

A. G. LEVENTIS FOUNDATION

**ON COOKING POTS, DRINKING CUPS,
LOOMWEIGHTS AND ETHNICITY IN BRONZE AGE
CYPRUS AND NEIGHBOURING REGIONS**

*An International Archaeological Symposium
held in Nicosia, November 6th – 7th 2010*

Edited by

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NICOSIA 2011

Cover illustration: *Maa-Palaeokastro*: the site and pottery

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ISBN: 978-9963-560-93-6

Published by the A. G. Leventis Foundation, Nicosia

Designed by EN TIPIS Voula Kokkinou Ltd., 9A Avlonos Street, 1075 Nicosia, Cyprus

Printed by Kailas Printers and Lithographers Ltd.

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Kastrokephala (Crete): strangers or locals in a fortified acropolis of the 12th century BC

Athanasia Kanta and Danae Z. Kontopodi

The subject of the present symposium has been part of scholarly inquiry and research at least for the last fifteen or so years. The picture of events in the 12th century Eastern Mediterranean becomes clearer as more relevant sites are explored and indeed published (cf. D'Agata 2003; Day, Klein and Turner 2009; Gesell, Day and Coulson 1983, 1985, 1988, 1991, 1995; Haggis 1993; Haggis and Nowicki 1993; Hayden 1988; Kanta 2001; Kanta and Stampolidis 2001; Karageorghis 1998a, 2001; Nowicki 2000, 2008; Wallace 2002, 2003, 2006; Watrous 2001). The main danger of current theories about detecting ethnicity from cooking or drinking utensils and loomweights is that they are often based on hypotheses and not on concrete facts.

Crete is full of refuge sites (Nowicki 2000). Their close examination shows clearly that they are complicated and do not follow a simple pattern. They were built mainly on remote, inaccessible areas that were naturally fortified. Many of them are categorized as shelters, whereas several others located on very high altitudes and reinforced by thick fortification walls could be described as military outposts (Karageorghis 1998a, 127; 2001). If we want to evaluate them correctly we should examine the pottery and small finds in relation to the architecture, as well as the evidence that we have for the existence of settled households.

The subject of our research, the fortified acropolis of Kastrokephala, is located near the town of Heraklion and is a typical fortified settlement of the type which has been recognized for a long time now, as indicating the presence of refugees who left their homelands and started moving in the southeastern Mediterranean in the 12th and 11th centuries BC (Kanta and Karetsou 2003). The Dublin conference of 1999 (Karageorghis and Morris (eds) 1999) explored the parameters of such settlements. Kastrokephala, for example, lies on a prominent hill, dominating the coast west of Heraklion. On the south side of the hill a steep gorge and marshy land is formed by the Almyros river (Fig. 1). The defensive character of the settlement is quite clear. A well structured thick wall with preserved height ranging from 0.30-2.00 m. and width from 1.5-2.00 m. protects the accessible areas of the hill. The south part of the acropolis was inaccessible due to steep cliffs and therefore did not need to be protected by a separate fortification (Figs 2, 3). The original height of the fortification wall is unknown. The total area enclosed is *c.* 40,000 m². There are two towers and a gate, which have not yet been explored (Fig. 3b). Natural stone is plentiful on the plateau and available as raw material (Fig. 3c).

Within this fortified enclosure the land falls in three terraces. Building complex I lies at the highest point of the citadel, while complex III is located lower down (Fig. 2, 4).

Building complex I, located along the cliff, has thick walls forming casemates and seems to have had three Megaron type buildings. Unfortunately there was little soil preserved and most of the walls of Building complex I have disappeared downhill. The access to the casemates was by a very badly preserved oblique ramp (Ramp II), which was previously identified as Building complex II (Fig. 4).

The casemate walls must have been at least 2.20 m. in height. A small 'guardhouse' or observation point is virtually hanging on the cliff, west of room 6. At the inaccessible parts of the citadel, the casemate walls provide an even more formidable aspect to the outsider watching the acropolis from the neighbouring hills. The viewer would see walls towering over cliffs of great height. This architecture which forms casemates, is very strongly reminiscent of the casemate walls of Pyla-Kokkinokremos, a Mycenaean refuge site in Cyprus, but also of the

architecture of Pyla in general (Karageorghis and Demas 1984). The parallels between the sites of Kastrokephala and Pyla are significant because of the quantity of Minoan pottery discovered at the Cypriote site.

A large number of hearths, together with the cooking pots found on them, define the character of Building complex I (Fig. 5). The rooms investigated so far do not seem to suggest normal households. Instead, they seem to have a military character. This is evident in room 1 of Building complex III, where cooking pots were discovered in the same context as a fine Naue II sword (Fig. 6a). Comparable swords have been found at LM IIIC Myrsini in the Siteia district, in Smirov, Pernik Bulgaria (Kilian-Dirlmeier 1993, 227, 237) and elsewhere. Such swords in Crete are usually discovered in tombs (Kanta 2003c, 182). This is the first instance, where such a sword has been found *in situ* in a settlement. The military character of the site is emphasized by the total lack, so far at least, of spools which are a characteristic of the period all over the South Eastern Mediterranean. It should be noted that other sites of the period such as the settlement of Kastelli Chania and indeed the refuge settlement of Karphi have yielded many spools (Fig. 16).

The presence of a foreign element that may have joined the Mycenaean group which seems to have founded the citadel is indicated by the presence of a 'fenestrated razor' of Italian origin (Fig. 7a). Such razors are extremely rare (Kanta 2003b, 26-27).¹

A parallel for this type (Fig. 7b) in the Aegean was found in Tomb H of the Achaia Klaus cemetery in Patras (Papadopoulos and Kontorli-Papadopoulou 2000, 144-5; Paschalidis and McGeorge 2009, fig. 7).

The chronology of the acropolis has already been discussed (Kanta and Karetsou 2003; Kanta 2003a). The conservation and study of pottery from the 2006 and 2007 excavations confirmed that an early LM IIIC date seems appropriate. Fine ware is relatively scarce among the Kastrokephala sherds. Nevertheless, it seems that the main drinking utensil was the deep bowl (Fig. 8a-c). Kylikes as well as carinated cups are present but rare (Fig. 8e-f, g, i).

The most common and identifiable fine ware shape of the period is the deep bowl (Fig. 8a-c). Most deep bowls studied so far are of remarkably good quality and often of elaborate decoration. Of the three examples presented here (Fig. 8a) indicates that overtones of wall paintings still exist among the material. Fig. 8b is decorated with a Minoan flower, while Fig. 8c has a running spiral (e.g. Sackett, Popham and Warren 1965, pl 77a:1, b:2).

Most of the kylikes found are fragmentary and are of the Cretan type with hollow foot. At present, there are only two examples of the Mycenaean solid foot type (Fig. 8f). Only one kylix (Fig. 8e) preserves the slightly carinated upper body (Kanta 2003a, fig. 3:g). They all have a very worn surface and the decoration is not preserved.

Among the cups with angular bodies (Fig. 8g, i), there is a burnished example of 'sub-Apennine type' (Fig. 8g). Few examples of this type of pottery together with grey ware have been found and analyzed at Kastelli Chania (Fig. 8h; Hallager and Hallager (eds) 2003, vol. III 2, pl. 101). Such vases also exist on the Mainland (e.g. Evely (ed.) 2006, 215, fig. 2.42). At Kastrokephala, a less angular and monochrome cup (Fig. 8i), is of normal clay and painted with black paint (e.g. Evely (ed.) 2006, 138-9, fig. 2.1).

Kraters show that wine drinking was very popular. Typical decorated kraters of the period are Fig. 8d and Fig. 9a. This last example clearly illustrates the chronological point of the Kastrokephala pottery. One side of this vase is decorated with a close style panelled pattern, while the other side shows a much freer decorative style. However, the hanging hooks tie the two motifs together. It is clear that we are at a chronological point when the close style becomes popular, but earlier decorative modes still exist.

¹ Despite Kanta 2003, 26-27, when this razor was discovered it was thought to be part of a stand. It was recognized as such during the lively discussion at the present symposium, showing thus the necessity and value of such dialogue.

The drinking at Building complex I seems to have had its ritual aspects as is suggested by two fragmentary rhyta (Fig. 9c, d). Such vases still exist at this period as is shown by examples from Karphi (Fig. 9e: Seiradaki 1960, 27, fig. 20), and (Fig. 9f) Kastelli Chania (Hallager and Hallager (eds) 2000, vol. II, pl. 50).

It seems that the inhabitants of the citadel did cook a lot and this is evident from the large quantity of cooking vessels of various types, some of which were found *in situ* on hearths. Animal bones have been discovered at the site. However, they are relatively rare, even though the terrain would suggest that animal husbandry was a main occupation of the inhabitants.

Normally in Crete cooking pots were placed on hearths, either inside buildings, or in makeshift kitchen areas outside them (Borgna 2000; Betancourt 1980). Often in settlements the cooking pots are plentiful, but well defined hearths associated with cooking pots are not so common. At Kastrokephala both exist.

