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A Euboean Warrior Trader

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A EUBOEAN WARRIOR TRADER

Summary A recently discovered burial in the Toumba Cemetery at Lefkandi, Euboea, differs from others previously found there in the shape of the tomb and the method of burial, which is a cremation contained in a bronze cauldron. The offerings, which include a sword, spearhead and iron arrowheads, make it certain that it is the burial of a warrior, but others, such as a series of stone weights, a N. Syrian cylinder seal and vases from Cyprus and Phoenicia indicate that he was a trader as well. In this preliminary account, these and other aspects of the burial are considered.

In the course of the 1994 British excavations in the Toumba cemetery at Lefkandi we found a tomb which is unique to that burial ground, and to Greece as a whole for the early 9th century B.C.¹

The burial was without precedent in that the cremated remains together with some offerings had been deposited in a niche cut into the side of the bottom of the shaft instead of on its floor. It was, also, most unusual in that the cremated bones were contained in a bronze cauldron with lid, though an antecedent for this practice can be found in the earlier burial inside the 'Heroon' (Fig. 1).

The tomb, no. 79, was situated in the newly discovered south extension of the cemetery where the burials appear to be uniformly Sub-Protogeometric in date and to include more than the usual number of pyres.² The burial, in this case, is firmly dated to Sub-Protogeometric II by the presence in it of two, nearly identical, Attic Early Geometric II oenochoae (Fig. 2).

The cremation has clearly been carried out elsewhere since the sides of the shaft bore no signs of scorching, whereas immense heat had been generated in the pyre, sufficient to warp several of the vases, even vitrifying some fragments of pottery.

The cremated bones had been collected from the pyre, after it had cooled or been quenched, and placed in the bronze cauldron, which, together with the warrior's weapons and some other offerings, was then deposited in the niche and the opening sealed by a large river boulder. Subsequently, the shaft was filled with ashes from the pyre and other offerings, principally vases, though their generally incomplete state show that no attempt had been made to collect everything.

The following report is being given before full study of the finds in order that this important burial may be made available quickly to students of the period. It should be regarded as preliminary and is by no means complete.

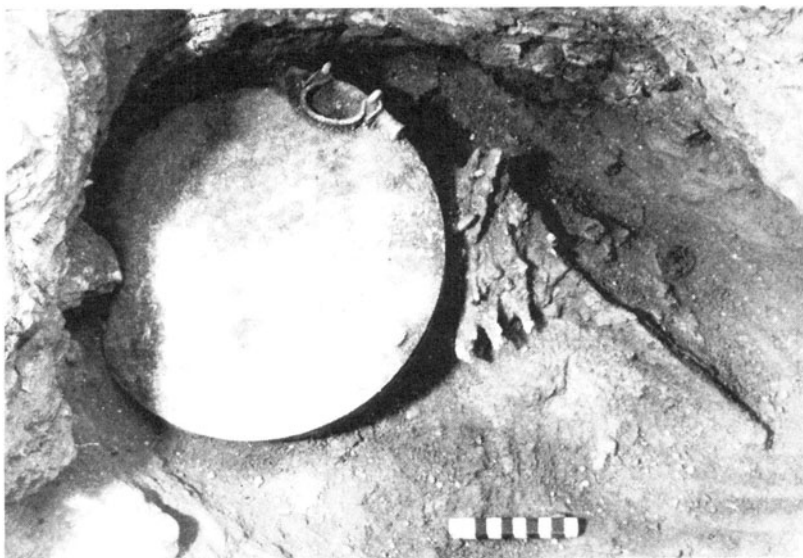


Figure 1
The burial niche and its deposition.

