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Survey at a complex urban site

By John Bintliff, Emeri Farinetti, Božidar Slapšak and Anthony Snodgrass



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with contributions from
Philip Bes, Margherita Bonanno Aravantinos, Oliver Dickinson, Lorenzo Gentili, Catherine Grandjean, Machiel Kiel, Uroš Kirn, Chrystalla Loizou, Christel Müller, Robin Osborne, Jerome Poblome, Kalliope Sarri, Vladimir Stissi and Athanasios Vionis

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4. The 'Rome Catalogue' (Ch.4)
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7. Table of artefact density and visibility measurements for Thespiai City (Ch.3b)

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Chapter 10(a)

The Neolithic site at the Thespiai Magoula

Kalliope Sarri

The site of the Thespiai Magoula is located on a low hill in the valley of the river Kanavaris, within the Classical city and below the modern villages of Thespies and Leondari (Fig. 10.1).

The river runs to the north of the Magoula, while its eastern periphery is marked by the same farm track, running southwards from the main tarmac road, that also forms the eastern boundary of the *Kastro* (Fig. 10.2). The surface of the site covers approximately 12,500 sq. m (1.25 ha) and it rises some 5 m above the valley floor to the north (305 m above sea level).

The perimeter and the back-filling of the Magoula change constantly over the years, since agricultural use is continuous. Visitors can still find numerous potsherds and stone tools of the Neolithic period on the surface of the site (Fig. 10.3). The project team has used this situation to make several revisits, in order to confirm the initial observations on the history of habitation on the site.

The Neolithic habitation at the Magoula has long been known, through the pioneer investigations of P. Stamatakis (1883) and from some early material collections published by J. Caskey and G. Bass (Caskey 1951; Bass 1959). The site was also mentioned by D. French as showing occupation during the MN period, as a strong presence of the decorated Chaeronea ware was detected (French 1972, 2). The finds discussed in this volume come from the surveys of the Boeotia project. To this material, a brief commentary on earlier published material and a brief re-evaluation of the very important figurines in the collection of the American School of Classical Studies have been added.[1]

Survey seasons and collections

The Thespiai Magoula was included in the investigated area of the Thespiai urban survey by the Boeotia project in the 1985 and 1986 seasons. In those two years, and again in 1989, 1991 and 1993, a large number of Neolithic sherds and stone tools were collected. The whole city site was gridded with transects, normally of 30 x 50 m but with much of the Magoula covered by the enlarged Transect 156 of 1986. This transect and its immediate neighbours yielded a total number of 320 sherds from various prehistoric periods, most of them belonging to the Neolithic era (Fig. 10.4). To this primary collection, a small number of 'grab' samples were added during later revisits and survey activities in the area.

Distribution

Scattered Neolithic finds occur over much of the surveyed area of the ancient city, up to the foot of the slopes below the modern villages of Thespies and Leondari (Fig. 10.5). But both during the systematic collections in this area and also on all subsequent revisits, the team has observed a particularly strong concentration of surface material in the centre of the Magoula and on its lower slopes (Transects 148–9, 153–6). The surface finds – many small and some bigger pottery fragments and large numbers of stone tools, found in a good state of preservation – indicate that the current surface level of the site, despite the intensive agricultural use, lies close to the habitation layers of an important, long lasting and well-preserved Neolithic settlement. In the *Kastro* area the density of the Neolithic occupation appears at its lowest, understandably when one considers the thick habitation layers of the subsequent periods. But between there and the Magoula, and in one location below the modern village of Leondari, some higher concentrations of Neolithic finds are found.

The ceramic finds of the Neolithic period stand out rather clearly, by their characteristic manufacture: the hand-made body, the intense polishing and the



Figure 10.1. *Thespiai Magoula, aerial photograph. Courtesy Darya Grosman.*

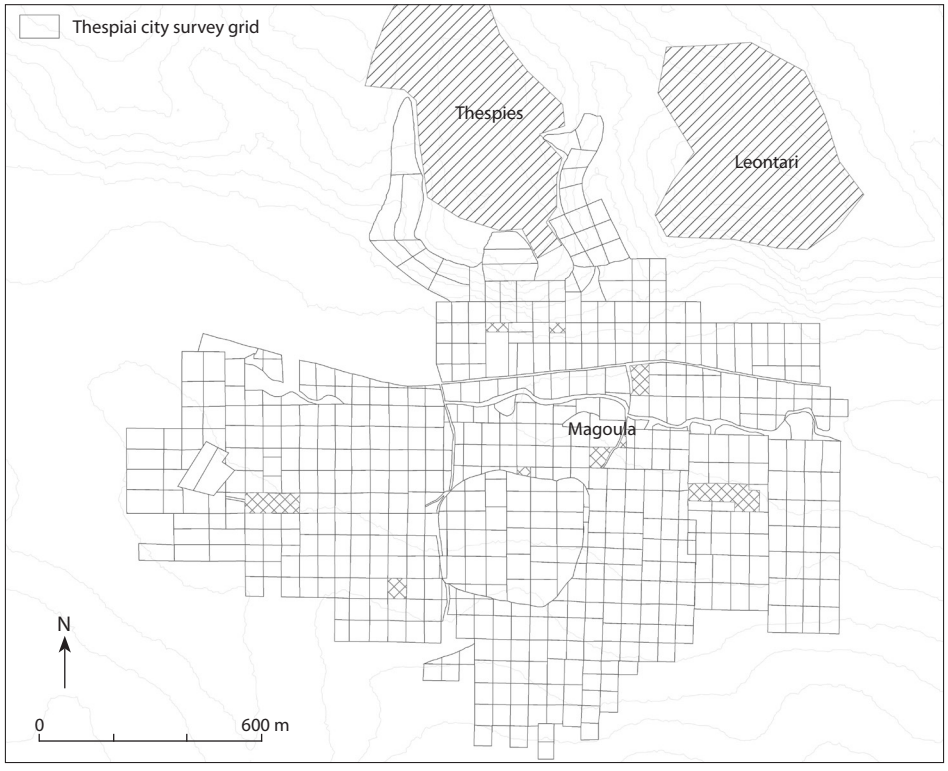


Figure 10.2. *Thespiai Magoula, location.*



Figure 10.3. *The site revisited in 1995.*

considerable hardness due to high firing temperatures, are all features of the Neolithic pottery of Central Greece, not to be repeated later in a similar combination. Many of these finds lack the morphological elements of shape or decoration and thus have to classified in a broad category of 'Neolithic', based on their generic macroscopic features.

The rare finds that can be dated to the Early Neolithic are concentrated near the center of the Magoula (Fig. 10.6). So too are the more numerous finds dated, with relative accuracy, to the Middle Neolithic (Fig. 10.7). The LN (Fig. 10.8) and FN finds are mostly localized on the lower slopes of the site, as well as at a greater distance to the north of the Magoula, where they appear in higher densities. This phenomenon can be explained by a series of much later intrusions in this area: in the centre we can discern a deep ditch arising from agricultural work, with irrigation wells and some older built constructions still in use. During the digging for these constructions, the removal of earth has probably reached the earlier, deeper layers, bringing the older material up to the surface (Fig. 10.9).

