Panagiotis Michalopoulos

Cultural Crossroads in the Corinthian Gulf during the EBA: Insights into a Ceramic Assemblage from Aigion

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ABSTRACT

Cultural Crossroads in the Corinthian Gulf during the EBA
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The Corinthian Gulf offers valuable information with regard to the effort to understand the cultural interactions of the late 3rd millennium when major changes occurred in southern mainland Greece, including Eastern Achaea (Aigialeia). To this end, the settlement of Aigion is particularly important because of its positioning and the special features of its pottery, illustrated by the ceramic assemblage from the Minasian plot. Despite limitations, this assemblage provides significant evidence of the local ceramic tradition, the associated changes and the chronological synchronisms and possible interactions with other sites. Based on this evidence an attempt to associate Aigion with a network of settlements around the Corinthian Gulf sheds some light on its role in an interconnected environment, within which a large part of the contemporary transformations in the Aegean took place.

KEYWORDS
Corinthian Gulf, Aigialeia, Aigion, early Helladic pottery, ›coastscape‹
Introduction

Aigion in Achaea, inhabited throughout the prehistoric period, shows significant evidence of activity during the late EBA period based on the pottery of the Minasian plot, which is indicative of interaction with other contemporary settlements. In this paper, other than the importance of the Anatolianizing influences and its manifestation in this assemblage, the focus is set on the context of the Corinthian Gulf. In this scope, a brief overview of the wider topographical and archaeological context of EBA Aigion, necessary to the comprehension of interaction, is followed by a short presentation of the context of the assemblage and the related methodological decisions. The various ceramic classes and shapes are then presented, followed by a summary of the various changes, which suggest relative synchronisms with other sites and indicate possible networks of interaction, in which Aigion was an active participant.

The Topographical and Archaeological Context of Aigion

The Corinthian Gulf, between central Greece and the Peloponnese, is delimited to the west by the Rio-Antirrio strait and to the east by the Alkyonides Gulf. Aigialeia along its southern shore occupied the area between the river Sythas (east), Ziria (west),

2 Michalopoulos 2022.
3 Abbreviations: EBA = Early Bronze Age; EH = Early Helladic. The use of abbreviations in the description of classes, shapes and decoration is limited to the associated figures and only where this is considered necessary. Abbreviations: for classes-surface treatment: DP = Dark-Painted; DonL = Dark on Light; LonD = Light on Dark; NC = Non-classified; PP = Pattern-Painted; Unp = Unpainted; YM = Yellow-Mottled; for macro fabrics: f = fine; m = medium coarse; c = coarse; for shapes: N.A. = non applicable; D. = Diameter; R. Diam. = Rim Diameter; H. = Height; Th. = thickness.
4 In this paper, Aigeira is considered the eastern limit, in accordance with the modern limits of the region.
Mount Helmos and Erymanthos (south) excluding the area of Kalavryta (south). Along the coast from Lampiri to Krathion are several small bays open to the rest of the Corinthian Gulf, a feature shared with western Corinthia, but contrasting with the more complex shoreline of the rest of the gulf, which features numerous semi-closed and closed bays. The rivers and torrents running through Aigialeia towards the Corinthian Gulf, vital for the development of settlements, connect the coastal and the mountainous inland areas and function as landmarks for possible boundaries of territories, a concept suggested for other EBA mainland sites. Fertile plains can be found across Aigialeia, with the largest extending eastwards from Aigion.

Achaea has generally been recognized as an area of non-random EH activity relatively early in the existing bibliography. In western Achaea, recent work confirms this recognition while in Eastern Achaea or Aigialeia, besides some work on EBA sites, most of the settlements, including Aigion, are not fully published and remain relatively unknown. Most of the EBA archaeological evidence comes from rescue and systematic excavations, supported by surveys (Fig. 1).

The EBA settlement of Aigion, situated in the northeastern part of the modern town, on an elongated hill, 60 m above sea level is accessible from the south, while to the north, a cliff sets the limits of the settlement and a narrow strip of land separates it from the coast, where the old and modern harbor lie. The location of the site offers views across Aigialeia and the Corinthian Gulf, reaching the mountains of central Greece. Concurrently, the settlement is a landmark visible to outsiders, possibly stating the existence of a territory.

The archaeological information published mostly in preliminary reports derives from rescue excavations (Fig. 2), characterized by notable constraints, revealing fragmented remains. However, the EBA settlement, going back to the FN (Fig. 2. 3), seems to have covered an area of fewer than sixteen hectares, most likely between eight to twelve hectares. Given the size of other contemporary southern Greek mainland settlements, it was most likely a small-sized settlement, at least compared to EBA Keryneia, which was larger than twenty hectares, considering the latest evidence.

Aigion, despite displaying several aspects of a large-scale EBA settlement, does not seem to have served in this way, even if one considers the evidence from the Mycenaean occupation of the site or the continuous and modern inhabitation of the site, which has played some role in its preservation. Based on the evidence from the rest of Aigialeia, however, the existence of pairs of settlements, one to the hinterland and another closer to the sea is possible. In the case of Helike, it has been suggested that it served as the harbor of the larger settlement of Keryneia, though together they could have formed a larger settlement as well. Kassaneva in southeastern Aigialeia could have been related to the latest ekistics evidence from the coastal site of Platanos. Likewise, at

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5 Kolia 2012, 324.
6 Weiberg 2011, 48–54.
7 Gadolou 2008, 45.
8 Åström 1964, 110.
9 See indicatively Gazis 2018; Aktipi 2020.
11 In addition to the surveys depicted in Fig. 1, EBA findings are cited in Petropoulos 1995, 231; Petropoulos 2006, 49 fig. 15, originating from a survey conducted along the west bank of the river Foinix without specific mention of particular newly discovered EBA sites.
12 For a reference in a broader context, see Weiberg – Finné 2013, 17.
13 Kolia 2015, 67.
14 Katsarou forthcoming.
15 Papazoglou-Manioudaki 2015, 314 fig. 1.
16 Kolia 2015, 67.
17 Katsarou forthcoming.
the western frontier of Aigialeia, Lampiri and Kamares might have developed a similar association. Aigion, accordingly, could have been closely associated with another, possibly larger, settlement that once existed in the hinterland closer to the plain.

