

LATE BYZANTINE GLAZED POTTERY FROM NAUPLION AND ARGOS: THE CASE OF ZEUXIPPUS DERIVATIVES

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About Zeuxippus Derivatives

The term 'derivatives' of Zeuxippus Ware was introduced by A.H.S. Megaw, while Theodora Stillwell MacKay was one of the first scholars to refer to 'copies' of this ware. According to Yona Waksman and Véronique François, the ceramics that macroscopically bear all the characteristics of the prototype Zeuxippus Ware, but have a different fabric, can be considered Imitations of Zeuxippus, while those that share some common traits with the prototype Zeuxippus (e.g. fabric, decoration, shape, quality and colour of glaze), but not all together, should be considered Derivatives of Zeuxippus Ware.

Zeuxippus Derivatives abound in Constantinople and certain areas of Asia Minor, such as Ilion, Pergamon, Metropolis and Magnesia on the Meander, while several, archaeometrically confirmed, production centres have been identified, in among other places, the region of the Troad (Troad Ware: 13th-14th c.), in Pergamon, Paphos in Cyprus and Mosynopoli in Thrace.

These ceramics are roughly dated from about the mid-thirteenth to the early or the first half of the fourteenth century.

The material from Nauplion and Argos

In the ceramic material found in Argolis (Peloponnese, Greece), at least 76 specimens have been recorded to date, mainly from Nauplion (64 specimens) and secondarily Argos (12 specimens). Although they share many similarities with Zeuxippus Ware in their decoration, such as the layout and the repertoire of motifs, they differ in their manufacturing details, such as the fabric, the shaping of the base or the thickness of the walls.

The fragments, provisionally ascribed here to the Zeuxippus Derivatives, are quite heterogeneous and cannot be easily put in groups. This is further corroborated macroscopically by the existence of various fabrics, indicating their provenance from different production centres. In any case, further research combined with archaeometric analyses is undoubtedly needed, in order to draw safer conclusions.

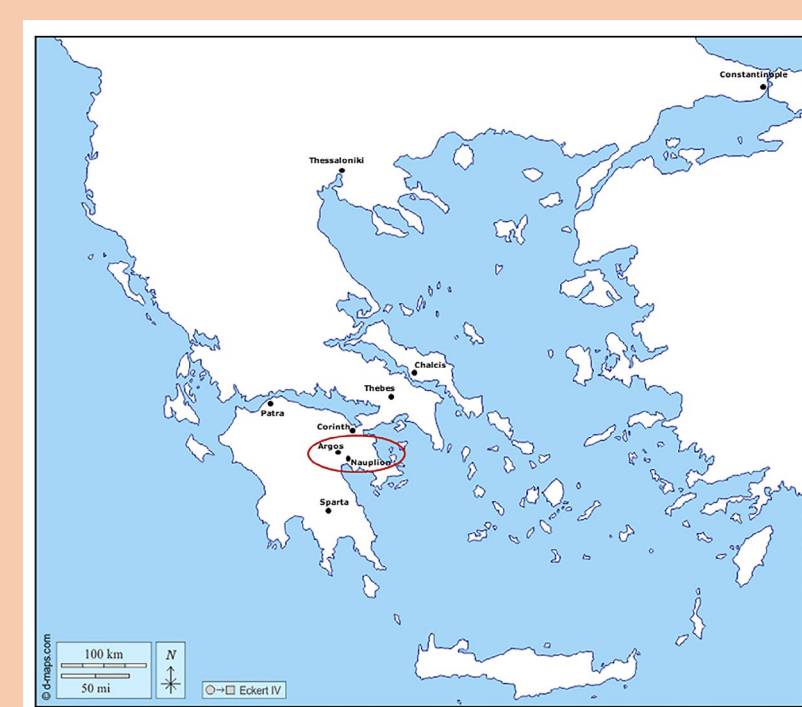
The numerous open vessels merely decorated with concentric circles, which have only a loose connection with Zeuxippus Ware, have not been included here, but specimens showing a clear attempt to imitate Zeuxippus ceramics, mainly in their decoration and surface treatment (slip and glaze) and sometimes in their shape have.



A partly preserved closed vessel stands out for being one of the two closed shapes recorded in the Argolic assemblage. Here, the attempt to imitate Zeuxippus decoration is obvious in the band with the characteristic S-shaped motifs alternating with combed decoration. However, the fabric as well as the thickness of the walls are markedly different from those of the prototype Zeuxippus ceramics.



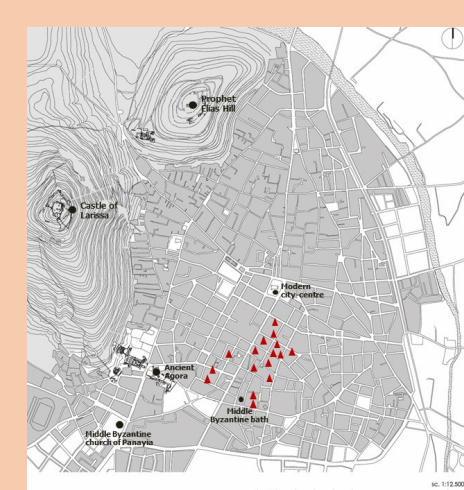
Bands or medallions with S-shaped or curved motifs alternating with combed decoration are also attested in open vessels. In these cases too their fabric along with their shape and thick walls point to Zeuxippus derivatives.