The dispersal of the LN ceramics around the Magoula, on the other hand, might be due to shallower ploughing that did not reach these deeper layers. This picture could however be explained by the fact – already noticed at other sites of the survey such as Tanagra and Hyettos – that the earliest Neolithic periods are limited to the main nuclei of settlement, while the LN structures and activities are spread to a longer radius, away from the main site (Bintliff and Sarri, in press).

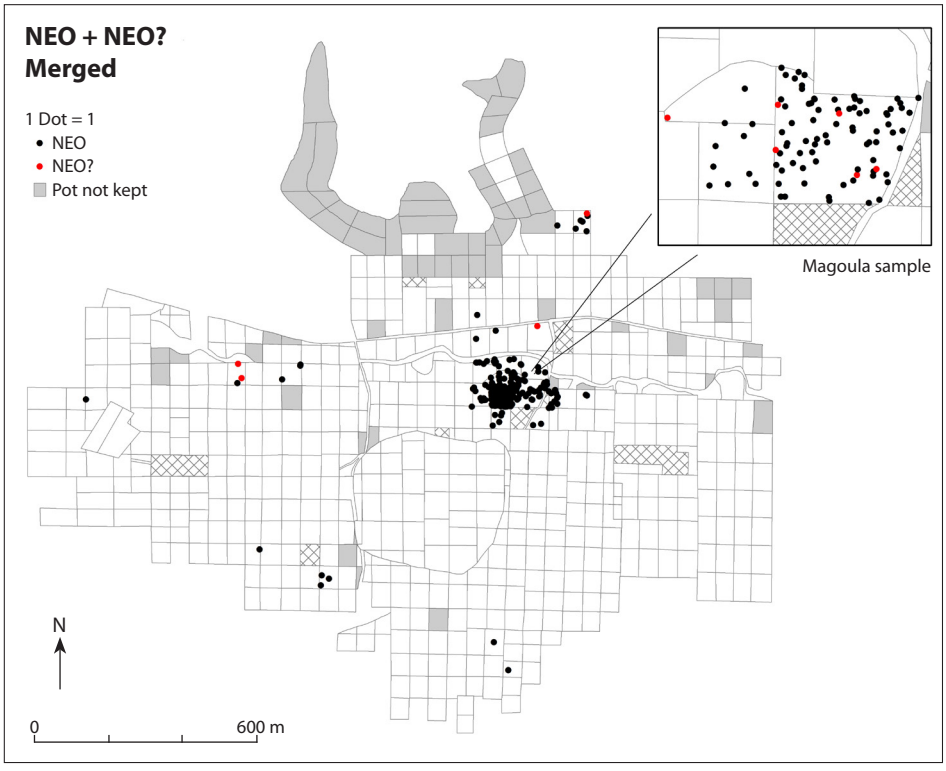


Figure 10.4. *Distribution of Neolithic and possible Neolithic finds from the Magoula area.*

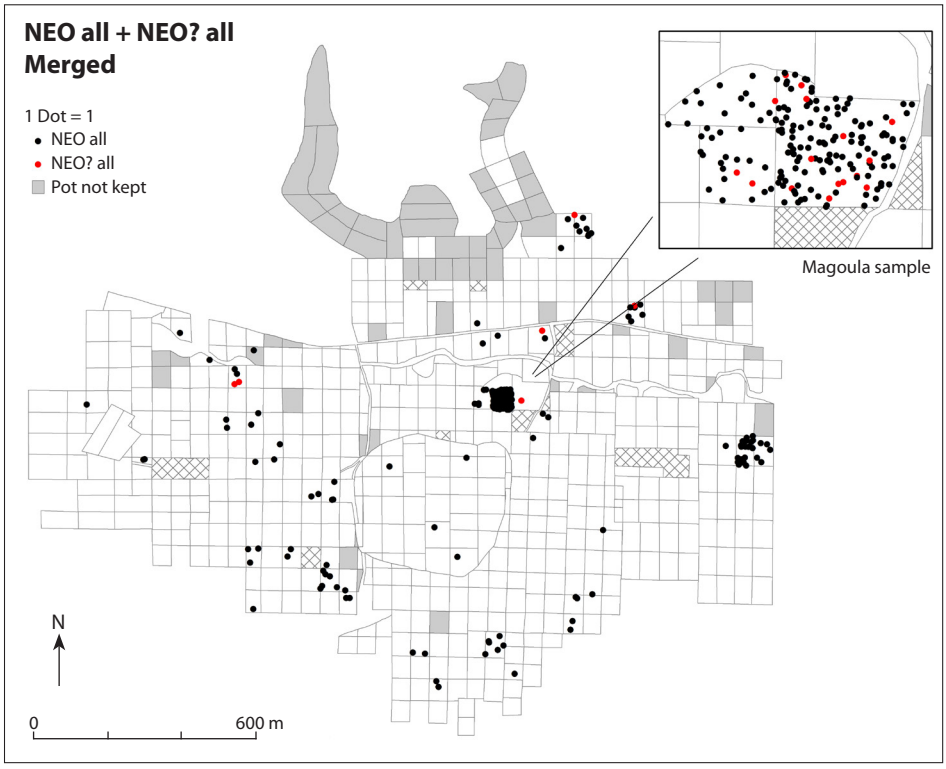


Figure 10.5. *Distribution of Neolithic and possible Neolithic finds over the whole city area.*

