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Digitizing of Archaeological Sketches of Mycenaean Cooking Vessels

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Digitizing Archeological Sketches of Mycenaean cooking ware and how this is useful to the field of Archaeology

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Abstract:

For my research assistantship, I digitized drawings of ancient Greek pottery sketches that were made during earlier archaeological excursions. In addition, I have also learned a lot about ancient Greek pottery in general and the processes that went into making it, its uses, and how archaeologists go about excavating it thousands of years later. My supervisor specifically focuses on Mycenaean cooking vessels and from lessons with her combined with the digitizing of the drawings I am able to notice the subtle changes in the shape of the vessels as history progresses. Pottery is useful as archaeological evidence because one can find out many things by paying attention to its details such as when it was made, where it was made, who made it, and who used it and why. By digitizing the sketches taken in the field, the nuances can be more easily noticed and furthermore, it helps in the eventual creation of a digital database of which future archaeologists can go through to help identify pieces that they find.

The above diagram shows the different parts of a pottery vessel that archaeologists can look at to use to identify certain subtle stylistic changes that would help them to date the piece. In addition, it gives a look at the different fragments that I traced in their complete form.

To the left is a thorough example of the process of what happens to a piece from when it is obtained in the field up to when I get it. This piece in particular is from the late Helladic period between 1450-1350 BC. It is photographed from all angles including an extreme close-up of the sedimentary makeup of the sherd. The archaeologist then measures and draws a sketch of it and then I digitally trace the drawing. To the right is an example of the kind of pottery vessel the sherd could come from with the arrow pointing to the particular area. Also to the right is a map of where the piece is from and where it was found. The above sequence is an excellent example of the subtle design shifts in a particular type of pottery. In this case the piece is a tripod cauldron. This piece was just one of many used for everyday use, in particular as cooking ware and it was placed over the fire. In addition, the figures show the popularity of this specific type of pottery in different time periods. The first picture is from the period 1450-1350 BC. The second is from 1350-1300 BC. The third is from 1300-1190 BC and the fourth group is from 1190-1060 BC. Based off these pictures we can guess that this style of pottery was fading out by 1060 BC.