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# **DAIS**

## **THE AEGEAN FEAST**

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# COOKED FOOD IN THE MYCENAEAN FEAST – EVIDENCE FROM THE COOKING POTS\*

## Introduction

It is widely accepted that food consumption is a major component of feasting.<sup>1</sup> This should also be true of the Aegean Bronze Age. Therefore, food and its role in the execution of a feast should be one of the main focuses of feasting-related studies. Such issues are one of the main concerns of both archaeozoology and the study of Linear B tablets.<sup>2</sup> However, food preparation and consumption, as evidenced by ceramic remains, constitute a field still not properly surveyed,<sup>3</sup> in great contrast to wine drinking. This is partly due to the lack of ambiguity of wine-related vessels among feasting remains. Wine pouring, mixing and drinking vessels are easily recognizable (or at least are thought to be so), something which cannot be said about food serving vessels. However, food preparation vessels, the ordinary cooking pots, are usually easy to identify due to their distinct fabric, shape and frequent burning marks, and I shall focus on them in the discussion that follows. Food serving vessels will be of secondary concern.

I selected three large deposits, which have been claimed convincingly to represent post feasting debris or storage of feasting equipment – the fill of the shaft graves at Lerna (dated to Late Helladic [hereafter LH] I), the EU-9 deposit at Tsoungiza (LH IIIA2 Early) and the destruction deposit from the palace of Pylos (conventionally dated to the end of LH IIIB2 or the beginning of LH IIIC Early period).<sup>4</sup> Such a choice of case studies theoretically enables both a diachronic analysis, as well as a comparison between large-scale feasts of different character – mortuary meal (Lerna), communal feast at a regional centre (Tsoungiza) and palace-sponsored feasting (Pylos).

Before turning to the discussion of the individual deposits, one may try to outline some expectations about the cooking pots to be found in such assemblages. These expectations will be verified against the archaeological evidence in order to extract some criteria, both positive and negative, for the cooking assemblages in feasting deposits. The following expectations take into account the existence of a hierarchical society on the Greek Mainland throughout the Late

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\* First of all I would like to thank Michael Lindblom and Patrick Thomas for sharing with me mostly unpublished information, without which this paper would not have been accomplished. I would also like to express my gratitude to Jeremy Rutter, Štěpán Růckl, Patrick Thomas and Salvatore Vitale for their comments on the various versions of this paper. Finally, my thank goes to Aleydis Van de Moortel for her invitation to study the Late Bronze Age cooking pottery from Mitrou and for allowing me to quote some of the preliminary results in this paper.

1 B. HAYDEN, “Fabulous Feasts: A Prolegomenon to the Importance of Feasting,” in M. DIETLER and B. HAYDEN (eds), *Feasts. Archaeology and Ethnographic Perspectives on Food, Politics, and Power* (2001) 20; J.C. WRIGHT, “A Survey of Evidence for Feasting in Mycenaean Society,” in *The Mycenaean Feast*, 133.

2 See for example L. BENDALL, “Fit for a King? Hierarchy, Exclusion, Aspiration and Desire in the Social Structure of Mycenaean Banqueting,” in *Food, Cuisine and Society*; T. PALAIMA, “Sacrificial Feasting in the Linear B Documents,” in *The Mycenaean Feast*; P. HALSTEAD and V. ISAAKIDOU, “Faunal Evidence for Feasting: Burnt Offerings from the Palace of Nestor at Pylos,” in *Food, Cuisine and Society*.

3 One notable exception is the PhD thesis of Julie Hruby: J. HRUBY, *Feasting and Ceramics: A View from the Palace of Nestor at Pylos* (Ph.D. Dissertation, Univ. of Cincinnati, 2006).

4 The Lerna feasting deposit has been recently presented in M. LINDBLOM, “Early Mycenaean Mortuary Meals at Lerna VI with Special Emphasis on their Aeginetan Components,” in F. FELTEN, W. GAUSS and R. SMETANA (eds), *Middle Helladic Pottery and Synchronisms. Proceedings of the International Workshop held at Salzburg October 31<sup>st</sup> – November 2<sup>nd</sup> 2004* (2007) 115-136. The Tsoungiza EU-9 deposit still awaits final publication, but its most important features in relation to feasting have been presented in M.K. DABNEY, P. HALSTEAD, and P. THOMAS, “Mycenaean Feasting on Tsoungiza at Ancient Nemea,” in *The Mycenaean Feast*, 197-216. Ceramic material from Pylos has been published in C.W. BLEGEN and M. RAWSON, *The Palace of Nestor at Pylos in Western Messenia I. The Buildings and their Contents* (1966).

Bronze Age; for simpler societies another set of expectations should be suggested.

1. Multimodal size distribution of vessels, including some very large examples, appropriate for preparation of dishes in different quantities.<sup>5</sup>
2. Considerable overall capacity of cooking vessels, in order to feed a large number of participants.
3. Variety of forms, pointing to a variety of dishes being prepared.<sup>6</sup>
4. Presence of unusual vessels.
5. Over-representation of cooking pots in the assemblage in comparison with ordinary household deposits, given the restricted range of shapes/functions covered by vessels used at feasting.

In order to define what can be perceived as ‘large’, ‘unusual’ or ‘over-representation’, contemporary settlement deposits will be cited for comparison.

### Lerna

The LH I fill from the shaft graves at Lerna, containing large amounts of pottery and animal bones, has been shown to represent remains of a mortuary meal. The two graves, cut into the Early Helladic II House of the Tiles, most probably have been re-opened somewhere in the LH III period, as is suggested by a rectangular cutting along the rim of one of the shafts and two restorable kylikes of Furumark shape 267 found in it. The interments and offerings were removed, while the soil, pottery and other finds were thrown back into the shafts. As a result, the material was mixed and there were multiple joins between the two shafts.<sup>7</sup> The deposit displays several unusual features, the most prominent of which is the share of vessels imported from the island of Aegina, including all classes produced around that time: Aeginetan Kitchen Ware (AKW), Aeginetan Solidly Painted and Burnished (APB), Aeginetan Plain (AP), Aeginetan Matt Painted (AMP) and Aeginetan Bichrome (AB). They make up 58% of the total assemblage by sherd count or half of around 1000 estimated vessels (Pl. XXIVa).<sup>8</sup>

Cooking pottery, constituting 14% by sherd or 10,5% by estimated vessel count (Pl. XXIIa),<sup>9</sup> is predominantly of Aeginetan manufacture (110 AKW vessels). The amount of local Kitchen Ware present is negligible.