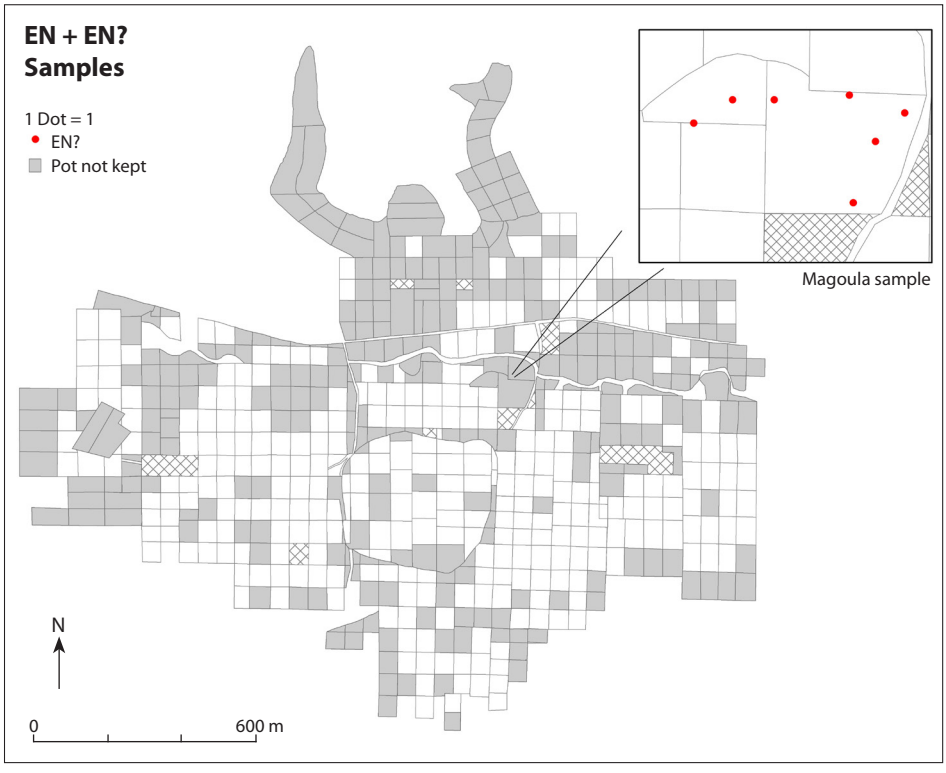


Figure 10.6. *Distribution of the Early Neolithic finds.*

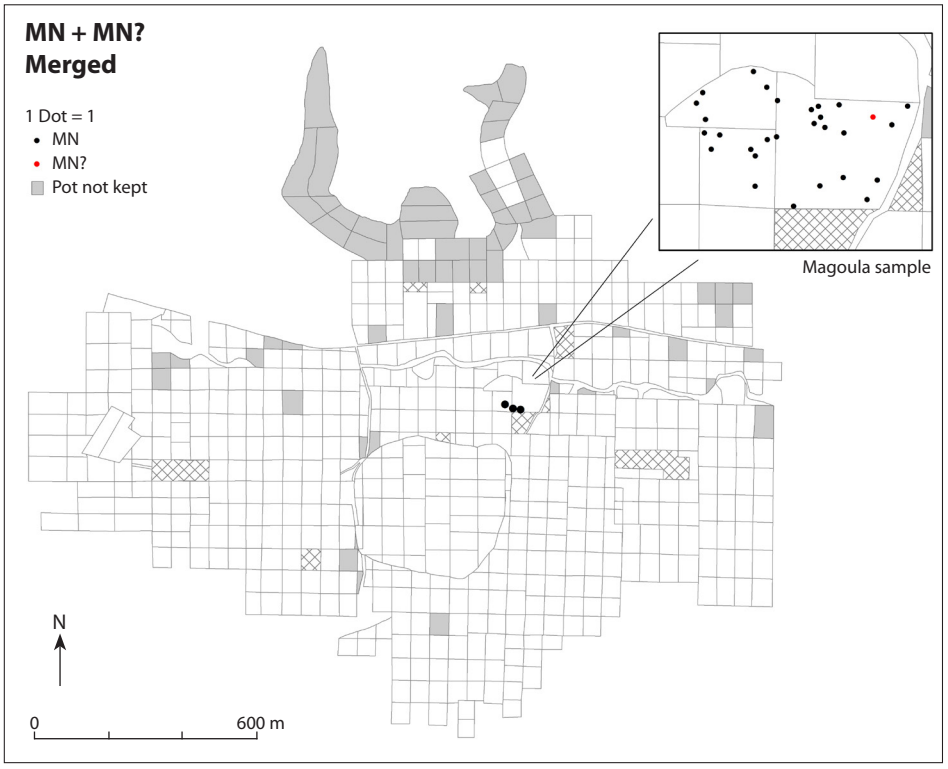


Figure 10.7. *Distribution of the Middle Neolithic finds.*

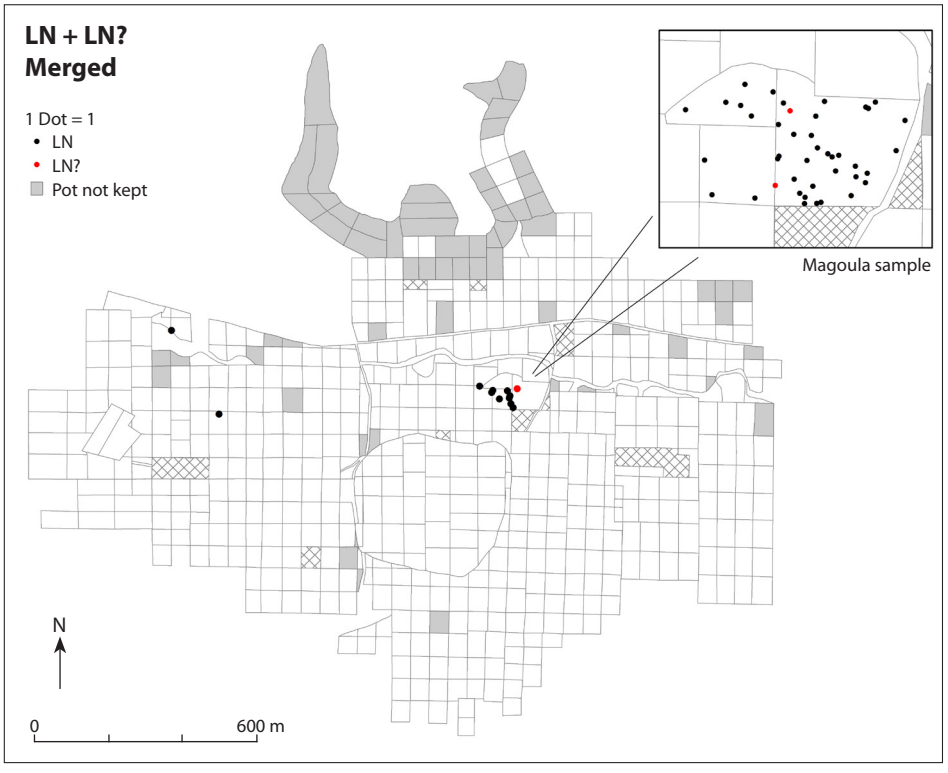


Figure 10.8. *Distribution of the Late Neolithic finds.*



Figure 10.9. *The Thespiai Magoula, marked by the electricity pylon in the middle distance, seen from the north-west. The outline marks the fields that were notably rich in Late and Final Neolithic material.*

Elsewhere within the Classical city site, the concentrations of surface finds contained also some examples of later prehistoric periods (see Dickinson, below, Chapter 10 (b)), but only a small number of Neolithic potsherds have been found, some from areas even beyond the *Kastro* (Fig. 10.5). These Neolithic sherds from outside the Magoula did not show any typological features. In the north-eastern extremity of the survey, particularly in Transects 2087 and 2088 of Sector 8, where the visibility was high, a second dense concentration of Neolithic and possible Neolithic potsherds was localized. These too were not typologically diagnostic, but their homogeneity and high numbers indicate an area of intensive activity. The location of this spot on the hill slope of the modern village Leondari, not far from the theatre, indicates a second pole of activity that could be related to another undiscovered site, located closer to the modern villages.

Pottery classification

Although most of fabrics attributed to the Neolithic period lack clear typological features, the special technology of the Neolithic – the hand-made manufacture, the hardness achieved through high firing temperatures and the smooth polish – distinguishes them easily from the later Bronze Age material. In this case, therefore, unlike those of many later, undiagnostic fabrics, we can be more confident that the number of plain and coarse Neolithic sherds recognized is close to the real amount in our collections.

Various pottery groups known from other sites of Central Greece appear at Thespiai, the most characteristic being the so-called painted Urfirnis pottery of the MN period (Fig. 10.10).

There are also several examples of undecorated red slip fabrics belonging to the MN or LN period (Fig. 10.11).