The Kastrokephala cooking pots seem to belong to two traditions, a Mainland tradition and a Cretan one. There is a type of cooking amphora with vertical handles below the rim (Fig. 10a, b). Comparable vases have been found at Phaistos (Fig. 10c: Borgna 2000, fig. 2). The Mycenaean amphoras (Fig. 10d-e) also have vertical handles but these are attached higher on the rim (cf. Lefkandi: Evely (ed.) 2006, pl. 43:3; Ashdod: Dothan and Zukerman 2004, 34 fig. 36:5). The Kastrokephala examples are large and must have been used for large quantities of food or drink. The amphora (Fig. 10a) was found in Building complex I mentioned above, which has the casemate walls and Fig. 10b comes from Building complex III, room I near the Naue II sword. It is interesting that this room contained more than ten cooking vessels, most of which have not been studied and mended yet. This type of cooking amphora has vertical handles, ovoid shape and flaring rim. From the same room comes a small cooking jug which represents a popular Mycenaean cooking pot (Fig. 11a). The cooking jug of Kastrokephala has a semi globular body, flaring rim and handle with round section placed below the rim. It has traces of burning outside and it is completely burnt inside. Similar vases (Fig. 11b-e) have been found e.g. at Karphi (Seiradaki 1960, pl. 4:b), Lefkandi (Popham and Milburn 1972, pl. 52:2), Ekron (Dothan and Zukerman 2004, 35, fig. 37), Mycenae (Tzedakis and Martlew (eds) 1999, no. 121) and elsewhere.

The Mycenaean cooking jug and cooking amphora are well known. We should not forget, however, that the Greek mainland also had tripodic cooking pots (Fig. 12, cf. Mountjoy 1995; Schilardi 1978; Thomas 2005).

A shallow carinated tripodic pot (Fig. 13a) from Building complex I has a body similar to tripod cooking vessels from Lefkandi (Fig. 13b, Evely (ed.) 2006, fig. 2.35). The Kastrokephala vase has a round bottom, slight carination on the body and flaring rim. The legs begin just under the carination and are decorated with three deep slashes. The handles are horizontal with a round section. This shape which obviously imitates metal prototypes resembles similar clay or bronze vessels from Mycenae (Fig. 13c, d, e.g. Tzedakis and Martlew 1999, no. 148; Onasoglou 1995, fig. 56:2).

The tripod cooking jar is the most common cooking vessel in Kastrokephala (Fig. 14a-c). Such vases have a globular body, a slightly flaring, almost collar rim and the height varies from 18 cm. to 45 cm. Most of them have horizontal handles placed on the shoulder and flat bottom. The legs have round sections and are usually decorated with finger marks or with one or three slashes. Some are plain. The smaller ones could not have contained more than 1 or 2 portions of cooked food and were more likely used for the preparation of hot 'alcoholic' beverages. (e.g. Sackett, Popham and Warren 1965, fig. 17; Hallager and Hallager (eds) 2003, vol. III:2. pl. 73). There is one example of cooking jar with perked up shape (Fig. 14a), comparable to the shape of the body of a cooking pot from the Juktas Sanctuary (Fig. 14d, Karetsou 1975, pl. 268).

Fragments of cooking dishes are also found in great numbers (Fig. 15a-d). It seems that most of the rooms of each complex contained at least one or two cooking dishes. These vessels resemble basins, but they have rounded thin bottoms, a much thicker rim and rough surface underneath. Some sherds preserve a small 'reversed spout'. The best preserved dish is 53 cm. wide and has three 'reversed spouts' on the rim (Fig. 15b). The base of these vessels is so thin that it is rarely preserved. A few base fragments are not more than 2 mm. thick

and they are usually unburnt underneath. There are, however, traces of burning on the exterior surface of the rim and in some cases, in the interior of the dish. Cooking dishes are a typical shape in Crete from the EM period onwards (Mook 1999). Although, they resemble a type of wok, (e.g. Yasur-Landau 2006, 236, fig. 2.2,3; Mook 1999; Betancourt 1980, 6, fig.3, 5D-E) their exact use or the purpose of the 'reversed spouts' has not been identified yet. It is not certain whether such vases were placed directly on the fire, although one was discovered on the hearth of room 8 (Fig. 15a), together with a small tripod cooking pot.

There are two cooking trays, both from Building complex I. They have a flat thick bottom and one of them preserves the beginning of a leg (Fig. 15e). They are rather shallow and were most probably used for grilling (e.g. Yasur-Landau 2006, 236, fig. 2.1, 4, 5; Betancourt 1980, 8, fig. 4). The fragment from a cooking lid probably covered a tray or a baking basin (Fig. 15f), although only a single sherd from a baking basin was noted among the material. Similar lids were discovered at Karphi (Fig. 15h; Seiradaki 1960, 26, fig 19:1, pl. 10c).

It seems that at Kastrokephala there are two types of fabric using similar raw materials for the manufacture of cooking wares. They are made of orange to dark red coarse gritty clay. The petrographic analysis which has been made at the Pacheia Ammos INSTAP center by Dr. E. Nodarou² has identified two fabric groups that have similar composition. Fabric group 1 has coarser clay with large inclusions. Fabric group 2 has medium coarse clay. The surface of several pots made from the second fabric group is smoothed to such a degree that it seems burnished. This technique is used on the smaller cooking jars, the small cooking jug and the shallow tripod pot of Mycenaean type and on a few cooking dishes.

The petrographic analysis of the burnished cup (Fig. 8g) shows that in terms of fabric and manufacture it constitutes a finer version of the above described cooking Fabric group 2. It has the same base clay with small inclusions, which, however, must have been removed through sieving of the raw material before the vase was made. This vase was fired at low temperature.

The textural difference between the two groups of clay might be indicative of different workshops or different potters within the same workshop. We should stress that the material has not been completely studied and mended so far. These points presented here are, necessarily, of a provisional nature. However, certain points clearly emerge.

The areas excavated so far show that the citadel of Kastrokephala was short-lived, ca. 50 to 70 years. It started just before or about 1200 BC. It was founded at the same chronological stage as other refuge citadels, e.g. Palaikastro Kastri, Kephala Thronos (Kanta 2003a, 168-9). The foundation of such a large fortified settlement in the area may be connected with the destruction and abandonment of the nearby settlement of Ayia Pelagia (Kanta and Karetsou 2003, 147). Kastrokephala was destroyed by fire *c.* 1150 or 1130 BC.

In the buildings excavated so far cooking ware predominates, together with large storage jars. The abundance of cooking vessels together with new features related to Mycenaean cooking utensils may suggest a change in cooking habits and thus indicate the presence of newcomers. Large scale cooking does not necessarily indicate the presence of women. Even today in military facilities cooking on a large scale is done by men.

The fact that not all cooking pots are of Mycenaean type may just be due to the fact that Kastrokephala is located in Crete, the land of the best ceramics in the Mediterranean.

The large number of square and roughly round hearths which were made with a layer of clay and/or sherds is a Greek Mainland feature. Such hearths exist on the Mainland from earlier times, e.g. Mycenae, Tiryns, Korakou, Nichoria etc. (Tourvanitou 1999, 835, 838-839). They are also common in new Mycenaean

² We are very grateful to Dr. Nodarou and the INSTAP center at Pacheia Ammos for this analysis which will be published by her in the near future. The results presented in this paper are part of her report.

establishments of this period such as Maa Palaeokastro in Cyprus, Tarsus in Anatolia, Ekron in Philistia (Karageorghis 1998b, 276-279). In Crete similar hearths that were constructed with clay and / or sherds were discovered e.g. at LM IIIC Halasmenos (Yasur-Landau 2006, 237), Kastelli Chania (Hallager and Hallager 2000, 128) and Kavousi Vronda (Day, Glowacki and Klein 2000, 116).

The abandonment of the Naue II sword in one of the rooms, the Italian razor, as well as sub-Apennine type pottery, perhaps indicates the presence of foreign warriors, or perhaps Mycenaean warriors who had travelled far.

What happened to the inhabitants of Kastrokephala and their Italian connections? Did they survive after the destruction of the site by burning? Did they join other bands and flee to Rhodes (Kanta 1980, 302, 304-306)? And from Rhodes did they go to Cyprus and Pyla where the architecture shows close similarities to Kastrokephala? Finally, did some of them travel from Crete (through Cyprus) and end up in Palestine as the Bible remembers?

No doubt further excavation and research will elucidate these points.