The relationship between such possible pairs of settlements, or even wider and more complex associations, remains open. Accordingly, a hierarchical relationship cannot yet be proven, though a two-level hierarchy, as has been proposed before for the EH II settlements of the region of Hermionid, remains worthy of consideration. Any

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Site/Settlement</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Site 1</td>
<td>Lampiri</td>
<td>EH II</td>
<td>Personal communication with Dr. A. Vordos and N. Petropoulos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site 2</td>
<td>Kamares – Petropoulos Plot</td>
<td>EBA; EH II</td>
<td>Kolia 2005, 365; Kolia 2012, 325 fig. 645</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site 3</td>
<td>Aigion</td>
<td>FN–EH II</td>
<td>Fig. 2</td>
</tr>
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<td>Site 4</td>
<td>Keryneia</td>
<td>EH II–III</td>
<td>Kolia 2015; Kolia – Spiroulias 2017 and 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site 6</td>
<td>Platanos</td>
<td>EH II</td>
<td>Katsarou (forthcoming)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site 7a</td>
<td>Krathion</td>
<td>EH II</td>
<td>Mastrokostas 1967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site 7b</td>
<td>Akrata (coast area)</td>
<td>EH II</td>
<td>Katsarou (forthcoming)</td>
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<td>Site 8</td>
<td>Aigeira</td>
<td>FN–EH I; EH III–MH I</td>
<td>Alram Stern 2006, 19–88; Alram Stern 2010, 144</td>
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<tr>
<td>Site 9</td>
<td>Kassaneva</td>
<td>EH II (Lerna IIIB–C)</td>
<td>Pontrandolfo 2016; De Caro et al. 2016; De Feo – Granese 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site a</td>
<td>Kamares-Xeriko</td>
<td>EH II</td>
<td>Åström 1964, 109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site c</td>
<td>Ampelokipoi: Agios Ioannis-Sarakinovouni</td>
<td>EH II</td>
<td>De Caro et al. 2016, 123–127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site d</td>
<td>Chrysanthio: Vlachos</td>
<td>EH II</td>
<td>De Caro et al. 2016, 141–144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site e</td>
<td>Aiges: Plakopetra</td>
<td>EH II</td>
<td>De Caro et al. 2016, 179 f.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site f</td>
<td>Oasi: Kampo</td>
<td>EH II</td>
<td>De Caro et al. 2016, 168 f.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site g</td>
<td>Monastiri: Kouros</td>
<td>EH II</td>
<td>De Caro et al. 2016, 195</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Minasian Plot

The rescue excavation in the Minasian plot was conducted in a limited area and uncovered poorly-preserved remains; some contamination is observable, especially in the upper layers. Moreover, the continuous habitation during the EH II period, as several superimposed layers indicate, affects the preservation of the lower and older habitation levels.

Further remarks in this direction, however, remain risky and demand the integration of far more information from other sites.

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**Fig. 2:** Plots and roads in Aigion with EBA material
Several layers and contexts identified during the excavation, including destruction layers, parts of floors and associated floor deposits, pits, fills and a fixed hearth, have been interrelated, with many of them linked to specific walls, resulting in the formation of ten stratigraphic stages. Observations on the stratigraphy and architecture of these stages align with the distinction of two separate architectural periods (A and B), marked by a destruction.

More specifically, the walls associated with Period A (Stages 1–5) are highly fragmented and their paths cannot be defined. Notably, a curvilinear wall identified during Stage 5 is associated with a building or house of apsidal form. Following the destruction in Stage 5, from Stage 6 onwards (Period B), walls are generally stronger compared to those of Period A. They are associated with buildings or rooms that follow approximately the same orientation concurrently pointing to a possible plan repetition, a trend not observed during Stages 1–5.

Unfortunately, there are no intact buildings or rooms, as many layers consist of deposits, and artifacts are rarely preserved in situ. With regard to the EBA pottery, only a handful of cases were largely intact or restorable, while post-excavation preservation work was affected by issues such as poor storage conditions. Consequently, the study of the assemblage was mainly based on sherds, several of them highly fragmented, making it a challenge to identify the exact shapes or whether several sherds belong to the same vessel.

Despite the problems, stratigraphic preservation is generally better than other cases on the site. The identification of several superimposed layers played a crucial role in the construction of a chronological framework for the assemblage. Furthermore, the systematic collection of all the sherds during the excavation process, contrary to the usual excavation practices of the time, is considered a good case for the first systematic study of a generally unknown ceramic group. Consequently, this assemblage is valuable evidence in the effort to explore the EH II pottery of Aigion.

At this point, it is important to notice that any remarks concerning the chronological divisions proposed here are related to the material from the Minian plot: it does not necessarily apply to the settlement of Aigion as a whole and it is not in contrast with the prehistoric phases that Papazoglou-Manioudaki has proposed for the prehistoric settlement of Aigion.

### Classification System and Methodology

The Minasian assemblage has been studied and presented through a ware-based classification system; considering the technological orientation of this approach, sherds were assigned into categories based on two or more common features (surface treatment and macro-fabric composition) and the existence of limited information about shapes. Experience, however, has indicated that this system can be rigid under certain circumstances, including the interconnection of ceramic attributes, future...
accession of new assemblages, incorporation of information from microscopic fabric and cross-referencing with other assemblages.

For such reasons, and related to the ambiguities and the uniformity characterizing this method, Rutter proposed a class-based approach that is clear and easily replicated, based on the existence/absence and type of painted decoration, basic macroscopic fabric features, surface finish and color, applied in important EBA materials. Accordingly, the Minasian assemblage will be presented and reorganized according to a class-based system. However, one of the issues that this approach could not consider is a large amount of poorly preserved sherds labeled as non-classified units. This matter might raise some questions about the importance and validity of the unit counts but, given that counts are based both on diagnostic and non-diagnostic sherds, as will be further explained below, and the low number of non-classified sherds in the body of diagnostics, any result can be cross-checked.

According to the particularities of this assemblage and the adaptation of a class-based taxonomy, specific methodological decisions proved necessary, including the broad distinction of surface treatments due to the inherent variation of the associated terms, the application of varied techniques in the same vessel or surface and the similar effect of different techniques as the result of several stages of manufacture. Procedures like paddling and paring described by Rutter, the stage of drying, the application of a slip and the stage of firing can affect the appearance of the finish. The macroscopic fabric (macro-fabric) is classified into broad macro-fabric groups based on size, shape, color and density of inclusions. A broad distinction into fine, medium and coarse fabrics has been applied according to other assemblages, including that of Lerna. The color of the surface, fracture and core are described in general terms. Furthermore, counts include both diagnostic and non-diagnostic units. Rim sherds are mainly considered diagnostic for shapes, but in underrepresented cases, other form accessories closely assigned to a shape are included.

Regarding ceramic periodization, an attempt to trace possible remarkable changes in pottery production involved examining several stratigraphic stages as potential chronological turning points. This investigation included Stage 6, marking the beginning of architectural Period B. In this instance, some variations are observed in ceramic classes, though those related to shapes are not particularly pronounced. However, from Stage 7 onward, variations in ceramic classes become more evident.
accompanied by several notable changes in shapes, as will be further developed. Consequently, two distinct ceramic phases are identified, Phase I (Stages 1–6) and Phase II (Stages 7–10), independent of the architectural periods, but interconnected through the stratigraphic stages. It must be noted that several units could not be securely assigned to any stratigraphic stage and, as such, they are not included in the associated tables (Fig. 6, 7, 9, 10, 17). Additionally, Anatolianizing and hybrid shapes (Helladic tankards) have already been discussed and their significance from a chrono-cultural perspective has been raised. Here, those are included only in the related charts, without any further analysis.

