



Ancient Greek art: an overview.

Dimitris Plantzos
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[σημα] *sema*

Lecture 2

Sema:

commemorating the dead in Early Greece.

Course structure

1. *Techne*: what is 'Greek' about Greek art? (29/2)

Section 1: Early Greece, ca. 1200-480 BCE

1. *Sema*: commemorating the dead in Early Greece. (7/3)
2. *Anathema*: gifts to the gods in Greek sanctuaries. (14/3)
3. *Agalma*: pleasing immortals and mortals alike. (21/3)
4. *Kerameus*: the art of Greek pottery. (28/3)

No class April 4, "de-brief" class April 11

Section 2: Classical Greece, ca. 480-336 BCE

1. *Mimesis*: nature as aesthetic ideal. (18/4)
2. *Hieron*: visiting a Greek sanctuary. (25/4)
3. *Skiagraphia*: painting with shadows. (16/5)

Section 2: Art in the Hellenistic World, ca. 336-30 BCE

1. *Pathos*: sculpture in the Hellenistic period. (23/5)
2. *Eikon*: immortalising the mortals. (30/5)

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Important dates:

- Beginning of semester: February 26
- Midterm essay due: April 5
- Olympia – Delphi trip: April 6 & 7
- Classes end: May 30
- Written exams: June 10-30


Reading:

- Plantzos 2016: pp. 43-63.
- [*Kerameikos*](#) pp. 36-73.

<https://eclass.uoa.gr/courses/BAAG107/>



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Portfolio / Ancient Greek art: an overview

Ancient Greek art: an overview (75202)

Professor Dimitris Plantzos



Description



From the Trojan War and its aftermath in the 12th c. BC, to the onset of Alexander's campaign in the late 4th, this course explores Ancient Greece through its art and archaeology: sculpture, pottery and vase-painting, architecture and city-planning are systematically assessed through carefully chosen examples and case studies in order to provide an informative survey of Greek art and its development during its most crucial phase. The course also offers a discussion of sources and methodology, matters of chronology, informative accounts on techniques, styles, and subject matter, and terminology.

> Course Description

<https://www.latsis-foundation.org/eng/e-library>

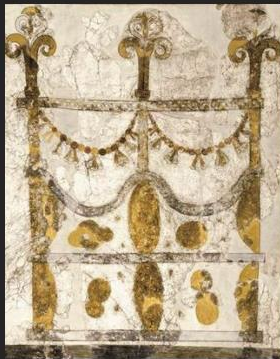


ΕΛΛ



— THE MUSEUMS CYCLE

Since 1997, with financing by the Latsis Group and Eurobank Banking Group and then with financing by the John S. Latsis Public Benefit Foundation, a volume dedicated to an archaeological museum of the country is published each year, aiming to create a series of albums which, with their scientific validity and their aesthetic approach, contribute to the deeper knowledge and understanding of the individual pages of the history of Greek culture.



Prehistoric Thera
2016



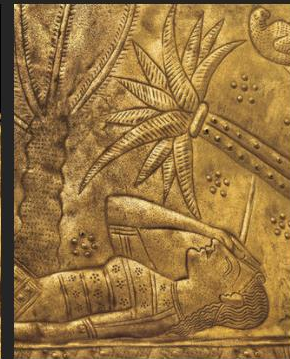
Mycenae
2015



Kerameikos
2014



Aigai: The royal
metropolis of the
Macedonians
2013



Samos: The
archaeological
museums
2012

Greek art chronological chart:

- **Bronze Age (3200-1100 BCE)**
- **Submycenaean (1100-1050 BCE)**
- **Protogeometric period (1050-900 BCE)**
- **Geometric period (900-700 BCE)**
- **Archaic period (700-480 BCE)**
- **Classical period (480-336 BCE)**
- **Hellenistic period (336-31 BCE)**

Early Iron Age (1100-700 BCE):