We may start with the objects in the niche or chamber. The near hemispherical cauldron (diam. 21.5; ht. 16.7) and its lid with handle (diam. 29; ht. 6.5) are in an unusually well-preserved state for bronzes on this site since



Figure 2
An Attic EG II oenochoe. Ht. 13 cm.

they had been protected from direct contact with the soil (Fig. 3). Not surprising in this early period, no close parallel is known for their shape or use as an urn, though bronze cauldrons do occur in roughly contemporary burials on Cyprus, but not used to contain cremations at that stage. An early 8th century burial on the island at Salamis, provides a later example.³ Beside the cauldron had been placed a 'killed' iron sword and a spearhead, both resembling in form others from the cemetery.⁴ New, however, at Lefkandi were the substantial tanged iron arrowheads, some 25 in all, of slightly varying sizes, which had fused into two concreted masses (Figs. 4 and 5). Nine others of identical form were found in the fill of the shaft.⁵ Two iron knives completed the warrior's accoutrements, if we exclude a bronze grater, also in excellent condition, it being the third instance at Toumba of this curious association with weapons (Fig. 6).⁶

Three other offerings in the niche appear to have no military association. A small lunate-

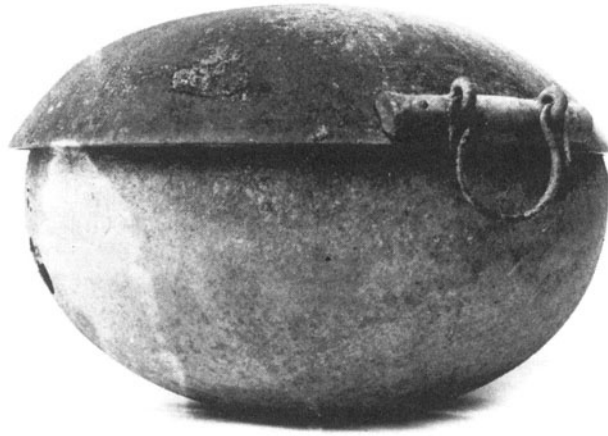


Figure 3
The bronze cauldron and lid.

shaped bronze object, with wire wrapped around each terminal and linking them, can hardly be other than an earring; its twin was found in the shaft fill (Fig. 7).⁷ Unidentifiable are the badly melted and incomplete remains of a substantial bronze

object, the only distinguishable features of which are two heavy globular 'knobs'. A fragmentary chain consisting of a ring with small rings attached could be part of the same object. It must have been a prized possession for it to have been collected in this condition

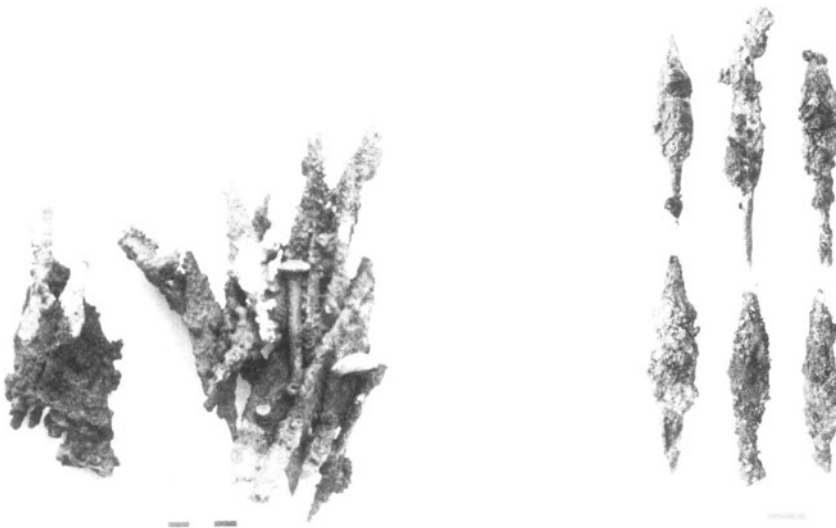


Figure 4–5
Iron arrowheads.



Figure 6
Bronze grater.

and placed with the burial. Can they be elements of a weighing balance, and so connected with the other unusual but clearly recognisable objects placed in the niche, — a series of twelve stone weights, also badly burnt, to which can be added a further four of similar shapes but smaller contained in the fill of the shaft?⁸ Two are hexagonal 'bars' with one wide facet, clearly the base. The others are of amygdaloid shape with one face partly flattened (Fig. 8 a–g).