The main point of reference is Lerna III because of the good preservation of the pottery, the comprehensive presentation, and the systematic documentation of parallels from other sites, along with comments on their variations. References to other contemporary sites are restricted, not due to lack of similarities, but for a synoptic presentation.

Analysis of the Minasian Assemblage

The EBA Ceramic Classes

(Fig. 4, 5, 6, 7)

19 **Fine: dark-painted** is the most common class in this assemblage, with two main variations: one with black-dark gray colored slips and another with brown-red colored slips. The latter is often roughly applied, thin and diluted, in lighter hues, similar to later Lerna III, at Romanos and Nafpaktos.

20 In the **fine: yellow-mottled** class, gray blots on the surface are typical. The term ›yellow-mottled‹ is preferred to ›light-painted‹ and to ›yellow blue slipped and polished‹. The former does not truly indicate the most striking features of the associated sherds at Aigion, while the latter includes a specific finish. Sherds associated with this class can be misidentified as unpainted, but in such cases, the existence of a grey core with clear limits in the fracture is a yellow-mottled feature. The slip is usually ›warm‹, a feature related to Lerna IIIC–D.

21 In the **fine: unpainted** class, the application of a self-slip is not excluded. A slip different from the clay of the vessel has, however, not been identified. Non-diagnostic sherds should be considered carefully when reading the counts of this class as unpainted surfaces from poorly preserved sherds could belong to other classes as well. Both diagnostic and non-diagnostic sherds, however, indicate a significant rise in the numbers of this class, as at other mainland sites.

22 The **fine: pattern-painted: dark-on-light** class is represented by only a few extremely fragmented sherds, while the **fine: pattern-painted: light-on-dark** class is identified only in a tiny sherd with such decoration, dated to Phase I, but its excavation group suffered from some contamination.

23 The **medium: dark-painted** class consists of a very small group whose macrofabric is varied. On the contrary, the **medium: unpainted class**, the outcome of merging
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Surface Treatment</th>
<th>Extent of Paint</th>
<th>Macrofabric</th>
<th>Parallels</th>
<th>Equivalent to Michalopoulos 2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unp</td>
<td>Polished; Burnished; Wiped</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>Fine 1</td>
<td>Tsoungiza: Pullen 2011, 338 tab. 4, 10; Helike: Katsarou 2011, 106; Kirra: Dor et al. 1960, 66; Askitario, Agios Kosmas, Koropi, Merenda and Raphina (light slipped class): Doni 2020, 283 fig. 6</td>
<td>195–197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PP DonL</td>
<td>Painted &amp; Polished; Wiped</td>
<td>Patterns</td>
<td>Fine 1</td>
<td>Lerna III: Wiencke 2000, 324 f.</td>
<td>221 f.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DP</td>
<td>Slipped; Polished; Burnished; Wiped</td>
<td>Solidly; Partly</td>
<td>Medium 1</td>
<td>Lerna III: Wiencke 2000, 325 f.</td>
<td>188–190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PP DonL</td>
<td>Painted; Wiped</td>
<td>Pattern</td>
<td>Coarse 1</td>
<td>Lerna III: Wiencke 2000, 324 f.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 4: The EBA ceramic classes of the Minasian assemblage and their main attributes

three different wares, comprises a large part of this material. The surface and fracture colors vary significantly, while sherd counts indicate changes related to the different macro-fabric groups.

The coarse: dark-painted class includes a small number of sherds. The color of the fabric, the usual blackening of the surface and the poor preservation hinder the identification of a slip, which is usually diluted. These are some of the reasons this class was initially treated as part of a broader coarse ware and unfortunately, its counts are based solely on the diagnostic sherds, but the original number of the non-diagnostic sherds should be limited as well. On the contrary, coarse: unpainted class is the main coarse class of the Minasian assemblage. In some cases, the application of a light-colored slip, poorly applied, possibly a self-slip/ wash, cannot be excluded. Finally, the coarse: pattern-painted: dark-on-light class is represented by only one sherd.

The EBA Shapes

Shapes are presented in alphabetical order in the associated figures, which include the most important information on common shapes of this assemblage (Fig. 8), counts of units per shape (Fig. 9, 10) and illustrations of several well-preserved cases
### Group Main Inclusions Fracture Core Th. (cm) Coarseness (scale 1–6)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Main Inclusions</th>
<th>Fracture</th>
<th>Core</th>
<th>Th. (cm)</th>
<th>Coarseness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fine 1</td>
<td>few (&gt;2 mm) white subrounded and rounded; few (&gt;1 mm) red &amp; dark angular; some silver mica (&gt;1 mm)</td>
<td>Brown-Red</td>
<td>Often Gray</td>
<td>0.4–0.7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fine 2</td>
<td>few (&gt;2 mm) white subrounded and rounded</td>
<td>Pale olive</td>
<td>No visible core</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium 1</td>
<td>variability; many white rounded and subrounded (&gt;3 mm); organic-straw (&gt;4 mm); silver mica (&gt;1 mm); occasional dark subangular and angular inclusions (&gt;3 mm)</td>
<td>Light Red to Pale Brown</td>
<td>Gray</td>
<td>0.4–1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium 2</td>
<td>many white rounded and subrounded (&gt;3 mm); silver mica (&gt;1 mm)</td>
<td>Red-Gray</td>
<td>Gray between red zones</td>
<td>0.6–1.2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium 3</td>
<td>variability; many white rounded and subrounded (&gt;3 mm), random dark (&gt;4 mm), occasional organic-straw (3–5 mm) inclusions silver mica (&gt;1 mm)</td>
<td>Red-Brown</td>
<td>Gray</td>
<td>0.6–1.1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium 4</td>
<td>some white rounded and subrounded (1–3 mm); organic-straw (3–5 mm); some dark angular and subangular (&gt;2 mm); silver mica (&gt;1 mm)</td>
<td>Light Brown-Red</td>
<td>Gray to Black</td>
<td>0.6–1.2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coarse 1</td>
<td>many dark angular &amp; subangular (&gt;7 mm); few white rounded &amp; subrounded (&gt;3 mm); silver mica (&gt;1 mm)</td>
<td>Red-Very Dark Gray</td>
<td>Gray to Very Dark Gray</td>
<td>0.5–1.7</td>
<td>6</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
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<th>Non-Diagnostic</th>
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<td>Phase I</td>
<td>Phase II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DP (f)</td>
<td>183 (43.5%)</td>
<td>88 (37.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YM (f)</td>
<td>29 (6.9%)</td>
<td>7 (3.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unp (f)</td>
<td>24 (5.7%)</td>
<td>32 (13.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PP DonL(f)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PP Lond (f)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DP (m)</td>
<td>15 (3.6%)</td>
<td>3 (1.3%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unp (m)</td>
<td>50 (11.9%)</td>
<td>44 (18.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DP (c)</td>
<td>8 (1.9%)</td>
<td>6 (2.5%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unp (c)</td>
<td>78 (18.5%)</td>
<td>34 (14.4%)</td>
</tr>
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<td>PP DonL (c)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (0.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NC</td>
<td>34 (8.1%)</td>
<td>21 (8.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>421 (100%)</td>
<td>236 (100%)</td>
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### Macro-fabric