Comparison with contemporary settlement deposits from Asine and Tsoungiza shows that the frequency of cooking pots at Lerna is rather standard (Pl. XXIIa). Higher values for the floor deposit from Tsoungiza are plausibly due to the fact that the three recorded cooking pots were not used simultaneously.<sup>10</sup> Conspicuous in such a comparison is the almost 100% share of the Aeginetan component in the cooking pottery at Lerna. However, in terms of the overall Aeginetan assemblage represented in the Lerna LH I deposit, the case of cooking pottery is the least striking. It suffices to mention that pottery of the Aeginetan Bichrome class, found in small quantities elsewhere,<sup>11</sup> represents some 15% of all pots at Lerna (Pl. XXIVa).

5 This criterion was suggested in M.J. CLARKE, “Akha Feasting. An Ethnoarchaeological Perspective,” in DIETLER and HAYDEN (*supra* n. 2) 158, Fig. 5.5.

6 This expectation has been put among criteria for ceramics remains from feasting activities outlined in DABNEY, HALSTEAD, and THOMAS (*supra* n. 4) 203.

7 LINDBLOM (*supra* n. 4) 117.

8 All the frequencies and estimates of vessel numbers derive from the initial study of the pottery by Caskey, after which much of the pottery was discarded: LINDBLOM (*supra* n. 4) 119.

9 Calculations for both Lerna and Tsoungiza (Pl. XXIIa) clearly show that cooking pots are over-represented in sherd count, if compared to vessel count. It is probably due to the fact that they are usually bigger than fine-ware vessels and therefore break in more pieces. In addition, they might be subjected to a higher breakage rate.

10 Their number and overall capacity is high compared to the remaining 16 vases. There are not enough eating vessels in the deposit to receive food cooked in all three cooking pots.

11 LINDBLOM (*supra* n. 4) Fig. 7; M. LINDBLOM, *Marks and Makers. Appearance, Distribution and Function of Middle and Late Helladic Manufacturer's Marks on Aeginetan Pottery* (2001) 36. There are only 25 marked examples of AB pottery listed. At Mitrou, where considerable amounts of Early Mycenaean AKW were found and the finds of APB or AMP pottery are not infrequent, so far only two fragments of AB vessels have been identified.



The repertoire of shapes involved in cooking is limited. The majority is made up of one-handled jugs (Pl. XXIVb), the most common Aeginetan product of that time. In addition, there was at least one tripod (Pl. XXIVb) and a few lids (Pl. XXIVb).<sup>12</sup> Both of these latter forms are very rare elsewhere.<sup>13</sup>

Sizes of the cooking pots utilized at the feast show multi-modal distribution, in accordance with one of the expectations (Pl. XXIIb). Rim diameters indicate existence of three size-groups – small (around 13 cm of diameter), medium (16 cm of rim diameter on average) and large pots (24 cm and more in the diameter). Although only one complete profile is preserved, extant Aeginetan cooking pots from other findspots allowed me to estimate for Lerna an average pot capacity of 4-5 litres.<sup>14</sup> The total available capacity would thus amount to some 500 litres (assuming 110 vessels estimated by Caskey), enough to feed between 250-1000 people (allowing between 2 and 0,5 litres of food per person). The number of open vessels in the deposit used for serving food and drink<sup>15</sup> suggests the lower estimate is more plausible, and thus cooked food was prepared in quantities sufficient to satisfy all the participants probably with more than one dish. One should not forget about the possible use of bronze vessels, mainly kettles, for food preparation. They constitute part of the grave furnishings in roughly contemporary Shaft Graves from Circle A at Mycenae and are believed to be part of the feasting equipment of the elite.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, the most important guests at the feast might have enjoyed quite different dishes than the majority of attendants, prepared in, and probably also consumed from, more prestigious metal vessels.<sup>17</sup>

More insight into the preparation of the feast can be gained from looking at one noteworthy feature of the Aeginetan production – its potmarks.<sup>18</sup> It seems that while every second cooking pot was marked, only every thirty-first Aeginetan Bichrome or every twelfth

12 LINDBLOM (*supra* n. 4) Fig. 10.

13 There are only two chronologically close AKW tripod legs, from Kiapha Thiti (J. MARAN, *Kiapha Thiti. Ergebnisse der Ausgrabungen* [1992] 41, Taf. 10.349) dated to LH III and from Tsoungiza (J. RUTTER, "Pottery Groups from Tsoungiza of the End of the Middle Bronze Age," *Hesperia* 59 [1990] 449, Fig. 18.171) dated to MH Late. Morphologically similar fragments, yet chronologically not fixed, were found in Asine: LINDBLOM (*supra* n. 11) No. 919, 81, Pl. 42 and at Mitrou (unpublished, object No. LM783-063-011). Fragments of AKW lids were published from Kolonna: F. FELTEN, C. REINHOLDT, E. POLLHAMMER, W. GAUSS and R. SMETANA (eds), "Ägina-Kolonna 2005. Vorbericht über die Grabungen des Fachbereichs Altertumswissenschaften/Klassische und Frühägäische Archäologie der Universität Salzburg," *ÖJh* 75 (2006) 35, Fig. 35.2, and from MH context at Lerna: C. ZERNER, "Middle Helladic and Late Helladic I Pottery from Lerna. Part II. Shapes," *Hydra* 6 (1988) Fig. 22.14.

14 During the research on the Aeginetan cooking pottery, the author has established that due to bigger size-variability of rims in comparison with bases, the former better reflect the original capacities of the cooking pots. Using all published restorable Aeginetan cooking pots, it was possible to define a mathematical function that best describes the relation of their rim diameter to the calculated capacity. Such a function allows one to estimate roughly the capacity of the vessels, from which only rim sherds were preserved. Certainly, the growing corpus of restorable cooking pots will make it possible to further refine this function, especially for the biggest cooking pots that are rarely preserved. However, it might be expected that the difference will not be big enough to undermine entirely current estimates. All the volume estimates are the author's own calculation using a module 'Capacity' developed by Avshalom Karasik, Noam Peled and Uzy Smilansky from The Weizmann Institute of Science, Rehovot, Israel. This module can be found at <http://www.weizmann.ac.il/complex/uzy/archaeomath/volumecalc.html> and it is distributed free of charge. The volumes were estimated up to the neck of the vessel. In the case of Pylos, the original estimates by Blegen have been used.

15 Because the pottery was discarded, it is very difficult to estimate a likely number of such vessels. However, most of over 600 vessels belonging to APB, Lustrous Mycenaean, Fine Matt Painted and Fine and Medium Tempered Burnished consists of open shapes for serving food and drink. The AB class included mainly kraters, most probably used for wine mixing.

