

Hagios Charalambos

A Minoan Burial Cave in Crete

II. The Pottery



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II. The Pottery

by

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*This book is dedicated to my mother
Maris Clymer Langford*



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Overview

The study of finds from the cave at Hagios Charalambos in the Lasithi Plain provides an illustration of the practice of secondary burial in Early and Middle Bronze Age Crete. The cavern adds to our understanding of Early and Middle Minoan Lasithi and illuminates more clearly the function of the cave at Trapeza, which has close parallels for most classes of objects found at Hagios Charalambos. A total of 18,065 sherds and vases come from the excavations, and they were all studied either statistically or in detail.

A majority of the pottery from the site is made locally, but a selection of imports ranges in date from EM I or earlier to MM IIB. Imports can be recognized from the Gulf of Mirabello area, the Mesara, Malia, the Pediada, and Knossos. The pottery shows a shift in the use of imports during the site's history. Objects from the Mesara decline after MM I, and objects from Malia increase in MM IIB. This change may reflect a shift in economic and/or political dominance and influence in Lasithi.

Typical of pottery associated with burials, the types of vessels were mostly used for the pouring and drinking of liquids. In addition, the assemblage has small-sized vessels that most likely contained precious oils or liquids and several other classes including several small jars and spouted containers, a few jars in large sizes, and a fine cylindrical pyxis. The assemblage also has offering tables made from the local clay fabric of the Lasithi region. The tables were designed to be carried by a short stem, and they could have held a liquid or solid offering.

The local clay sources used to make the distinctive fabric of the plain's pottery are represented in the majority of the ceramics found at the cave. Petrographic analysis provides a thorough description, and the fabric is referred to as the Lasithi Red Fabric Group.

Petrographic analysis of samples of imported wares confirms the origin of manufacture for some of the vases and allows for conclusions regarding the implications of certain imports.

Overall, the pottery here shows that the people who deposited their dead in the secondary burial cave at Hagios Charalambos were in contact with ceramic production centers in East Crete, the Mesara, Knossos, the Pediada, and Malia. This range of influences speaks not only of trade relations and political spheres of influence but also of tastes in pottery production and consumption.



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List of Abbreviations

B	base	L	leg
C	complete	LM	Late Minoan
cm	centimeter(s)	LN	Late Neolithic
d.	diameter	m	meter(s)
EM	Early Minoan	max. dim.	maximum dimension(s)
FN	Final Neolithic	mm	millimeter(s)
H	handle	μm	micrometers
h.	height	MM	Middle Minoan
HCH	Hagios Charalambos excavation number	MNI	minimum number of individuals
HNM	Hagios Nikolaos Archaeo- logical Museum number	MNV	minimum number of vases
IGME	Institute of Geology and Mineral Exploration, Athens, Greece	NC	nearly complete
INSTAP-SCEC	INSTAP Study Center for East Crete, Pacheia Ammos, Crete, Greece	pres.	preserved
		R	rim
		rest.	restored
		S	spout