- **Bronze Age (3200-1100 BCE)**
- **Submycenaean (1100-1050 BCE)**
- **Protogeometric period (1050-900 BCE)**
- **Geometric period (900-700 BCE)**
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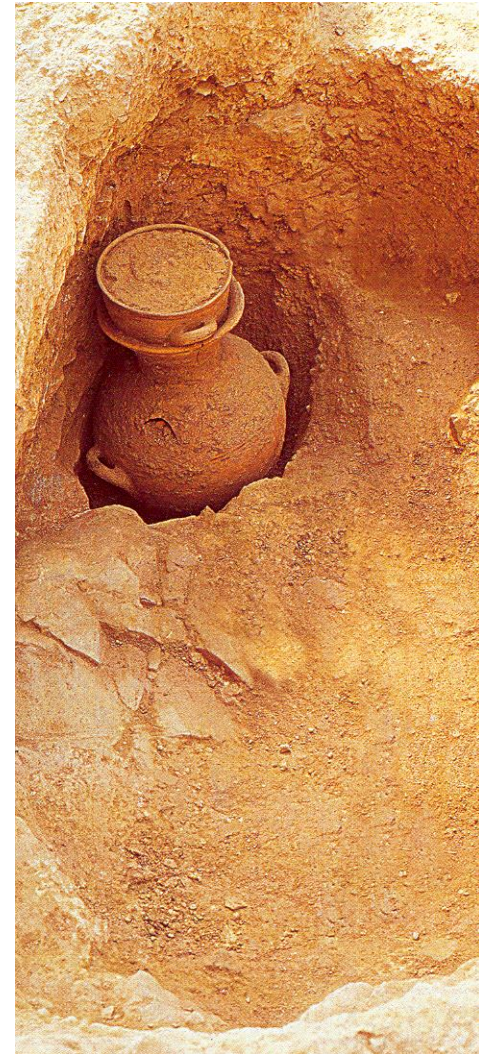


Protogeometric period (1050-900 BCE):

- New social and political organization**
- Cultural recovery for Greece**
- The term refers to the prevalence of geometric motifs on pottery**
- Strong break with the Mycenaean civilization**
- Some elements of continuity with the past**

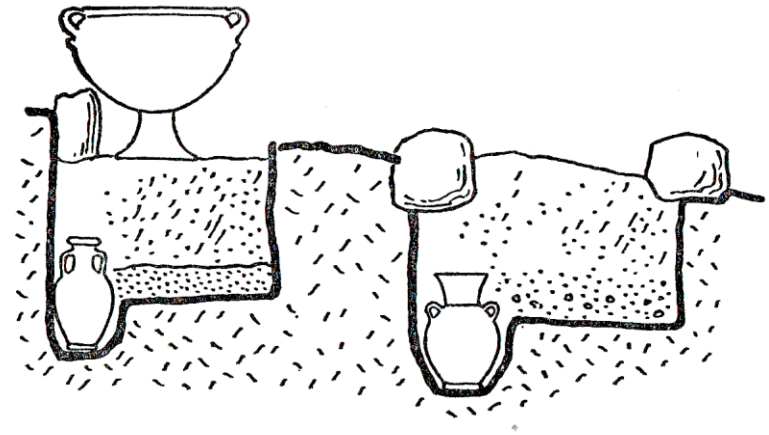
1100 BCE: cremation

- Cremation becomes more widespread
- Inhumation not completely abandoned, but retained throughout antiquity
- Choice a matter of family tradition
- Also on social and economic reasons
- Cremation costly (skilled labor, expensive materials)



pit grave:

- Simple rectangular pit dug into the earth or bedrock
- Cremation burials are divided into:
 - *primary*, when the body is cremated on the spot where the grave is dug
 - *secondary*, where the remains of the cremated body are transferred to another spot





10th c. BCE

amphora with horizontal handles



amphora with vertical handles







Silhouette painting

Protoegeometric pottery:

- limited number of geometric motifs: concentric circles and semicircles, bands, 'chequer board' patterns, hatched triangles and zigzags
- bands and horizontal divisions
- articulated structure
- silhouette



Protogeometric pottery:

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- **Compass**
- **Multiple brush**

Geometric period (900-700 BCE):

- Early Geometric (900-850 BCE)
- Middle Geometric (850-760 BCE)
- Late Geometric I (760-735 BCE)
- Late Geometric II (735-700 BCE)