16 J.C. WRIGHT, "The Mycenaean Feast. An Introduction," in *The Mycenaean Feast*, 146 and Tab. 6.

17 Two unique Aeginetan Bichrome bowls or small kraters open the possibility that not only metal vessels might have had a significantly higher status and therefore were appropriate for the elite. Their decoration and shape clearly sets them apart from the rest of the AB vases. LINDBLOM (*supra* n. 4) 125, Fig. 15.

18 The following calculations are based on all the fragments described as deriving from Lerna VI contexts in M. Lindblom's dissertation from 2001: LINDBLOM (*supra* n. 11) and Caskey's estimates of the number of original vases: LINDBLOM (*supra* n. 4) Fig. 8. It must be remarked, however, that not all of the marked vases coming from Lerna VI contexts belonged to the fill of the shaft graves (M. Lindblom personal communication). This will be clarified in the forthcoming publication, yet again the differences plausibly will not be big enough to change the picture elaborated here.



Red Slipped and Burnished vessel received a marking. If the hypothesis equating mark-types with individual potters/workshops is correct,<sup>19</sup> the usually uncommon, prestigious classes of pottery found at Lerna would have been manufactured by a limited number of workshops that rarely marked their products, while the cooking pots represent just a random sample from a substantially larger range of workshops (50 marks of 27 different types). Such a variety is typical of other ordinary settlement assemblages, like Asine (77 marks of 49 different types on AKW). A way to put these observations together is to hypothesize that while the tableware (APB and AB) was specially commissioned by the feast hosts from a few workshops, the cooking pots were brought by the participants themselves.<sup>20</sup> That is, each family would bring, utilize and finally discard its own cooking pot. This would explain the lack of extremely large cooking pots, appropriate for large communal meals. The different sizes of the pots would be accounted for by the variable size of family groups. One can speculate that some dish prepared in advance might have been brought in these cooking pots, to which a valuable and rarely consumed ingredient – the meat (provided by the hosts) – was then added.

Another explanation of the different frequency of marking between the classes of Aeginetan pottery would be that this was a feature inherent to the organization of production, i.e. more elaborate classes of Aeginetan pottery, produced by a limited number of workshops, were always marked less frequently than AKW. However, comparison of a potmark repetition index (ratio of the total number of potmarks to the number of potmark types represented) does not support the hypothesis that there were only a few workshops producing these classes of pottery. It is rather low for both AB (1,32) and APB classes (1,65), given the total number of potmarks found on these vases (25 and 51 respectively).<sup>21</sup> Accordingly, from sites other than Lerna there are no indications that AB or APB pottery was in fact marked less frequently than ‘ordinary’ cooking pots.

### Tsougiza

The Tsougiza evidence for feasting has been presented in the already classic *Hesperia* volume entitled “The Mycenaean Feast.” The article provides a thorough analysis that includes faunal and ceramic remains, figurines and other finds from the EU-9 deposit. Archaeozoological analysis by P. Halsted has proved that large amounts of meat might have been available for consumption – remains of at least 6 cows have been identified. Moreover, in the case of cattle there is evidence for selective discard, not attested for pig and sheep/goat. Ceramic remains, presented by P. Thomas, were tested against a model devised for feasting ceramic discard. All of the outlined criteria have been fulfilled, including the preference for open and unpainted vessels, and the presence of both diminutive and oversized vases.<sup>22</sup>

Since the EU-9 deposit has not been excavated entirely, no estimate of vessel numbers is possible. The assemblage shows clear preference for open shapes, predominantly painted and unpainted kylikes and stress on wine consumption seems obvious. Cooking pottery accounts for only 8,5% of the unpainted features. Due to the dearth of well published deposits, comparison with contemporary settlement assemblages is not possible. However, a somewhat later LH IIIB1 deposit from the same site, believed to represent refuse from an ordinary household,

19 LINDBLÖM (*supra* n. 11) esp. 121-133.

20 However, it cannot be excluded that the cooking pots were acquired also by the feasts host from a middleman or from a storage of ready pots at Kolonna itself. As AKW appears to be the bulk product of Aegina workshops, there was no need for a special order of such a batch of cooking pots, and, as a result, higher frequency of marks is not to be expected.

21 These results may be compared to the repetition indices for sites that produced comparable numbers of marks, but on AKW only. The difference is not big enough (1,33 for 20 marks from Korakou; 1,58 for 93 marks from Asine) to allow for an assumption that the number of workshops producing classes of pottery other than AKW was significantly lower. In such a case, the repetition index for AB or APB should have been much higher. Moreover, the material from Lerna is chronologically homogenous; in a limited period of time one can expect to have less workshops operating than over a century or two. As far as the AKW itself is concerned, repetition ratio for LH I Lerna (1,85) is higher than for Asine (1,58). Again, this might be only a matter of chronological span of the deposit(s) from which the marked fragments originated.

22 DABNEY, HALSTEAD, and THOMAS (*supra* n. 4).

is suitable for comparisons. Contrary to the expectations, the frequency of cooking pot features in household refuse is some 30% higher than in the ceramic remains resulting from feasting activities (Pl. XXIIc). LH IIIB1 floor deposits from the Panagia Houses at Mycenae make the discrepancy even more acute. The frequency of cooking pots by vessel count amounts to 14%. Additionally, as it has been shown above (Pl. XXIIa and note 9), the sherd count is more favourable for the frequency of cooking pots than the count of restorable vessels.

The cooking pots take the form of either a tripod or a handled jar. Only two possible lid fragments were reported.<sup>23</sup> The tripods, which, judging by their leg profiles, are attested in at least two varieties, deserve special attention. While they are very rare in earlier or contemporary settlements (there is only one secure example among many cooking pots in the contemporary deposits from Mitrou, see S. Vitale this volume), they appear to be quite frequent at Tsoungiza. Comparison with the deposits dating to the LH IIIB1 period, by which time tripods are widespread as well as common on the Mainland, clarifies how unusual the case of EU-9 deposit is (Pl. XXIIId). Tripod legs account for 26% of the cooking pot features at Tsoungiza, while in LH IIIB1 Tsoungiza for 17% and in LH IIIB1 South House at Mycenae for only 8%. Suitability for outdoor cooking only partly explains the popularity of this shape in the LH IIIA2 Early deposit from Tsoungiza. It might have been a conscious aspiration of the host to use a novel utensil in considerable quantity, in order to impress the guests and symbolically elevate in rank those admitted to taste food cooked in them.