The LN painted ceramics further include specimens of the monochrome and bichrome matt-painted and the black burnished with relief decoration (Fig. 10.15). The Final Neolithic (4500–3300 BC) shows very different characteristics from those of the previous periods. The ceramics of the latest Neolithic phases, down to the Early Bronze Age, are coarse, rough, often rich in vegetal inclusions, fired at lower

temperatures and usually undecorated (Fig. 10.14: see Coleman 2012 for chronology and cultural interactions in the FN). For the fabric identifications and the dating of these later, seldom clearly diagnostic phases, we have used descriptions of the contemporary material from Boeotia, namely Thebes (Tsota 2009), the Sarakenos cave (Sampson 2008), Chaironeia (Tzavella-Evjen 2012), and from some other excavated sites in Southern Greece such as Franchthi and Lerna (Vitelli 1999 & 2007). All these parallels are reinforced by the FN finds from our recent surveys in the region of Tanagra, where some more characteristic examples of this period have been found (Farinetti *et al*. 2006; Bintliff *et al*. 2006; Bintliff and Sarri in press). It becomes clear that during the later stages of LN we are dealing with a different use for ceramics, one related more to food preparation and storage and less to food consumption.

Methodology

The comparative study of the Neolithic pottery is mainly based on Boeotian parallels from old publications which provide a limited typological range with the exception of the recently published cave of Sarakenos and the Magoula Balomenou at Chaironeia (Sampson 2008; Tzavella-Evjen 2012). Our systematic surface collection has also yielded new groups that were not attested in earlier, more selective studies. For this reason, we used a combination of systems to classify our Neolithic ceramic finds. For long familiar styles, such as the *Neolithic Urfirnis* and the *Larissa black burnished*, we have followed the traditional terminology used by Wace and Thompson (1912), Tsountas (1908), Theocharis (1993) and other pioneer researchers of the Greek Neolithic (French 1972; Coleman 1977; Hauptmann 1981; Hauptmann and Milojčić 1969; Phelps 2004), while for more recently defined fabrics, we used Vitelli's classification for the Neolithic pottery of Lerna (Vitelli 2007). For undecorated fabrics, first identified on the Thespiai Magoula and not comparable to any published groups, we used a new classification.[2]

Neolithic pottery groups

A. Painted wares

Urfirnis Pattern Painted is a MN, fine to medium-coarse fabric, which is partially painted or covered with a reddish-brown streaky slip (2.5YR 5/8) to 2.5YR 3/6), covering a large part of the surface (Fig. 10.10). It can also be painted on one side and slipped on the

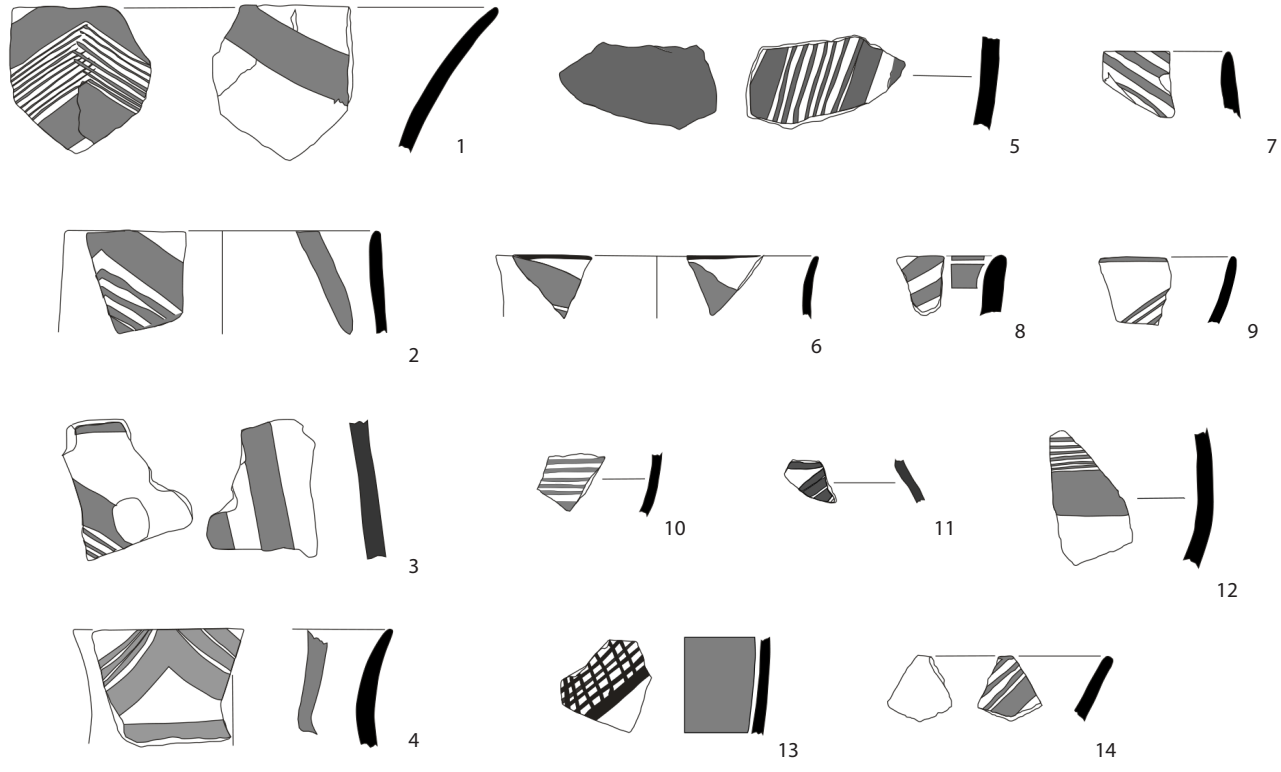


Figure 10.10. *Middle Neolithic Urfirnis painted pottery (scale 1:3).*

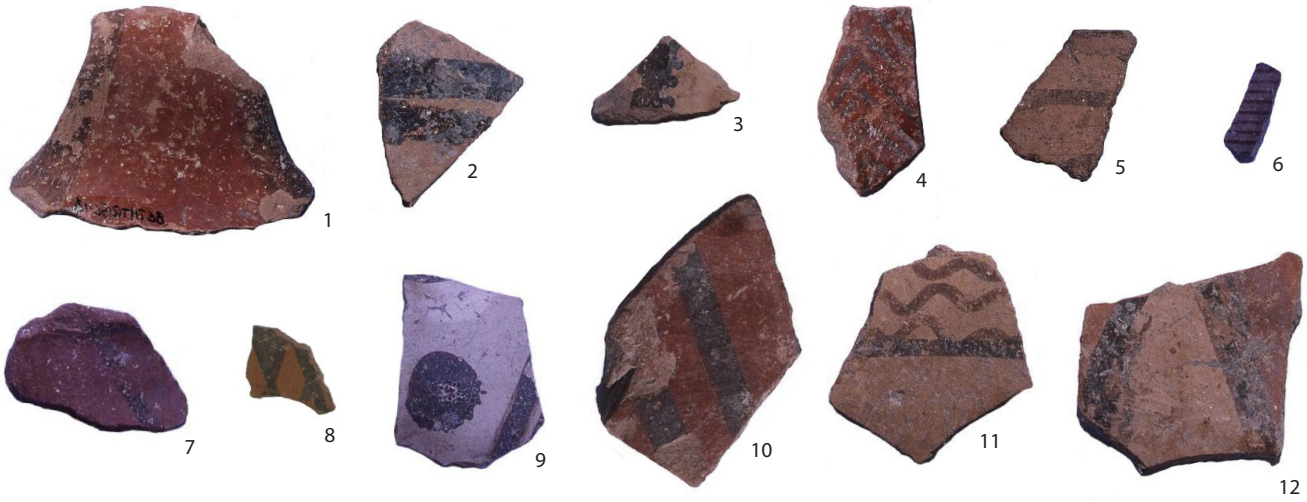


Figure 10.11. *Late Neolithic painted fabrics (scale 1:2).*

other. The reddish-brown paint can sometimes be streaky or applied in a striated style, without solidly painted areas or clearly defined edges. The shapes are mainly fine, often very thin-walled bowls with incurved or flaring rims or, more rarely, closed shapes.