Figure 7
Bronze 'earrings'. L. of each 2 cm.

Turning to the fill of the shaft, apart from objects mentioned above, the main interest lies in the pottery it contained, with one notable exception, a cylinder seal. Discoloured by burning, its material, like that of the weights, is probably haematite, but in this case it is an antique of great age, belonging to a class of N. Syrian cylinders dated around 1800 B.C. (Fig. 9).⁹

This Near Eastern connection is attested too by some of the pottery which included parts of two 'Phoenician' bichrome jugs, the most complete of which has a ridged neck, a long-lived shape very common in the 'Phoenician' repertoire (Fig. 10).¹⁰ Both jugs are the earliest examples of this type to reach the Aegean.¹¹ There were also present fragments of three small Cypriot jugs, two in White Painted Ware and one of Black-on-Red.

Of the local pottery, parts were preserved of some six pendent-semicircle plates, all with

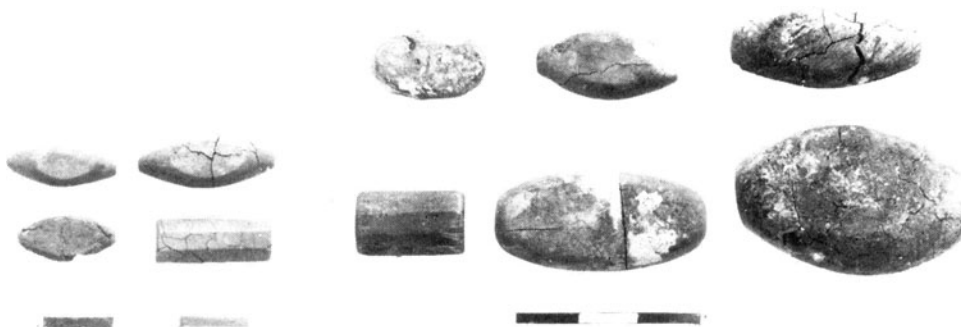


Figure 8
8(a–b) Stone weights.



Figure 9
N. Syrian cylinder seal and impression. Ht. of seal 1.8 cm.



Figure 10
Phoenician jug. Preserved ht. 15 cm.

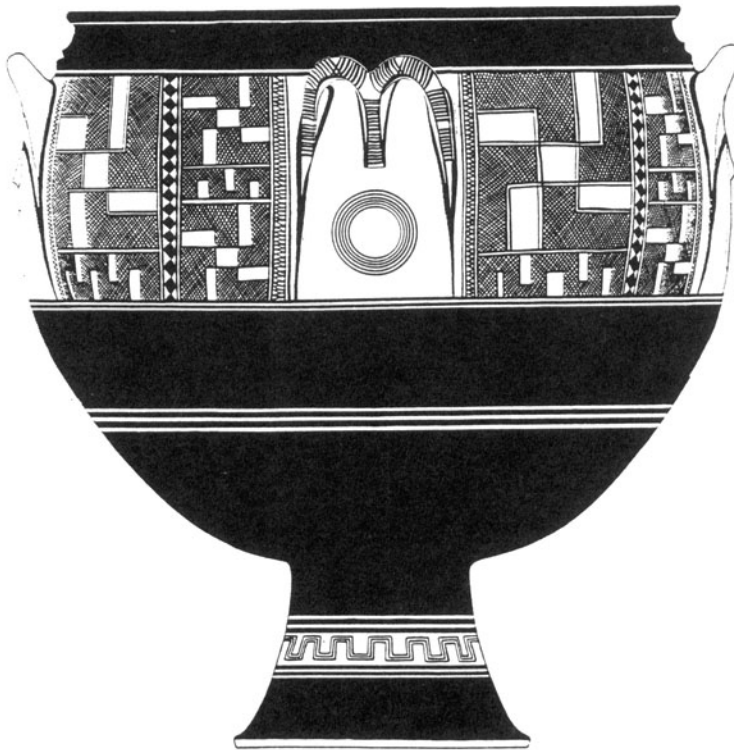


Figure 11
Crater restored in drawing. Ht. c. 76 cm.

double handles, of which only one, though incomplete, was capable of restoration. Strangely the popular pendent-semicircle skyphos is absent, while the version with full circles was represented by only one example, and it is not of the standardised type.