Estimated capacities for cooking pots from the Tsoungiza feasting deposit suggest that they were not only under-represented, but also rather small when compared to Lerna. The best preserved tripod appears to be of diminutive size (No. 267,<sup>24</sup> 0,67 litre), and in general the capacities do not exceed 1,5 litres, with rim diameters reaching a meagre 14 cm. Only two preserved fragments are markedly bigger, among them a handled jar of 30 cm rim diameter (No. 288), a real monster in this company. The other one is of Aeginetan manufacture (No. 289), with an estimated capacity (based on the diameter of the base) of more than 5 litres. The frequency of Aeginetan pottery in this deposit appears to be low if compared to Lerna (2% of cooking pot features). However, given a general decrease in Aeginetan exports in this period, this number might be significant.<sup>25</sup> Therefore the pot from Tsoungiza might have had certain value, additionally emphasized by its size.

All observations suggest that, in contrast with Lerna, the quantities of food cooked at Tsoungiza were rather low. One may speculate that small cooking pots were used to prepare additives (like sauces) to accompany the main meat dish, cooked in a different way (possibly roasted). However, the relative rarity of shallow angular bowls (hereafter SAB; Pl. XXIIIa), the most obvious food serving vessels,<sup>26</sup> as well as other plausible candidates – stemmed bowls<sup>27</sup> and angular kylikes,<sup>28</sup> implies that meat was not prepared in quantity. The Tsoungiza

23 DABNEY, HALSTEAD and THOMAS (*supra* n. 4).

24 The numbers given here are the same as will appear in the forthcoming publication of the material by Patrick Thomas in *Hesperia*.

25 At the site of Mitrou, the LH IIIA2 Early deposits presented by S. VITALE in this volume did not contain a single sherd of AKW, although the earlier deposits of the LH IIB horizon are still rich in this class of pottery.

26 I. TOURNAVITOU, "Practical Use and Social Function: a Neglected Aspect of Mycenaean Pottery," *BSA* 87 (1992) 200. The residue analysis from an LH IIIB shallow angular bowl from Cult Centre at Mycenae revealed traces of fat of uncertain identity: *Flavours*, 133, No. 116.

27 DABNEY, HALSTEAD, and THOMAS (*supra* n. 4) 202.

28 Kylikes are usually, and quite automatically, associated with wine drinking. However, their variety in terms of decoration, form and fabric suggests that different applications are conceivable for this shapes. Given the very close morphological resemblance of the bowl of angular kylix to the bowl of SAB and the usually rather poor quality porous and thus permeable fabric (K. WARDLE, "A Group of Late Helladic IIIB1 Pottery from within the Citadel at Mycenae", *BSA* 64 [1969] 285: the 'rough' fabric among kylikes is used only for the angular version; P. MOUNTJOY, "Late Helladic IIIB 1 Pottery Dating the Construction of the South House at Mycenae," *BSA* 71 [1976] 94: the 'rough' ware, inferior fabric among fine unpainted pottery is used especially for the lipless bowls, shallow angular bowls and for all angular kylikes with flat bases; see also K. SHELTON, this volume), its use as an eating vessel is quite probable. As their capacity clusters around the half of this of SAB, they might have been used for a dish consumed in smaller quantities, maybe in a semi-liquid form (porridge?). This presumed function would also explain extreme popularity of this kylix type.

LH IIIA2 Early deposit features the lowest frequencies for each of the vessels type in question, when compared to the already mentioned LH IIIB1 deposits from Tsoungiza and Room 22 in the South House at Mycenae. Moreover, the two latter deposits also contained deep bowls, another possible eating vessel.<sup>29</sup> This fact makes the difference even more acute. Thus food at the Tsoungiza feast would be cooked in carefully chosen vessels and available to selected participants. The majority had to settle for wine only or, as argued by Halstead,<sup>30</sup> could only take meat with them in order to distribute it in their home villages. Large amounts of meat available for consumption, selective discard pattern for cattle bones and low frequency of food serving vessels all indicate that such a scenario might have taken place.

## Pylos

Copious amounts of unpainted food and drink serving vessels recovered from the pantries located in Rooms 18-22 in the palace at Pylos (Pl. XXIIIb) provide firm evidence for feasting.<sup>31</sup> This evidence is further substantiated by the findings of burnt animal bone deposits, the largest of which was recovered from Room 7 and included remains of nineteen cows and one deer.<sup>32</sup> The obvious complementation to the finewares from the pantries would be the cooking equipment stored in quantity in Rooms 67-68.

The cooking pot storerooms contained altogether at least 190 ceramic vessels, 137 of which were primary<sup>33</sup> cooking vessels. This makes up no more than 3% of the total assemblage from both pantries (Pl. XXIIIb), less than in cooking-pot poor Tsoungiza (though by a different count).<sup>34</sup> This, however, does not mean that food was not consumed in quantity. Archaeozoological remains suggest large quantities of meat were available for consumption, a common feature with the Tsoungiza feasting deposit. However, the high frequency of shallow angular bowls (Pl. XXIIIb) contrasts sharply with Tsoungiza and suggests quite different circumstances – the abundance of food consumed at the feast itself. Given the low frequency of cooking pots, the meat must have been processed in a different way than by boiling it in the cooking pots.

For the first time among analysed deposits there is a certain variety among cooking pots. One- and two-handled jars are both represented (Pl. XXV), the latter attested in two sizes.<sup>35</sup> Small one- and two-handled tripods are common (Pl. XXV), the former often being equipped with a pouring channel. In addition, there are three large pans and two lids (Pl. XXV). At least two functionally discrete sets might be hypothesized. Each of the tripods could have been accompanied by a brazier (Pl. XXV) for carrying coals, as is suggested by the clearly corresponding number of each vessel-type (52 inventoried tripods and 51 counted braziers). The jars (Pl. XXV), also found in similar quantities, might have complemented such a set. Another set consisting of a pan and a lid can be suggested, as there is no other vessel form that could accommodate such a lid.<sup>36</sup> The two together would form an efficient and portable

29 TOURNAVITOU (*supra* n. 26) 190.

30 DABNEY, HALSTEAD, and THOMAS (*supra* n. 4) 201.

31 Discussed by BENDALL (*supra* n. 2), HRUBY (*supra* n. 3) and B. LIS, “The Role of Cooking Pottery and Cooked Food in the Palace of Nestor at Pylos,” *Archeologia* 57 (2006) 7-24.

32 S.R. STOCKER and J.L. DAVIS, “Animal Sacrifice, Archives, and Feasting at the Palace of Nestor,” in *The Mycenaean Feast*, 179-198; ISAAKIDOU and HALSTEAD (*supra* n. 2) 146.

