

Feasts of clay? Ceramics and feasting at Early Minoan Myrtos: Fournou Korifi

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For forty years, the site of Myrtos: Fournou Korifi has been used to explore changing theoretical perspectives in Aegean prehistory, because of its geographical and chronological context within the EB II ‘emergence’ of civilisation (C. Renfrew 1972: 90-92), and particularly because of its near complete excavation, limited later disturbance and thorough publication (Warren 1972). While earlier debates focused on its overall structure and organisation (reviewed in Whitelaw 2007), more recent interpretations have continued to engage with these questions, while using the site to illustrate more subtle models of social interaction, integration and differentiation. But while attracted to the site by the detail of the published data, most interpretations are simply imposed on the data, not analysing them to learn whether the interpretations are actually relevant, or how past occupants of the community actually behaved. Here, I will examine the ceramic assemblage in the light of claims for large-scale feasting at the site.

The broadly accepted interpretation of the site is that it was composed of some 5-6 households, each representing a nuclear family (Whitelaw 1983; 2007).¹ These families co-operated in the decision to reside in a nucleated community, and also in the construction and maintenance of a solid defensive perimeter wall in its final phase, as well as several communal spaces (Figure 26.1). The principal disagreement with this reconstruction has been the identification of one group of rooms at the south-west corner of the community as a village shrine (e.g., Warren 1972: 265-66; in press; Gesell 1985: 114-16), which ultimately rests on the identification of a single figure-vessel as a cult image (Warren 1972: 210; 1973; in press; Cadogan 2010).

Overlooked in alternative attempts to understand the nature of the community as a whole, is the pervasive evidence for household independence within the community. Each architectural group of inter-connected rooms has its own evidence for agricultural production (the biconically-bored stone weights [3-5 per household] may be digging stick weights), food storage (storage vessels), food preparation (hearths and cooking vessels, *lekanai*), and consumption (diverse small serving and consumption vessels). In contrast, what is clearly missing are communal production or storage facilities, which would represent a significant supra-household level of economic and social inter-dependence.

What linked these households together? In a small community of this size, everyone was almost certainly related. Indeed, given the scale of regional population necessary to sustain a small community like this in a low-density landscape, residents probably had relatives spread across many communities on the south coast between Myrtos and Ierapetra, and the uplands extending much of the way to the Bay of Mirabello (Whitelaw, in press). What made them reside together, and co-operate at least in maintaining the solid perimeter wall? Evidence from EM Crete is increasingly drawing attention to defensive concerns, highlighted repeatedly in recent work in the Mirabello region, and exemplified in the hilltop locations of many sites (Nowicki 2010; Watrous 2012; Betancourt 2013). While pragmatic, this nucleation may also have helped reinforce a sense of community identity; Fournou Korifi may even have been a somewhat closed community. The rooms with a bench situated at each entrance to the community may have served as reception areas where visitors to the community were met, offered hospitality and vetted, or perhaps where all interactions with them were undertaken, explicitly keeping them outside the community itself, comparable to the village ‘guest houses’ maintained in many cultures.

Recently, there has been a great deal of interest in identifying feasting in Aegean prehistory (e.g., Wright 2004; Halstead and Barrett 2004; Mee and Renard 2007; Hitchcock *et al.* 2008), relevant to

both intra- and inter-community interactions and the negotiation of social [end page 247] and political relations. Unfortunately, it is extremely difficult to identify feasting simply on the basis of a ceramic assemblage, since with the differential breakage of small consumption vessels (David 1972; Varien and Mills 1997; Shott 1996), any accumulated deposit is bound to be dominated by cups, bowls, jugs and similar small, frequently used vessels, a pattern often assumed to indicate feasting. To counter-act this bias requires the documentation of individual depositional events or a synchronous assemblage, as in the destruction deposits of the palace of Pylos (Whitelaw 2001), or potentially at Fournou Korifi.

Arguments for feasting at the site (e.g., Haggis 1999: 61; Hershenson 2002; Catapoti 2011; Hamilakis 2008: 11; Day *et al.* 2010; Damilati and Vavouranakis 2011: 40-44; Hamilakis and Sherratt 2012: 191) have been based on the assumption that one or more of the well-preserved Period II assemblages published from each household are simply too large to represent the needs of a nuclear family. There are no norms from fully preserved households at other EM sites to support this assertion, and it is at least questionable if one considers the more than 665 vessels recovered from House N at Palaikastro (Sackett *et al.* 1965; Sackett and Popham 1970), or the circa 1,300 vessels from the West House at Akrotiri (Papagiannopoulou 1995). Assemblages of 50-80 vessels are not exceptional among the household inventories of ethnographically documented small-scale agricultural societies, though numbers are highly dependent on the availability of pottery and containers of alternative materials (e.g., Foster 1960; Nelson 1981; Bedaux 1987; Arnold 1988; Deal 1998).

Several assemblage-specific considerations are also relevant. First, many of the catalogued vessels are extremely fragmentary, and are very unlikely to have been in use at the time of the destruction (Figure 26.2). They were published because they were typologically interesting, not because they were all part of the synchronous destruction assemblage. Unfortunately, fragmentation may be due to their already broken condition (much refuse was allowed to accumulate in corners, particularly in public spaces: Whitelaw 2007: 69-71); or to post-depositional loss, so the degree of preservation alone cannot determine which vessels were in use at the time of the destruction. Second, it is clear from the condition of their bases (with projecting burrs of clay surviving on the edges), that some vessels had never been used. With grape skins still in the fermenting wine, the village was probably burned in the autumn, and since traditional pot making in the Mediterranean is highly seasonal (for drying), households would probably only recently have laid-in their supplies of new pots to last them the year. Since small vessels have short use-lives, often less than a single year for small, frequently used vessels such as cups, bowls and jugs (Shott 1996), these will have been acquired preferentially and stored in excess of the quantity required for use at any one point in time (cf. DeBoer and Lathrap 1979: 124; Nelson 1991: 171; Tani 1994: 56-57). So we should anticipate that the preserved assemblages will be larger than needed for daily use, and that small vessels in particular should be over-represented.