Matt-painted pottery is a distinctive product of the LN period. The colour of the paint is dull and appears in various shades, such as black (2.5 YR 3/1), brown (2.5YR 4/2) and purple-red (10R 5/4), forming monochrome but also bichrome (Fig. 10.11: 11,12) patterns (for similar sherds from Thespiai in the ASCS collection, Caskey 1951, pl. 87, 5. The bichrome fabric was also found at Orchomenos (Kunze 1931, pl. iv. 1–2, 5: on the bichrome style, see also Hauptmann 1981, 24). It is a style used more for closed jars than for open bowls (Pentedeka 2007, 74). The examples from Thespiai show patterns such as dots, horizontal and wavy lines, and most commonly groups of hatched bands and chevrons. In a special variety of matt-painted ware, the decoration is painted on a dark slipped surface (Fig. 10.11: 4,7,10). This fabric is fine-tempered, covered with a dull, reddish-brown slip (2.5YR 5/6 red), and it is painted with a black matt decoration (2.5YR 4/1 dark reddish gray: compare Hauptmann and Milojcic 1981, Pl. B). We have no examples of this ware that indicate the characteristic shapes, but the relatively thick walls and the rough interior of some matt-painted pieces show that they come from large closed vessels.

B. Polished wares

To the broad category of polished fabrics, we assign fragments with no visible traces of burnishing, indicating a final surface treatment achieved through intensive scrubbing of the still wet clay with the aid of a soft material (Fig. 10.12). All examples are highly lustrous and most of them finely levigated.

B1: Fine polished is a highly polished fabric. The surface color can be reddish-yellow, red, orange-brown or grey (2.5Y 7/4 pale yellow, 5YR 6/6 reddish-yellow, 2.5YR 5/8 red, 7.5YR 4/1 dark grey). It is tempered with lime inclusions. In contrast to the shiny exterior surface, the interior can be porous and rough. This fabric may be datable to MN and is very similar to Vitelli's 'Monochrome Urf' ware (Vitelli 2007: CD Photos 25, 26, 27).

B2: Red Polished is a distinctive fine and hard-fired variety of fine polished ware, with a surface smoothly polished but not very highly lustrous (Fig. 10.12: 5–10). It can be generally attributed to Neolithic period, being found in all sub-phases of the Neolithic in the very common shapes of simple semi-globular and low-footed bowls.

B3: Buff Polished is a fine, hard-fired fabric with a highly polished surface (Fig. 10.12: 4a–b). It is glossier than the Red Polished group. Some examples show extremely thin walls, down to approximately 3 mm, recalling some of the porcelain-like fabrics of the EN.

B4: Larissa Black Polished (Fig. 10.12: 1–4) is defined as a fabric with a black, well-polished surface, after the style known from the earlier Late Neolithic period in Thessaly (Gallis 1987), but also having a strong presence in Boeotia (Kunze 1931, 9; French 1972, 6; Sampson 2008, figs. 48–51; Caskey 1951, pl 87, 16–18 for further examples of this style in the ASCS collection).

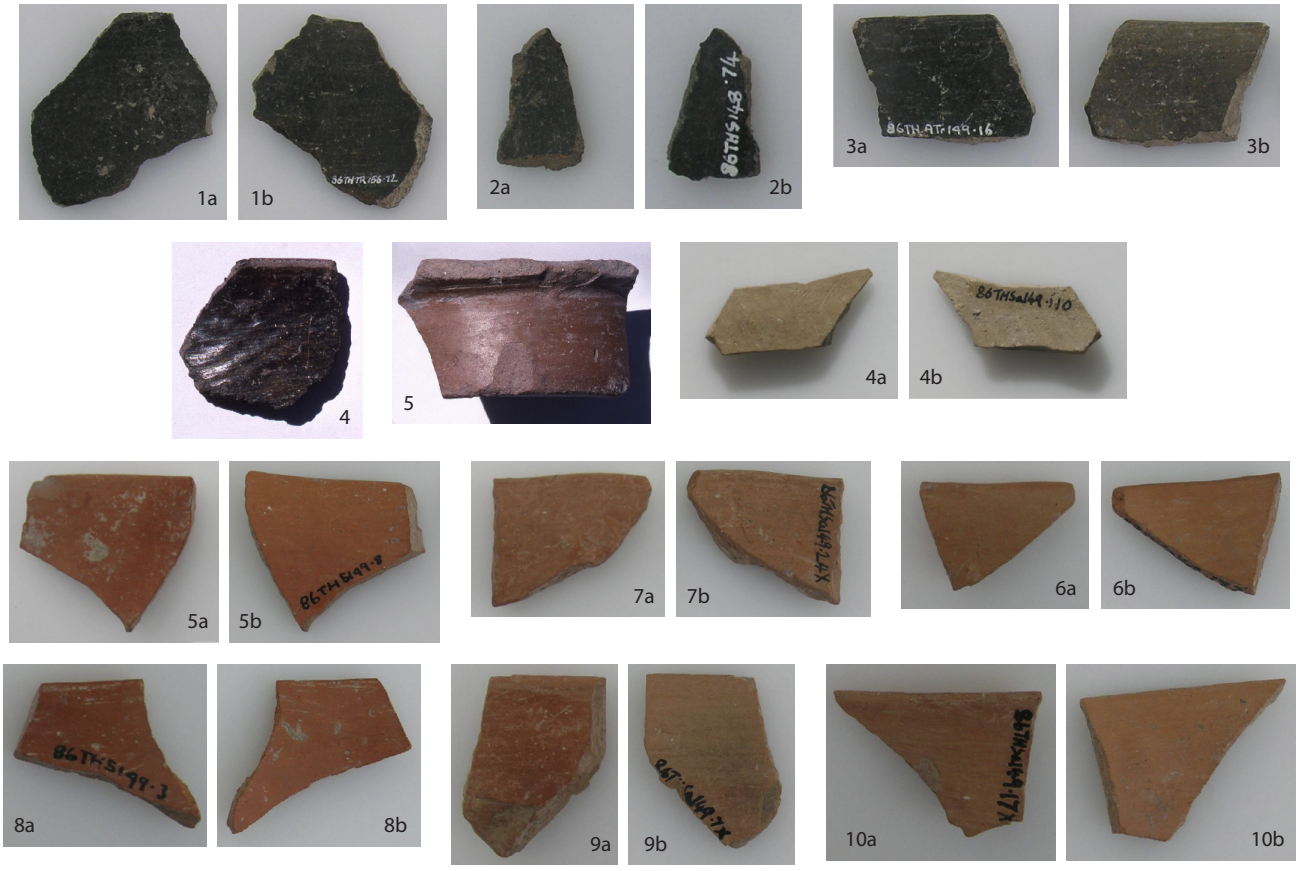


Figure 10.12. *Plain polished fabrics.*

A common form of decoration, placed high on the body of the pots, consists of tiny plastic pellets, a decorative style known as beading, sometimes combined with groups of parallel plastic ribs. This combination of relief decorative elements has been called '*Bead and rib decoration*' (Vitelli 2007, CD Fig. 52). The dating of this fabric is now assigned to the earliest phase of the Late Neolithic period or, in Boeotian terms, to the LNIA period (Sampson 2008, 89). The shapes are commonly small open bowls, but include a larger jar with angular flaring rim (Fig. 10.12: 3a–3b; see also Fig. 10.15).