33 Excluding lids and braziers.

34 Even if one allows for a higher frequency in the case of the hypothetical sherd count, it probably would not reach the same value as at Tsoungiza. Comparison between Pylos and the two other feasting deposits is substantially hindered by the fact that the former does not represent a post-feasting discard but a storage of vases awaiting to be used. However, it is conceivable that the proportions of particular shapes (e.g. kylikes vs SABs) or functional pottery classes (serving vs storage or cooking pottery) in the pantries reflect the actual demand and discard of vases during large scale events. Due to the possibility that not all the vases were used at a single event and that some of them might be overrepresented (because their supply might have just arrived to the pantries before the final destruction) one should still treat the estimates with appropriate caution.

35 For all the calculations and divisions of the cooking pottery assemblage, see LIS (*supra* n. 31).

36 The largest of the coarse-ware kraters (shape No. 59) found in Room 68 has a diameter of 21.4 cm. BLEGEN and RAWSON (*supra* n. 4) 396. Another observation in favour of such a set is the protrusion visible on the internal wall of the pan (Pl. XXV) that would provide additional support for the lid.

(thanks to the handles of the tray) baking device.

One and two-handled pots have a similar average capacity of around 2,5-3 litres. The larger version of the two-handled form can accommodate as much as 10 litres. The tripods are distinctively smaller with average capacities below 1 litre (0,69 for one-handled and 0,96 for two-handled type). Comparison with cooking pottery from ordinary settlement assemblages reveals some important differences. Two specialized cooking utensils, the rounded grill (also called *griddle*, Pl. XXVI.1 and Pl. XXVI.2)<sup>37</sup> and souvlaki stand,<sup>38</sup> popular at that time and present also in other parts of the Palace,<sup>39</sup> are not attested in the pantries. One- and two-handled jars are quite standard, yet their similar dimensions are unusual – two-handled jars tend to be bigger elsewhere.<sup>40</sup> This is the case among Pylian tripods, which otherwise constitute the most striking oddity in the assemblage. Their nearly miniature size is paralleled only at the Tsoungiza feasting deposit (No. 267) and in one tripod from Mycenae Cult Centre,<sup>41</sup> both non ordinary contexts. With their flat bases, very short legs, and occasional spouts, they are also peculiar morphologically. The pan and the lid, especially in combination, are, according to author's knowledge, absent elsewhere on the Mainland.

37 Some controversy arose over the possible use of that peculiar 'vessel', consisting of a rounded tray punctured on one side and flat on the other, with two raised edges (Pl. XXVI.1 and XXVI.2). It is not clear what can be called the upper and bottom surface – in fact both the perforated surface and the usually fire-blackened but also sometimes polished (K. KILIAN, "Ausgrabungen in Tiryns 1977," *AA* [1979] 400) surface can be conceived as upper faces. It is not impossible that the vessel might have been used in both ways, fulfilling a variety of functions, among them baking of flat bread and frying. The perforated surface might have served the purpose of a better transmission or carrying away of the heat or, if covered with oil, it would prevent from sticking of the fried/baked food. The burning marks on polished surface, conventionally explained as resulting from contact with fire, might be in fact a result of flat bread baking, if the bottom part of such a bread got burnt. There are more elaborate shapes, by which such a griddle is supplied with legs or cylindrical stands (Pl. XXVI.3-5). They are usually called *portable ovens* (Pl. XXVI.3 and XXVI.4), and as their orientation is less ambiguous they could potentially throw some light on the use of simple *griddles*. Unfortunately, their analysis only adds to the confusion. The legged tray from Unterburg in Tiryns has the punctured surface as the underside (Pl. XXVI.4). The heavy burning on the upper surface might suggest that it was used as a *portable hearth*, a source of heat and light but, as elaborated above, the use for flat bread baking is also possible. However, a clay 'vase' from Palaikastro (Pl. XXVI.5) proves that very different application has also to be considered. It is a clay cylinder with an U-shaped opening and another round hole opposite. One end of the cylinder is closed by a tray with a punctured surface (probably a classical griddle, although one cannot see if the underside is raised). If it were not for the handles, one could deduce that it was used as a portable hearth/oven and that the punctured surface was facing downwards. However, the handles leave no doubt as to the orientation of this vase, i.e. the griddle part is at the bottom with the punctured surface facing upwards. It might be vaguely speculated that this vessel, if placed on hot coals, acted as a pot stand for a very slow cooking.

38 Although there is no doubt that this utensil was used for grilling pieces of meat placed on a spit, it is not clear where the coals were placed. It has been suggested that the tray was added to an earlier version of the spit stand (consisting of two separate rests) in order to collect the drippings: HRUBY (*supra* n. 3) 146. However, such an idea has some weak points. First of all, it is not clear whether the heat reaching the meat in such an arrangement would be sufficient for grilling. Secondly, the height of the legs on one preserved example from Mycenae (*Flavours*, 134) would not allow one to place many coals underneath, not mentioning the difficulties with oxygen circulation. Thirdly, porous, organic-tempered fabric (at least in the case of the Mycenae example) seems not to be well suited for collection of drippings. For the author it is therefore more plausible that the coals were placed on the tray, directly underneath the spits. Unfortunately, the burning marks on the example from Mycenae are inconclusive.

39 HRUBY (*supra* n. 3) 139 and 146.

40 For LH IIIB1 Panagia Houses at Mycenae the capacity of one- as compared to two-handled pot is 3,1 to 10,9 litres (Nos. 140 and 141 respectively; I. MYLONAS-SHEAR, *The Panagia Houses at Mycenae* [1987] Fig. 20); for the Service Area at Mycenae Cult Centre the one-handled cooking pots have a capacity of 1,3 and 3,8 litres (Nos. 66-1519 and 66-1523; E.B. FRENCH and W.D. TAYLOR, *The Service Areas of the Cult Centre [Well Built Mycenae 13, 2007]*), while the only preserved two-handled cooking pot accommodates 4,2 litres of content (No. 66-448). The deposit at Iria (Argolid), conventionally placed at the transition to or at the beginning of LH IIC Early, provides us with a one-handled cooking pot of 1,05 litre capacity and a two-handled example with capacity of 2,8 litres (Nos. B23 and A31 respectively, H. DÖHL, "Iria. Die Ergebnisse der Ausgrabungen 1939," in *Tiryns VI* [1973] 148, Fig. Abb 14 [B23] and 174, Fig. 18 [A31]). Moreover, large cooking pots with capacity around 10 liters are invariably two-handled. The difference in capacities of one- and two-handled cooking pots is easily explicable from a utilitarian point of view – in order to carry a bigger cooking pot, two handles are much more handy.