The typical approach is to look at the published quantities of cups, goblets, bowls, jugs and jars, and decide that these are far beyond a single family's needs, therefore they must [end page 249] be exceptional. It is suggested that the largest assemblage represents a high status household (ignoring the effects of complete excavation and particularly good preservation of that group of rooms), and that household will have preferentially hosted feasts, to establish and maintain its social standing (Haggis 1999: 61; Hershenson 2002). A variant interpretation, recognising that other households also had large assemblages, suggests that such feasting rotated, being used to generate, but also distribute status within the community (Catapoti 2011: 110; Damilati and Vavouranakis 2011: 40-42), presumably on the model of Latin American *cargo/fiesta* festival sponsorship. While this proposal recognises that the largest household assemblage is not really exceptional at the site, this is probably not a particularly relevant model for such a small village. But rather than debate theoretical expectations in the abstract, what can we actually learn from the preserved evidence?

I here consider 555 Period II vessels that served as containers. The numbers in specific categories vary slightly from those catalogued in Warren's 1972 publication, because several of these join, and various catalogued but unreconstructed pots actually consist of sherds from multiple vessels. While many of these vessels were certainly not in use at the time of the destruction, many others remain uncertain, but they all contribute to identifying patterns in how vessels were probably used in the EM IIB community.

I divide the assemblage by major shape categories, on the assumption that these are distinct enough to have been easily recognised types, and such major shape characteristics put constraints on how vessels could be used effectively. Further dividing these will be modes in vessel volume, which should also relate to how the vessels were used.² Looking at all vessels together reveals volume [end page 250] modalities which cross-cut the different vessel types and shapes (Figure 26.3). Focusing-in on the range of smaller vessels likely to have been in everyday use (Figure 26.3C), multiple modes can be recognised, with a lot of very small vessels (0.2-0.4 litres), many slightly larger (up to 0.7 litres), another mode ending at 1.3 litres, possibly a few sub-modes within a broader range up to c. 4.2 litres, and a much more dispersed range of volumes up to c. 12 litres and beyond. Not only do these modes have relevance across different shapes, suggesting they relate to the ways shapes were used together, they also span the three different pot-making traditions represented at the site: the local South Coast and imported Vasiliki and Mirabello traditions (Whitelaw *et al.* 1997). This suggests they relate to broadly shared ideas underlying how the vessels were used, rather than purely local habits.

Goblets are all small, and with pedestal bases, so it is difficult to see them as designed for anything other than drinking (Figure 26.4A). Most are imported, but a few were made locally. With not enough for all residents, other small cup and bowl shapes must also have been used for drinking. Whether the distinction between goblet and other [end page 251] small container use was opportunistic or due to individual preference, status or social situation is not obvious, but most households had them. Their small volume provides a guide for looking for vessels used similarly among the cups and small bowls.

Cups come in a variety of forms, the major distinction being between simple s-profile cups, usually with large loop handles, and other, often more finely finished varieties of hemispherical or globular cups (the latter all imported, whereas most of the former are local). Nearly all of the fragments catalogued as s-profile bowls have a localised wear pattern on lip and maximum diameter which indicates that they were actually from handled cups, the wear resulting from their use as dippers, to scoop food or drink from larger open vessels; some larger deep bowls have corresponding wear inside. These cups may have been used to transfer food or drink from cooking or serving to consumption vessels, or might have been used for direct consumption from a communal pot. The generic cups (Figure 26.4B) usually hold 1-3 times the standard goblet volume, at the upper range perhaps representing a full serving to accompany a meal. The act of refilling during the course of a meal may have been socially important in goblet use, or the limited volume might suggest specific use in hospitality or toasting, though goblets were not stored separately from the other drinking vessels or otherwise distinguished as intended for restricted use. Dipper cups span the same range, with a mode about twice the goblet norm (Figure 26.4C).

Bowls can be divided into three principal shapes: deep, shallow and hemispherical/globular. The latter are the most straightforward, displaying a single mode (Figure 26.4D), which corresponds with that of the dipper cups – convergence on a single food serving, probably for an individual (e.g., Turner and Lofgren 1968); they are nearly all imported. Deep bowls are considerably more varied, with some corresponding to the small volume goblets and others to the larger cups and hemispherical bowls (Figure 26.4E). Above this is a general spread up to c. 2.0 litres, another up to c. 4.2 litres; these represent multiples of the small consumption units, suitable for servings for 3-5

individuals. Beyond this, the size ranges are more spread, with numerous vessels between 10 and 30 litres, and one around 38 litres. This spread of sizes would accommodate a wide range of uses, in food preparation and serving (e.g., the dipper wear inside some vessels), as well as non-food related processing activities and even short-term storage; the lack of clearly defined modes may suggest general rather than narrowly defined or constrained anticipated uses.

Shallow bowls are much more restricted in volume with none over 9 litres (Figure 26.4F). There are a few small examples, but the bulk concentrate in the middle range (0.6-2.2 litres), and only two outliers are larger than 4.5 litres. It is difficult to fill a shallow bowl as much as a deep bowl and not spill its contents when lifting or moving it, so we can assume these were usually less completely filled than their deep counterparts, in part accounting for a shift upward in the volume modes. In terms of stability to raise and drink from, and the large rim diameter, they are unlikely to have been used as drinking vessels, accounting for the dearth of very small examples. The core of the distribution would correspond to 1-2 food servings. Given the visibility and ease of access to contents due to their wide and flaring apertures, the larger examples may have been used preferentially as serving vessels for food shared among a small number of consumers. Interestingly, just over half of the examples over 1.1 litres in volume were imported, whereas most of the smaller ones were locally produced. This may represent complementary aspects of use, or else local production filling a gap in the available imports, produced to meet slightly different local norms. The two significantly larger vessels (6.5-9.0 litres) are both imports, and there is one from each of the two best preserved households. These may have been display pieces, used for ~~larger~~ presentations of larger quantities of food or on particular occasions, for example when outsiders were invited for a meal. The volumes involved, however, would not suggest the ability to serve a large extra-household group.

The few jars are insignificant in number as well as volume (Figure 26.4G), perhaps aligning better with pyxides than serving vessels. Among spouted jars, I distinguish long-spouted 'teapots', given arguments that the elaboration of spouts was to draw attention to serving, in contexts of hospitality (Catapoti 2011: 110; Day and Wilson 2004: 55). The volume distributions support such a shape distinction, with most 'teapots' corresponding to the middle mode (0.8-1.3 litres), suitable to hold 2-6 goblet or 2 cup refills (Figure 26.4H). The one much larger example (P665), is poorly preserved but exceptional in most ways (one of only two 'teapots' made locally, with unique white painted decoration).³ The other spouted jars are mostly flat-bottomed and short spouted (Figure 26.4I). Their size range seems to complement that of 'teapots', perhaps suggesting slightly different tendencies in use, with the less elaborate vessels at the smaller and larger ends of the serving vessel range. The extravagant spouts on the mid-range 'teapots', ~~this~~ may be pragmatic and related to balance and manoeuvrability, but probably also to the social contexts of use. The bulk of the standard spouted jars are also imports, with the smaller range predominantly Vasiliki (2/3) and South Coast (1/3), and the larger examples mostly Mirabello. Twenty-five examples are smaller than 4.5 litres, within the documented range for serving and consumption containers, with only four spread evenly from 7.5 to 32 litres, probably used for other tasks, distributed across three households.

