

Ancestors, Death & Burial



Lefkandi

Lefkandi

- Coastal settlement, flourishing from EBA to c.700 BC
 - **Xeropolis**: main town site
 - Toumba: main cemetery site
- Stands out wealth & evidence for early trading contacts with Cyprus & Levant
- Focus of excavations by [British School at Athens](#)



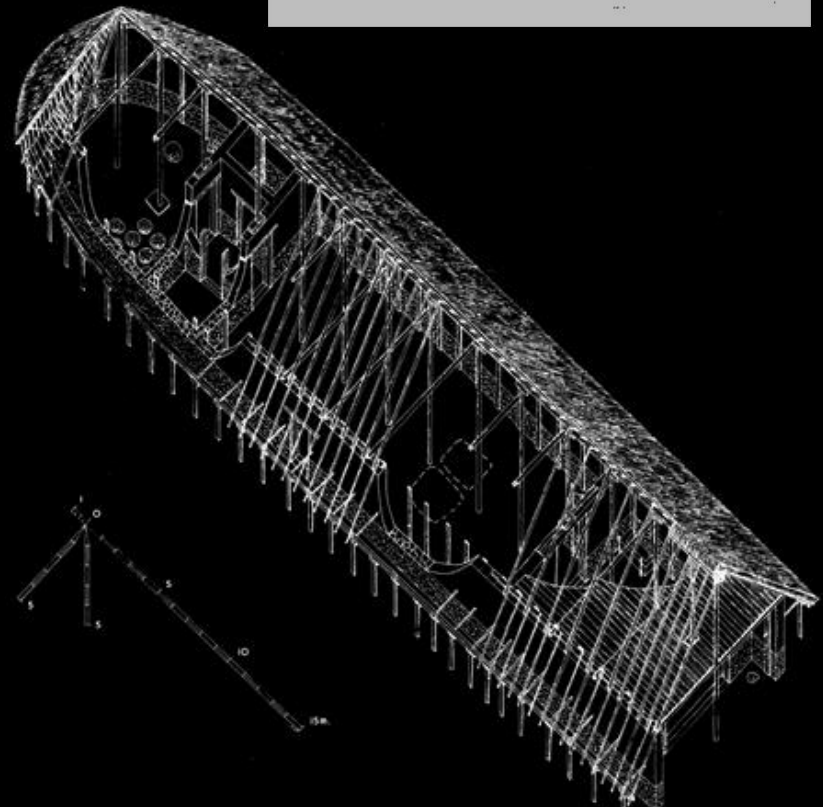
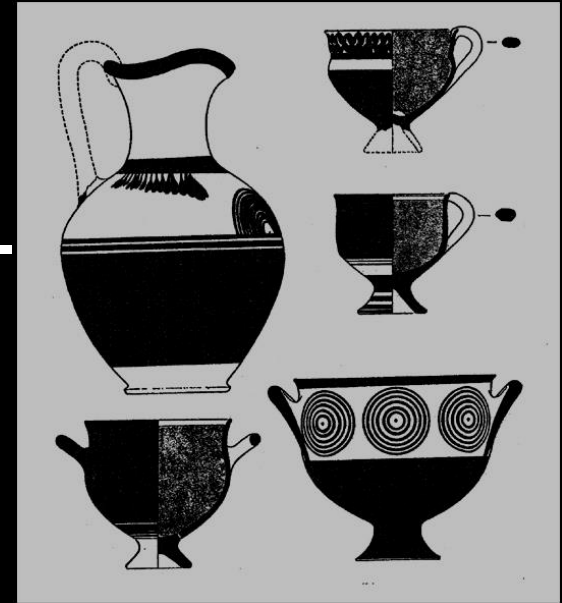
■ Chronology