41 FRENCH and TAYLOR (*supra* n. 40) No. 66-513, 310.



The overall capacity of cooking pots stored in Rooms 67-68 amounts to at least 341 litres.<sup>42</sup> If used all at once, they were sufficient to feed hundreds of people, assuming 0,5 litres for an average SAB, most common eating vessel at Pylos. However, archaeozoological remains suggest that roasted meat formed the basic food consumed at Pylian feasts. Therefore the cooking pots might have been used in two ways. As in the case of Tsoungiza, some additives for meat dishes could have been prepared. The small tripods seem to fit this role perfectly, allowing a liquid substance to be cooked, then to be reduced in volume while being kept warm and finally, by means of the channel, to be poured over the meat. The rest of the pots, judging by their large number, would have been suitable to prepare a variety of dishes in different quantities. The average size of a cooking pot might suggest that dishes were consumed in groups of only a few people. Lack of giant pots implies that food was not meant to be prepared *en masse* as a simple fare for all. The presence of only 2 or 3 baking sets allows us to hypothesize about different levels of admittance to certain types of food. At the peak of the food consumption pyramid one may imagine the highest palatial elite using metal vessels for both preparation and consumption of refined dishes. Meat of red deer and some exotic spices attested in Linear B tablets might be included in the list of the possible ingredients.<sup>43</sup>

## Conclusions

We have just surveyed three chronologically distinct deposits representing three different kinds of feasts. Due to their variability and low number of sample, definite conclusions about the changes in the institution of Mycenaean feasting with regard to food are hardly warranted. Some general remarks, however, can be made.

The changing status and role of food in the Mycenaean feast seems clearly perceivable (Pl. XXIIIc). There is a shift from food prepared in quantity for all (Lerna) towards more specialized equipment and restricted access to food at the feast (Tsoungiza), and finally to a more varied repertoire of dishes allowing for differentiation among those admitted for consumption (Pylos). This may reflect an evolution in feasting behaviour that can be tied to the changing political landscape of the Mycenaean world. Naturally, in particular cases the amount and quality of the food depended also on the economic strength of the host and his intentions. At Lerna, creation of social solidarity and common identity was plausibly at stake, and the wealth and status of the host was stressed by the choice of the vessels and possibly by the quality of ingredients and beverages provided. At Tsoungiza, evidence for restricted access to food is already detectable. The amount of food available for consumption at the feast was not great. The generosity of the host was displayed in the distribution of meat among participants, creating obligation of reciprocity. At Pylos, at the top of the Mycenaean socio-political hierarchy, meat from selected animals and cooked food was offered in quantity. Abundance was combined with restricted access to certain food items, by controlling the amounts and possibly the quality of some dishes. Differential access to food might have been an expression, and at the same time a confirmation, of social hierarchy.

In terms of cooking pottery, the three deposits share some common traits, confirming or disproving some of the expectations outlined at the beginning of the paper. These traits might be expected to be typical of all Mycenaean large-scale feasts. At all three events food has been prepared, consumed, and possibly utilized to achieve certain goals. The cooking assemblages display some unusual features, be it rare shapes, uncommonly small sizes or non-local provenance of vessels employed. At least bimodal distribution of vessel sizes is always attested, although the reasons for such a size distribution might have been different. Contrary to the expectations, extremely large vessels are not present.<sup>44</sup> Similarly, the frequency of cooking

42 LIS (*supra* n. 31), HRUBY (*supra* n. 3).

43 For spices and other available ingredients see HRUBY (*supra* n. 3) 135-139. Some metal vessels are reported from the area of the Megaron (Room 6), yet they seem to be mainly parts of drinking vessels: BENDALL (*supra* n. 2) 122-123. No bronze cooking vessels have been reported so far from the palace.

44 Although there are certain limitations of the size of the cooking pots resulting from the qualities of the clay, a pot from Structure 10 at Cerén with the capacity of 56,4 litres can be cited as a point of reference. L.A.

pots in feasting deposits not only does not exceed, but often is significantly lower than the share noted for household assemblages. Hopefully, future excavation and publication of other feasting deposits will help to add some new criteria and verify already proposed ones. Even more important is an attempt to define the differences between cooking pottery assemblages from small-scale feasting and cooking pottery from ordinary settlement assemblages. It might be expected that the differences will be much more fine-tuned and therefore a significantly larger corpus of securely identified feasting deposits is a prerequisite for accomplishment of this task.

Bartłomiej LIS

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BROWN, "Feasting on the Periphery. The Production of Ritual Feasting and Village Festivals at the Cerén Site, El Salvador," in DIETLER and HAYDEN (*supra* n. 2) 380.