Quite outstanding must have been two monumental standed craters of which, sadly, only parts survived, though enough of one was preserved to allow its restoration in drawing with reasonable accuracy, a vase rivalling in size that associated with the much earlier 'Heroon' burials (Fig. 11).¹²

The two Attic Early Geometric II oenochae have already been mentioned in connection with the date of the tomb; unlike most of the pottery they are almost intact and bear no signs of burning, suggesting that they could have been post-cremation offerings.

The early Dark Age connections of Lefkandi with the Near East and especially with Cyprus have already been well documented and the evidence for them is most apparent in the Toumba cemetery.¹³ So, to that extent, our new Tomb 79 causes no surprise, but it does provide yet further welcome confirmation of these long-distance links.

It raises, however, new issues, which at this preliminary stage are best left as open

questions to be pursued after further research and study.

Is the ritual of burying a cremated warrior in a bronze cauldron essentially a continuation of that practised in the 'Heroon' tomb, though in that case the urn was a much more valuable decorated bronze amphora?¹⁴ And was there continuity, as yet undocumented, in Euboea which concluded in the similar Late Geometric warrior burials at the West Gate in Eretria?¹⁵

Do the weapons in combination with the Near Eastern objects and, especially, the collection of weights imply a merchant venturer of warrior status and, if so, were such people an important element in the background to early overseas trading?

Is the new tomb with its small side chamber indebted to ideas from another region or was it simply a local innovation, not, as far as we know, repeated subsequently?

Finally, on a possibly, but not necessarily, lighter vein, did the earrings, if such they are, belong to the warrior and did he wear them?

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ABBREVIATIONS

<i>AR</i>	<i>Archaeological Reports.</i>
<i>BSA</i>	<i>Annual of the British School at Athens</i>
<i>LK I</i>	<i>Lefkandi I, Text and Plates</i> , M.R. Popham et al. (editors), 1979–1980.
<i>LK II, 1</i>	<i>Lefkandi II, Part 1</i> , R.W.V. Catling and I.S. Lemos, 1990.
<i>LK II, 2</i>	<i>Lefkandi II, Part 2</i> , M.R. Popham et al. (editors), 1993.
<i>RDAC</i>	<i>Reports of the Department of Antiquities, Cyprus.</i>
<i>SCE</i>	<i>Swedish Cyprus Expedition.</i>
<i>Skales</i>	<i>Palaepaphos — Skales. An Iron Age Cemetery in Cyprus</i> , V. Karageorghis, 1983.

NOTES

1. The excavation by the British School at Athens, which took place in April 1994, was directed by the authors, assisted by Ric Tyler, under the general supervision of the Ephor of Euboea, Mrs. E. Sakellarakis.

We are grateful to several colleagues for advice, and, in particular, to Prof. J.N. Coldstream on the Attic vases, Dr. B. Teissier on the cylinder seal and to Dr. P. Bikai on the Phoenician jugs.

2. A plan of the Toumba cemetery at the end of 1994 season is given in the *The Archaeology of Greek Colonisation*, Essays dedicated to Sir John Boardman, ed. G.R. Tsatsiklidze and F. De Angelis (Oxford 1993) 16.

3. Though differing in shape, the nearest examples are

from the Palaepaphos Skales cemetery, Tomb 49, no. 10 and Tomb 80, no. 27, dated to the Cypriot Geometric I period and within the limits of the Cypriot Geometric II period respectively, *Skales* 59–76, pl. 60 and fig. 88; T.80: 250–57, pl. 158, fig. 156.