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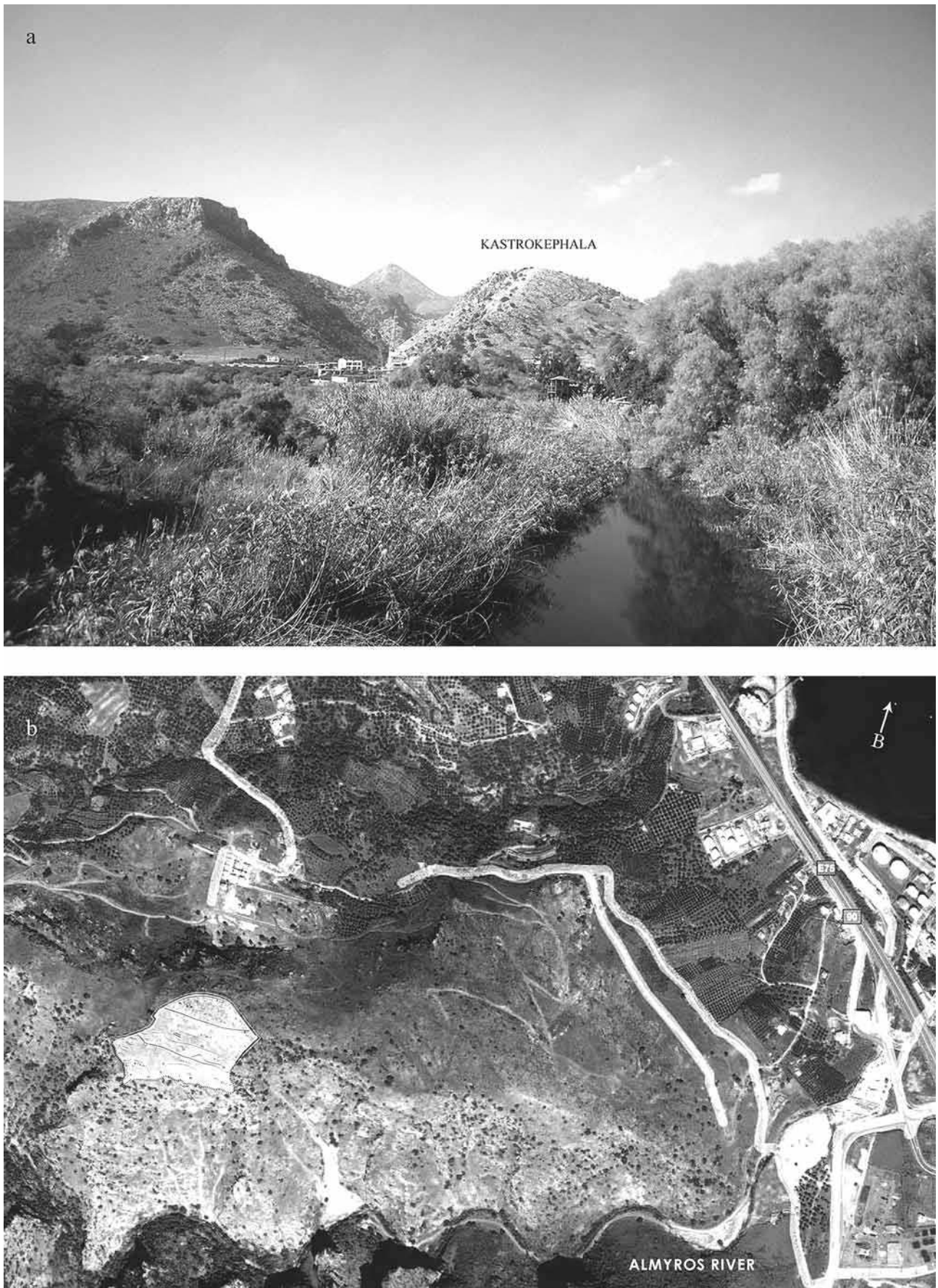


Fig. 1. a. Kastrokephala, from the NE. Note the Almyros River and marshy land, b. Kastrokephala and surrounding area from "Bing maps".

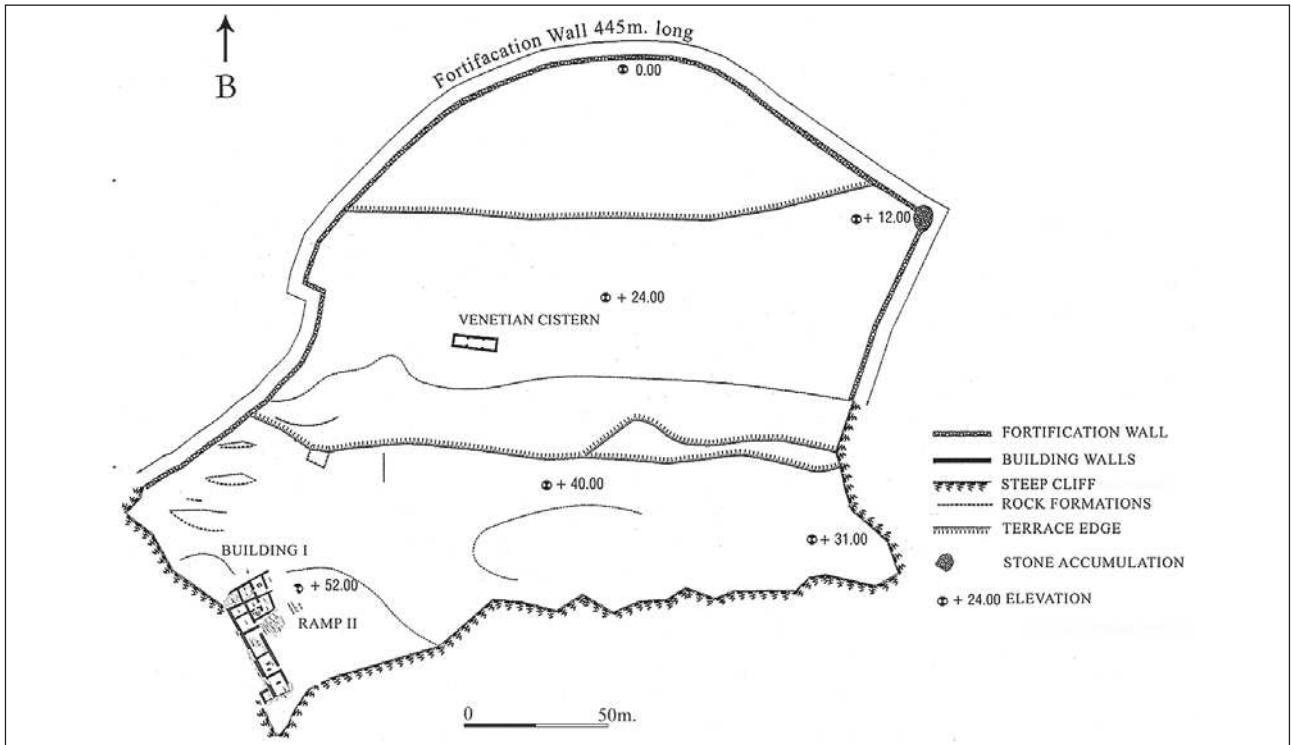


Fig. 2. Kastrokephala. Ground Plan of the Fortification.



Fig. 3. Kastrokephala. Details of the Fortification.