-
- MPG Burials
- Toumba
- 62b
- 68
- 49
- 17
- 12b
- 6
- N



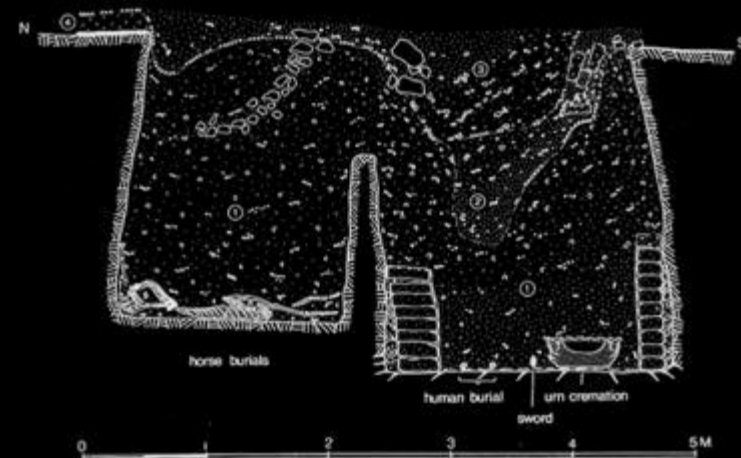
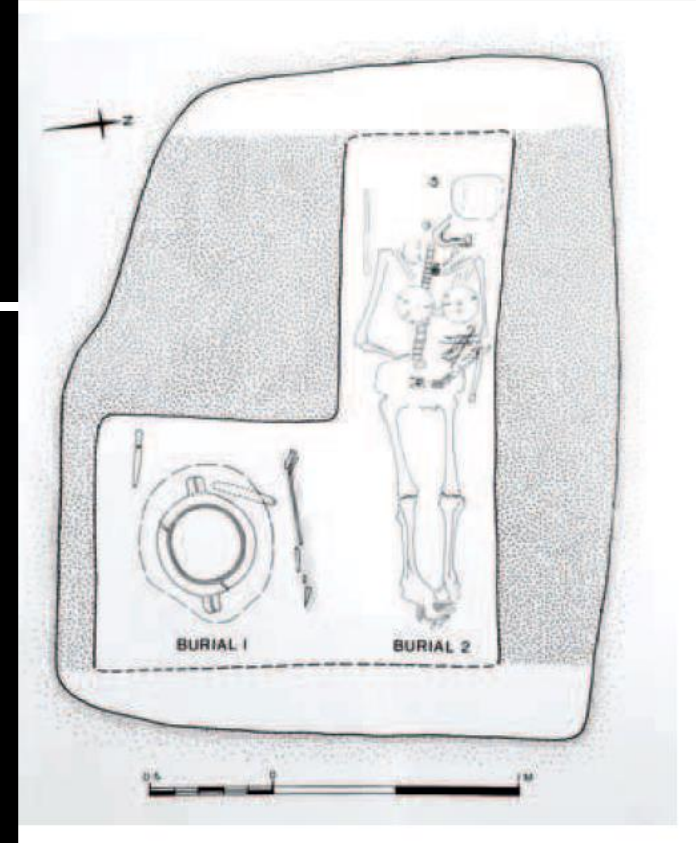
Heroön

- Apsidal building: 45 x 10m facing East
- Characteristics of architecture:
 - Particularly large
 - Certain features are suggestive of early temple architecture
- Chieftain's house?
- Early temple?
- Or **heroön**: shrine to a charismatic individual?
- Not in use for long before it was abandoned & destroyed c.950 BC



Heroön

- Used for double burial:
 - Male cremation in bronze urn
 - Female inhumation (facing East)
 - & horse burials
 - Covered with tumulus
- Funerary ritual of hero recalling Homeric practices?
- Tumulus: was the site revered by (later) inhabitants?
- Iron Age cemetery builds up at edge of burial mound



Male Burial

- Cremated
 - Bronze funerary urn: Cypriot 12th century heirloom?
 - Warrior equipment: killed sword & linen shroud/cloak
- “this burial complex is not a grander version of typical funerals; it completely overturns every norm”
(Morris 1996: 3)
- Hero buried in his “palace” with his wife
 - Why a double burial?