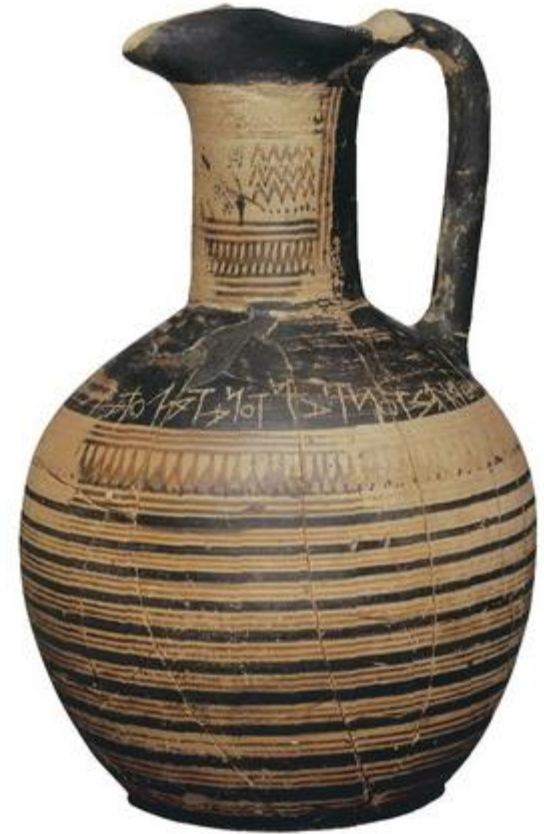
Geometric period (900-700 BCE):

- Formation of **new settlements**
- Appearance of **new political institutions**
- Economy remained largely **agricultural**
- Development of **small scale industry**
- Consolidation of the **social stratification**

Colonization:



Introduction of the alphabet:



Athens, Late Geometric oenochoe. c. 750-730 BCE

Epic poetry:



Athens, Late Geometric mug. c. 750-730 BCE

Sanctuaries:



Olympia, Geometric figurine. 8th c. BCE

Birth of figurative art:



Athens, Geometric cup. c. 750-730 BCE



Geometric pottery:

- Variety of Geometric themes
- Silhouette
- Geometric composition
- Balance and symmetry
- Technological progress
- Iconographic references to myth, recent history and daily life



Athenian Geometric pottery:



Athenian Geometric pottery:



Early Geometric (900-850 BCE)

Athenian Geometric pottery:



Middle Geometric (850-760 BCE)

Athenian Geometric pottery:



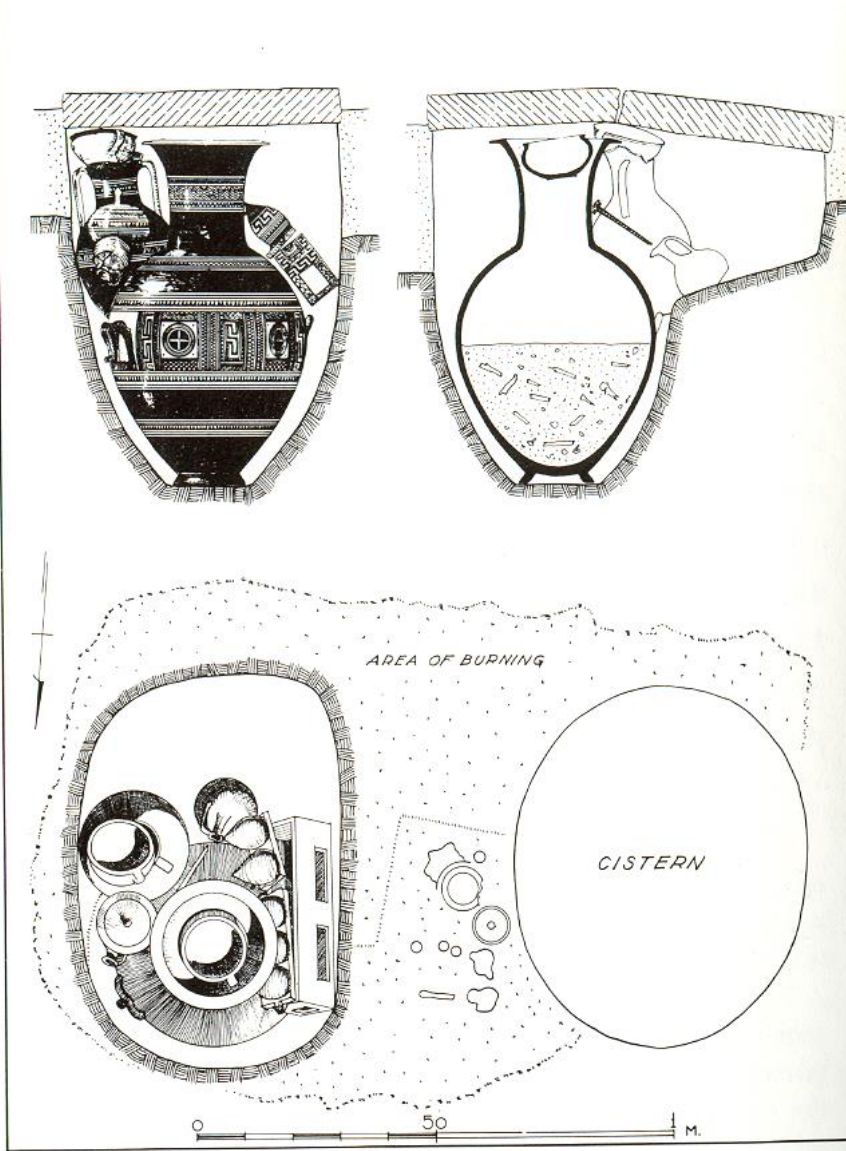
Late Geometric I (760-730 BCE)