B5: Coarse polished ware is a gritty, very hard-fired fabric with a polished surface on both interior and exterior. Sometimes it appears burnished as the brush-burnished fabric described below (C3). This variety is preserved only in body fragments.

C. Slipped wares

One of the largest groups in the assemblage consists of slipped wares, belonging to various periods (Fig. 10.13). Grey and black slipped fabrics are much less well represented than are red slipped.

C1: Coarse Slipped is a mid-coarse to very coarse fabric with rough surface, designed for pithoi and storage jars. The clay is usually dark reddish brown (2.5 ΥR4/6) and contains white marble and dark red inclusions. The surface is rough, covered by a thick dull brown slip.

C2: Black-slipped Coarse ware is a semi-coarse fabric, very heavy in weight (Fig. 10.13: 4–6) and containing many lime and black stone inclusions. The external surface is covered by a thin, dark-grey to black cracked slip with a matt appearance, giving the look and feel of a blackboard.

C3: Grey slipped is a semi-coarse fabric covered with a thin, dull grey slip, which varies from light to dark grey to dark brown (Fig. 10.13: 7). The surface finish shows traces of brush burnishing, resembling the monochrome Urfirnis. The clay contains large lime inclusions.



Figure 10.13. *Slipped fabrics.*

C4: Fine, creamy-white slipped is a thin-walled and hard fired fabric. It contains very fine lime inclusions and is covered with a thick creamy-white to yellow slip (10YR 8/4 very pale brown), which is smoothed and matt-polished. It can be unevenly fired, with the slip changing to a darker grey-brown. The interior can be rough with traces of smoothing running in different directions. This fabric may be dated to the EN.

C5: The ***Fine Red-slipped*** fabric makes up the largest group of the slipped classes (Fig. 10.13: 1–3). It contains plenty of lime inclusions, but few of sand or stone. It is covered with a thick orange or dark-red slip (5YR 6/8 reddish-yellow), which is often cracked. At Lerna, a similar group is classified together with the monochrome Urfirnis (Vitelli 2007, fig. 11–13c–14, 16, 21a, 31). The red-slipped fabric also extends after the MN period and characterizes a chronological horizon just before the EBA. These later examples have, however, a less shiny surface (for an example of the FN red-slipped fabric see Papathanassopoulos (ed.) 1996, 252, Catalogue no. 92 and, for the chronology of this period, Alram-Stern 2007 and Coleman 2012).

D. Coarse wares

Organic tempered
The organic or vegetal tempered is a semi-coarse fabric that is rather soft, porous and brittle (Fig. 10.14: 3a–4b).

The clay contains many vegetal inclusions, together with sand and larger white, gray and black pebbles. The surface is as a rule reddish-brown (red 2.5YR 4/6) and unburnished, the biscuit is always dark gray, and the feel rather soft. The better preserved fragments indicate that large household jars, sometimes with handles, formed the main shape manufactured in this fabric. Almost all of the examples appear in concentrations coming from the same transects. According to recent parallels with Lerna (Vitelli 2007: CD Photo 77), this fabric can be tentatively assigned to a period from the Final Neolithic to the beginning of Early Helladic (Bintliff and Sarri, forthcoming).

Lime tempered
This group is a fabric well represented in the Argolid, from the Neolithic strata of both Lerna and Franchthi (Vitelli 1999; 2007). The plentiful and sizeable lime inclusions are its main feature. At Thespiai, the lime-tempered is a semi-coarse fabric, very light in weight, with a large number of fine lime inclusions and some larger lime pops (Fig. 10.14: 1a–2b). The colour of the surface varies from light grey to buff. The surface is usually simply smoothed, but sometimes traces of an intensive faceted burnishing have been observed.

Plain' burnished
The fabric group of Plain Burnished pottery is the largest in the whole assemblage from Neolithic Thespiai.

Its main feature is the undecorated, well burnished surface. Variations in the art of burnishing create several sub-groups:

We give the name *Brush Burnished* to a very distinctive semi-coarse to coarse fabric, which is slightly burnished with a brush-like implement (Fig. 10.16: 1–2). This fine burnishing leaves traces of short movements in various directions.

Faceted (or Ripple-) Burnished is the name given to a fine to semi-coarse fabric, hard fired, showing traces of a sharp burnishing instrument (Fig. 10.16: 3a–3b). These are shallow, 1–2 mm wide and they run roughly parallel, creating a characteristic faceted surface. This kind of burnishing can sometimes be observed also on highly polished fabrics, and at times in combination with applied pellet decoration. No shapes can be recognized in this material, though all the examples belong to small, well-fired vessels.

The pottery sequence

Summarizing, the current data from the Neolithic Magoula show a faint and questionable presence during the Early Neolithic period, but a strong occupation from the Middle to the Late Neolithic. Final Neolithic is particularly abundant beyond the site's periphery, suggesting a reorganization of the settlement and a readjustment to the landscape around