Bronze krater in situ

Female Burial

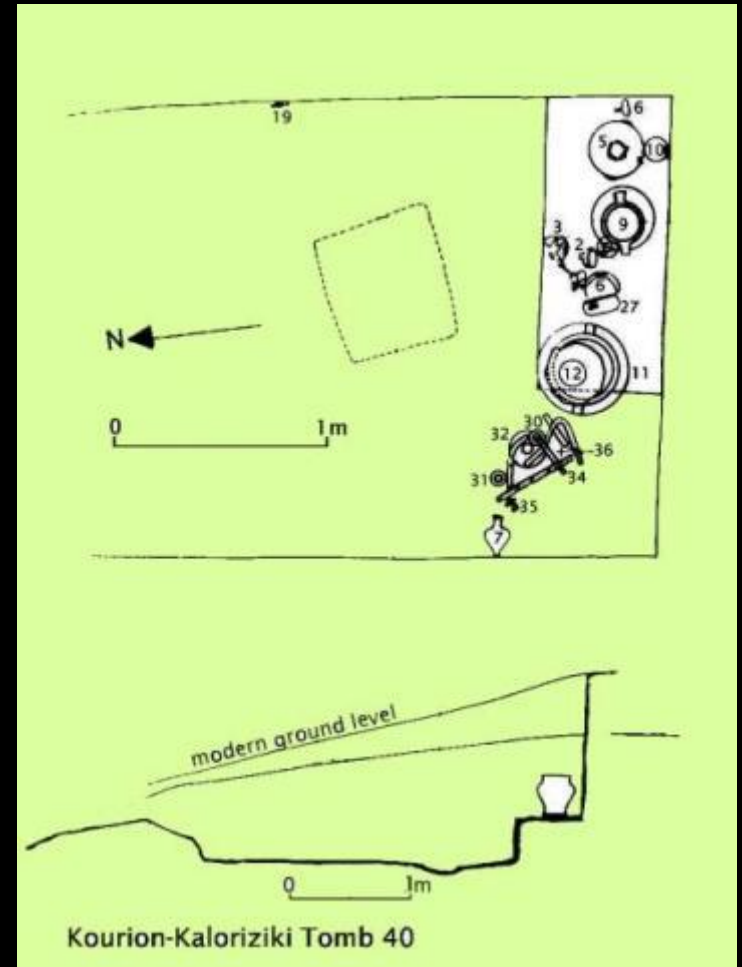
- Fantastically wealthy burial
 - Gold pectoral & breast plates
 - Gold & faience necklace with gold pendant (antique – from Babylon, c.2000 BC)
 - Iron knife with ivory handle by her head
 - Group of 9 bronze & iron gilt pins
 - Gold & electrum finger rings
- Personal wealth or reflecting familial wealth / dowry?





Heroön

- Double burials of warrior & wife attested on Crete & Cyprus in 11th century Cyprus:
- *Kourion Kaloriziki T.40*
 - Warrior burial in bronze cremation urn:
 - Almost exact parallel for Lefkandi urn
 - In Cypriot context this is interpreted as a Minoan "heirloom"
- North Cemetery Knossos