Jugs constitute the largest ~~single~~ class of vessels in the assemblage, with considerable variation in volume, though high standardisation in shape (Figure 26.4J). Many smaller jugs held individual goblet-scale servings, but this main mode *[end page 252]* extends continuously across the capacities of goblets and cups, representing individual liquid servings (seemingly the equivalent of modern individual cafetières). While not corresponding to our expectations about transfer vessels (holding liquid for multiple servings or serving multiple individuals), this helps account for the surprisingly large number of jugs recovered in some households. Above this, there may be sub-foci, but these pretty much merge into a broad mode from circa 0.8-3.8 litres, incorporating the bulk of the smaller jugs and spanning the serving range. Based on the smaller, goblet-scale jugs, this larger

mode represents multiple serving vessels, for 4-5 goblet to cup-sized servings. There are 18 larger jugs, ranging fairly evenly from 4.5-13.0 litres. These would probably have been transfer vessels, and possibly the principal vessels used to carry water up to the site (unless skin bags were used). A few of the smaller piriform jars might have been similarly used (nine are 4.5-9.5 litres), but most are 12.5-28 litres, representing a very considerable weight to carry up from the valley floor (though water jars this large are documented ethnographically); many were positioned alongside large storage jars, so are likely to have been used as mid- to long-term liquid storage.

We can finish this survey of the smaller containers by considering cooking pots (Figure 26.4K). With identifications constrained by the degree of base preservation, four were certainly flat-based, 12 had tripod legs, and 15 are uncertain; the two forms presumably relate to different forms of cooking. Most held 1.6-4.2 litres, with an additional cluster around 6.5-12.5 litres, and three much larger (>30 litres). The smallest cluster corresponds to the mid-range deep bowl capacities, some 3-5 individual small bowl servings, while the second mode might represent 2-3 meals for a comparable group of people – for example where some or all components of a family's daily food consumption are cooked once in the day, supplying multiple meals (Nelson 1981). The three exceptional examples are only represented by 5-10% of each vessel, so their actual capacity cannot be estimated accurately; given such poor preservation, they may not have been in use at the destruction. If in use, the very large vessels might have been for occasional larger cooking events (Longacre 1985: 344-45), or for other large capacity heat-processing activities, such as cheese-making, beer-brewing or wool-dyeing; these are distributed across three different households.⁴

Overall, pottery seems to have been used in very structured ways, with clear patterning by shape and size. Most, not surprisingly, was focused on the preparation, serving and consumption of relatively small quantities of food and drink, for individuals and aggregates of 3-6 individuals. Small numbers of some shapes could have catered for slightly larger groups, but supra-household groups would normally have required multiple vessels used side by side, whether for cooking, serving or consumption: more pot-luck than feast. A range of larger cooking pots, deep bowls and jugs (8.0-15 litres) may have been used in food processing and preparation, though potentially also for other activities. A very small number of much larger vessels do not obviously fit into this interconnected series. These vessels may not have been used for food processing at all, but for other activities; there is at most one example of such shapes per household.

Given the Pompeii-like character of some of the better preserved rooms at the site, one might hope for some behaviourally meaningful associations, but the best preserved contexts for these everyday vessels were storage (e.g., rooms 33, 72, the cupboard in 80, 82 and 91), and most other rooms had vessels distributed across them individually or in only small clusters. One deposit, however, recovered high up in the fill of room 79 and surmised to have fallen from the flat roof (Warren 1972: 72), provides an instructive assemblage. It included 5 goblets, 4 very small deep bowls, 1 much larger deep bowl (circa 27 litres), 1 dipper cup, a small piriform jar (circa 14 litres), and ~~two~~ 2 tripod cooking pots, and appears to be a serving and dining set for 4-5 individuals.

Figure 26.5 plots the representation of the different types and size classes of vessels across the entire Period II assemblage. Many of these vessels were not in use at the time of the destruction. Bearing in mind the dramatically different use-lives documented ethnographically for different types of vessels, we can expect smaller serving/consumption vessels to be broken at a much higher rate, accumulate as trash and therefore be significantly over-represented in any accumulated deposits, including some contexts at the site.

Figure 26.6 plots the vessel representation for the four better-preserved households at the site. The significant differences in preservation of different households and rooms within them, as well as the vessels themselves, complicate direct comparisons. The North-central and South-east clusters are the most difficult to interpret, as their full boundaries were not defined, and no storage areas for

small pots were preserved or excavated, arguably accounting for why small vessels are so significantly under-represented in both. The South-central and South-west households are the best preserved, with the former being significantly larger, with ancillary rooms expanding out from the core suite of rooms shared by all households at the site (Whitelaw 2007: 71-72). The South-west was the last household added to the community, probably not ~~that~~ long before the destruction, since there were no architectural modifications, documented for all the others (Whitelaw 2007: 68-69).⁵
[end page 253]

The differences in physical scale are paralleled by the differential size of the preserved assemblages and by the preserved storage capacity in each household, suggesting that each relates to a degree to an underlying variable: the relative population of each household. This can be expected to change through the domestic cycle of the occupying group, so storage capacity is likely to be a more responsive index of resident population at any one time than house area. Because the storage vessels are fairly robust, they are likely to serve as a more reliable archaeological index of the number of consumers in each household, than the preserved small vessels, though both are also likely to be influenced by relative household wealth.