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<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Diagnostic</th>
<th>Non-Diagnostic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Phase I</td>
<td>Phase II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fine 1</td>
<td>206 (48.9%)</td>
<td>126 (53.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fine 2</td>
<td>30 (7.1%)</td>
<td>1 (0.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium 1</td>
<td>15 (3.6%)</td>
<td>3 (1.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium 2</td>
<td>19 (4.5%)</td>
<td>29 (12.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium 3</td>
<td>5 (1.2%)</td>
<td>7 (3.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium 4</td>
<td>26 (6.2%)</td>
<td>8 (3.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coarse 1</td>
<td>86 (20.4%)</td>
<td>41 (17.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NC</td>
<td>34 (8.1%)</td>
<td>21 (8.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>421 (100%)</td>
<td>236 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 5: Macroscopic fabric description of the pottery
Fig. 6: Ceramic classes by phase in the Minasian assemblage
Fig. 7: Macro-fabric groups by phase in the Minasian assemblage
and sherds. Here, only information concerning the representation of each shape, some clarifications on poorly represented shapes and evidence from not closely assigned sherds are listed.

The pottery of the Minasian assemblage includes most of the known EH II shapes. *Amphoras* (jars) (Fig. 11 a, b) are mainly represented by neck fragments, partly restored with the contribution of individual handles from medium coarse fabric. The *askos* is known from a few questionable sherds (Fig. 11 c), while some partly preserved handles, possibly related to the shape, are not included in the charts. *Baking pans* (Fig. 11 d, e) are represented by a small number of sherds in the coarse unpainted class with burnished surface and *basins* (Fig. 11 f–k) are identified from medium coarse rim sherds, often with well-finished surfaces, morphologically restored by individual handles and ring-form bases. *Bass bowls* of the Minasian assemblage have been

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Shape</th>
<th>Main features &amp; measurements (in cm)</th>
<th>Parallels</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baking pan</td>
<td>Outline: circular (Fig. 11 d) Size: H.: 4.5 Rim D.: &lt;30 Wall Th.: &lt;1</td>
<td>Tsoungiza variant: Pullen 2011, 426 fig. 5.113; 592</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Outline: oval/circular (Fig. 11 e) Size: Rim D.: &gt;30 Wall Th.: &gt;1</td>
<td>Lerna III: Wiencke 2000, 535 f. fig. II.74 Ayios Dhimitreios: Zachos 2008, 71 f.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pithos</td>
<td>Convex: (Fig. 14 a–c): T-rim</td>
<td>Kassaneva: De Feo – Granese 2016, 256 fig. 77 b–d Lerna III: Wiencke 2000, 579 fig. II.90 Kassaneva: De Feo – Granese et al. 2016, 256 fig. 78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sauceboat</td>
<td>Best preserved cases: D18/68/14 (Fig. 15 d): Phase I; D18/16/21 (Fig. 15 e): Phase II Spouts (Fig. 15 h–m): out-turned flattened lip &amp; pointed triangular ears exc. D18/43/3; Handles: horizontal &amp; vertical but varied (Fig. 15 o–p), including: vertical strap handles (Fig. 15 q); Bases: ring &amp; raised conical H.: 13.5–17 Rim D.: N.A</td>
<td>Mainly similarities with Lerna III type 2 &amp; 4 but closer to central Greek cases type III island class: Wiencke 2000, 587–590 fig. II.92; Tzavella-Evjen 1984, 156; Fahy 1962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saucer</td>
<td>Slightly incurved (parallel to Lerna III Early type 1 Lerna III) (Fig. 16 a–c; 17)</td>
<td>Lerna III: Wiencke 2000, 595 fig. II.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Incurved-Inturned (Fig. 16 d–n; 17)</td>
<td>Lerna III late type 1: Wiencke 2000, 596 f. fig. II.93 Tsoungiza: Pullen 2011, 356 fig. 5.71 Kassaneva: De Feo – Granese 2016, 262 fig. 83 e–g Romanos: Rambach 2018, 223 fig. 15 a–n</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

43 Pottery with yellow-mottled surface is illustrated with a distinctive dotted pattern after Wiencke 2000.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shape</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Phase I</th>
<th>Phase II</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amphora</td>
<td>DP (m)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unp (m)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unp (c)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NC</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anatolianizing</td>
<td>DP (f)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>YM (f)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unp (f)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NC</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Askos</td>
<td>DP (f)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>YM (f)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unp (m)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NC</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baking Pan</td>
<td>Unp (m)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unp (c)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NC</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basin</td>
<td>DP (f)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DP (m)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NC</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unp (m)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bass Bowl (one-handled)</td>
<td>DP (f)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bass Bowl (two-handled)</td>
<td>Unp (f)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unp (m)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NC</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruitstand</td>
<td>PP DonL (c)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unp (c)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NC</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearth</td>
<td>Unp (c)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DP (c)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 9: Pottery shapes by class and phase in the Minasian assemblage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shape</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Phase I</th>
<th>Phase II</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Helladic Tankard</td>
<td>DP (f)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unp (f)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>YM (f)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hybrid Sauceboat</td>
<td>DP (f)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hydria</td>
<td>Unp (m)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lopas</td>
<td>DP (f)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DP (m)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unp (m)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DP (c)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unp (c)</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NC</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pithos</td>
<td>Unp (m)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DP (c)</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unp (c)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NC</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pyxis</td>
<td>DP (f)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unp (f)</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sauceboat</td>
<td>DP (f)</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>26</td>
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<td></td>
<td>YM (f)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unp (f)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unp (c)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NC</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saucer</td>
<td>DP (f)</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>YM (f)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unp (f)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DP (m)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unp (m)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>NC</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stand</td>
<td>Unp (c)</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>421</td>
<td>236</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
partly presented elsewhere\textsuperscript{44}. Included here is one Phase I case with tactile decoration (Fig. 12 a) and some much more fragmented unstratified sherds with dark-burnished surfaces and medium coarse fabric (Fig. 12 b–e). There are only a few examples of fruitstand sherds (Fig. 12 f–h). On the contrary, the shape is well documented at Ayios Dhimitrios\textsuperscript{45}. It is attested in Lerna IIIC–D\textsuperscript{46} and Kassaneva too\textsuperscript{47}. Hearths (Fig. 12 i. j) are represented only by two sherds from Phase I and can be assigned to the high type of Lerna III\textsuperscript{48}. Furthermore, one large fragment of a hydria (Fig. 12 k) parallel to the type 8 of Lerna III jars\textsuperscript{49} comes from Phase II. The lopas\textsuperscript{50} (Fig. 13) is represented mainly by rim sherds typically in coarse: unpainted and medium coarse classes, often difficult to discern.