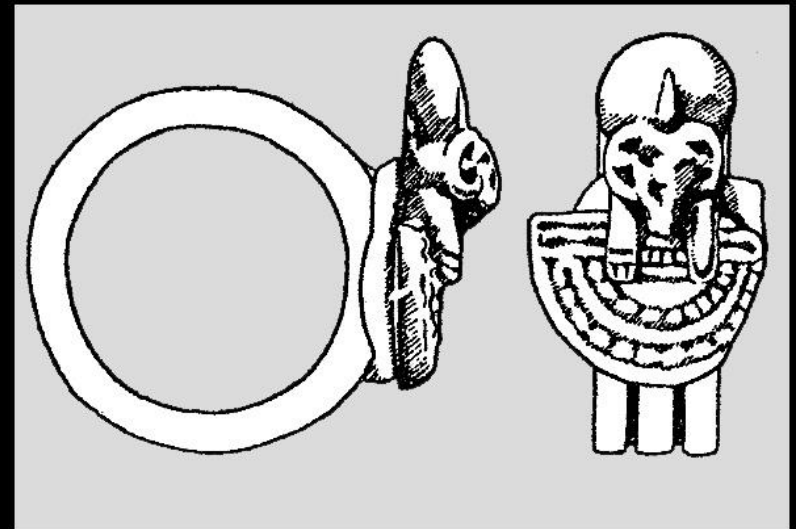
Toumba Cemetery

- Close association of cemetery & the mound:
 - Burial ground started following destruction of building & construction of the mound
 - Memorialisation, commemoration, ancestors?
- 83 tombs: shaft graves for inhumations (no full examples recovered) & cremations
- 34 pyres: in situ cremations over large rectangular pit



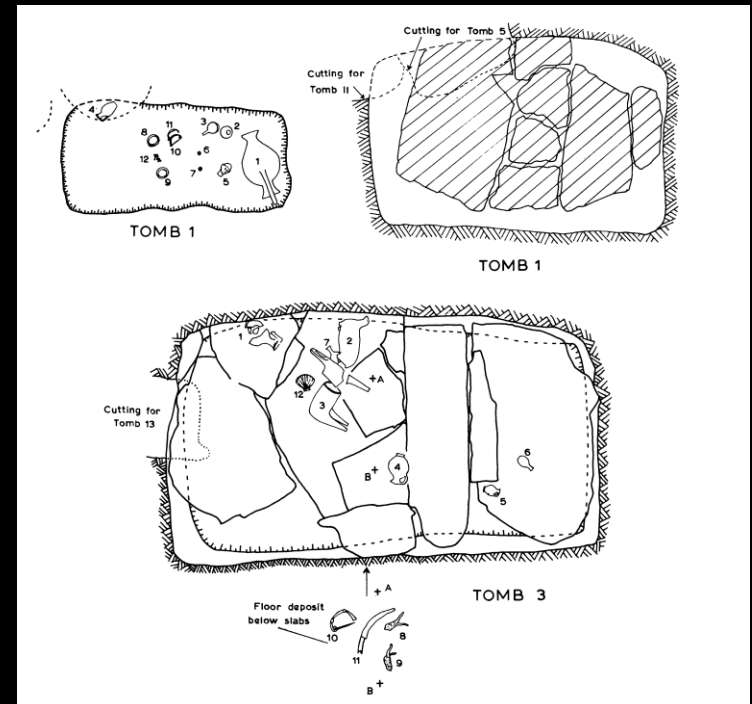
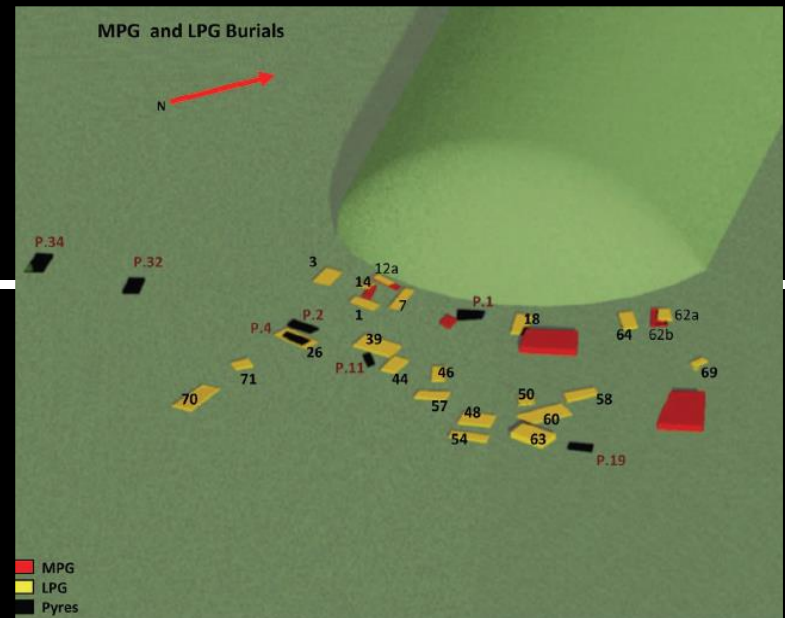
Toumba