Athenian Geometric pottery:

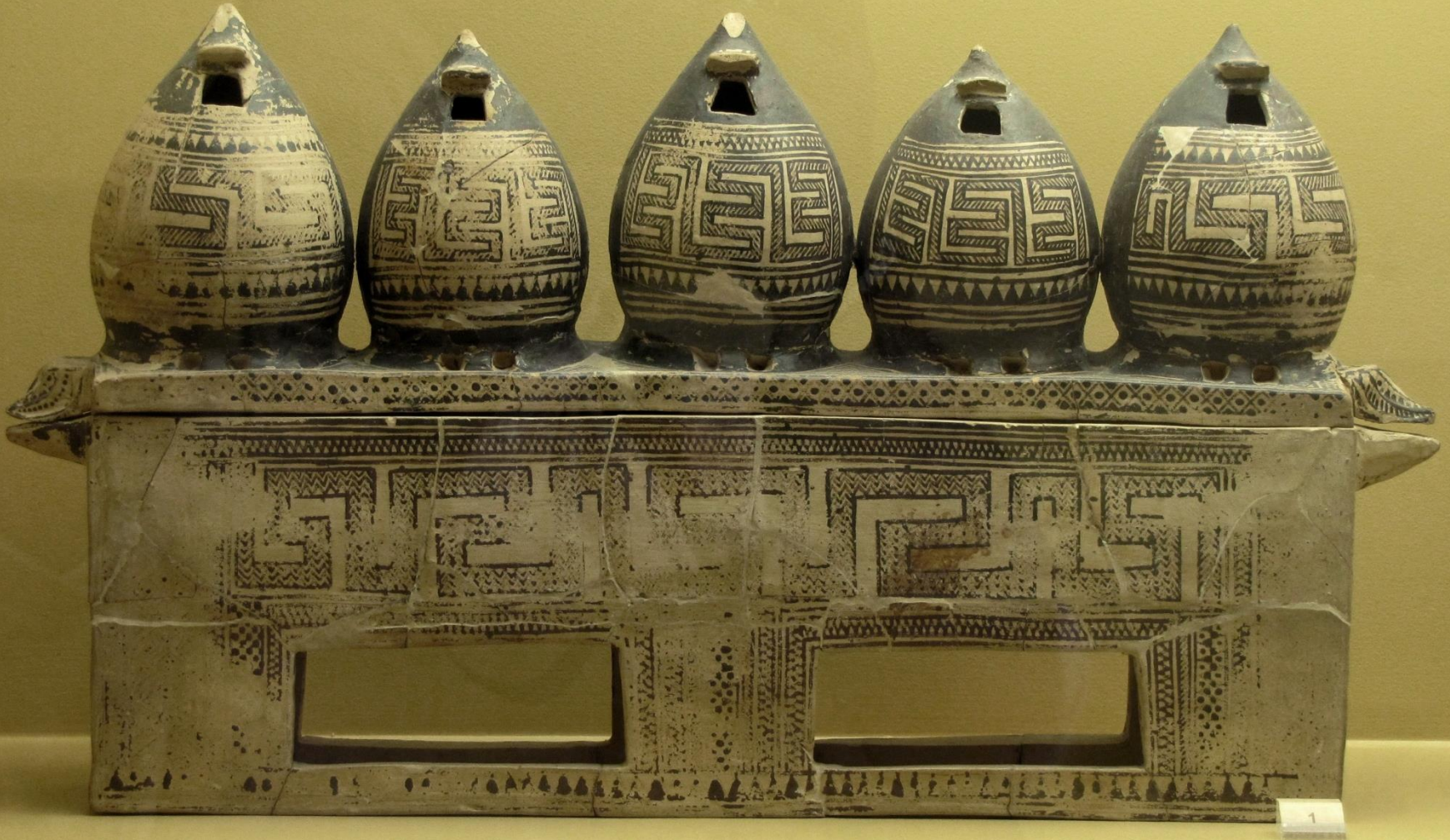


Late Geometric II (730-700 BCE)

Tomb of 'Rich Athenian Lady' (850 BCE)