The later cremation in Salamis Royal Tomb I, reportedly of a woman, was accompanied by Cypro-Geometric III pottery and imported vases of Attic Middle Geometric and Euboean SPG, Gjerstad E., 'A Cypro-Geometric Marriage in the 8th cent. BC' in *Salamine de Chypre* (Paris 1980).

4. *LK* I, 253–6; *BSA* 77 (1982), 241, pl. 26; *AR* 1988/89, 118; *LK* II, 2, pl. 13.

5. See *SCE* II, 79, pl. 19A for a comparable though later array of some fourteen iron arrowheads accompanied by an Attic MG II crater in Amathus Tomb 13, dated to CG III and CAI; Toumba Tomb 26, of LPG date, also contained some ten iron arrowheads, but these were of the flat, plate variety, discussed by H.W. Catling in *LK* I, 183, pl. 244c. Curiously, a single small plate arrowhead of bronze, of typical LBA type, was found in the fill of our tomb.

6. *BSA* 77 (1982) 240, pl. 33, g; *AR* 1988/9 118, fig. 2.

7. They can hardly be other than examples of the boat-shaped earrings, customarily of gold, with a long history in the Near East, which R. Higgins thought to be a type which had 'doubtless reached Greece from Syria' (*Greek and Roman Jewellery* (2nd ed.) 119, with references). Related types occur in contemporary Cypriot contexts, e.g., Skales, T. 75, no. 100, of gold and with a different method of attachment, *Skales* 214 with references and pl. 130.

8. The suggestion of a weighing balance arises from such a combination of scales and a weight in Tomb 67 at Palaepaphos-Skales cemetery dated from CG IA to early CG II, *Skales* 174 and with the discussion in Appendix VIII, 424, which, however, is concerned with LBA

parallels. Other examples of Early Iron Age weights include one in Salamis Tomb I, Yon, M., *Salamine de Chypre* II, La Tombe I, no. 39, pls. 16 and 17, and the group of gold bars and dumps, with examples in silver and electrum, deposited in the Tholos tomb at Khaniale Tekke near Knossos of probable late 9th century date, if they are of standardised weights, J. Boardman, *BSA* 62 (1967) 61–2.

The present weights of the amygdaloid examples are, in grammes, 159.7, 89.9, 44.9, 25.0, 21.9, 8.3, 5.9, and 4.1; of the hexagonal ones, 30.1 and 10.5. All have been severely burnt and discoloured. They are being studied by Dr. M.J. Price prior to their full publication.

9. Dr. B. Teissier, who is preparing a publication of the cylinder seal, has kindly informed us that she would ascribe it to a N. Syrian school with a date of c. 1850–1750 B.C.

10. Its base is lacking but the other jug has a ring base, a feature which has been claimed to be a later development, S. Chapman, *Berytus* 21 (1972), 150–3, and W.P. Anderson, *Bulletin of the American School of Oriental Research* 279 (1990) 41–7.

11. The next earliest is a jug in Tomb 107 at Knossos, which is likely to be among the oldest offerings with the burials having a range from the late 9th to the 7th cent. B.C.; J.N. Coldstream, *RDAC* 1984, 122.

12. *LK* II, 1, pl. 54. Parts of other very large local craters have been found with other cremations, e.g. Pyre 11/12, nos. 12 and 13, the latter having decoration similar to ours, *BSA* 77 (1982) 77, pl. 75.

13. Summarised by M.R. Popham in *The Archaeology of Greek Colonisation* (above n. 2) 11–34.

14. *LK* II, 2, pls. 18–21, and section 6 by H.W. Catling where reference (p. 86) is given to Kaloriziki T. 40 of LC IIIB date in which, unusually, one (and possibly two) bronze amphorae were used as urns for cremations.

15. Bérard C., *Eretria* III (Bern 1970).