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\textsuperscript{44} Michalopoulos 2022, 46 fig. 3.
\textsuperscript{45} Zachos 2008, 70 ff. with a discussion on its existence in other sites.
\textsuperscript{46} Wiencke 2000, 555 ff.
\textsuperscript{47} De Feo – Granese 2016, 254 fig. 71.
\textsuperscript{48} Wiencke 2000, 557.
\textsuperscript{49} Wiencke 2000, 565. 568 fig. II.86.
\textsuperscript{50} After Aggelopoulou 2014, 141.
from rim sherds of basins. *Pithoi* (Fig. 14) are usually found represented in the *coarse: unpainted* class, are underrepresented and often rim sherds are indistinguishable from the coarser rims from *lopas*, so body sherds and base sherds associated with pithoi are incorporated into the diagnostics units. There are a few cases of *pyxis* (Fig. 15 a–c) dated to Phase I including a vertical double rim (Fig. 15 a) found in a pyxis from Steno\(^{51}\) and a vertical rim (Fig. 15 b) similar to Lernaean cases\(^{52}\). *Sauceboats* (Fig. 15 d–q) are very common in this assemblage, based on a couple of well-preserved cases, several rim sherds and spouts, usually under *fine: dark-painted* and *yellow-mottled* classes. Accordingly, *Saucers* are represented by large numbers of rim sherds and some well-preserved cases (Fig. 16). Several of them can provide typological information (Fig. 17). Sherds of

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\(^{51}\) Dörpfeld 1927, 302 suppl. 64, 4.

\(^{52}\) Wiencke 2000, 581 f. fig. II.91.
stands (firedogs) (Fig. 18) from the Minasian assemblage are limited to Stages 1 and 2 of Phase I and are probably related to one vessel similar to *Krateutai* from Lithares.53 Furthermore, some EH II shapes known from other sites are not identified in the Minasian assemblage, possibly related to the state of preservation, use of space and chronological aspects. Some sherds which have not been specifically assigned could be related to these shapes, but the evidence is not sturdy enough. More specifically, the *collared bowl*, presumably an early Peloponnesian adaptation of the central Greek Bass bowl associated with Lerna IIIC–D, might be represented here by one rim-sherd from Phase I, in *medium: dark-painted* (Fig. 19 a). Apart from the type termed *amphora*, only a rim sherd (Fig. 19 b) could be related to type 3 of the jars from Lerna III and

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53 Tzavella-Evjen 1984, 172 f. pls. 88, β-η. 89.
54 Wiencke 2000, 552–554.
55 Wiencke 2000, 563 f. fig. II.86.
to form 15 of EH II Tsoungiza\textsuperscript{56}. Its form with the dark-painted exterior surface is an early EH II feature, in line with its dating to Phase I. Jugs, considered absent in the Minasian assemblage, could be associated with two twisted handles (Fig. 19 c. d) and two vertical handles (Fig. 19 e. f), while a few fragmented spouts (Fig. 19 g–j) are either related to jugs or some other kind of spouted vessel, while a rim-sherd (Fig. 19 k) could be associated with a jug or with an askoid vessel. Other sherds that provide some information on specific shapes include an incurving rim-sherd (Fig. 19 l) with parallels from

\textsuperscript{56} Pullen 2011, 362 ff. fig. 5, 72.
Makrovouni\textsuperscript{57} and Tsoungiza\textsuperscript{58}, while another (Fig. 19 m) is parallel to an EH I–II jar from Perachora\textsuperscript{59}. Finally, a pierced knob (Fig. 19 n) of Phase I could be related to a spout of a necked pithos similar to that from Nidri\textsuperscript{60}. With regards to individual shape accessories, a rough association of vertical handles of vessels related to coarse and medium coarse macro-fabrics with earlier EH II stages and horizontal handles with later EH II stages is chronologically interesting. Bases in the whole range of macro-fabrics are usually ring-shaped, though raised and flat bases also exist.

\textsuperscript{57} Dousougli 1987, 189 fig. 19, 98.
\textsuperscript{58} Pullen 2011, 229 fig. 4, 43; 334.
\textsuperscript{59} Fossey 1969, 62 fig. 4, 16.
\textsuperscript{60} Kilian-Dirmeier 2005, 94. 102 pl. 15, 1.
Fig. 16: Selected saucers from the Minasian assemblage

Fig. 17: Counts of saucers in the Minasian assemblage according to rim-wall formation per phase

Fig. 18: Stand sherds from the Minasian assemblage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Phase I</th>
<th>Phase II</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Slightly incurved rim</td>
<td>28 (23.0%)</td>
<td>10 (13.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inturned/Incurved rim</td>
<td>66 (54.1%)</td>
<td>56 (75.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concavely carinated</td>
<td>15 (12.3%)</td>
<td>1 (1.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight-walled</td>
<td>13 (10.7%)</td>
<td>7 (9.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Types of Decoration

Patterned-painted: dark-on-light, though identified in some extremely fragmented sherds, often derive from troubling contexts and any remarks remain open to future evaluation in comparison with other assemblages⁶¹. This decoration is associated mostly with fine fabrics, except for a fruitstand sherd (Fig. 12 g). The two identified styles include one closer to EH II patterns (Fig. 20 a–c) and another with both EH II and possible EH III features (Fig. 20 d–m)⁶². Fine: pattern-painted traditions are completed with a

⁶¹ In a few cases, the existence of a motif could not be verified and, as a result, these cases were not included in this class.
⁶² These sherds possibly come from three different vessels: 1) Fig. 20 d–h, 2) Fig. 20 i–j, 3) Fig. 20 k–m.
tiny *light-on-dark* decorated body sherd (Fig. 20 n) either related to the EH II tradition\(^\text{63}\) or an EH III intrusion of the Ayia Marina ware\(^\text{64}\).

Tactile decoration is common, attested mainly on *basins*, *lopas* and *pithoi*, mostly associated with type C, according to Pullen's classification\(^\text{65}\) and only a few cases differ. Other types of decoration include impressed triangles (Fig. 20 o), impressions

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\(^{63}\) Wiencke 2000, 323.