Tomb of 'Rich Athenian Lady' (850 BCE)



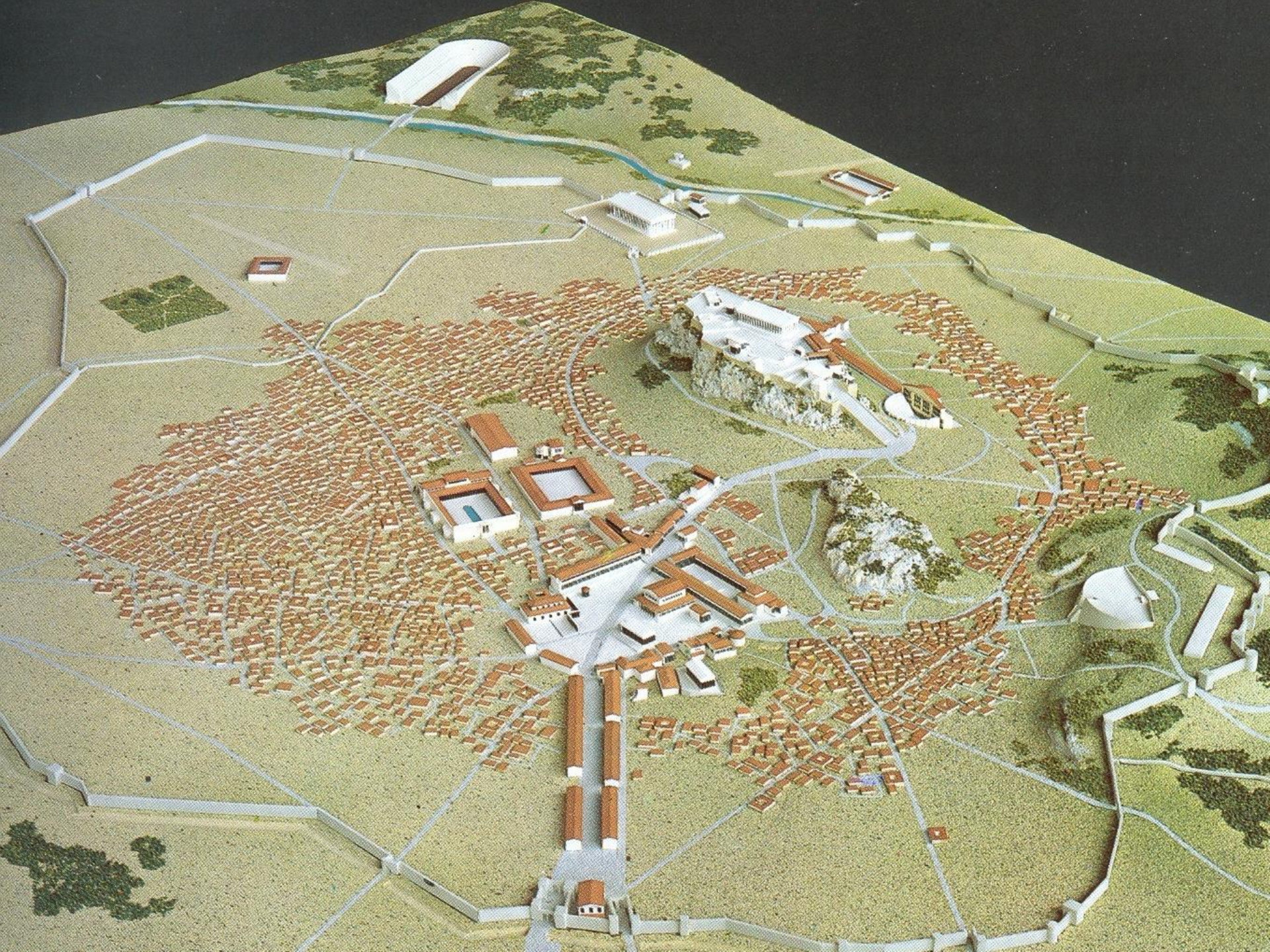
Athens, Middle Geometric pyxis. c. 850 BCE