- Very wealthy burial ground
- Plentiful evidence for links with Egypt & Levant
 - Egyptian faïences include rings, plaques & vases
- EIA Greece: gold very rarely enters burial record, except at Lefkandi
 - Typical Lefkandi style, but some evidence for Phoenician links?



Fragmentation

- Relationship between shaft graves 1 & 3?
- Tomb 1: scraps of bones associated with wealthy grave goods:
 - Ceramic head, pair of gold earrings, 2 bronze bracelets, faience necklace, glass beads
 - Pottery: 1 trefoil jug, 1 bowl, 1 dipper jug, 1 oil juglet
- Tomb 3: Ceramic “funerary” offerings on slabs above grave
 - Centaur body, animal vase, 5 oil juglets.
- Pebble floor at base of shaft:
 - 4 bone fragments, 2 gold sheet fragments, 1 bronze fibula, iron knife with ivory handle, seashell



Centaur

- Centaur deliberately split between 2 graves
- Ritual action?
- Closest parallel from Cyprus



Enkomi centaur

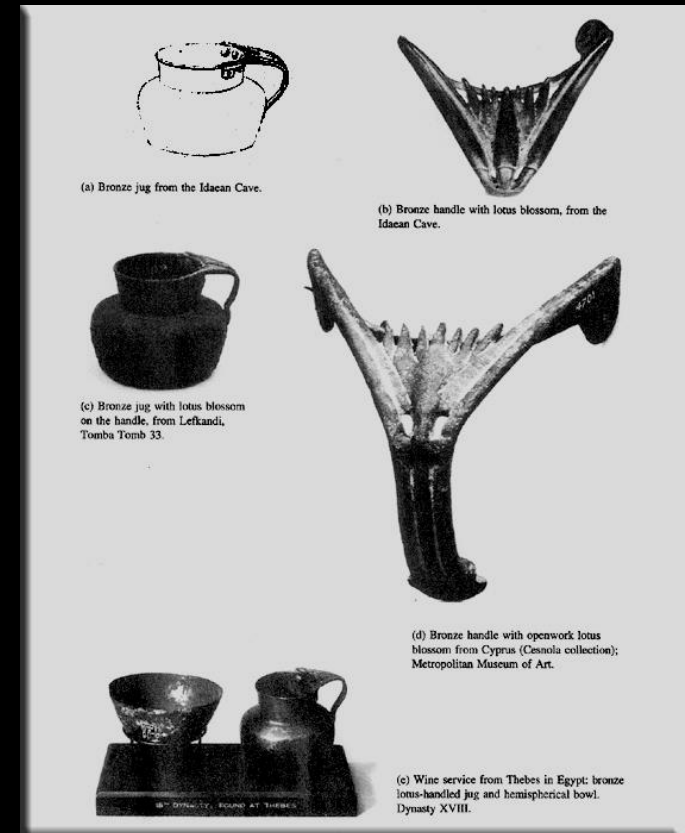


Lefkandi centaur



Lotus Jugs

- “Egyptian” lotus vase from two tombs in 9th-8th century contexts
- Similar vases attested in Crete during 9th-8th centuries:
 - 5 from **Idaeon cave**
 - 2 from **Fortetsa Tomb P**
 - 1 from **Amnisos**
- Seen as evidence for direct trade with EIA Egypt:
 - Egyptian parallels date to Dynasties XVIII-XIX