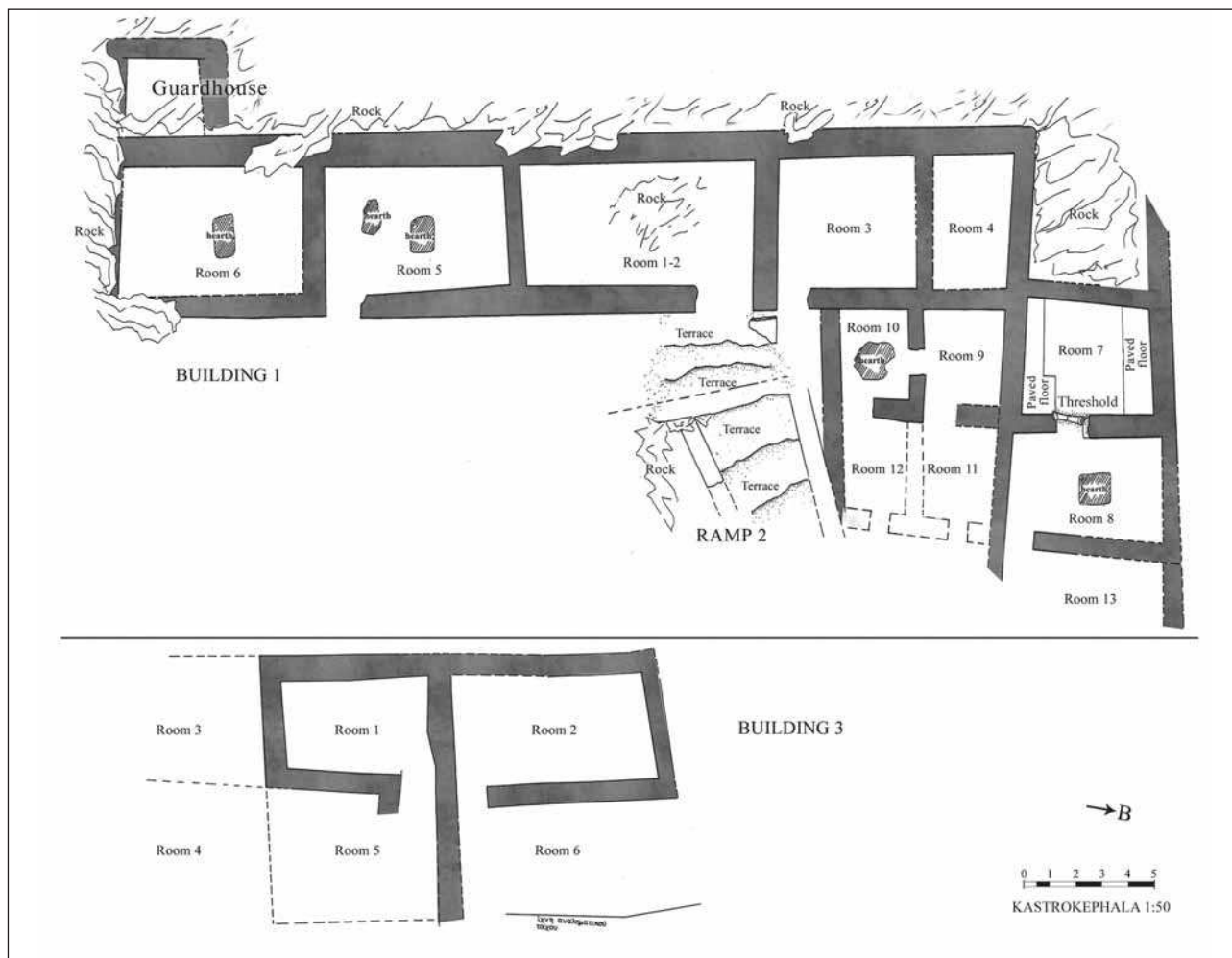


Fig. 4. Kastrokephala. Plan of Building Complex I and its Access Ramp II, and Building Complex III.

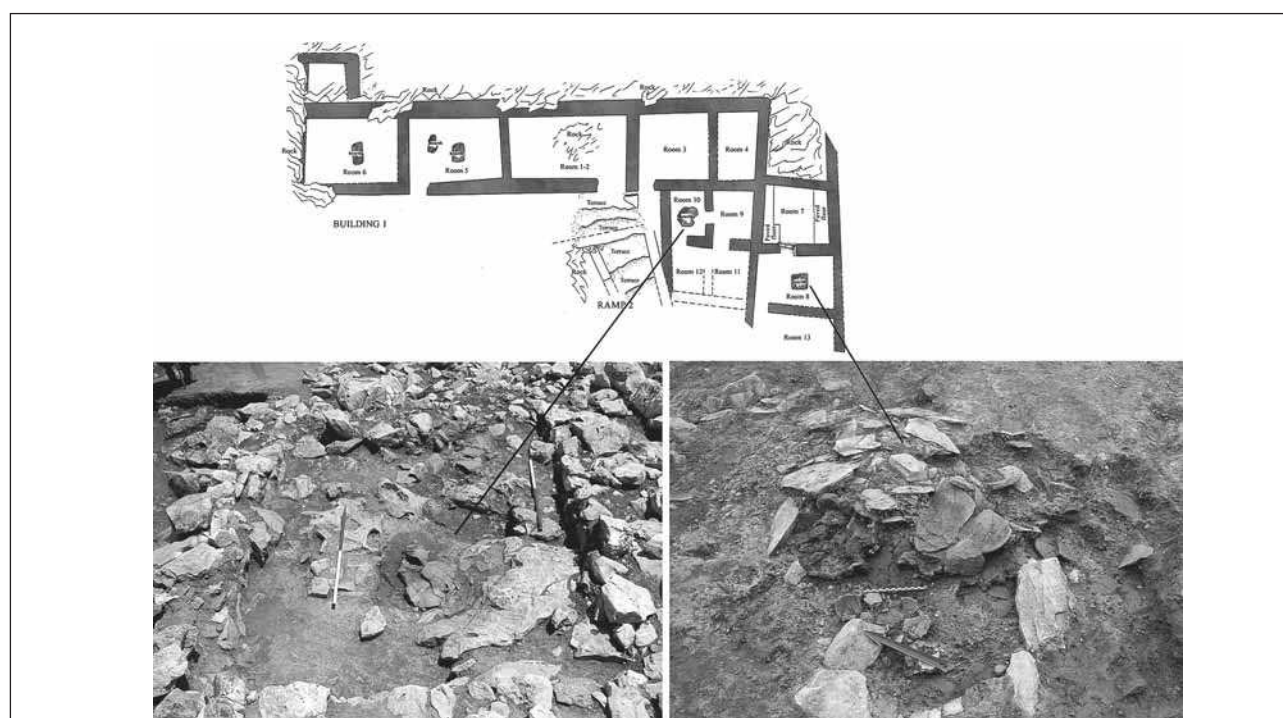


Fig. 5. The hearths of room 8 and 10 with the cooking pots found *in situ*.

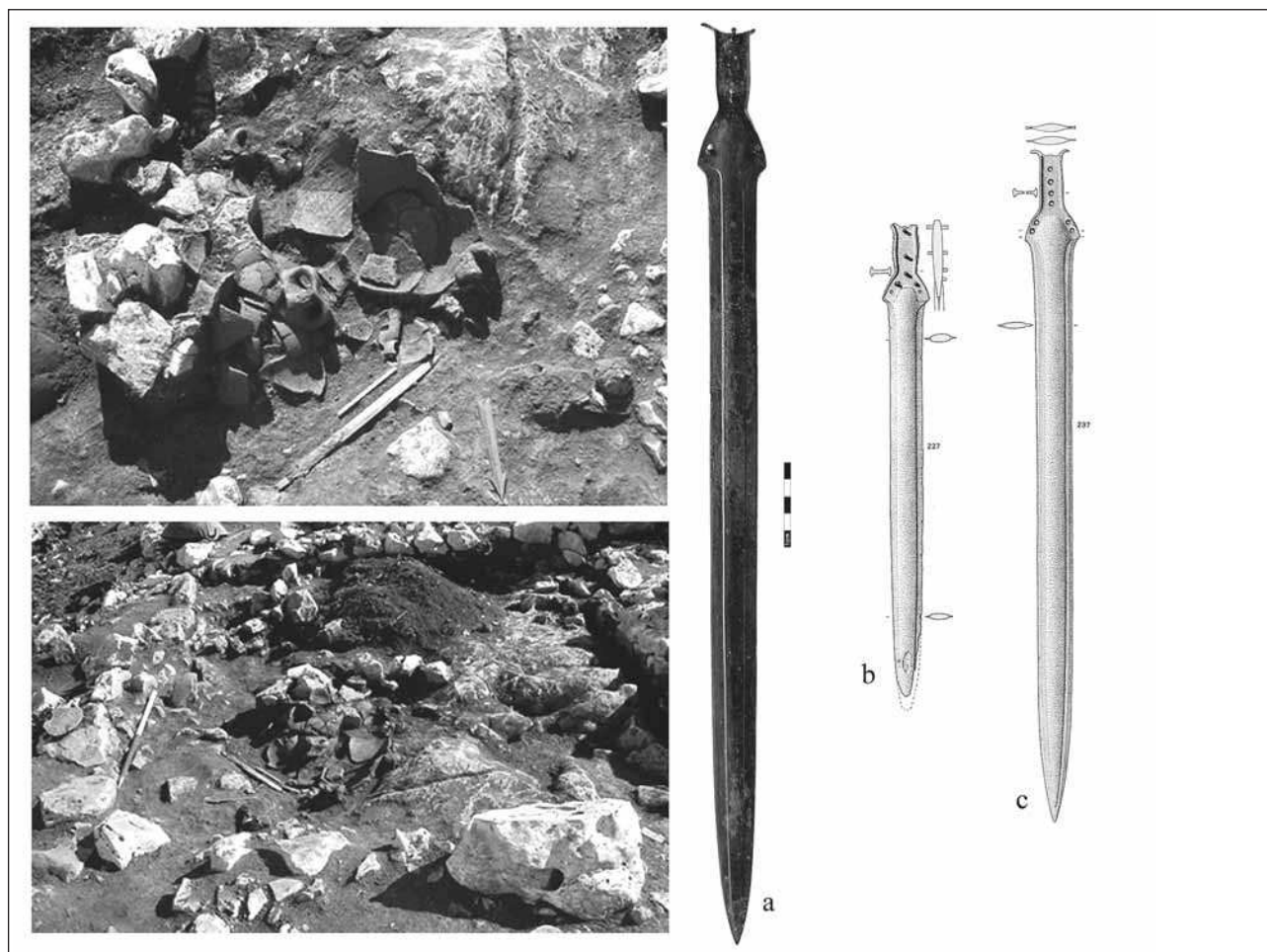


Fig. 6. a. The Naue II sword from Building complex III, b. Naue II sword, Myrsini, Siteia (after Kilian-Dirlmeier 1993: 227) c. Naue II sword, Smirov, Pernik Bulgaria (after Kilian-Dirlmeier 1993: 237).