Flat-base *pyxides* (8th c. BCE):



The Dipylon Vases (c. 750-730 BCE)



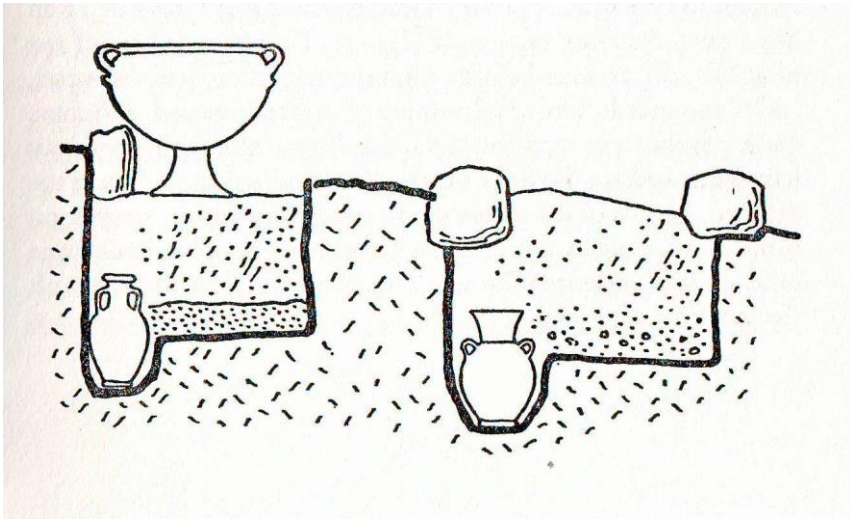


The Dipylon Vases (c. 750-730 BCE)



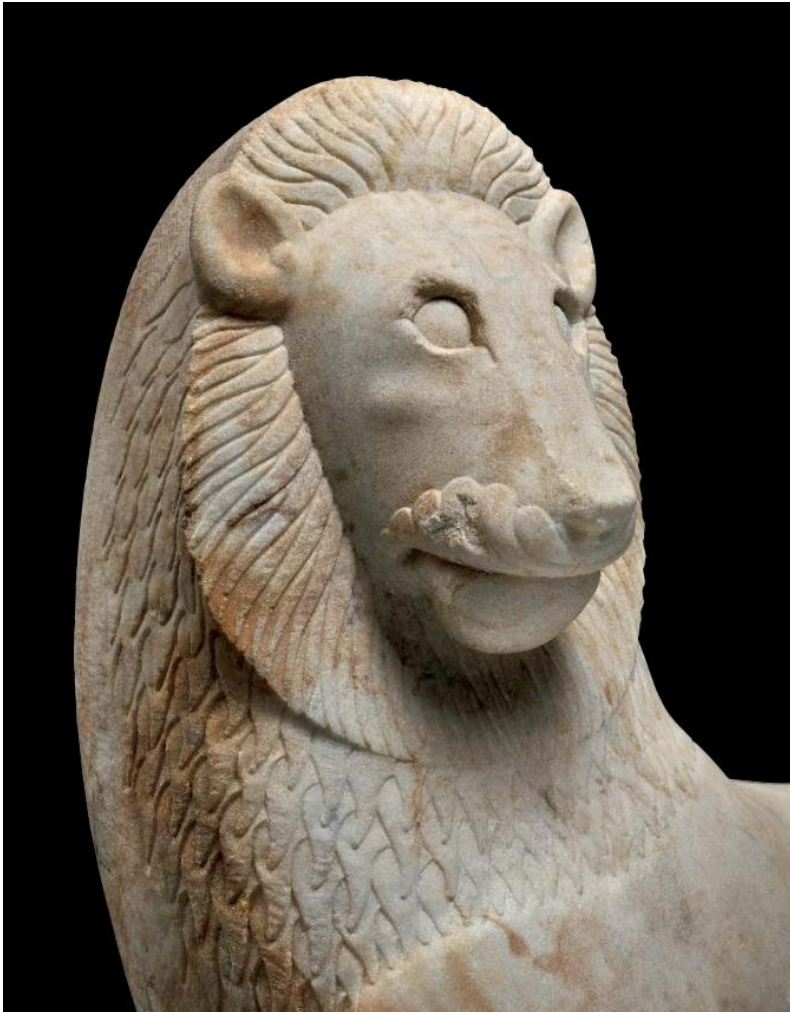
Semata [grave markers]