Lotus Jugs

- EIA lotus jugs associated with hemispherical bronze bowls:
 - Egyptianising wine set current in Egypt, southern Levant & Cyprus at end of LBA
- Are the Greek examples “heirlooms”, made 250-500 years before deposition?
- Or contemporary manufacture in Egypt?
 - Carter (1998): special gift objects which are curated as evidence of prestige/status



Hala Sultan Tekke Lotus jug



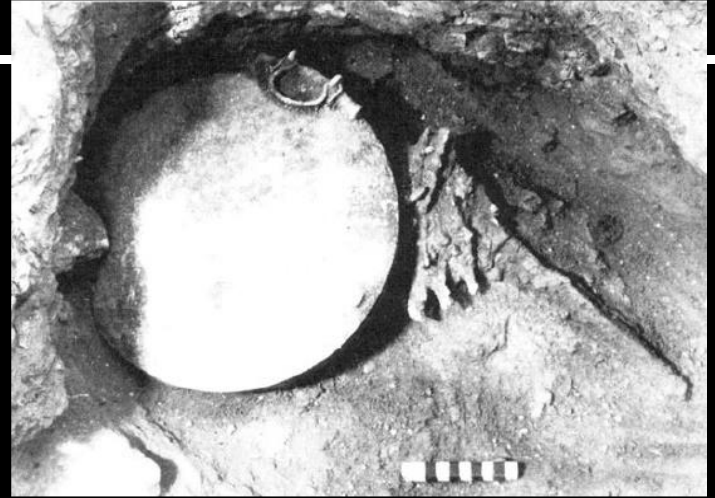
Deir el-Balah lotus jug

Tomb 79

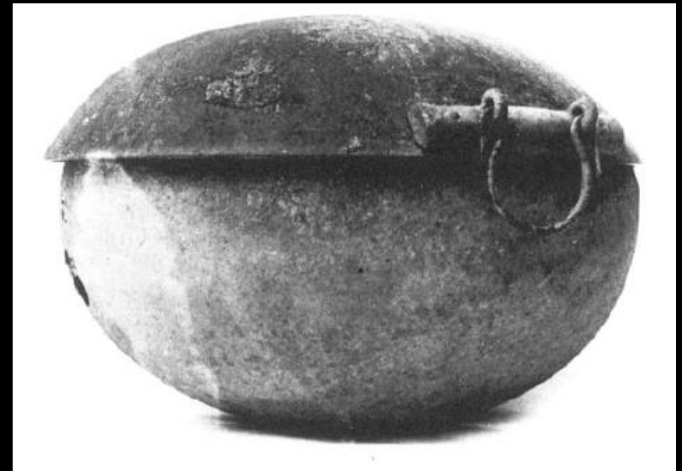
- Mid-9th century BC
- Niche in side of shaft contained burial & selected grave goods:
 - Cremated bones in bronze cauldron
 - Weapons: killed sword, spearhead & arrowhead
 - One earring
- Niche sealed with boulder & shaft filled with ash, pottery from pyre (incomplete), other earring



