

## Lecture 3: Early Bronze Age Hellas

Monday, January 16, 2017

**Reading:** C/F 30-31; EG II and video (see below)

**Καλημέρα** (kah-lee-meh-rah)

Δ Δ Delta is for Dimini (late Neolithic village) and deka=10

Δ Δ = 20, Δ Δ Δ = 30

- acrophonic numbers

### Pre-Historic Hellas

- Paleolithic: Hesiod's Golden Age
- Mesolithic
- Neolithic: Hesiod's Silver Age
- **Chalkolithic**
- Bronze

-lithic = stone

chalko- = copper

chalkos = metallurgy

### Chalkolithic Hellas = Late Neolithic

- Prometheus (see. p. 29)

-new technology = new people

### Criteria for Civilization (review)

Agriculture

Towns

Monumental Buildings

Metallurgy

System of Writing

### Bronze

- alloy of copper & tin or copper & arsenic
- better tools, weapons, displays, wealth
- no tin or arsenic in Hellas

### Bronze Age (3000 - 1100 BCE)

Early Bronze Age 3000 - 2000 BCE (EBA) p. 30-1

- Mainland: Early Helladic (EH)
- Cyclades: Early Cycladic (EC)
- Crete: Early Minoan (EM)

### 3 EBA commonalities

- dependence on agriculture
- metallurgy
- -language: non-Greek: 'Aegean'
  - -ssos, -ttos, -inthos

### Early Helladic (EH) = mainland:

distinguished by architecture, burials, and plain, hand-made pottery

## **1. EH Architecture**

### Settlements

- larger than in Neolithic
- fortified
- improved housing (rectangular in shape)
- monumental buildings

### Lerna (Peloponnese):

- Hydra, Herakles (Hercules)
- Herakles performed his first labour by killing a lion in Lerna (killed the Hydra in his second labour)
- Second labour of Herakles = control of water (hydra=hydro)
  - people started building dams to control water, which was probably the reason for this myth

### House of Tiles (EG Pt II)

- corridor house, has lots of hallways
- about the size of a basketball court
- fortified site
- has a tile roof, tiles made of slate or clay, but you don't see tile roofs in Helladic for another hundred years
- has an exterior bench
- store rooms like a sealing archive, seals were like people's initials now, it was used to imprint clay
- not likely someone's dwelling, probably a meeting place and a place for storing surplus

## 2. EH containers (EG Pt II)

- hand made
- new shapes
- curvilinear designs disappear in the early Helladic
- no decoration
- changes in pottery means changes in the people

## 3. EH graves (cist)

- multiple burials
- cist graves (underground) = inhumation
- outside settlement

## Early Cycladic (EC)

### 1. EC Architecture

#### Melos: Phylakopi

-first town of 5000+ people but NO monumental architecture

### 2. EC Sculpture fiddle idol

- female marble figurines (C/F 24-5, 30 (both), 31; EG Pt II)
- male musicians
- do not know what they were used for
- represents a squatting female
- marble figurines were then made and it is not know what they were used for
  - ranged from thumb-sized to human-sized, had their arms folded, v thin, mostly female
  - A. Modigliani was inspired by them

#### Early Cycladic Marble Male Musicians

- do not know what they were used for

### 3. EC containers:

- material (see C/F p.31) made out of stone and clay
- has a lid
- not sure what they're used for
- the fact they can hollow out stone means they probably learned it from Egypt
- decoration: incised or painted
- shapes: zoomorphic, do not know what these were used for either
- frying pan (see C/F p. 30; EG Pt II), made form clay, incised decoration, spiral

motif, NOT for cooking, some have incised ships on them

- theory: could act as a mirror to put water in it and look at you reflection
- theory: could represent female womb

#### **4. EC burials**

same as early helladic

#### **Agriculture**

#### **Towns**

Monumental Buildings

#### **Metallurgy**

System of Writing

#### Early Minoan Crete (EM)

##### **1. EM Architecture**

- no large settlements
- no fortification
- no monumental buildings

##### **2. EM Burials**

- house tombs: plaques that depict what the houses look like, theory is that they belonged to a family
- tholos tombs: made of stone burials were in entryway and in circular part of the tomb

##### **3. EM pottery**

- very simple decoration, do not find it in the mainland, only in Crete

##### **4. EM metalwork**

- granulation: making little gold balls and sticking them onto whatever it is that you want, first you hammer out a v thin sheet of gold finer than aluminum foil and you cut it into little squares, and as you apply heat to them, they become solid gold balls, you don't want to heat the base too hot or the ball will melt
- very sophisticated technique on the island of Crete
- probably learned from Egypt

#### EBA Similarities

non-Greek

agriculture

metallurgy

pottery made without use of potters wheel

EBA Differences

architecture  
burial customs  
pottery shapes and decoration

### **Coming of the Indo-Europeans** **Middle Bronze Age: 2000 - 1600**

- indo-europeans brought lots of change to Hellas

#### Mythical Explanation

- centaurs

#### Changes

- language: introduce Greek language
- agriculture: introduction to the horse
- religion: introduce worship of sky gods until this point it was Mother Goddess)
- architecture
- burial customs
- making clay containers: bring the pottery wheel

**Images:** C/F p. 24, 30 (both), 31 (figurines), EG Pt II (all figures)

**Study Map:** Cyclades, Crete, Peloponnese, Lerna

#### **Words to Remember**

**Places:** Lerna, Cyclades, Melos, Crete

**Terms:** deka, Hydra, Early Helladic, Early Cycladic, Early Minoan, House of Tiles, corridor house, sealings, cist graves, incision, frying pan, tholos tombs

#### **Think About It!**

1. In what ways do Neolithic steatopygous figurines differ from early Cycladic figurines?
2. Why are Cycladic figurines problematic? (see video)
3. In what ways do the 3 EBA areas in Hellas differ from one another?
4. How are the 3 EBA areas in Hellas similar?

**Classics Museum:** Cycladic figurines

#### **Video**

**Cycladic Marble Figurines:**

<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/ancient-art-civilizations/aegean-art1/cycladic/v/cycladic-harpist>