The Dipylon Vases (c. 750-730 BCE)



Sema [grave marker]

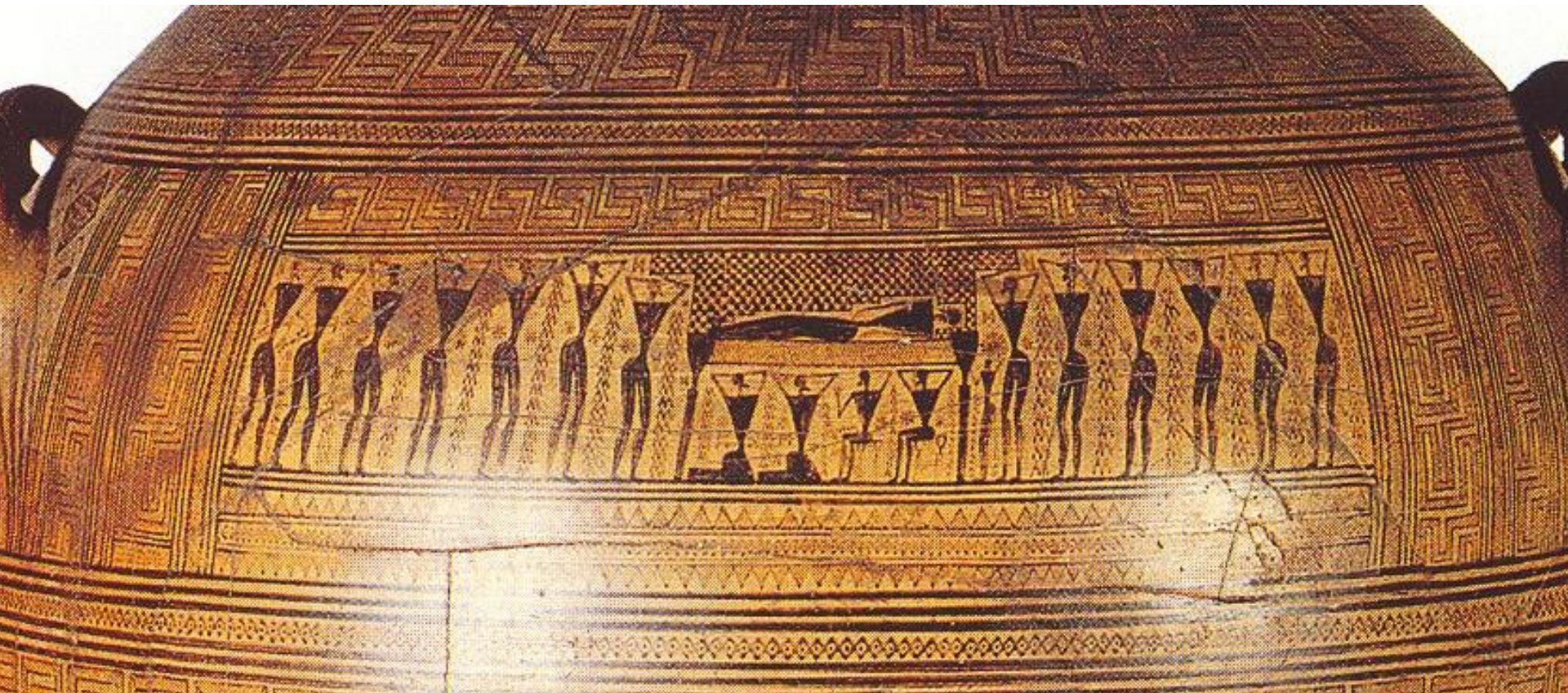
https://www.latsis-foundation.org/content/elib/book_2/kerameikos_en.pdf