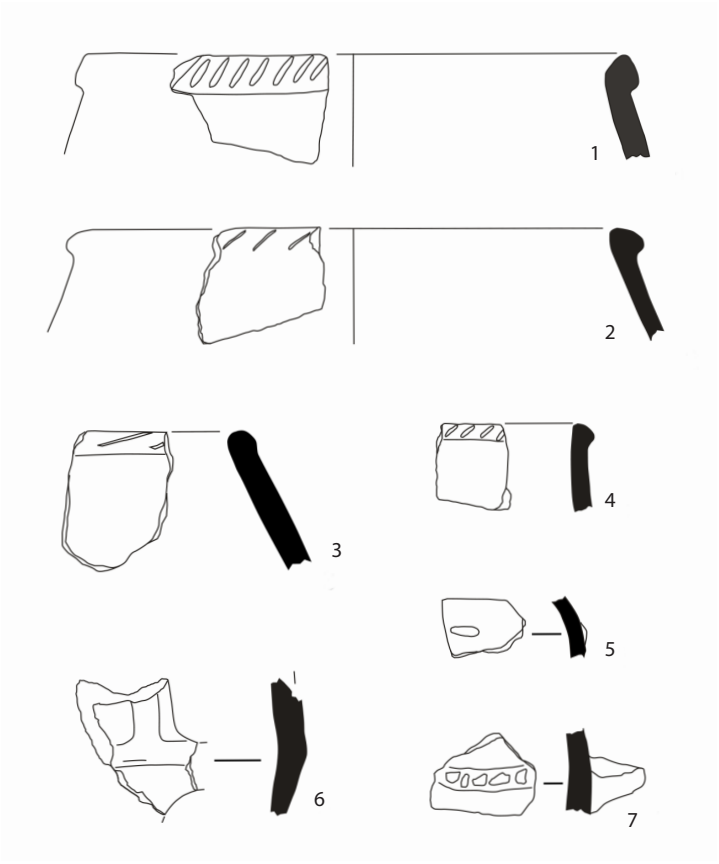


Figure 10.15. *Pottery with plastic decoration (scale 1:3).*

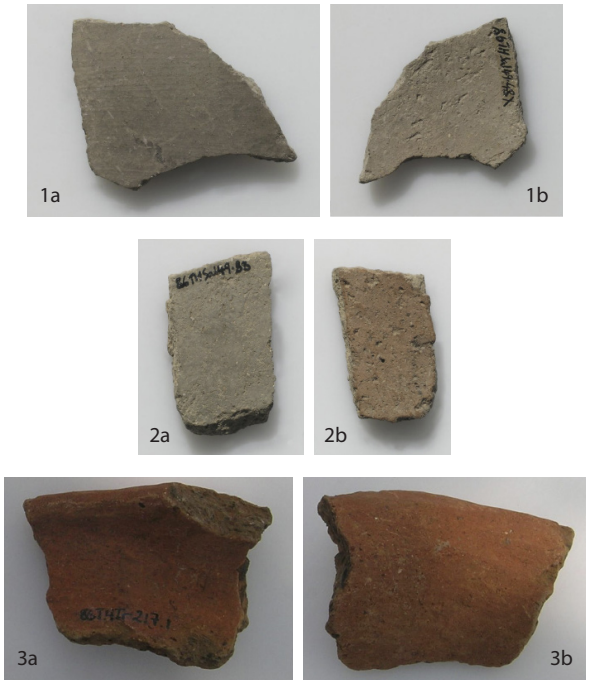


Figure 10.14. *Lime-tempered and organic tempering fabrics.*



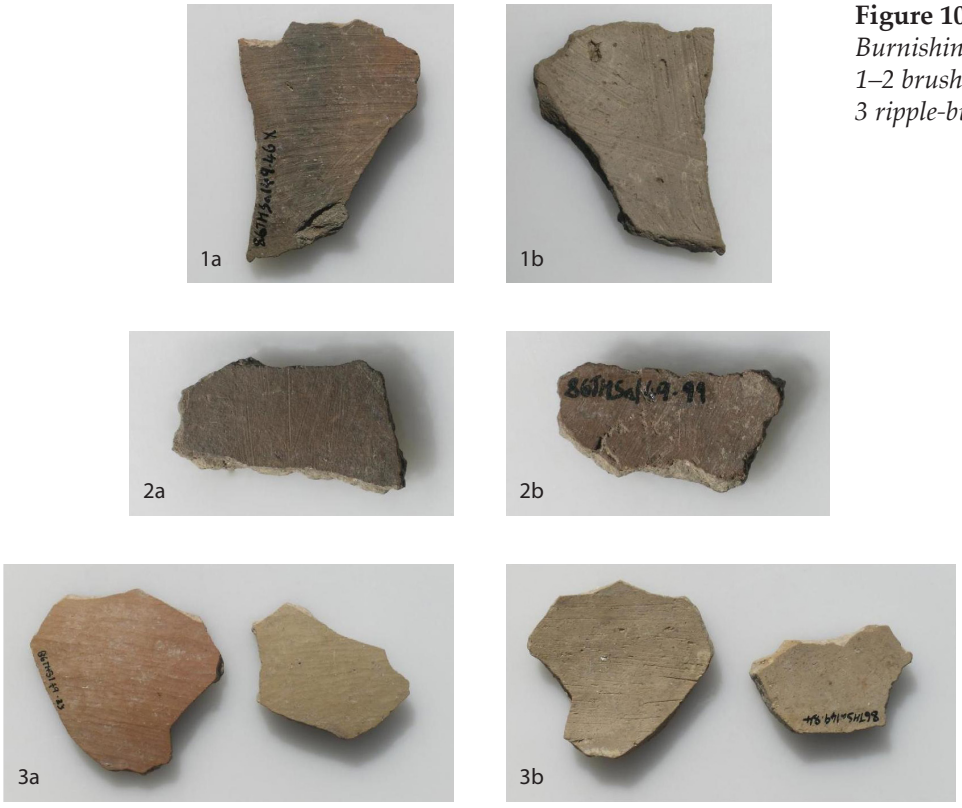


Figure 10.16.
Burnishing techniques: 1–2 brush-burnished; 3 ripple-burnished.



Figure 10.17.
Neolithic figurines in the ASCS, Antiquities Collection: 1 = AST 90; 2 = AST 291; 3 = AST 36; 4 = AST 60 (scale 1:3).

the site. The Neolithic pottery assemblage consists of well-recognized fabrics of Central Greece of a very high quality, which – although surface finds – are preserved in excellent condition.

The pottery classes represented in the bulk of the survey material do not complete through the entire repertoire of the Neolithic period. There are fabric groups and short periods missing, leaving some open questions about the site's pottery production and chronological sequence. Some supplementary material can be found in the collection of the American School of Classical Studies, published in a selective fashion by Caskey (1951). In this collection, we can distinguish further pottery classes that are not sufficiently, or not at all, represented in the Boeotian surveys, such as FN pattern burnished and EN incised and Impresso fabrics.

The Neolithic figurines

The six Neolithic figurine fragments published by Bass (1959) and now in the collection of the American School of Classical Studies[3] add useful information to the chronological sequence and the significance of the site.

Two of them belong to the steatopygous standing female figurines with narrow waist, broad shoulders and a strong emphasis on the navel (Fig. 10.17, 3–4). In no case are the head, arms or legs preserved. The rare omission of the usual practice of using stumps to denoting the chest and arms in one case (Fig. 10.17, 4) indicates similarities with an EN forerunner from Prodromos, Karditsa (Skafida 1996, fig. 205). Two of the figurines preserve decoration with bright and glossy red paint on a light background (Fig. 10.17, 3), a style known from MN pottery, but also from a figurine from Chaironeia (Theocharis 1993, fig. 69). This decoration presumably represents applied textile bands, decorating an elaborate garment, while a circular pendant round the neck of one figurine provides a rare depiction of Neolithic ornament.

A vase fragment from the same early collection shows a relief human face placed close to the vessel's rim (Fig. 10.18, 1: see also Caskey 1951: fig. 86, 96). The eyes and mouth of this figure are denoted by plastic applications. The eyes are ''coffee bean'' shaped, an element usually found on EN figurines (Perlès 2001, 264–5). The closest parallel for this comes from Nea Nikomedeia (Rodden 1962, 268–88). A series of similar finds occurs in the EN layers of Achilleion (III–b), but also in later layers at the same site (Pilidou 2006, 21, fig. 1a–b). The unique fragment from Thespiai seems to be later, however, since in addition to the face representation it bears incised decoration on the rim, a much later feature normally dated to the FN.