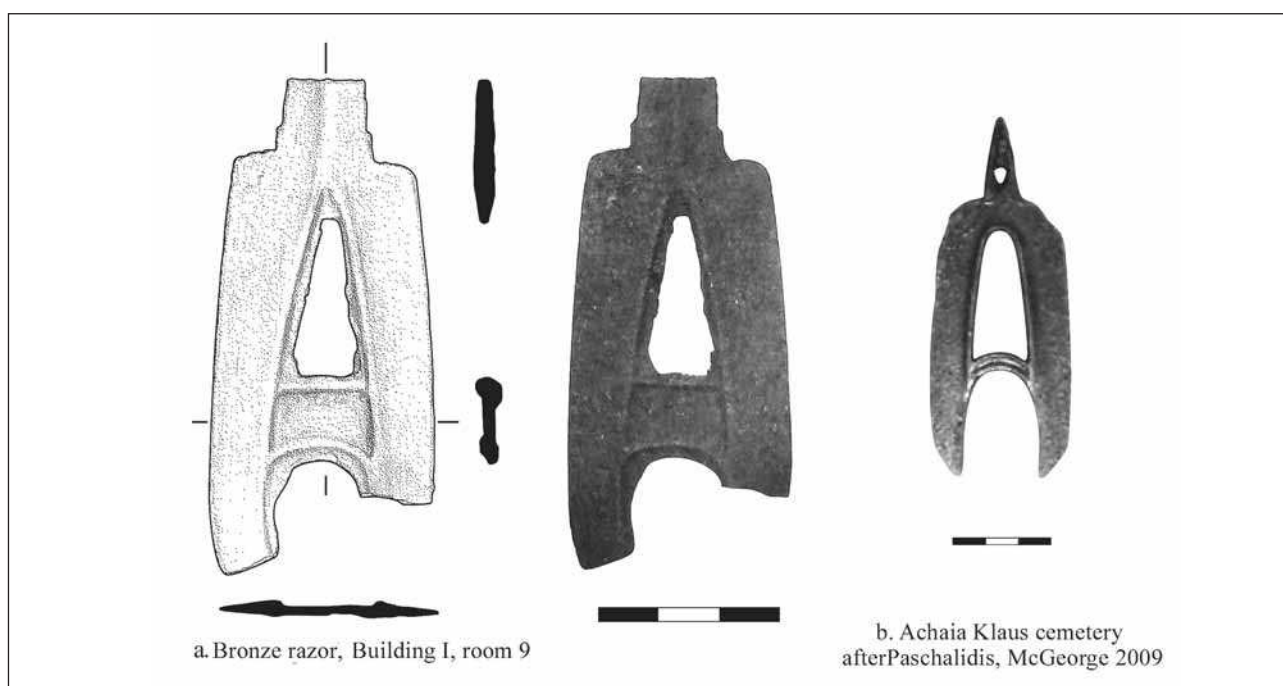


Fig. 7. a. Bronze razor from Kastrokephala, b. Italian razor from Tomb H of the Achaia Klaus cemetery in Patras (after Paschalidis, McGeorge 2009, fig. 7).

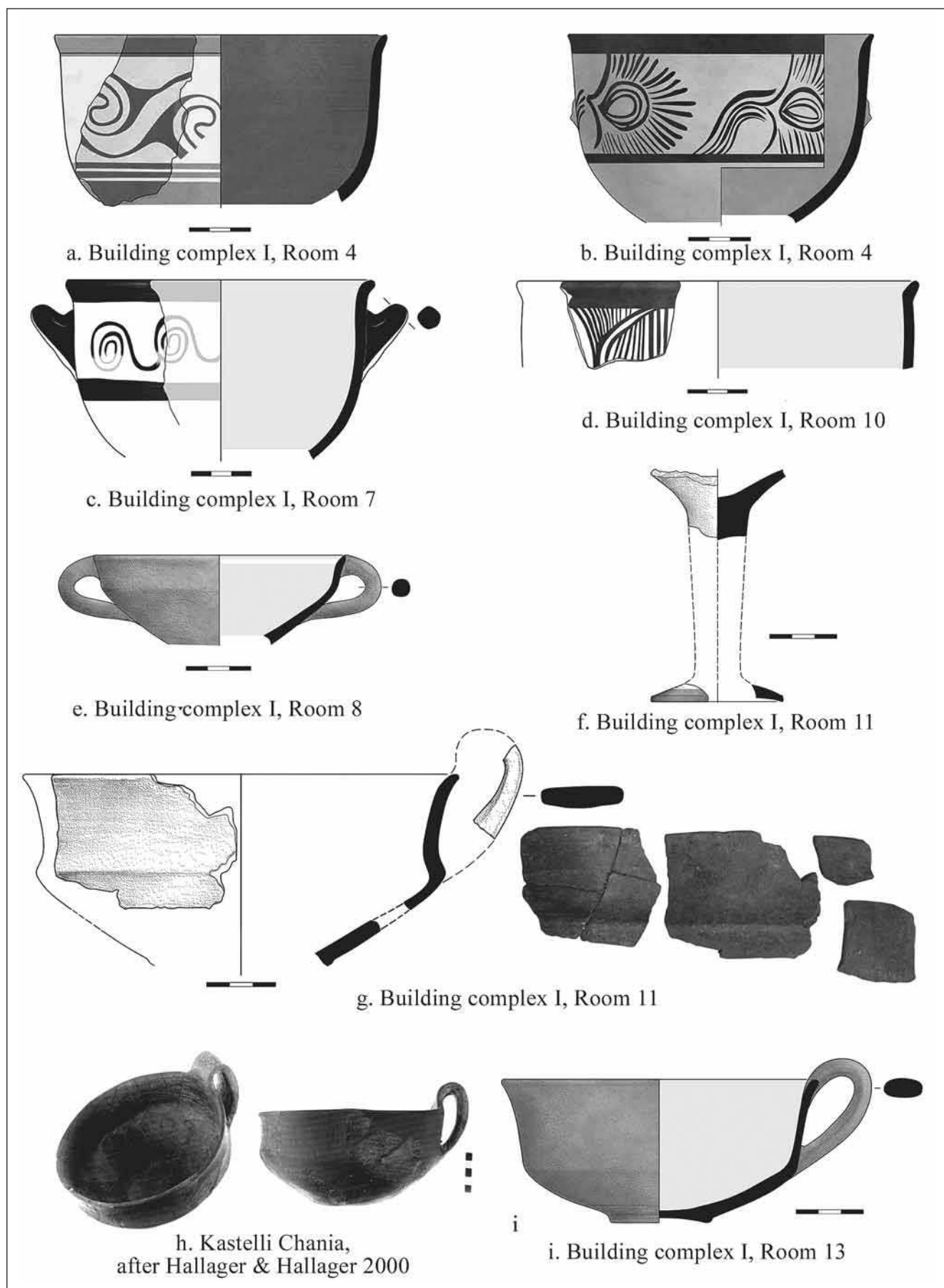


Fig. 8. a-c. Deep bowls, e-f. Kylikes, g. Carinated cup of 'sub-Apennine type' building complex I, h. Burnished cup from Kastelli Chania (Hallager and Hallager 2000, vol.III2, pl. 101), i. Carinated cup from Kastrokephala.