Kerameikos:
pp. 36-73



prothesis



ekphora



chariots

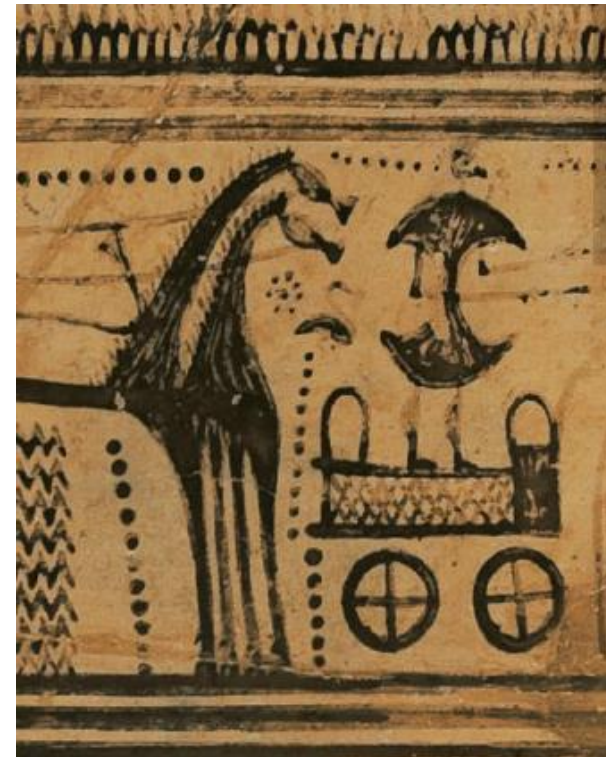


battle scenes

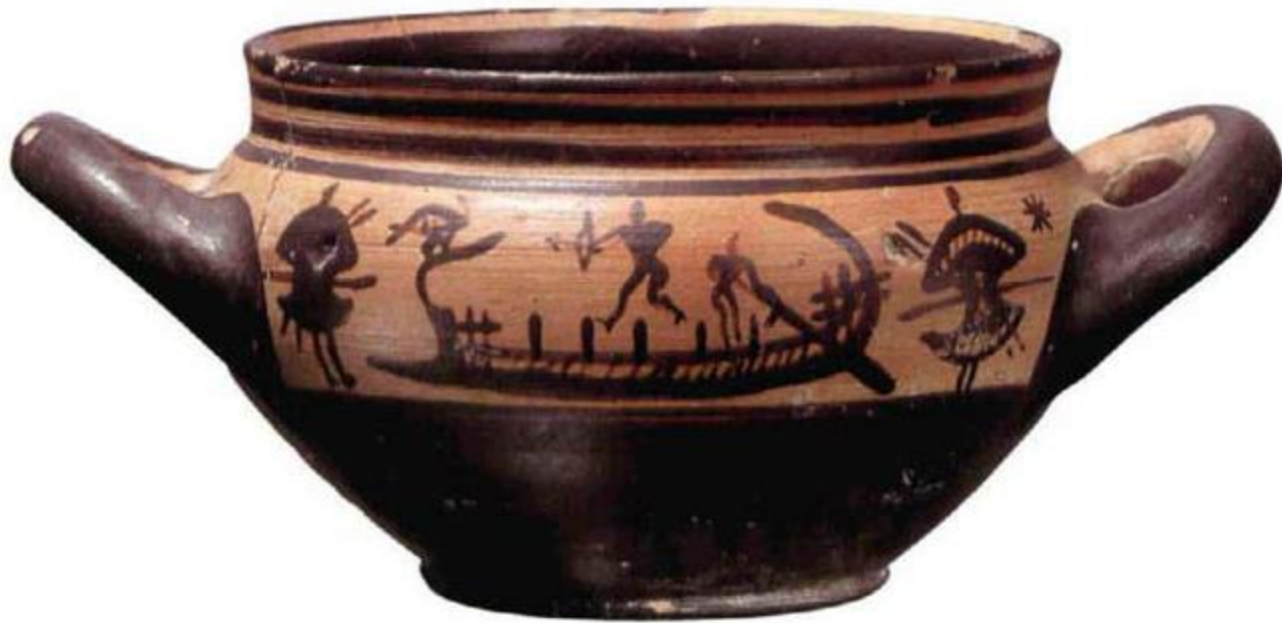


ships









Eleusis, Geometric cup. 8th c. BCE



Olympia, bronze cauldron leg. 8th c. BCE