Earrings



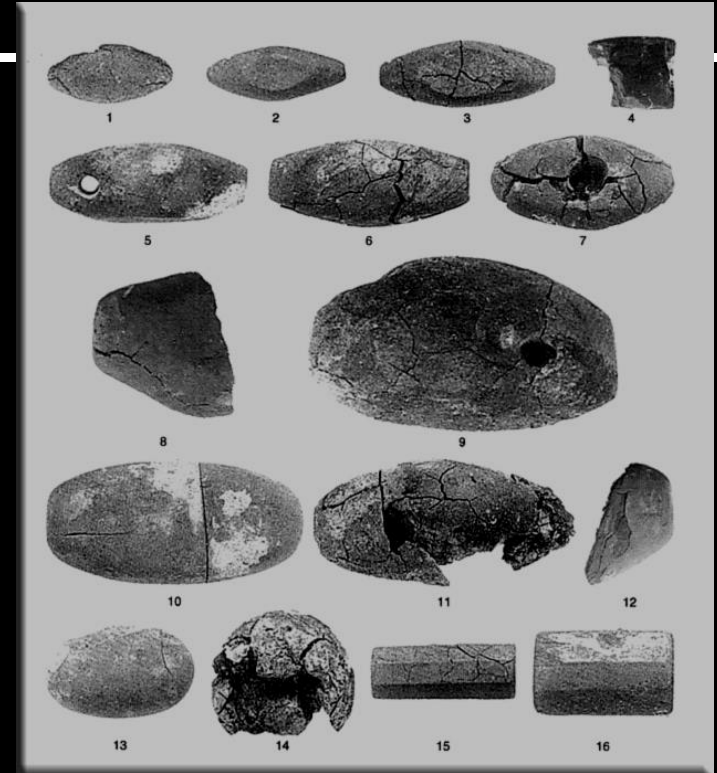
Cauldron in situ



Cauldron & lid

Heirlooms

- Grave goods include a number of imports: Pottery from Attica, Cyprus & Phoenicia
- “Heirlooms” or antiques
 - MBA North Syrian seal
 - 16 LBA haematite weights & bronze weighing balance
- Kroll (2008): not a functional set, but brought together as part of personal funerary equipment



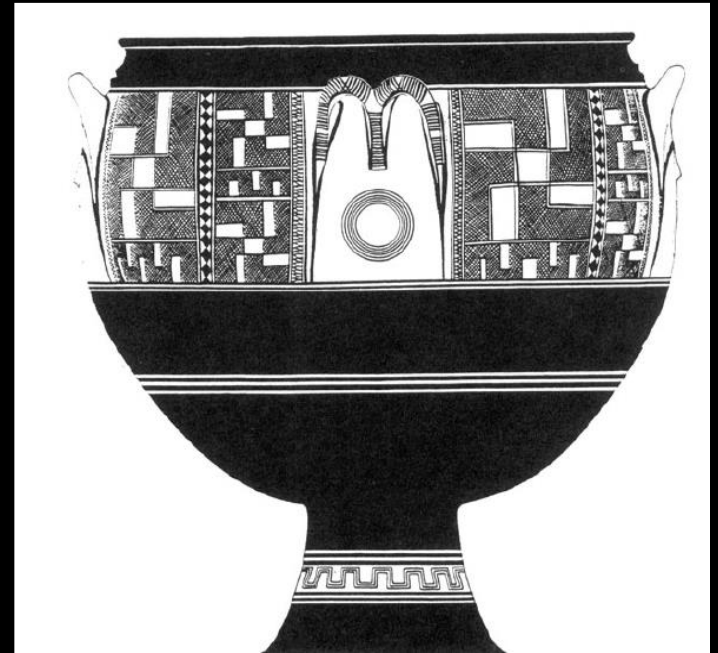
Weights



Seal

Tomb 79: A Warrior Trader?

- Wealthy burial with accoutrements of warrior: weapons & krater
 - Identified as a “warrior trader”
 - Phoenician trader (Papadopoulos 1997)?
 - Greek pirate trade (Luranghi 2006)?
- Important insight into early Greek society & maritime interaction
- Long-term continuity of trading activity within Cypro-Levantine world
- Active participation of Euboeans in Near Eastern trade of earlier Iron Age



Reconstructed krater

Lefkandi Wealth

- Exceptional for EIA Greece
- Close links with Cyprus & Phoenicians
- Exceptional burials accompanied by antiques with biographies
 - **Heirlooms** presupposes that they pass down within a family over the generations
 - **Biography objects** can circular as gifts between elites, acquiring histories & cultural significance



Necklace from Heroön burial

Summary

- Lefkandi stands out for wealth in Early Iron Age Greece
- Memorialisation: significance of the Toumba monument & the development of the MPG cemetery
- Gendered status?
- Importance of new warrior status: ideological creation of heroic world
 - How does this relate to Homeric epic?
 - New forging of identities intrinsic to being Greek
- Close links with Cypro-Phoenician world:
 - Shared cultural practices & use of status symbols