\(^{64}\) Sotiriadis 1912, 271–290; Rutter 1995, 18 f.

\(^{65}\) Pullen 2011, 168–171.
along the rim (Fig. 20 p–s), an impressed herring-bone motif (Fig. 20 t), plastic (Fig. 20 u) and incised decoration (Fig. 20 v).

**Summary of the Changes in the Minasian Assemblage**

Beyond any issues raised, several changes, usually variations, can be traced in all of the attributes of this assemblage. A notable increase/decrease in counts of a shape, a form or a shape accessory is typical. Rarely does a shape or form disappear during Phase I, while none is introduced during Phase II (Fig. 21). Accordingly, during Phase II none of the classes disappeared, nor were any new ones introduced (Fig. 22). In fine pottery, some surface treatment/class variations are associated with specific shapes (Fig. 23). Among other shapes, saucers show some interesting changes, partly related to general changes in the associated classes. Both saucers and sauceboats answer as rim-painted and partially painted, especially during Phase II. Changes in macro-fabric composition (Fig. 7), though previously associated with changes in wares\(^66\), indicate that fine macro-fabric 2, similar to a greenish-yellow fabric identified in Corinthia\(^67\), is mostly associated with Phase I, but variations are mostly visible in medium and coarse macro-fabrics. More specifically, the rise of medium: macro-fabric 2, the drop of medium: macro-fabric 4 and coarse: macro-fabric 1 during Phase II suggest a taste for less coarse fabrics.

The available information on decorative styles is limited and ambiguous. Phase I pattern-painted: dark on light sherds are related to EH II motifs, while Phase II cases show features that can be attributed both to the known motifs of EH II and the EH III. Parallel EH III motifs are dated in Lerna IV, 1–2, while the Minasian Phase II sherds derive mainly from the final stages (9–10). In non-painted decoration, the correlation of Phase I with more intensive variability is possible. At the same time, the drop of lopas with tactile decoration is significant in Phase II, especially from Stage 9, when it is almost absent. This could further associate Stage 9 with the EH III period at Lerna, wherein handleless bowls believed to be cooking pots do not bear any tactile decoration\(^68\).

Consequently, changes occur gradually, more clearly traced between Stages 1–6 (Phase I) and Stages 7–10 (Phase II), they are numerous, mostly in morphological features, lesser in macroscopic composition and observable mainly through variations in percentages.


\(^{67}\) Alram-Stern 2018, 169.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shape</th>
<th>Chronological correlations</th>
<th>Association with other Greek mainland sites</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amphora</td>
<td>Phase I</td>
<td>Lerna IIIC type 5</td>
<td>Wiencke 2000, 564 f. fig. II.86 tab. 16 a. b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Phase II</td>
<td>Lerna IIID type 6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Phase I: vertical &amp; wide handles:</td>
<td>Lerna III type 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Phase II: horizontal crescent and triangular handles in medium coarse fabric</td>
<td>Towards Lerna IIID increasingly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baking Pan</td>
<td>Phase I: common</td>
<td>Lerna III: reducing towards later EH II</td>
<td>Wiencke 2000, 536</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hel.Tankard</td>
<td>Phase II: rise</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lopas</td>
<td>Sharply incurved</td>
<td>Phase I: low number Lerna III–D: straighter type</td>
<td>Wicncke 2000, 549</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tactile decoration:</td>
<td>Phase II: decrease</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pithos: necked</td>
<td>Phase I: mostly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pyxis</td>
<td>Phase I-mainly Stage 1</td>
<td>Lerna III: absent</td>
<td>Ayios Dhimitrios IIb: drop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sauceboat</td>
<td>Phase II: drop</td>
<td>Thebes &amp; Latoufi Group B: absent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bass Bowl</td>
<td>Two-handled**</td>
<td>Phase I</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>One-handled</td>
<td>Phase II Stages 9–10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saucer</td>
<td>Large-sized</td>
<td>Phase I: mostly Lerna III: after IIIB only survivals</td>
<td>Wicncke 2000, 601</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Deeper-Slightly Incurred</td>
<td>Phase I: mostly Lerna III</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Concavely carinated</td>
<td>Phase I</td>
<td>Lerna III: random in Lerna IIIIC late; Tsoungiza: EH II developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Incurved</td>
<td>Phase II: rise</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inturned</td>
<td>Phase I: mostly Midea: Lerna IIIIB developed period context</td>
<td>Alram-Stern 2018, 172 fig. 9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Phase I: 15.3% and in Phase II: 7.7% (based on the cases that preserve this information).

** The distinction between one-handled and two-handled Bass bowls in this assemblage is based on fragmented cases and further evaluation is necessary.

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### Classes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classes</th>
<th>Change in Phase II</th>
<th>Association with other Greek mainland sites</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DP (f)</td>
<td>Black-dark gray slip: drop</td>
<td>Late EH II Latoufi: Psaraki 2016, 767; EH II developed – EH II developed-late Pazaraki: Kalogeropoulos 2019, 177 f.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Red-brown slip: notable increase</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Partially painted: Increase</td>
<td>Late EH II Kirra: Dor et al. 1960, 66; Lerna III: Wiencke 2000, 597</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DP (m)</td>
<td>Significant drop</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YM (f)</td>
<td>Possible drop</td>
<td>Lerna IIIID: Wiencke 2000, 322; Ayios Dhimitrios Period IIb: Zachos 2008, 66; Thorikos: Nazou 2014, 250 tab. 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unp (f) &amp;</td>
<td>Significant rise</td>
<td>Lerna IIIIC late–D mainly in medium coarse: Wiencke 2000, 326 f.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unp (m)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ayios Dhimitrios Period IIb (all fabrics): Zachos 2008, 67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unp (c)</td>
<td>Notable drop</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DP (c)</td>
<td>Possible rise</td>
<td>Lerna III later: Wiencke 2000, 327</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

Fig. 21: Notable chronological correlations of specific shapes/forms with Phase I and Phase II

Fig. 22: Notable changes from Phase I to Phase II in classes/surface treatment addressed in the Minasian assemblage and similar events/situations from other sites in southern Mainland Greece
### Relative Synchronisms with Other Settlements

Based on the previous summary, some relative synchronisms can be suggested (Fig. 24). Any chronological remarks, however, represent the situation of the specific plot and not necessarily of the settlement.

Since Anatolianizing shapes derive from both phases and hybrid shapes already exist from Stage 1, the assemblage can be correlated mostly with the EH II B period, equal to the EH II late. Any effort for a more detailed phasing is mainly based on Lerna, as the most representative, systematically published, and well-presented of the EH II–III periods. The material from Tsoungiza derives from the periods before and after the EH II B. Although, in a relative framework, the parallels presented here function as a marker for the existence of early features in the Minasian assemblage and possible further chronological variations during the EH II B.