The two best preserved households, with a regular factor of two-three difference between them in quantity by small vessel categories, bracket the variations in nuclear family scale, bearing in mind that with high child mortality, the number of consumers in a nuclear family will vary between households and over the domestic cycle, even if the number surviving to adulthood may simply replace the senior generation (i.e., a generic family of two parents and two surviving children, might have had significantly more child consumers/vessel users in the earlier phases in its development). Even anticipating such differences, what stands out is the low frequency of the different types and size classes of consumption vessels, usually 2-5 of a type. Some overlap in uses (e.g., goblets, cups and small deep bowls for drinking) and seasonal over-stocking accommodate the lower and upper ends of the ranges, consistently pointing to a consuming group of some 4-6 individuals as the household norm. The storage capacities support this view, with pithos, amphora and piriform jar estimated total volumes: North-central: 1,742 litres; South-east: 1,461 litres; South-central: 2,046 litres; South-[end page 254]west: 796 litres.⁶ Using Christakis' calculations (2008), these would hold agricultural produce sufficient to support the equivalent of 5.3, 4.4, 6.2 and 2.4 adult consumers, respectively. Given agricultural storage strategies in a highly uncertain environment, we might expect a household to aim at storing two years' provisions, while anticipating additional storage in organic containers.

Returning now to the starting point for all interpretations claiming feasting at Fournou Korifi: this analysis of the characteristics of the ceramics challenges the assumption that the preserved household assemblages are far too large to have served the needs of nuclear families, so therefore must have been used in feasts. Once the shapes and volumes of the vessels are considered in detail, the large numbers of cups, bowls and jugs reduce to functionally differentiated components of assemblages suitable for individual families. Different classes of vessels might have been drafted in to serve in more generic ways for the occasional event (e.g., teacups and coffee mugs used indiscriminately), but there is no evidence to support the sort of large-scale feasting events, which have been asserted as obviously represented by the assemblages. [end page 255]

While the published detail of the data available from Fournou Korifi has encouraged the exploration of new ideas, the applications usually do not engage with the data in ways that can test their assumptions or the validity of the interpretations. This examination suggests there is more scope at this site to investigate patterns in everyday commensality, rather than the large-scale feasting proposed to date.

There are other, notionally common-sense assumptions that have become factoids through repetition, which a critical look at the Fournou Korifi evidence also questions. It is often assumed

that Vasiliki Ware was high status, possibly associated with elites, because it appears to skeuomorph metal vessels (e.g., Branigan 1970: 129-30; Betancourt 1979: 24; Wilson and Day 2004: 53, 58). Yet every household at a small, undifferentiated hamlet like Fournou Korifi had access to it. Wine consumption has also been assumed to have been high status (Sherratt 1987: 92; Hamilakis 1996; 1999; Morris 2008; Catapoti 2011; though see Christakis 2008: 31). But it was produced at household level in the community (J. Renfrew 1972: 316), probably in most if not all of the households.⁷

Identifying feasting has been pursued enthusiastically in Aegean prehistory, but by and large, we have not developed convincing methods for recognising such behaviours archaeologically, nor distinguishing the many different forms they may take, with their distinct social implications. In many cases, our data do not have the chronological or depositional resolution necessary to identify such behaviours or events securely. Faunal analysts have been considerably more successful, paying close attention to deposit formation processes, and with the additional evidence from carcass preparation and body part representation to inform more directly on the scale and time-scale of consumption behaviour (e.g., Halstead and Isaakidou 2004; 2011; Pappa *et al.* 2004; Hamilakis and Harris 2011). Ceramic assemblages need a similar degree of analytical consideration to be used effectively to address the social contexts and implications of consumption. In specific circumstances, this may be possible, and this examination outlines one approach to exploring the patterns of use and social significance of ceramic assemblages.

Each analyst tends to see what they are looking for, but we need critically to assess whether an interpretation actually works in terms of patterns in the data, giving adequate consideration to depositional behaviour, formation processes, preservation, recovery and documentation biases, community context and site history. While forty years after publication, Fournou Korifi still provides our most detailed data for an EM community, it cannot be assumed to represent all aspects of EM societies, nor to be relevant to all questions.

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Footnotes

1. Driessen has proposed the application of Lévi-Strauss' model of 'house societies' to Minoan communities, using Fournou Korifi as a prime example, challenging the household model (Driessen 2010a; 2012), but it is not clear what Driessen's version of the 'house society' model represents – it differs very considerably from Lévi-Strauss' original formulation. It seems it can represent entire communities (Driessen 2010a: 52, 55), though these may be sub-divided into distinct households (*ibid.*: 40; seemingly accepted for Fournou Korifi: *ibid.*: 52), or blocks of houses (*ibid.*: 36; discussed as neighbourhoods, wards or barrios in other regions), or even distributed between different communities (*ibid.*: 55-56). The intent is to emphasise the house as

a material and symbolic embodiment of the residential group, which resonates with part of Lévi-Strauss' model, but in the case of Early and early Middle Minoan Crete, given the preferential investment of effort and material resources in tombs, it would seem more appropriate to refer to these as 'tomb societies' (which I do *not* advocate). Driessen seems to expect one ideological construct to extend throughout the Minoan period, whereas houses become more readily identifiable architecturally at the same time as they become increasingly elaborated, in the early Neopalatial period, when tombs decline as foci for intra-community identity and competition. Only defined vaguely, not analytically or socially, it is not obvious that the concept of 'house society' helps us to understand Early Minoan communities such as Fournou Korifi. [Page 247]