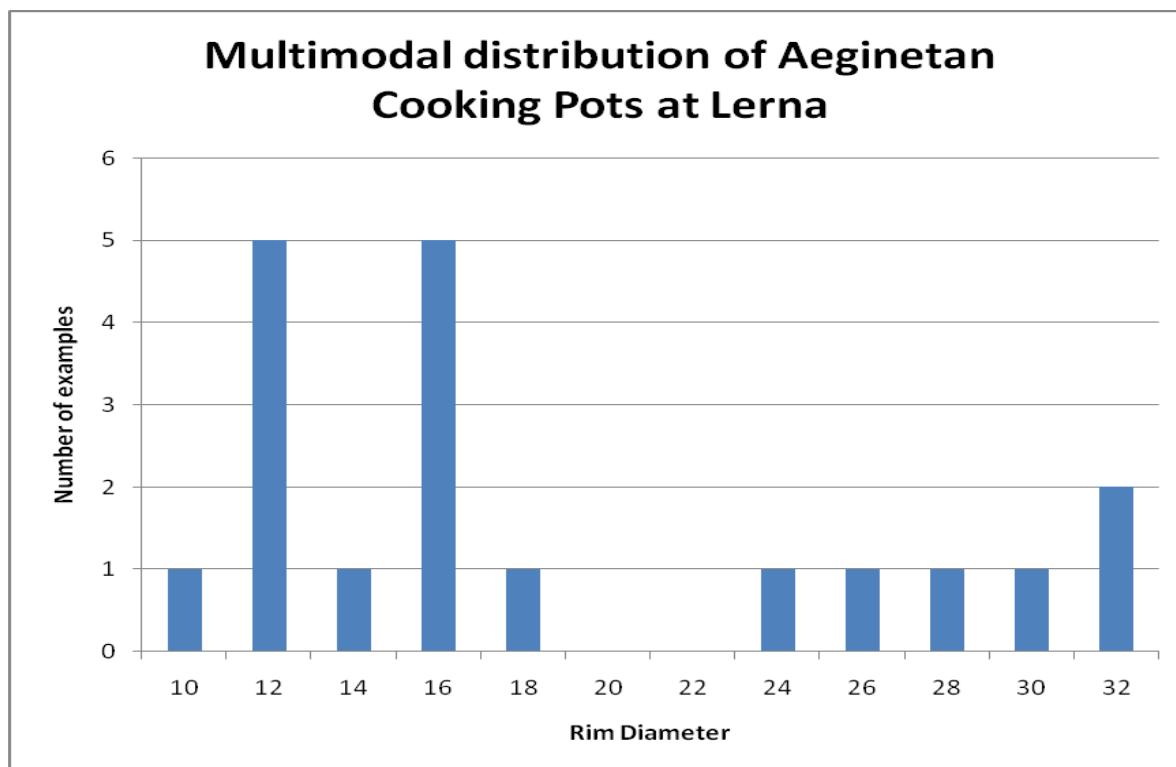
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- Pl. XXIIb Multimodal size distribution of Aeginetan cooking pots at Lerna.
- Pl. XXIIc Frequency of cooking pots in the deposits from Tsoungiza and Mycenae. After P. Thomas personal communication (Tsoungiza LH IIIA2 Early); P. THOMAS, "A Deposit of Late Helladic IIIB1 Pottery from Tsoungiza," *Hesperia* 74 (2005) Tab. 1 and 6, (Tsoungiza LH IIIB1), and MYLONAS-SHEAR (*supra* n. 40) (Mycenae LH IIIB1, all vases belonging to floor deposits found in Houses I and II have been included in the count).
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- Pl. XXVI Griddles and portable ovens from Tiryns, Pylos and Palaikastro. 1. Tiryns, KILIAN (*supra* n. 37) 401, Abb 24; 2. Pylos, BLEGEN and RAWSON (*supra* n. 4), Fig. 348.12; 3. Tiryns, KILIAN (*supra* n. 37) 406, Abb. 31.2; 4. Tiryns, G. HIESEL, "Bericht zur Unbemalten Mykenischen Keramik von Tiryns," *AA* (1982) 439, Abb. 57; 5. Palaikastro (scale unknown), M.N. TOD, W.L.H. DUCKWORTH, and R.M. DAWKINS, "Excavations at Palaikastro II," *BSA* 9 (1902-03) 274-387, 325, Fig. 25.



Site	Frequency of CPs by Vessel Count	Frequency of CPs by Sherd Count	Share of Aeginetan among CPs
Lerna	10,50%	14,05%	Almost 100%
Tsougiza	15,71%	24,91%	37%
Asine	----	15,45%	66%

a



b

Deposit	Date	Share of CPs in UP features	Frequency of CPs by Sherd Count	Frequency of CPs by Vessel Count
Tsougiza EU-9	LH IIIA2 Early	8,50%	no data	n.d.
Tsougiza EU-2	LH IIIB1	11,62%	n. d.	n.d.
Panagia Houses at Mycenae	LH IIIB1	n.d.	n.d.	14,00%

c

Deposit	Date	All CP features	Tripod legs	Frequency of legs
Tsougiza EU-9	LH IIIA2 Early	152	40	<b>26%</b>
Tsougiza EU-2	LH IIIB1	383	66	<b>17%</b>
Room 22, South House at Mycenae	LH IIIB1	162	13	<b>8%</b>

d

Deposit	Date	Share of SAB in UP features	Share of Angular Kylix in UP features	Share of Stemmed Bowl in Painted sherds
Tsougiza EU-9	LH IIIA2 Early	1,00%	11,00%	4,00%
Tsougiza EU-2	LH IIIB1	1,54%	17,61%	20,60%
Room 22, South House at Mycenae	LH IIIB1	7,10%	33,40%	11,00%

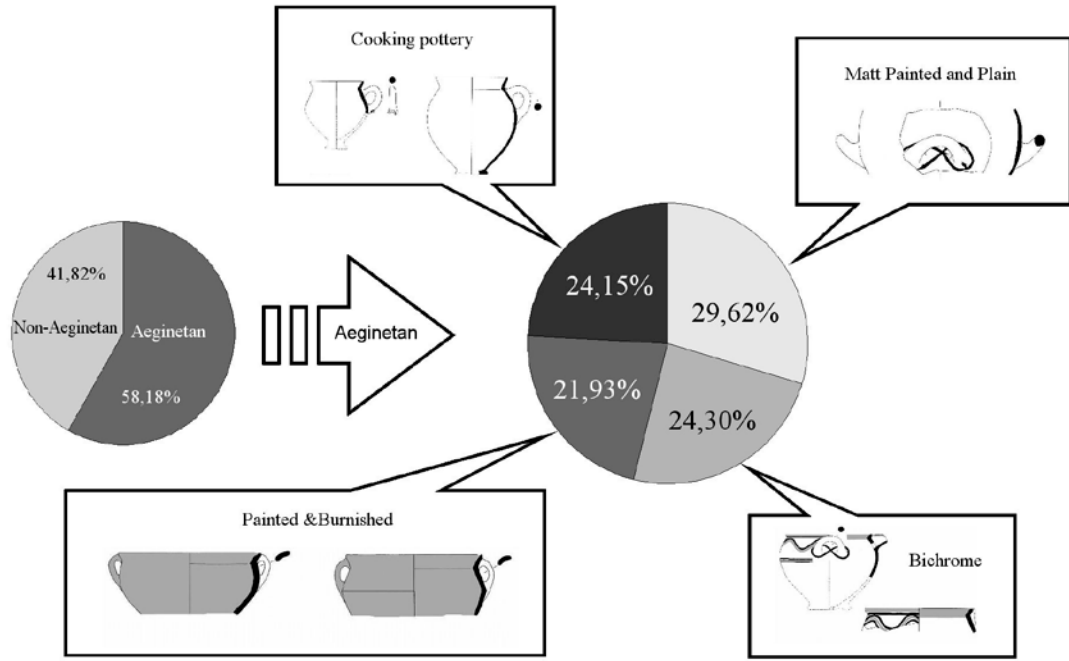
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Shape	Number of examples	Frequency	Total Capacity
SAB	1325	19,32%	675,75
Kylikes	3454	50,37%	
Dippers	471	6,87%	
Cups	1164	16,98%	
Kraters	24	0,35%	
Jugs & Amphoras	87	1,27%	
Other	142	2,07%	
Cooking Pots	190	2,77%	341,57
Total	6857		