Phase I can be generally associated with Lerna IIIC, mainly with its late part, synchronous to the appearance of the Anatolianizing ceramics in southern Greece. Phase II is related to Lerna IIIID, but Stages 9 and 10 of this Phase might intrude into the EH III period, based on the presence of the one-handled *Bass bowl*, the changes in the *pattern-painted: dark on light* decoration and the polish of *dark-painted Helladic tankards*.

---

### Table: Shape Class/ Surface treatment Association with other Greek mainland sites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shape</th>
<th>Class/ Surface treatment</th>
<th>Association with other Greek mainland sites</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amphora</td>
<td>DP (m): more common in Phase I</td>
<td>Lerna IIIC–D: Wiencke 2000, 564 f. tab. 16 a. f</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unp (m): rise in Phase II</td>
<td>Lerna IIIC: Wiencke 2000, 544</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basin</td>
<td>DP (m): mostly Phase I usually partially painted</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pithos</td>
<td>DP (c): mainly in Phase I</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pyxis</td>
<td>DP (f): in Phase I</td>
<td>Lerna IIIIB–C: Wiencke 2000, 581</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lopas</td>
<td>Unp (m) with light surface: rise in Phase II</td>
<td>Lerna IIIC–D: Wiencke 2000, 565</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sauceboat</td>
<td>DP (f): black-gray slip: drop</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>YM (f): drop</td>
<td>Lerna IIIID: Wiencke 2000, tab. 22 a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DP (f): red – brown slip: rise</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unp (f): rise</td>
<td>Lerna IIIID: Wiencke 2000, 591</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saucer</td>
<td>DP (f) Incurved/ Inturned: mainly related to Phase I</td>
<td>Lerna III: Wiencke 2000, 597; Tiryns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inturned/ Incurved rim-painted &amp; partially painted: increase in Phase II*</td>
<td>Lerna IIIC–D: Wiencke 2000, 597; Midea EH II developed or later: Alram-Stern 2018, 166 fig. 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DP large saucers: mainly in Phase I</td>
<td>Lerna III early: Wiencke 2000, 602</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concavely</td>
<td>DP (f): usually solidly painted in Phase I</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>carinated</td>
<td>* In the Minasian assemblage rim-painted/solidly painted slightly outnumber the solidly painted, but in general, partly painted easily outnumber the solidly painted. During Phase II, solidly dark-painted count only a few cases, rim painted/solidly painted consist one third and in general partly painted dominate.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

69 A general scheme has already been proposed: Michalopoulos 2022, 45 f. and 55 f. tab. 3.

70 Manning 1995, 58 f.

---

[Fig. 23: Significant changes in the Minasian assemblage shapes relative to specific classes/surface treatment]
almost identical with that of the EH III *pattern painted: Light-on-Dark from* Orchomenos. A few sherds with dark-burnished surfaces, probably from *Bass Bowls* retrieved from a mixed layer, reinforce an EH III synchronism of a habitation level. However, even the pottery of Stages 9 and 10 of Phase II includes mostly EH II features. Those of the EH III are limited in number, related to troubling contexts, and need further evaluation. But, in such a case, a transition similar to Tiryns: «Übergangssphase, with EH II and EH III ceramics coexisting, might be proved to be closer to EBA Aigion than what happens in Lerna IV.

**Peloponnesian and Central Greek Features of the Minasian Assemblage**

Any attempts to classify local ceramic production/ traditions into dualistic categories are conventional but useful. The cultural trait of an area is usually complicated by the co-existence of several micro-traditions, but the choice to focus on the Peloponnesian and Central Greece in correlation with Aigion as a place of cross-cultural processes is based on specific evidence, including the location of the settlement by the Corinthian Gulf, close to the province of Phocis, the abundance of ceramic features of the Korakou culture and sufficient evidence for the cultural exchanges with sites of central Greece based on specific shapes, such as the Anatolianizing ceramics, the *Bass bowl* and the hybrid shapes of the Minasian assemblage, already discussed.

37 Regarding surface treatment, red-brown colored slips, present in this assemblage from Phase I, show a notable increase during Phase II, similar to central Greek settlements (Fig. 22). The *yellow-mottled* class, though strongly related to Attic sites where Mesogaia has been considered a production area, is relatively unknown in southern Central Greece. Perhaps, in Thebes and Latoufi, pots and sherds of this class might have

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**Table:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relative Chronology</th>
<th>Minasian assemblage</th>
<th>Representative mainland sites</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Late EH II (EH IIB)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Phase I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Lerna IIIC late; Tiryns Fundhorizont 8b; Lefkandi I, Thebes B; Ayia Irini III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Phase II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lerna IID; Lefkandi I, Thebes B; Ayia Irini III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EH III</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Lerna IV.1; Tiryns Fundhorizont 9; Thebes Γ; Ayia Irini gap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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*Fig. 24: Suggestions of chronological associations of the Minasian assemblage with important EBA sites*
been considered part of a wider *dark-painted* group rather than absent. However, the numbers of this class in the Peloponnese are closer to the picture in Aigion\(^77\).

Shapes support further interactions. Carinated *saucers* of Phase I seem mainly associated with the Peloponnese. Also, *saucers* with incurved/inturned rims in EH IIB are more common in the Peloponnese, while straight-walled *saucers* are more common in various central mainland sites\(^78\). Concerning *saucers*, partial painting, and specifically rim-painting, could be more easily associated with the Peloponnese. *Sauceboats* are not attested in EH IIB contexts in some Boeotian sites like Thebes and Latoufi, but are present in others like Lithares. Their survival at Aigion during Phase II seems more of a Peloponnesian choice than an influence from Boeotia or Phokis. However, associating *sauceboats* from this assemblage with the types of Lerna is difficult, but the similarities with central Greek cases are rather interesting.

Some shapes are absent or not recognized in this assemblage. The *cup*, common in central Greece, including Attica and Boeotia, is not popular in EH IIB Peloponnesian contexts\(^79\). Also, *pithoid* ceramics with conical rims are usual in EH IIB Thebes\(^80\), except bottom right, Latoufi\(^81\) and exist even further north in Perfakia\(^82\), but are absent in EH IIB Peloponnesian contexts. On the other hand, some shapes known from the Peloponnese like the ladle, mainly an Argolid-Corinthian shape\(^83\), have not been recognized yet at Aigion. Nevertheless, such evidence must be treated with caution as it could reflect only the current state of research and could also be affected by chronological aspects.

### Aigion and the Corinthian Gulf

To place Aigion into the wider context of the Corinthian Gulf, adopting the concept of *coastscape* can prove useful, highlighting the role of coastal settlements and focusing on their socio-economic aspects\(^84\). Under this concept, Aigion can be considered a member of a Corinthian Gulf network, possibly consisting of several overlapping networks that acted during the EBA, similar to EBA coastal settlements of the Saronic Gulf\(^85\).

