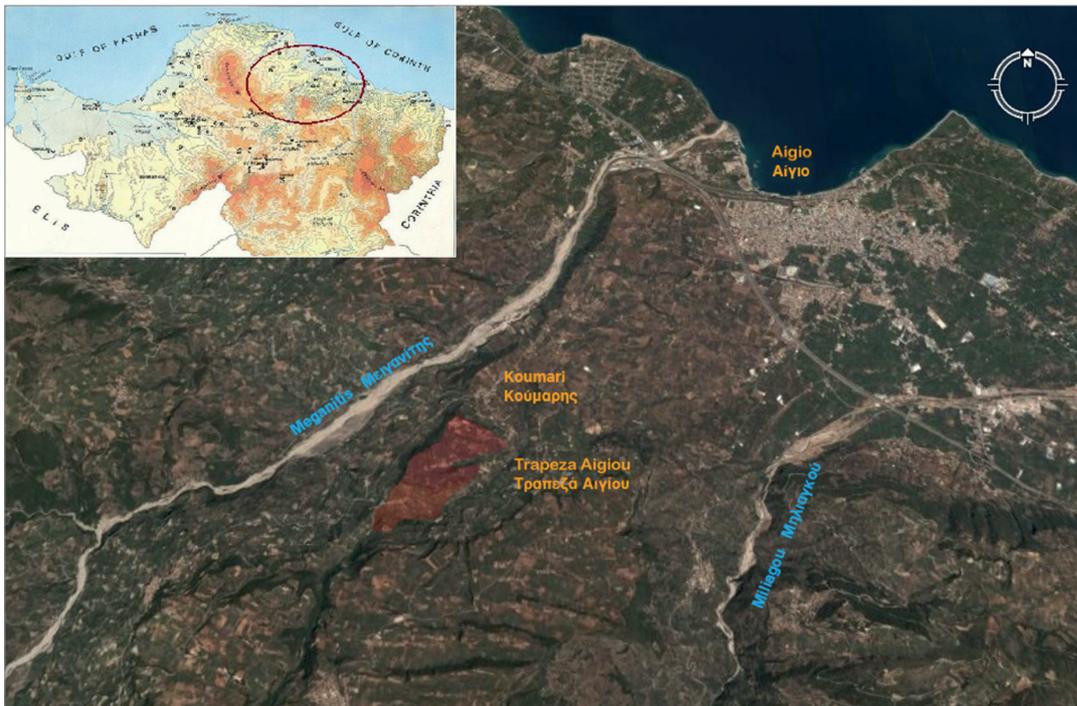


Fig. 1a General map of the Aigion area with the Trapeza hill (Goole Earth 2014).

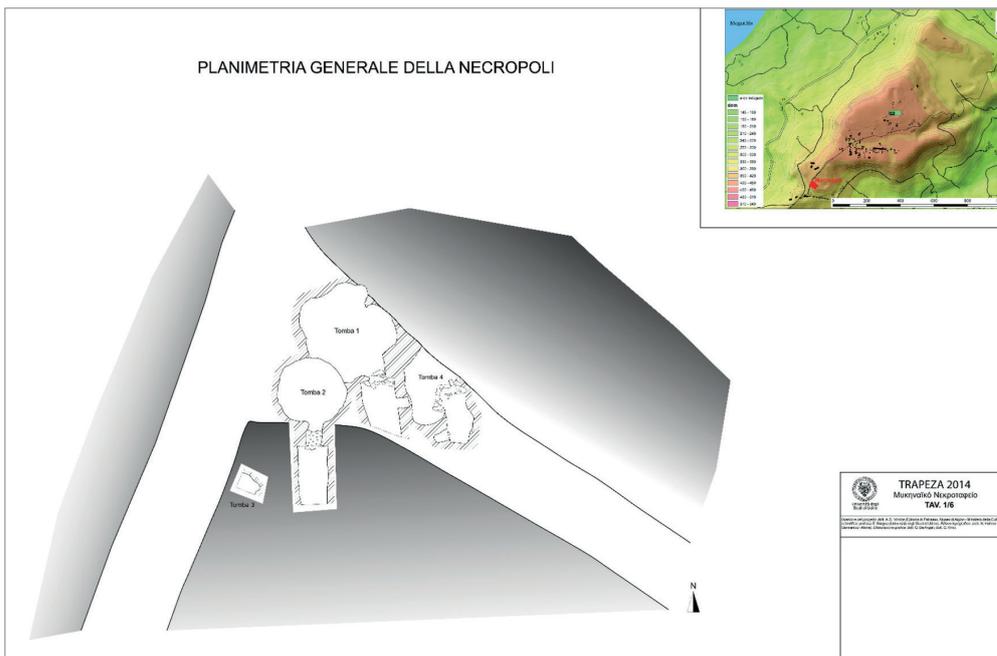


Fig. 1b General plan of the Trapeza cemetery until 2014 (G. De Angeli).

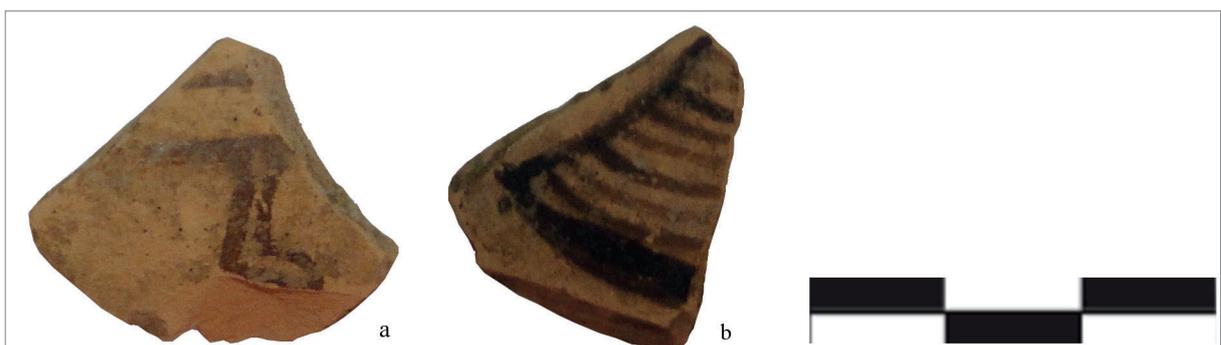


Fig. 2a Sherd no. 1; 2b Sherd no. 2 (photo: A. Licciardello).



Fig. 3a Bell-krater from Enkomi (after VERMEULE, KARAGHEORGIS *et al.* 1982, 202, fig. V.27); 3b Pictorial sherd from Acropolis of Athens (after Sakellarakis 1992, 22, fig. 4); 3c. Krater from Evangelistria, Nafplio Museum; 3d. Larnax from Tanagra with mourners, Thebes Museum; 3e. Larnax from Tanagra with funerary scene, Thebes Museum; 3f. Larnax from Tanagra with male procession, Thebes Museum (3 c–f photos: A. Licciardello).