2. Volumes have been estimated for most shapes as two stacked truncated cones; even for broadly conical vessels, this allows closer tracking of curved profiles. For estimation, some 66% preserved all relevant dimensions, and for 80%, an accurate estimate is possible; for the remainder, a key measurement cannot very reliably be reconstructed and the estimate is approximate, particularly relevant to larger, often poorly preserved vessels. [Page 250-51]
3. There is no basis for considering the vessels with white painted chevrons, only found in the South-central household (Whitelaw 2007: 73), as higher status (Haggis 1999: 61; Damilati and Vavouranakis 2011: 40). This is simply asserted as notional support for the assumption that this household, with more pots, must have been higher status. [Page 252]
4. I have not included baking plates, as these are not containers, but most are represented by a single sherd (only one reaches 25% preservation). Most are very fragmentary and probably were not in use at the time of the destruction, being merely over-looked refuse, often among the ashy deposits on kitchen floors. A few have traces of legs, but most fragments do not preserve enough of the vessel to know whether they had them or not. The low broad spouts on some suggest heating small quantities of liquid (cheese-making?), or dry produce (grain roasting?); cooking flat bread may be another option. [Page 253]
5. The shrine interpretation hinges on three characteristics: the female figure-vessel fallen from a stand in Room 92, the skull fragment from Room 89, and the associated ceramic assemblage. The latter is considered in the text, and is not exceptional. Opinion differs as to whether the figure-vessel represents a goddess or not (Warren 1973; in press; Cadogan 2010). All comparable vessels known to date come from burial contexts, and those from specific contexts are found with burial offerings, not in public areas of the cemeteries, perhaps suggesting they were individual offerings or personal possessions. It is usually noted that the skull fragment might represent a victim of the destruction, but this is dismissed because no other bones were recovered, and it is assumed that it was used in the room as a ritual item, representing the ancestors (Warren 1972: 83; Soles 2001; Driessen 2010b). It is highly unlikely that much of it will have been missed during excavation (though the intense burning, resulting in distortion of the bone, might have destroyed the more fragile bones of the face), so it was probably far from complete *in situ*. Given the complete burning of the village, despite its construction largely in stone and mud, not wood, and with internal fire-breaks provided by the passages, courts and abandoned unroofed rooms, it is likely that the burning was intentional. Some post-destruction salvage may be documented by the dearth of metal artefacts recovered, and the skull fragment may have been missed when a victim of the destruction/sack was later recovered for burial. Working from the known to the unknown, this group of rooms is laid-out in a pattern conforming to the other houses and is equipped like them, with the same features and a similar assemblage, all implying a similar range of activities in the past. Identifying this household as a community shrine, simply on the basis of the single figure-vessel, would seem to be a matter of faith. [Page 253-54]
6. The presence or absence of holes near the base of pithoi or amphorae does not indicate whether they were used for the storage of dry or liquid products (*contra* Warren 1972: 146), because the holes were too low for tapping liquid into any vessels, and none are known to have been raised

high enough on pot stands to allow this (Whitelaw 2007: 72). The household storage capacities estimated here differ from those in Whitelaw 1983, where Warren's average volumes were applied to all vessels; here the volume of each vessel has been estimated. [Page 255]

7. Only a limited number of deposits with visible seeds or pips were floated. Residue analyses conducted on six pithoi from the site suggest that wine was stored in pithoi from the North-central, South-east and South-central households; no vessels were analysed from the South-west (Warren 1999a; 1999b; McGovern *et al.* 2008). [Page 256]

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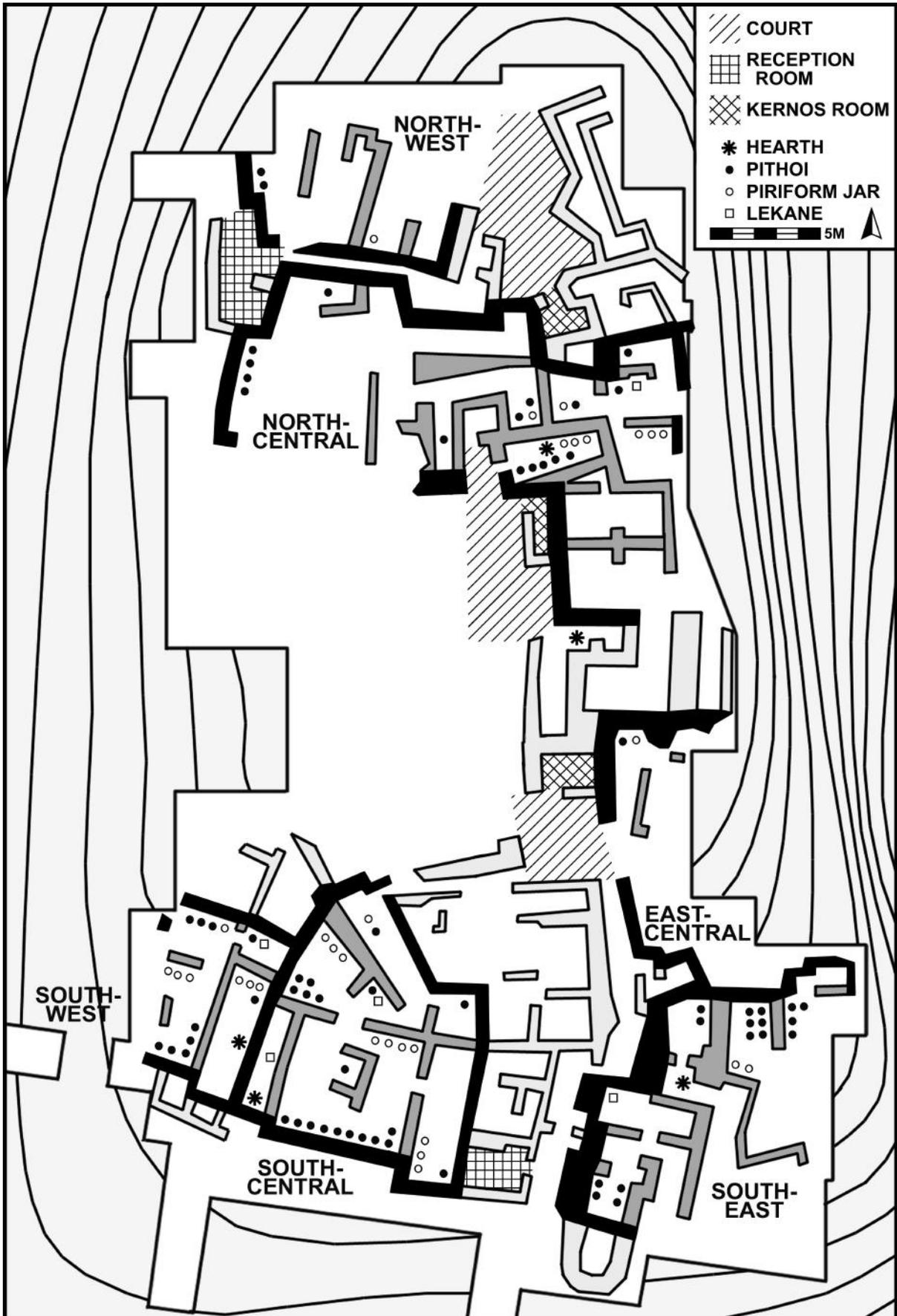


Figure 26.1. Myrto: Fournou Korifi households and communal spaces. By the author. [Page 248]