The other figurine fragments belong to different LN types. One of these is a large plastic, hollow figurine with one preserved leg (Fig. 10.18, 5). The surface is decorated with dense red chevron patterns, while a deep engraved line between the legs may indicate

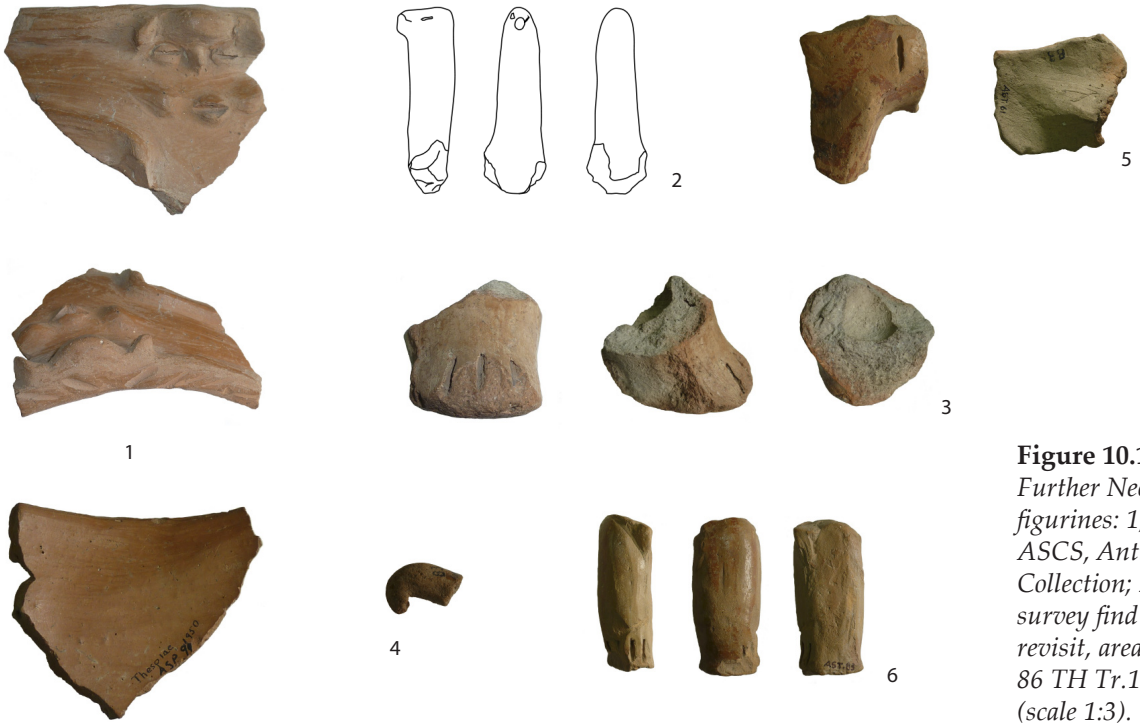


Figure 10.18. *Further Neolithic figurines: 1, 3–6 in ASCS, Antiquities Collection; 2 Boeotia survey find (1989 revisit, area of 86 TH Tr.156) (scale 1:3).*

gender. A foot fragment with engraved toes comes from a very large, hollow and well-burnished figurine (Fig. 10.18, 3), whose estimated size will be comparable to that of an ithyphallic figurine from Karditsa (Wace and Thompson 1912, 56, fig. 30). A fragment of a small compact figurine, with one leg preserved, also bears incised signs of toes (Fig. 10.18, 6): it is preserved intact from the base up to and including a part of the pelvic region. The group of vertical and horizontal painted lines seen on the external side presumably depict a long, decorated garment. The modelling of the body resembles that of a figurine from Chaironeia (Sotiriadis 1908; Tzavella-Evjen 2012, pl. Σ67). A fragment from the arm of a figurine (Fig. 10.18, 4) should belong to the type with arms bent and resting on the chest, as in the steatopygous figurine from Thespiai (Fig. 10.17, 4) or a type from Nea Nikomedeia (Rodden 1964, fig. 1,4). It is made of porous unburnished clay, without trace of decoration.

Two other fragments of solid clay figurines depict abstract human figures (Fig. 10.17, 1–2). One of them is from a naked torso, with extended arms and the backbone area heavily emphasized by a vertical cavity. The flat front side, though chipped, shows that it is probably a male figure, while the traces of a chipped plastic element suggest that the figure may have held something tightly to the body with the right hand.

The manufacturing technology and decoration offer some evidence to help clarify the chronological classification of the figurines. Thus the red paint, turning to a dark brown, on the hollow figurine (Fig. 10.18, 5) recalls MN Urfirnis pottery; while the bichrome decoration on the draped body of another figurine (Fig. 10.17, 2) offers a secure argument for a dating to LN.

A new figurine fragment was found during the visit of 1989, in the area of Transect 156, at the centre of the Magoula (Fig. 10.18, 2). The only preserved part is the head, which belongs to the cylindrical type with rounded top, incised eyes and strongly protruding, highly placed nose, a type which is also known from the Magoula Balomenou at Chaironeia (Tzavella-Evjen 2012, Pl. 6). It corresponds with the type dated to the EN period at Nea Nikomedeia (Marangou 1996, 151, 293, fig. 41, 188). A possible dating for this type of figurine as early as EN is supported by further parallels from Prodromos Karditsas (Orphanidi 1998, 121, a; 128, fig. 27 a) and Eleusis (Mylonas 1932, fig. 115 a, c; Orphanidi 1998, 139, fig. 59). The examples from both Eleusis and Nea Nikomedeia show that such cylindrical heads could be mounted on steatopygous female figurines, while the Prodromos example is considered to be phallus-shaped (Hourmouziadis 1973). The type with cylindrical head continues, however, into the LN period (Marangou 1996, figure on p. 209).

While Neolithic figurines cannot offer a safe dating, even in excavated sites, because of the constant intrusions caused by pits (Orfanidi 1995; Talalay 1993), some early features of the Thespiai finds could well be attributed to the EN period. It is worth noting that full plastic figurine types show more similarities and parallels in distant regions than are found at nearby sites. They seem to have more connections, even from the EN period onwards, with the areas of Eastern Macedonia and Thessaly, whereas the pottery from the site follows the standards and local traditions of Boeotia, Euboea and Attica of the MN and LN phases. Although we do not know the exact find-spots of the items in the early collections by the ASCS, some of which could come not precisely from the Magoula but from a nearby area, the chronological distance from the rest of the material could be an additional indication, even though one insufficiently supported by the pottery from the survey, for an EN installation of the settlement at Thespiai.

Notes

1 I am grateful to J. Bintliff and A. Snodgrass for their permission to study this material and my Boeotia Project colleagues V. Stissi, J. Poblome and A. Vionis for a constructive exchange of expertise and knowledge during many study seasons in Boeotia. E. Farinetti has kindly prepared the distribution maps, giving visual form to our chronological results. I owe many thanks to J. Coleman, O. Dickinson, S. Dietz and C. Perlès for sharing their experience with the prehistoric assemblages of the Greek mainland. Colleagues R. Di Ciaccio and G. Nymo kindly assisted in the study of the prehistoric pottery of the years 2009 and 2011 respectively. The Institute of the Aegean Prehistory generously supported our prehistoric study season for the year 2010.

2 Some preliminary classifications were given in Bintliff *et al*. 2012. For the colour definitions of the clay and painted decoration, we have used the Munsell 1994 revised edition.

3 I owe many thanks to J. Davis and N. Vogelkoff-Brogan for the permission to study and re-publish this material and for their helpful assistance.



Boeotia Project, Volume II: The city of Thespiai

Few major Classical cities have disappeared so completely from view, over the centuries, as Thespiai in Central Greece. Only the technique of intensive field survey, carefully adapted to a large urban site and reinforced by historical investigation, has made it possible to recover from oblivion much of its life of seven millennia.

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