In this direction, clear indications of connectivity between Aigion and central Greek settlements have been presented, without excluding short-scale population movements from the area of central Greece, as from Phoci\(^86\). These are not embodied only through the Anatolianizing and hybrid ceramics, but through features that are more usual in central Greece than in the Peloponnese, as well.

Most choices in ceramic production and consumption, however, suggest a persistence in features closely related to EH II Peloponnesian sites. This is indicated not only by the limited number of features linked to central Greek traditions but by the survival into the final stratigraphic stages of ceramic features that can be considered among the signatures of EH II pottery found in Peloponnesian sites. Furthermore, it is important to notice that the connection with the Cyclades, which is manifested through the obsidian products found in the Minasian plot and a fragment of a Cycladic stone...
vessel with incised decoration from another plot\textsuperscript{87}, would have been possible through Attica and Corinthia. Direct interactions with the latter are not clear, but features such as \textit{fine macro-fabric} group 2 and Peloponnesian characteristics, such as concavely \textit{carinated saucers} and partially \textit{painted saucers}, could be mainly related to interactions with this region. It is also necessary to underline the importance of networks that were developed in the hinterland and were affecting the coastal settlements. In the case of Aigialeia, the similarities observed in pottery production between Kassaneva and Aigion could be an indication of such interactions.

Aigion, and other sites of Aigialeia, including Helike (Rizomylos), Platanos and Kamares, could have been involved in a coastal network as several EH II sites around the Corinthian Gulf, situated no more than 2 km from the shore (Fig. 25). The southern shores of the Corinthian Gulf seem better documented than the northern shores. Regarding boat travel, small paddle canoes, covering a maximum distance of 20 km, and longboats, covering a maximum distance of 40 km in one day, indicate possible trips between settlements\textsuperscript{88}. Specifically, given that the settlements in the southern shore of the Corinthian Gulf do not exceed a distance of 20 km and that several trips among settlements of the Peloponnes and Central Greece, like Aigion-Anemokampi, Krathion-Kirra, Helike-Kirra, are around 30 km, it can be suggested that small paddled canoes were favorable for trips across the shoreline, while longboats could have been used for one day trips from one side of the Corinthian Gulf to the other.

Some of the sites addressed are not considered strictly as coastal sites (Fig. 25 I. S. T), but alterations of the coastline are quite possible, while several sites were easily reached via land routes. In such a «coastscape» network, a combined use of land and sea routes was possible, if not typical. Also, under specific circumstances, where the choice of one of the two ways was prohibitive, the existence of the alternative would be profitable and would offer stability to this network, in contrast to other networks based exclusively on sea or land routes, which would be vulnerable for various reasons.

Conclusions

Based on the evidence from pottery and topography, Aigion was in constant contact with settlements of this network. However, the changes observed between Phase I and Phase II in the Minasian assemblage, apart from being related to cultural hybridization\textsuperscript{89}, suggest a shift in this network concerning Aigion. During Phase II, the interaction with central Greece is intensified, while during the preceding Phase I, interaction with the Peloponnes is stronger. Interaction with Corinthia, especially neighboring the Argo\textit{lid}, Megarid, Attica and part of the Saronic Gulf «coastscape», must have been important. Whether such a shift affected several settlements of this network, or if was just the settlement of Aigion, cannot be answered. Meanwhile, what happens during the EH III period, how all the changes and destructions observed in several settlements influence its activity, and how such evidence would add to the discussion on the disturbances of this final EBA period is indeed an intriguing matter concerning this network.

The aforementioned changes, however, occur gradually, without synchronous changes in other areas of the material culture. So, what has been described as a transition\textsuperscript{90} accurately fits this case, and external influences are only part of such

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\bibitem{88} Broodbank 2000, 101 f. tab. 3; Pullen – Tartaron 2007, 153 f.; Pullen 2023, 338 f.
\bibitem{89} Michalopoulos 2022, 53, 55.
\bibitem{90} Galaty – Rutter 2022, 428.
\end{thebibliography}
Site | Reference
---|---
A | Kamares Fig. 1
B | Aigion Fig. 1. 2
C | Helike Fig. 1
D | Platanos Fig. 1
E | Krathion Fig. 1
F | Derveni Sarri 2013, 465-468
G | Kamari Paphathanasiou 2015, 371 f
H | Xylokastro Paphathanasiou 2015, 369 f
I | Thalero Hope-Simpson 1981, 37
J | Agios Gerasimos Hope-Simpson 1981, 33
K | Corinth Lavezzi 2003, 72-74 plan 4.5-4.6
L | Korakou Blegen 1927
M | Poseidonia-Canal Hope-Simpson 1981, 33
N | Aspra Chomata Hope-Simpson 1981, 38
O | Loutraki Hope-Simpson – Dickinson 1979, 71
P | Perachora-Vouliagmeni Fossey 1969; Hope-Simpson 1981, 38
Q | Kreusis Mylonopoulos 2013, 1, 3
R | Aliki Fossey 1988, 168; Farinetti 2011, 173; Mylonopoulos 2013, 1, 3
S | Korsiai Morin 2004
T | Medeon Vatin 1969, 37
U | Antikyra Sideris 2014, 29
V | Kirra Dor et al. 1960
W | Apsifia Vatin 1964; Baziotopoulou – Valavanis 2003, 12
X | Galaxidi Vatin 1964; Baziotopoulou – Valavanis 2003, 12
Y | Anemokampi Vatin 1964; Baziotopoulou – Valavanis 2003, 12
Z | Nafpaktos Saranti 2018

Fig. 25: EH II sites around the Corinthian Gulf
processes. Several features of the Korakou culture that characterize both phases, elsewhere associated with cultural resistance to ceramic novelties from central Greece, can be further associated with a relatively stable network.

However, pottery is only a part of the products that were circulating. Apart from finished goods, it can be suggested that raw materials, like obsidian and human resources, including workmen and craftsmen, were circulated through such a network. Consequently, knowledge and traditions were transmitted through this “coastscape” network, which played a vital role in the interactions between the northern Peloponnese and southern central Greece, with plenty of other extensions through sea and mountain routes to the central and southern Peloponnese, Thessaly, the Cyclades, the Ionian Islands and western Greece.

Based on the evidence presented here, the scene of the Corinthian Gulf can be interpreted as a melting pot of different micro-traditions. This network could be a small world, similar to those suggested for the Cyclades, the Attic-Euboean Gulf, the Argolid and the Saronic Gulfs, or the common ground for several small worlds. Cultural variations need further investigation to understand the function of the associated network/s and the role of its actors. Aigion, as one of them, can contribute decisively towards this aim, as its pottery reveals, through an intensification of the study of pottery and the rest of its material world.

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