



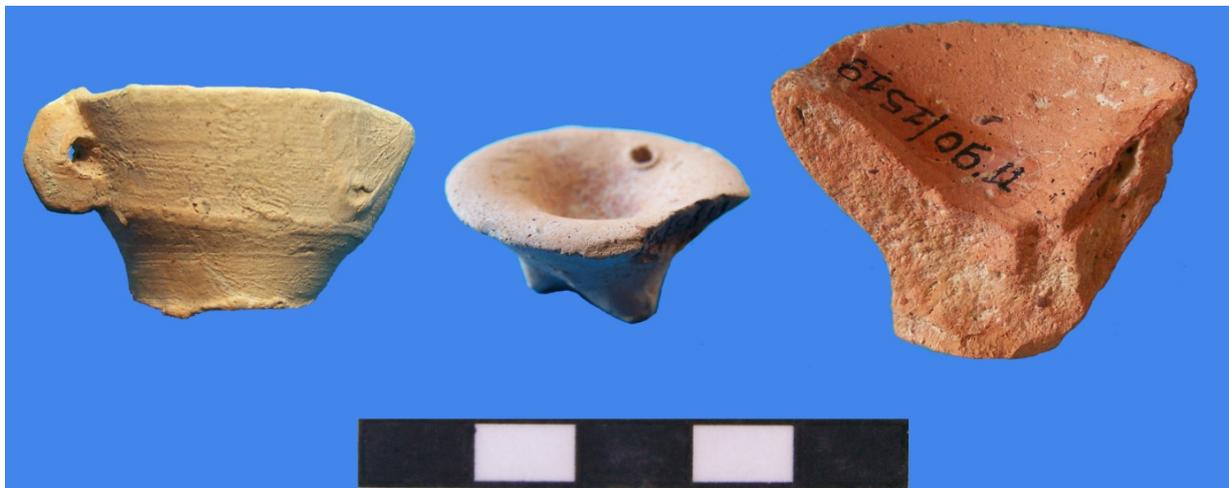
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Petras Miniature Vessels

Vessel studies, particularly pottery, constitute a popular field of Minoan archaeology, due to the rich chronological, social, religious and artistic information they provide. Within this field, several categories of vessels (e.g. utilitarian or ‘ritual’) have been exhaustively examined, while others have been largely ignored. Miniature vessels belong to the latter category, even though they occur in almost every excavated site.

As a result, miniature vessels are inadequately defined. The process of and reason for their miniaturisation have been fleetingly speculated upon. Their technical, social and contextual affordances are largely overlooked (encouraging exceptions are Girella 2002; 2003). There is therefore a need to conduct a systematic study and publication of all miniature vessels from Minoan Crete. By meticulously recording and contextualising them, we will gain new, diachronic and site-specific knowledge about artistic and economic issues in Minoan societies, perhaps even issues of age and gender.

Anna Simandiraki-Grimshaw has been conducting a project entitled “*Miniature Vessels in Minoan Crete*” since 2006, which aims to fill this gap and hopes to create a valuable resource for researchers of Aegean prehistory. Significant bibliographic research has already been undertaken and the project is now at the stage of unpublished data collection. This stage is kindly sponsored by INSTAP (2009-) and includes a variety of recording and interpretative archaeological methods.



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The study of miniature vessels from Petras (commenced in 2007) is part of this larger project. The Petras miniature material, although not extensive, is nevertheless significant in the study and comprehension of miniature Minoan vessels, particularly from Eastern Crete. It is already becoming apparent that the detailed examination of the techniques, variability, context and palatial provenance of the Petras specimens will add hitherto undetected pieces in the puzzle of their significance as artefacts and concepts.

Selected References:

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