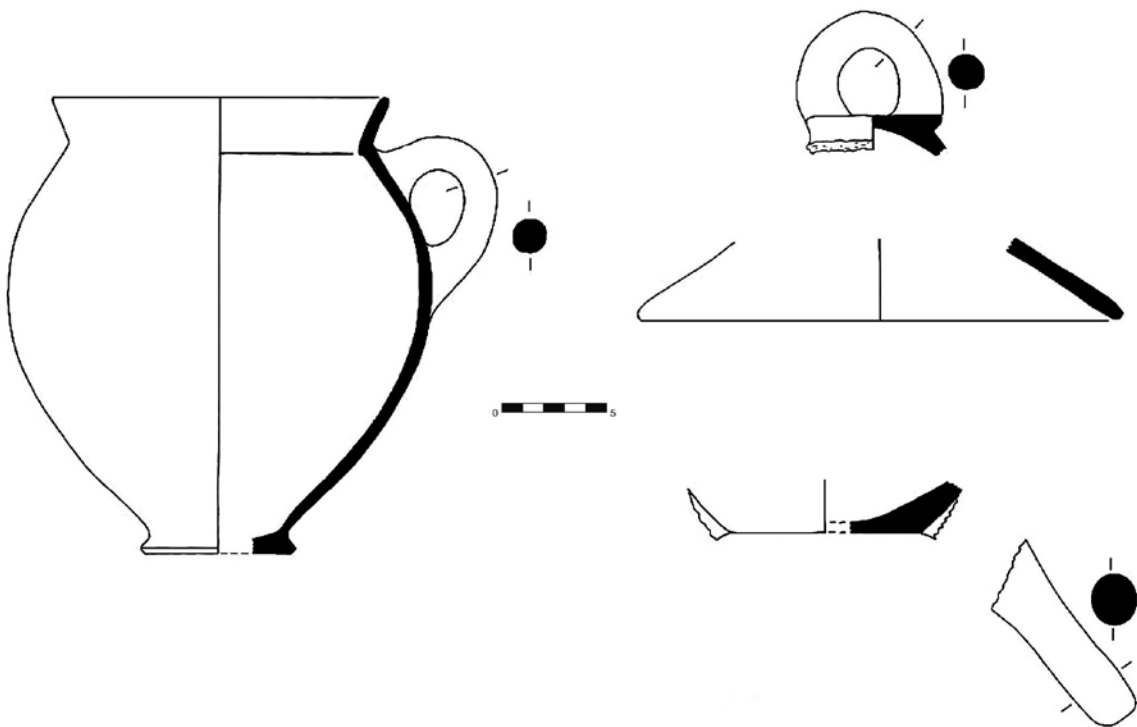
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SITE	FOOD			
	Quantity	Access	Variety	Role
Lerna	Large	Unrestricted	Low	Solidarity
Tsougiza	Low (at the feast) High (distribution)	Restricted	Medium	Commensalism Reciprocity
Pylos	Large	Restricted	High	Confirmation of social structure

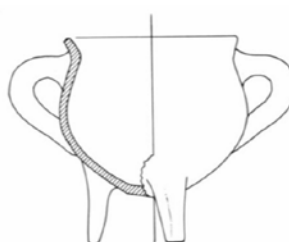
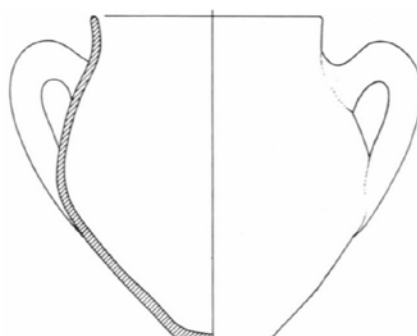
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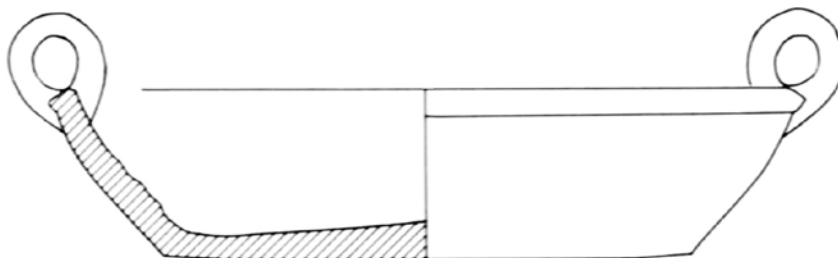
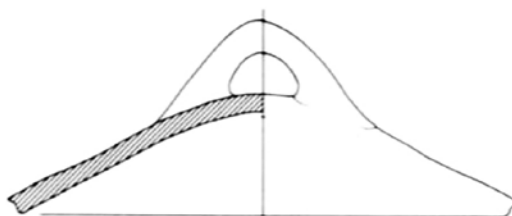
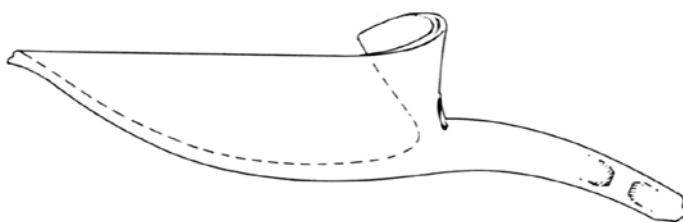
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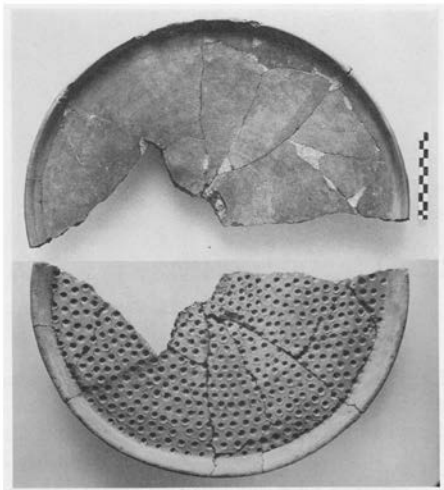
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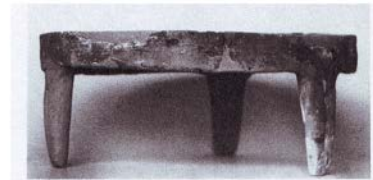
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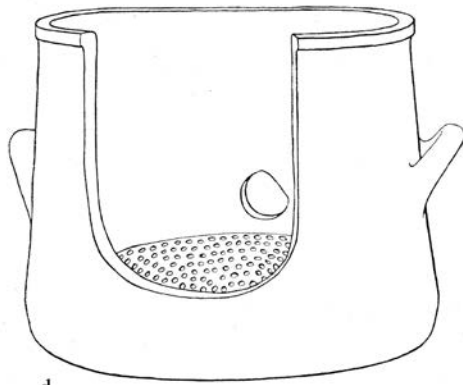
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