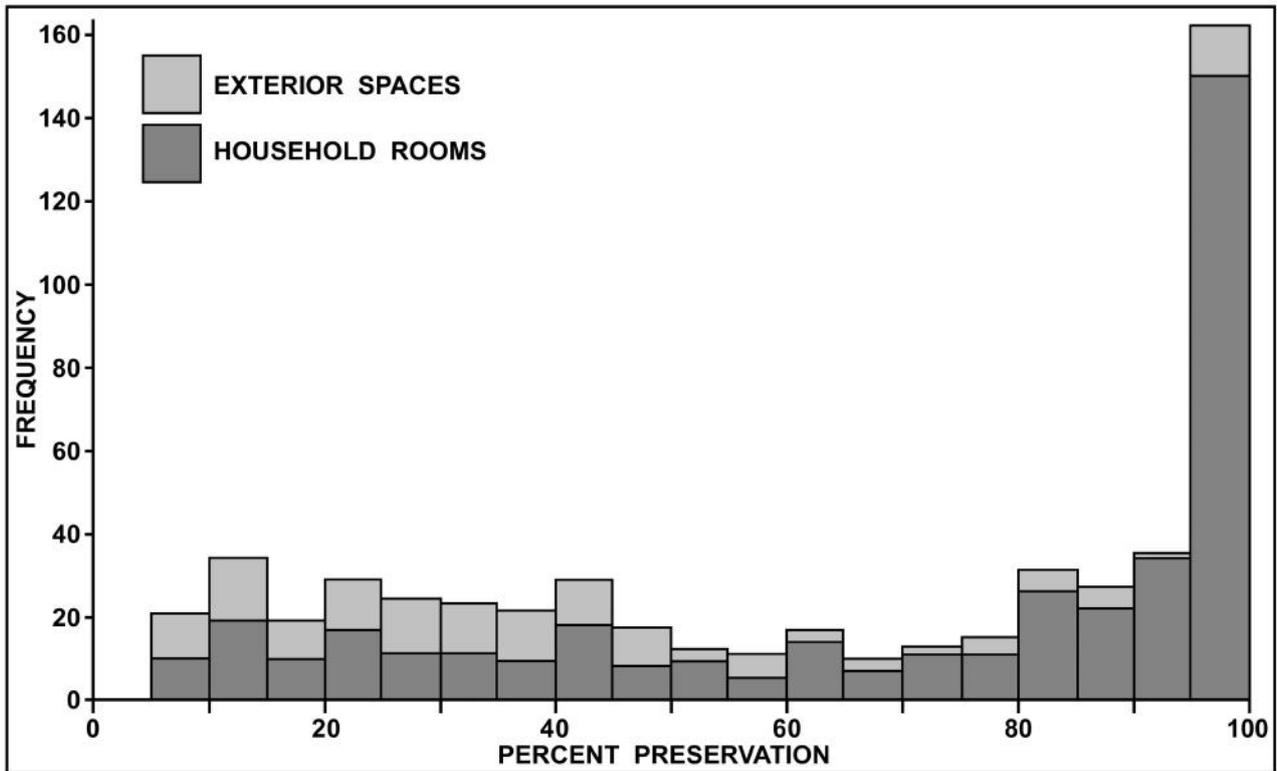


Figure 26.2. Vessel fragmentation graph, entire Period II catalogued assemblage, distinguishing vessels from interior and exterior spaces. By the author. [Page 249]

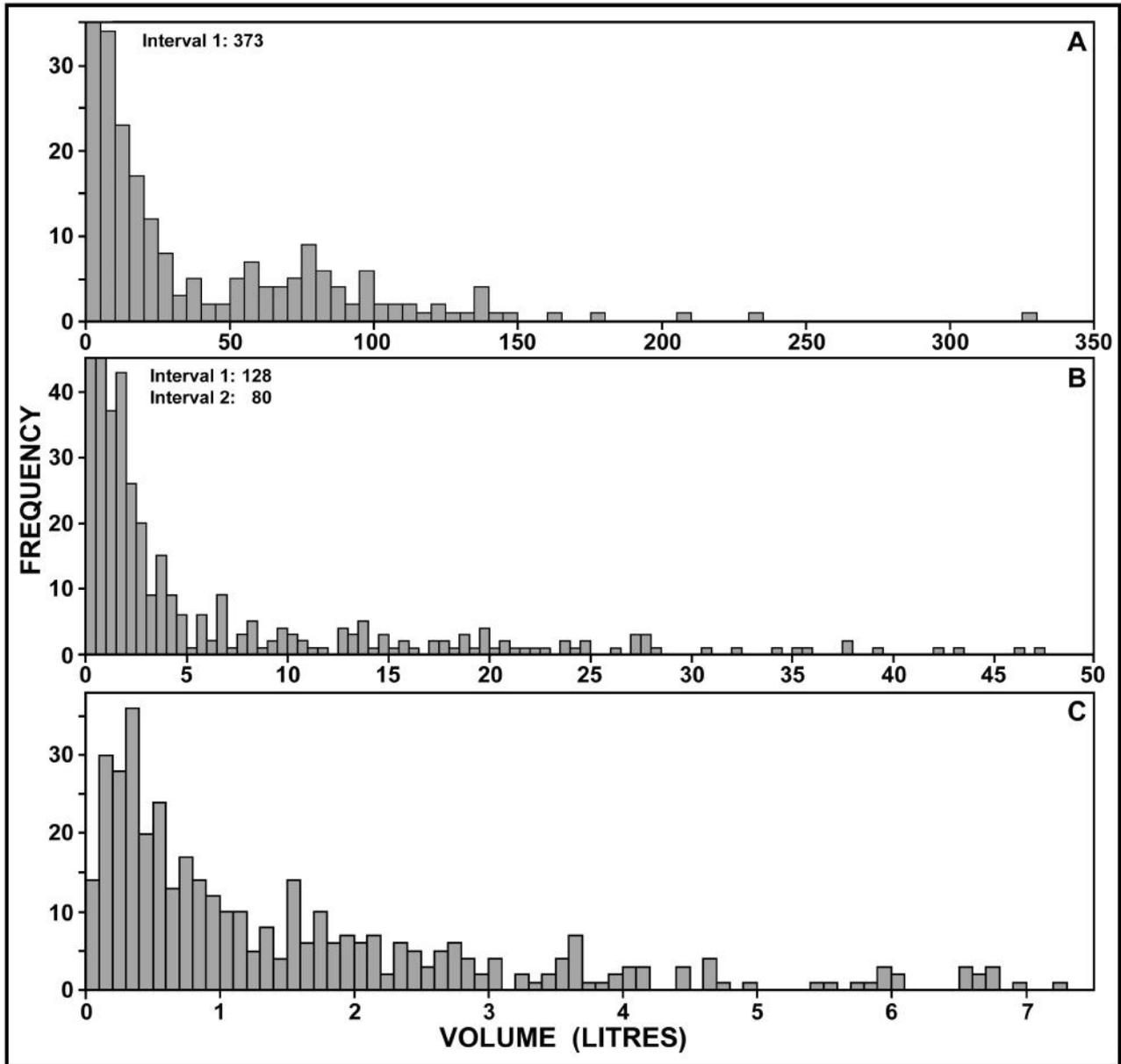


Figure 26.3. Estimated vessel volumes, Period II assemblage: A. full assemblage, 0-350 litres; B. detail, 0-50 litres; C. detail, 0-7.5 litres. By the author. [Page 250]