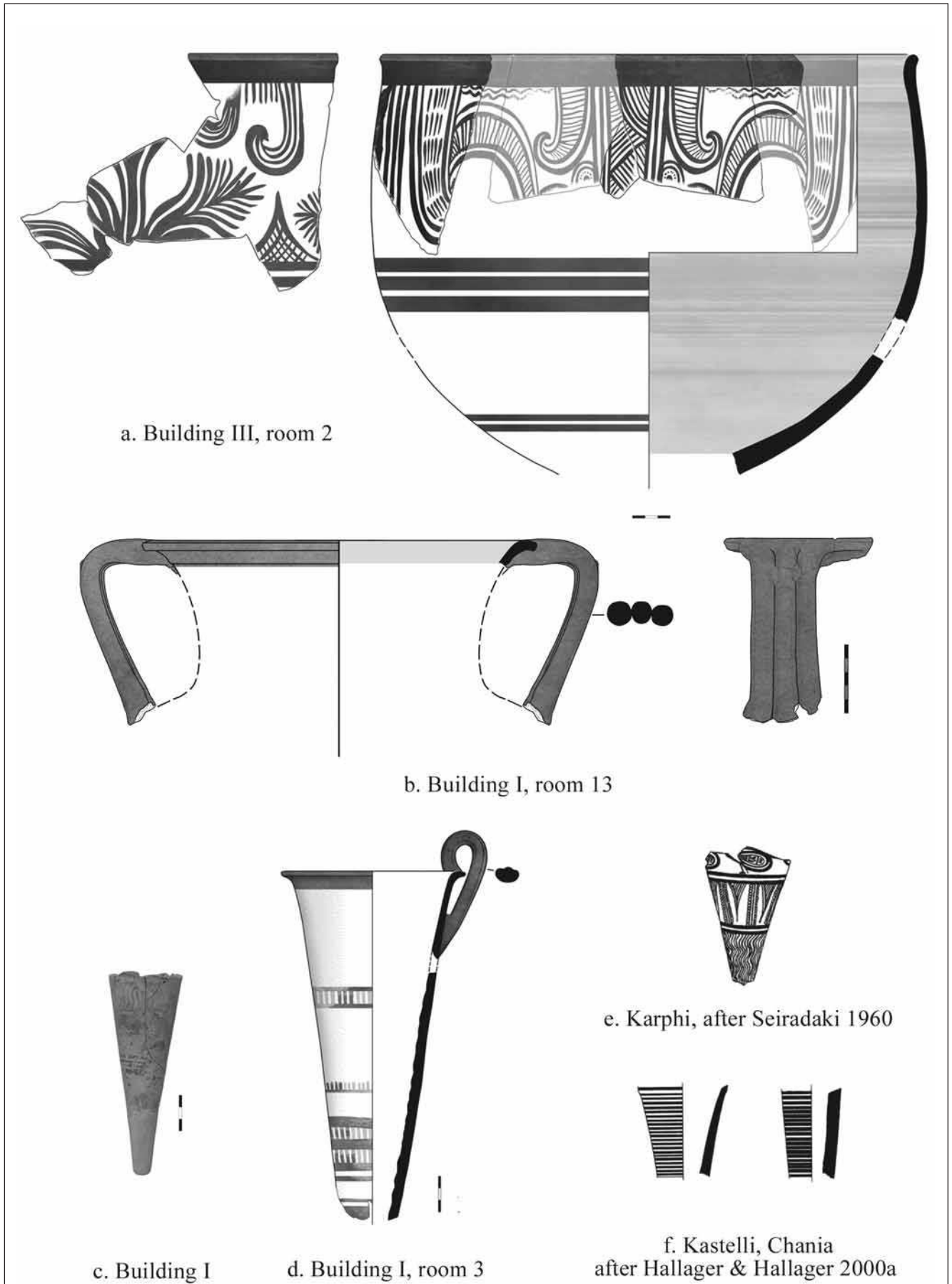


Fig. 9. a. Krater, b. Amphoroid Krater, c.-d. Rhyta from Building complex I, e. Rhyton from Karfi (after Seiradaki 1960, fig. 20), f. Rhyton from Kastelli (after Hallager and Hallager 2000a, vol. II, pl. 50).

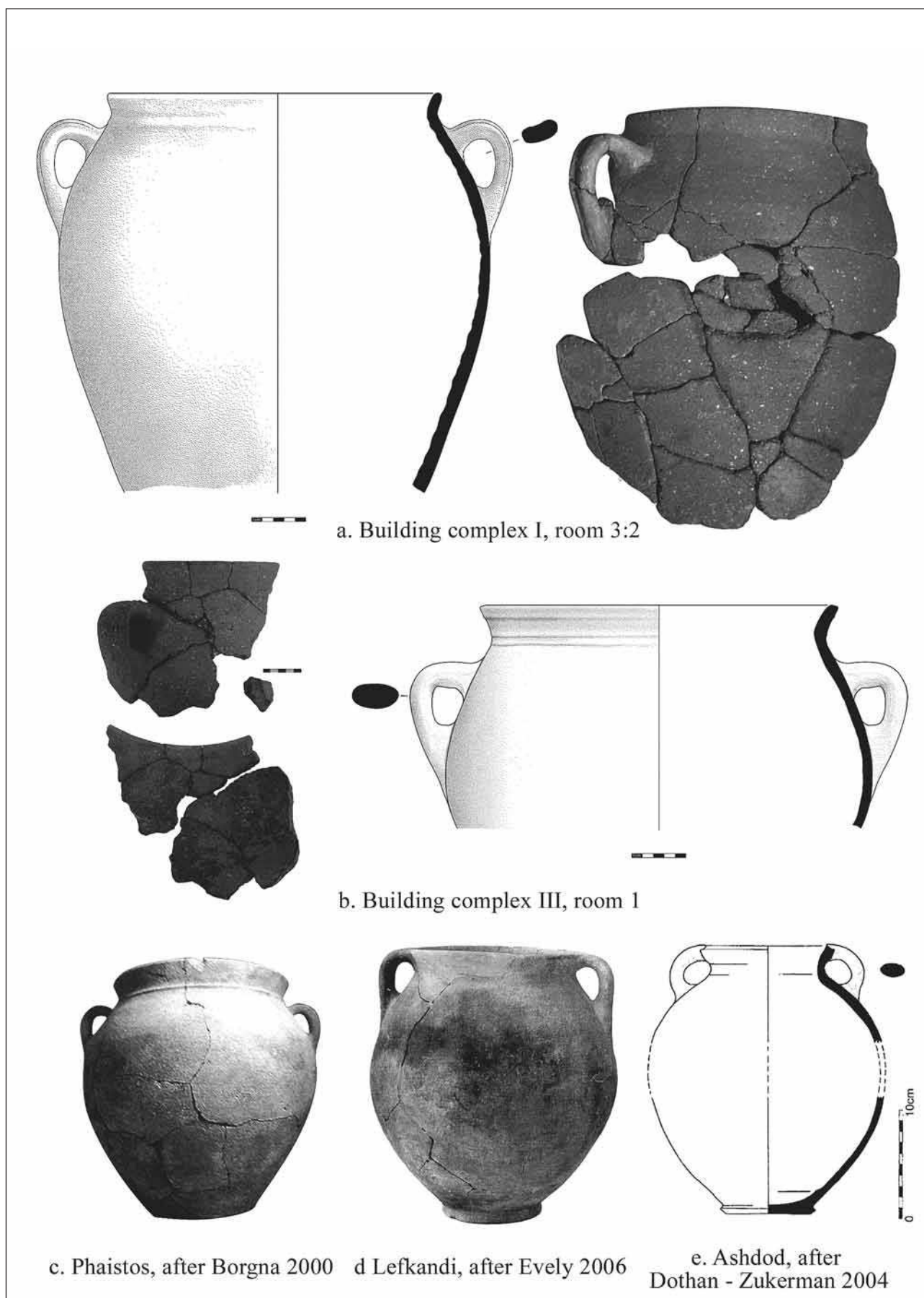


Fig. 10. a-e. Cooking amphorae.