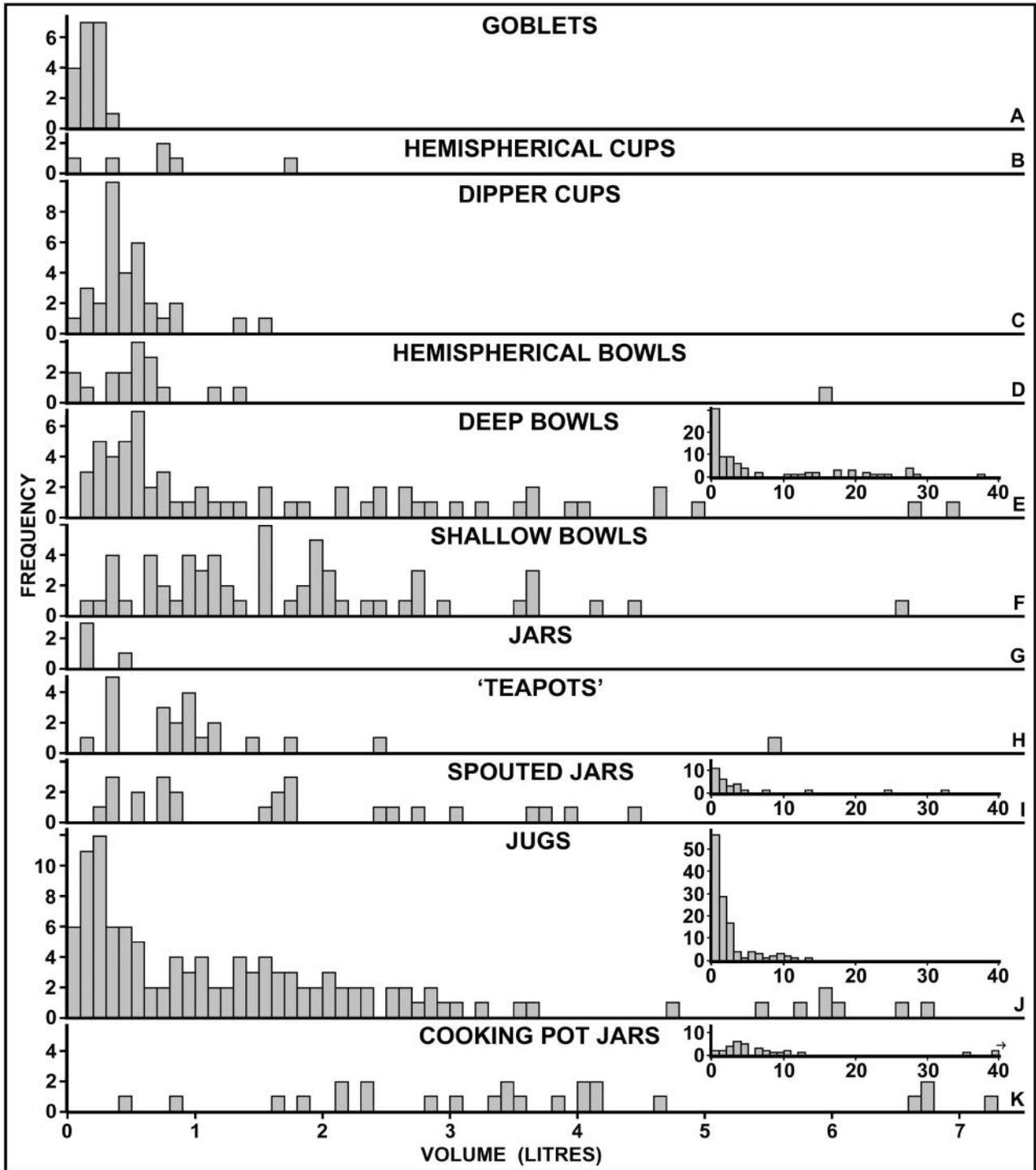


Figure 26.4. Estimated vessel volumes, by vessel type: A. goblets; B. hemispherical cups; C. dipper cups; D. hemispherical bowls; E. deep bowls; F. shallow bowls; G. jars; H. 'teapot' spouted jars; I. short-spouted jars; J. jugs; K. cooking pots; insets showing whole size range. By the author. [Page 251]