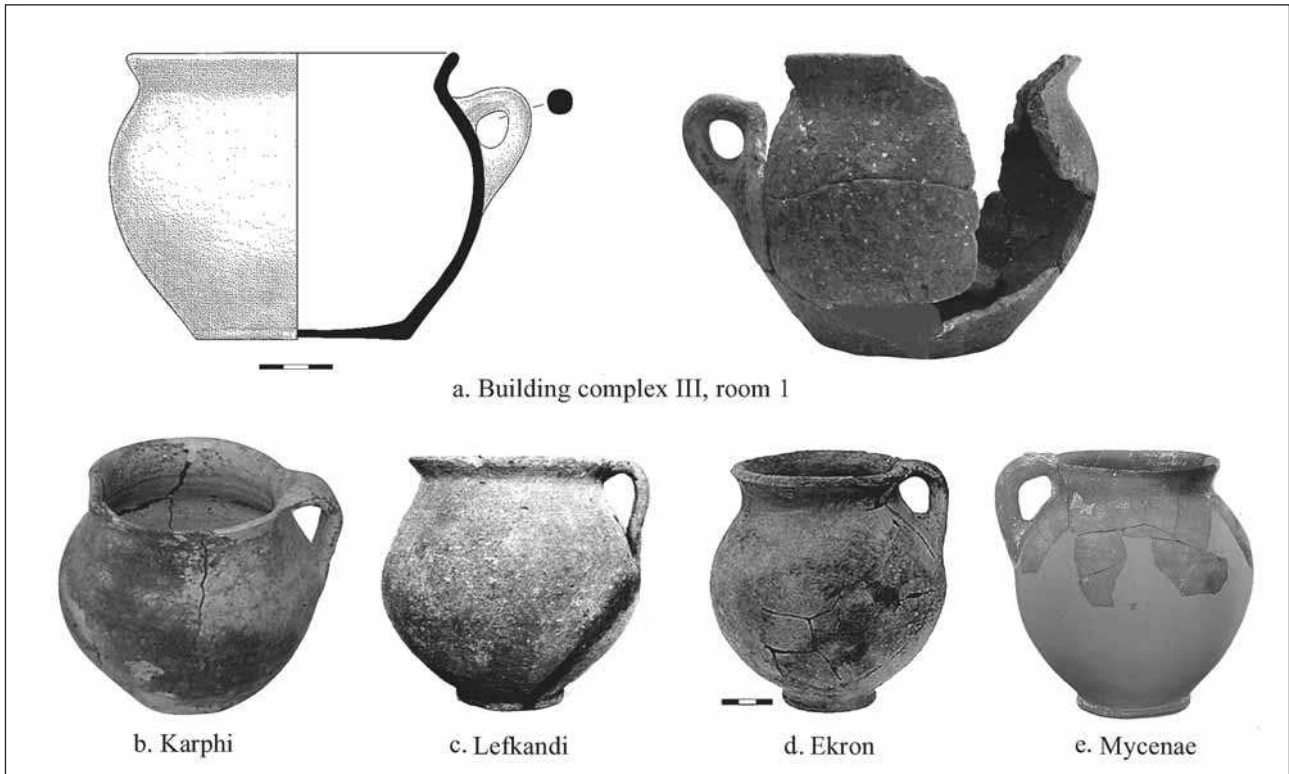


Fig. 11. a. Mycenaean jug from building complex III, b. Jug from Karphi (Seiradaki 1960, pl. 4:b), c. Jug from Lefkandi (Popham and Milburn 1972, pl. 52:2), d. Jug from Ekron (Dothan and Zukerman 2004, 35 fig. 37), e. Jug from Mycenae (Tzedakis and Martlew 1999, no: 121).

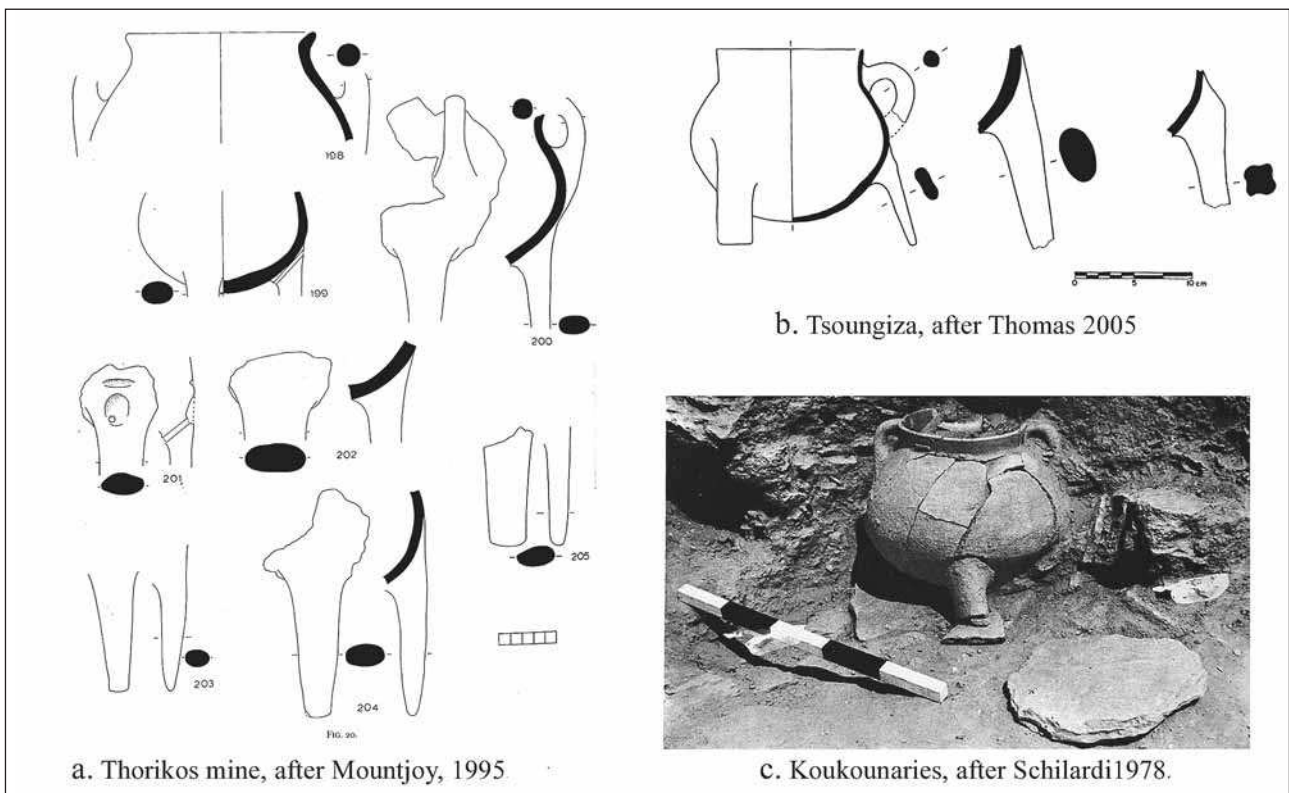


Fig. 12. Mycenaean tripod cooking pots: a. Thorikos Mine (Mountjoy 1995, fig 20), b. Tsoungiza (Thomas 2005, fig. 31), c. Koukounaries (Schilardi 1978, pl. 138b).

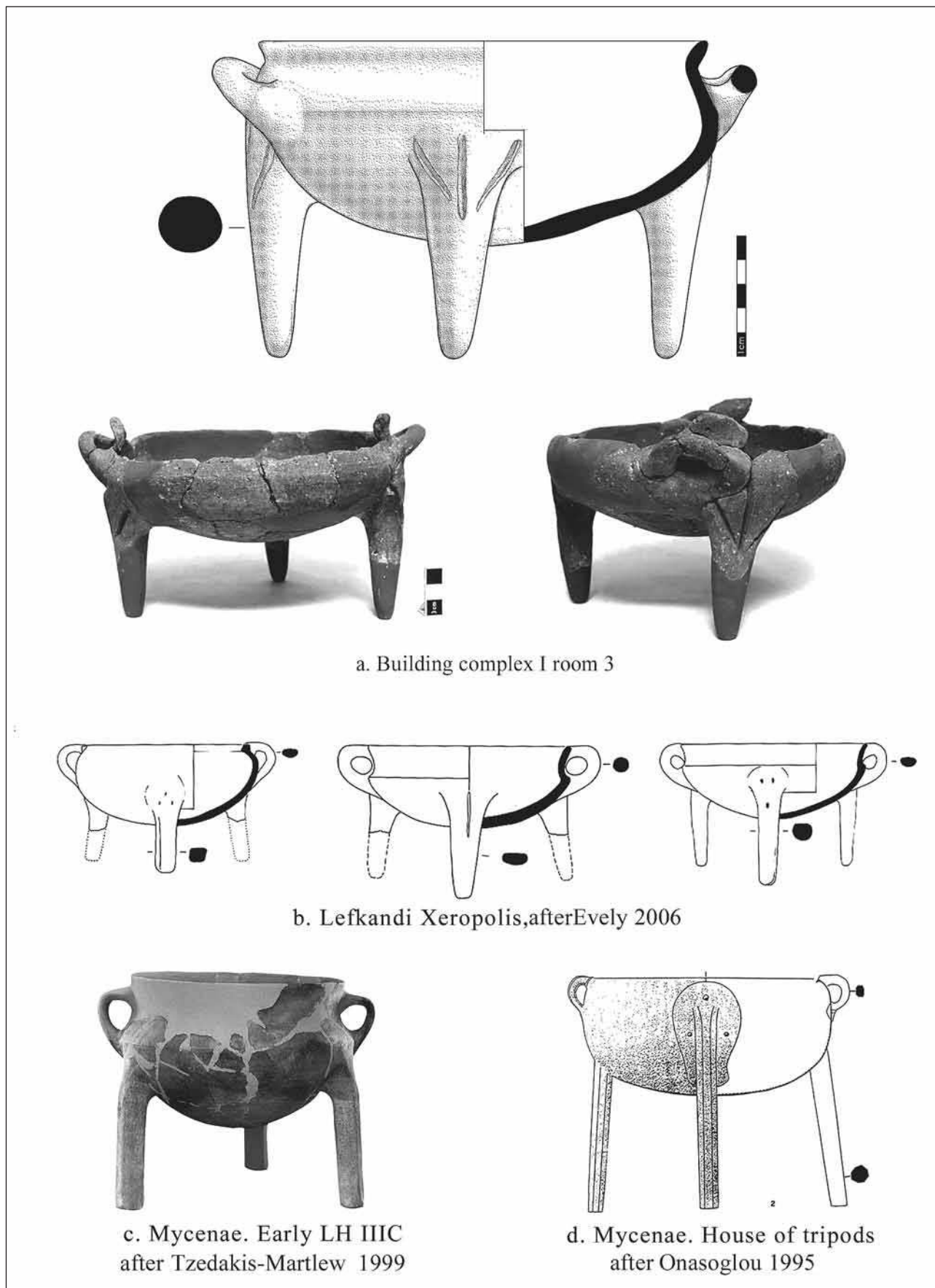


Fig. 13. a. Shallow tripod cooking pot from Building complex I. b. Tripod cooking pots from Lefkandi (Evely 2006, fig. 2.35), c. Tripod cooking pot from Mycenae (Tzedakis and Martlew 1999, no: 148), d. Bronze tripod from Mycenae, House of tripods (Onasoglou 1995, fig. 56:2).