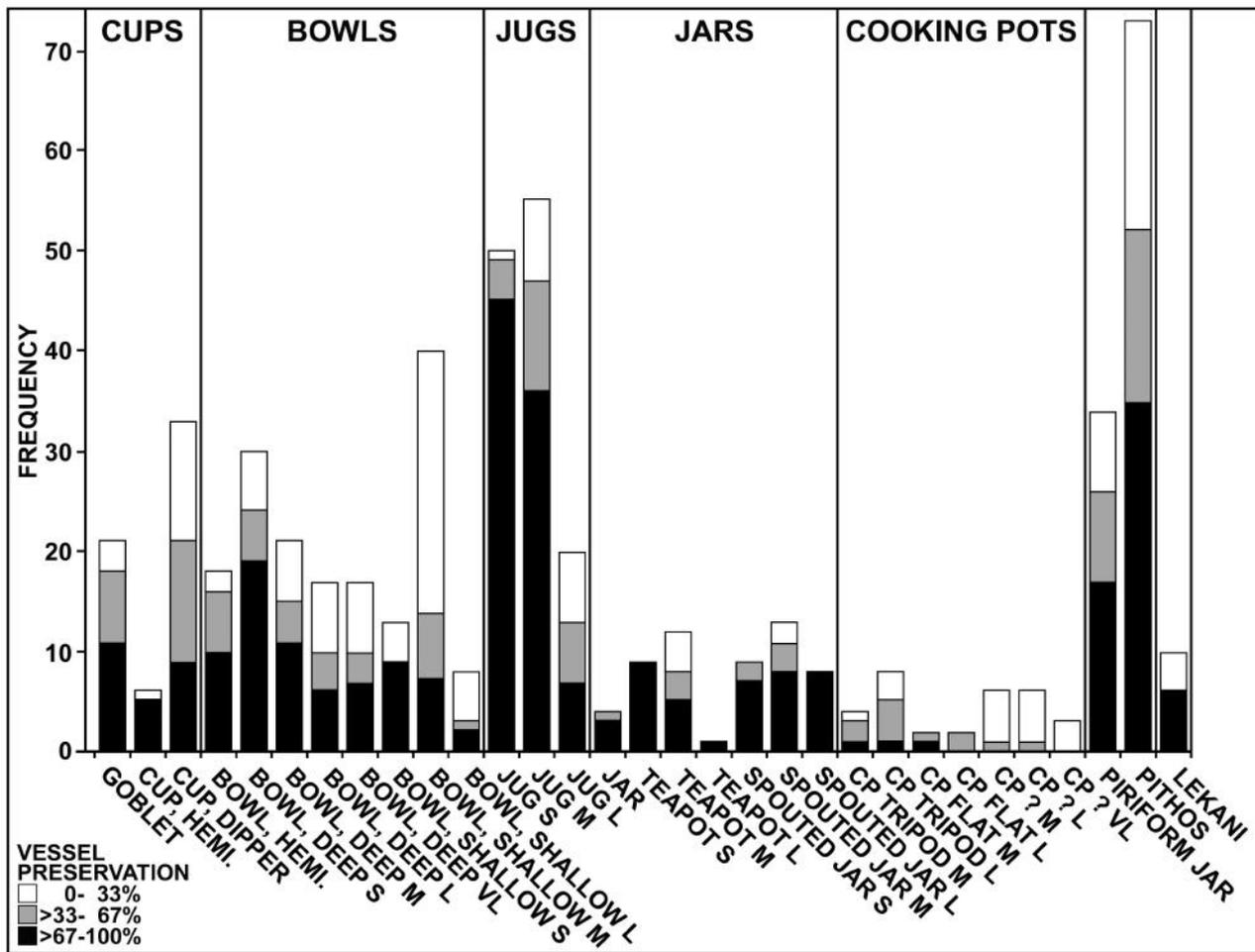


Figure 26.5. Vessel types in analysed Period II assemblage, distinguished by vessel preservation. By the author. [Page 254]

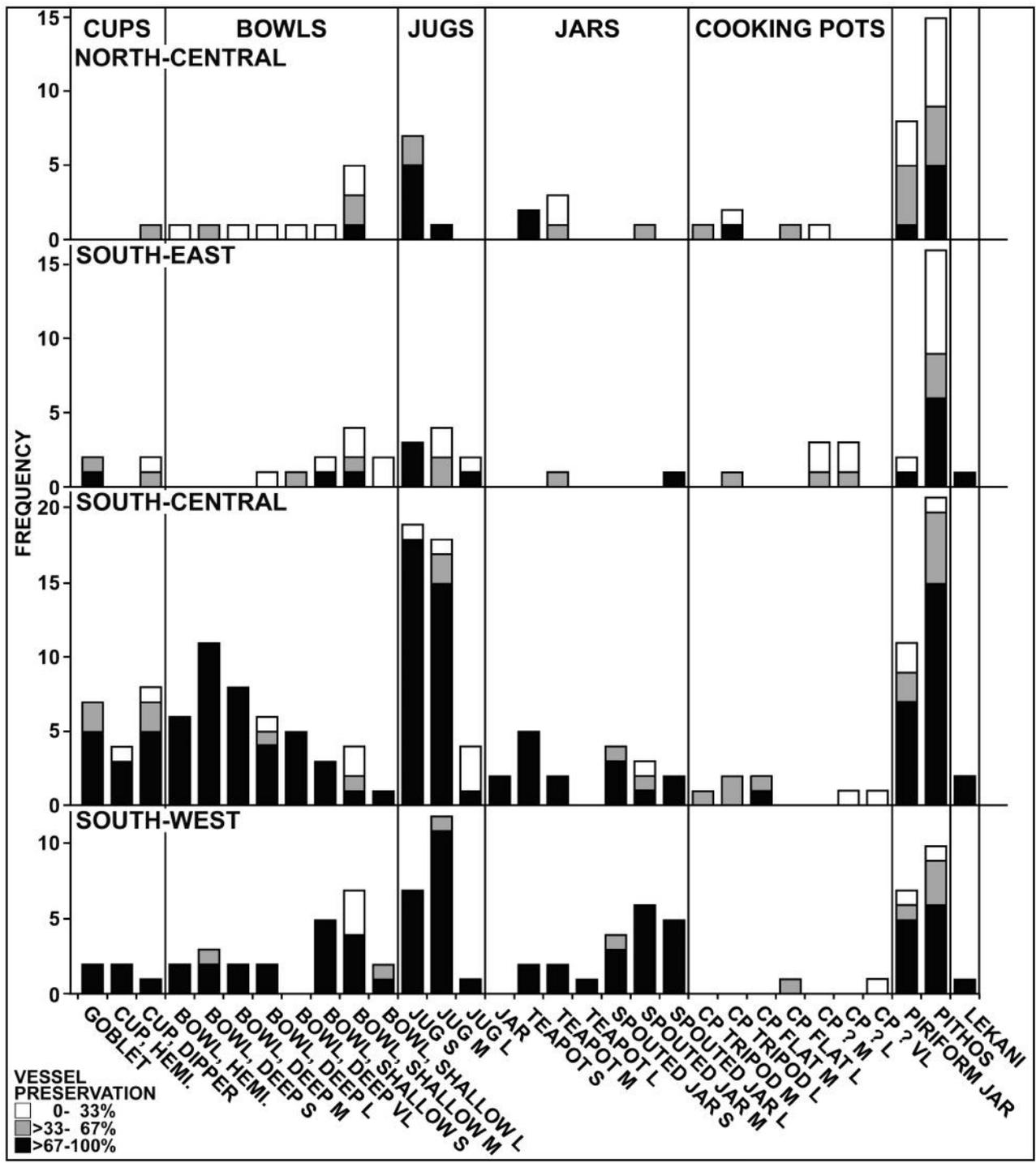


Figure 26.6. Vessel types in four households, distinguished by vessel preservation. By the author. [Page 255]