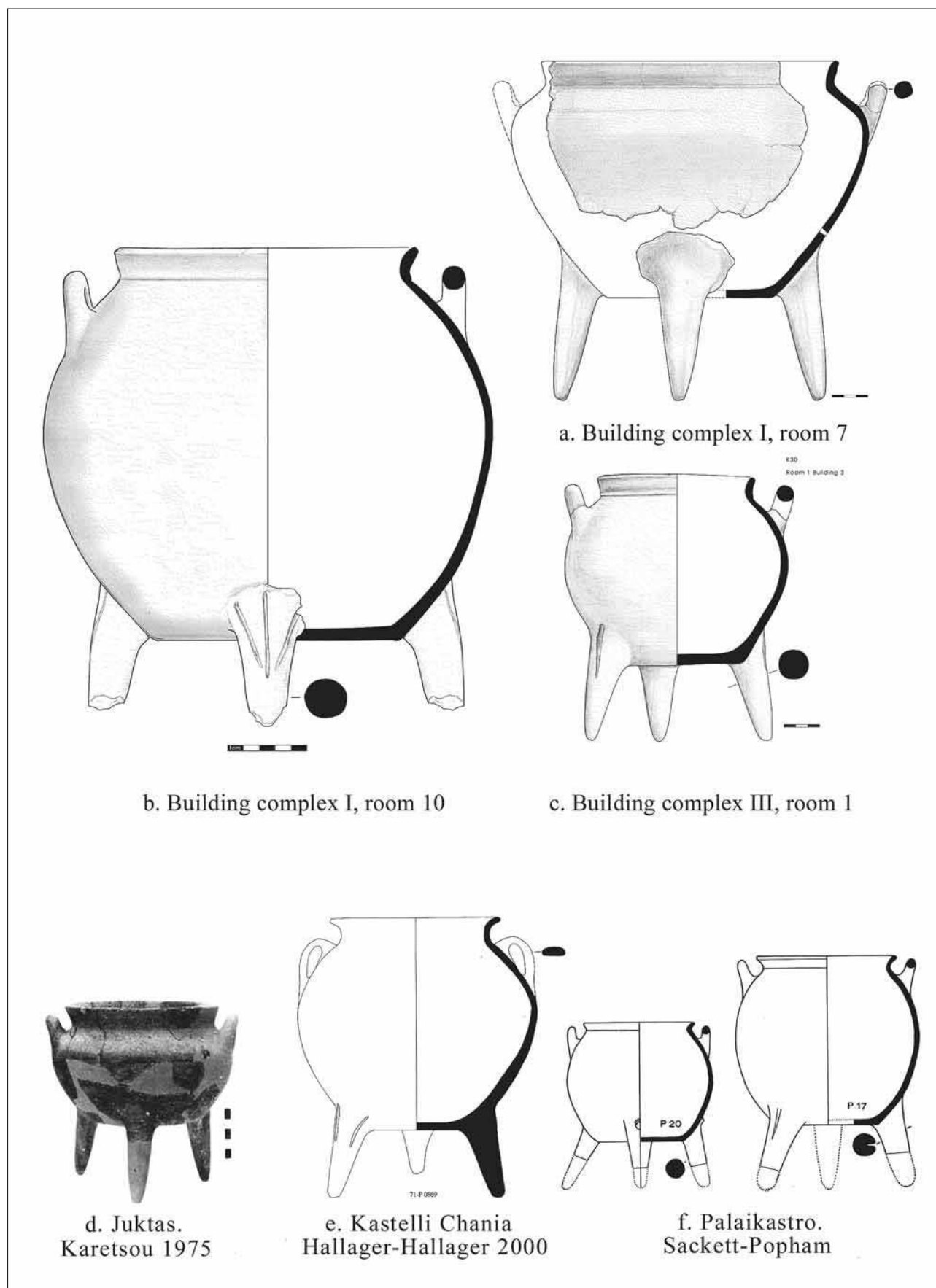


Fig. 14. a-c. Cooking jars from Kastrokephala. d. Cooking pot from Juktas (Karetsou 1975, pl. 268); e. Cooking pot from Kastelli Chania (Hallager and Hallager 2000, vol. III:2. pl. 73); f. Cooking pot from Palaikastro Kastri (Sackett and Popham 1965, fig. 17).

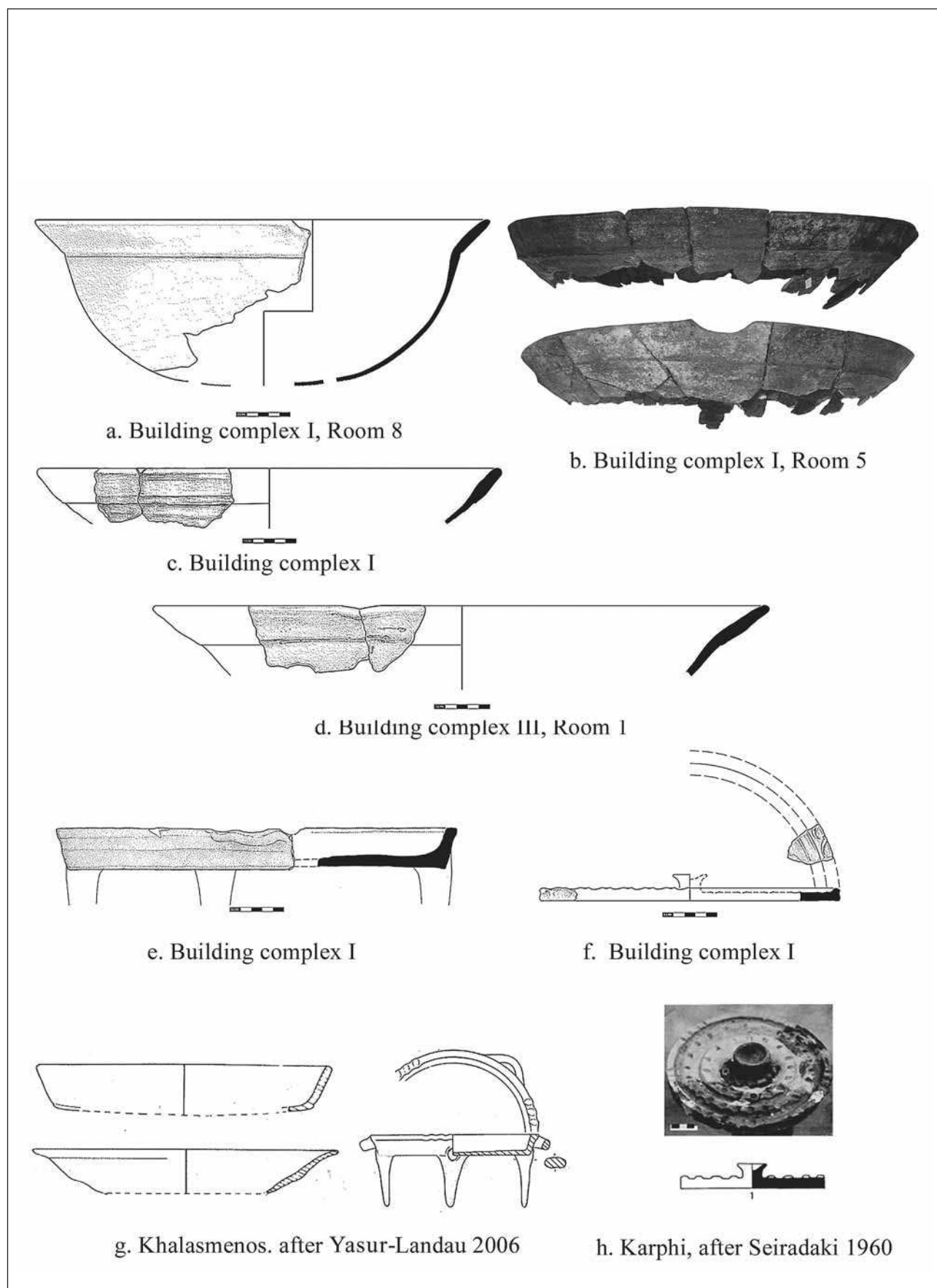


Fig. 15. a-d Cooking dishes from building complex I and III, e. Cooking tray from building complex I, f. Cooking lid from building complex I, g. Cooking dishes and tray from Khalasmenos (Yasur-Landau 2006, 236, fig. 2:2,3, 2:1), h. Cooking lid from Karphi (after Seiradaki 1960, 26, fig 19:1, pl. 10c).



Fig. 16. Spools from Karphi.