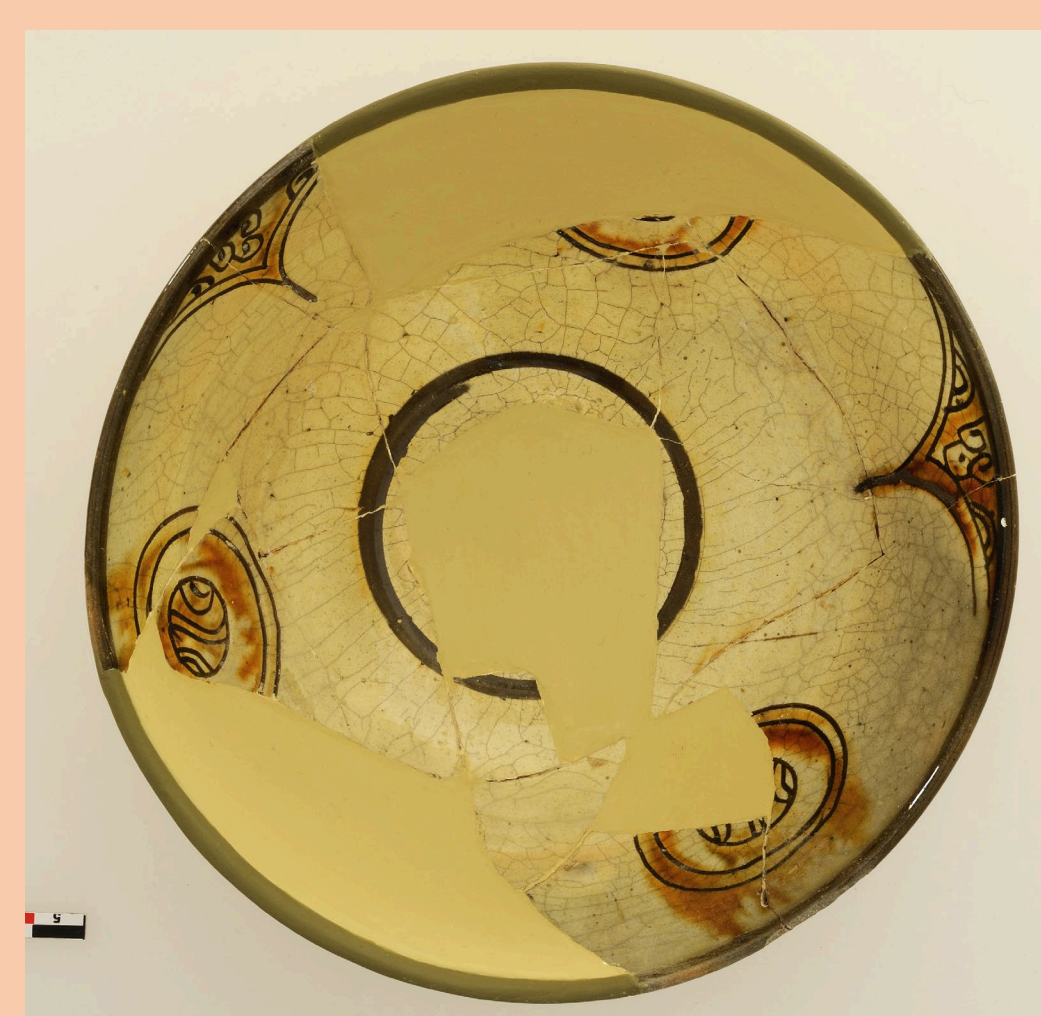
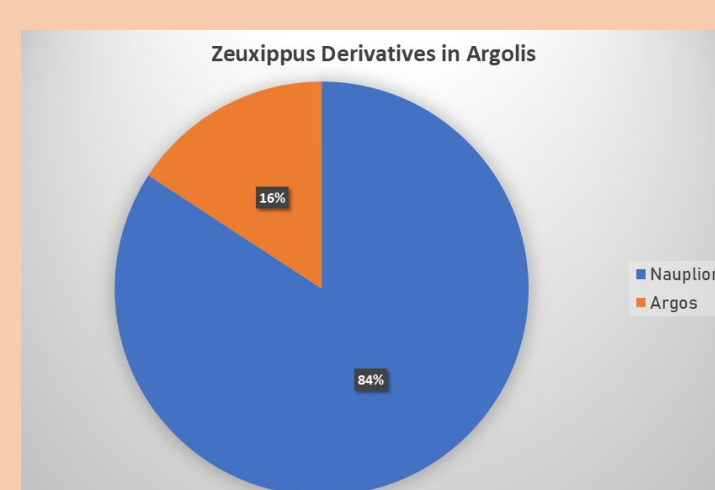
Map of the Aegean
(https://it-maps.com/carte.php?num_car=3770&lang=en, with modifications by Anastasia Vassiliou)



Plan of Nauplion: Castle of Akrotaurion and Lower town (Plan by Eirini Dikonomopoulou, with modifications by Anastasia Vassiliou)



Plan of Argos (based on Chlepa E.A. 2002. Αναβίωση των αρχαίων μνημείων και συνόλων της πόλης του Αργούς. Μέτρα προστασίας, ανάδειξη και ένταξη στον πολεοδομικό ιστό. Municipality of Argos; Piérart, M. and G. Touchais. 1996. Argos. Une ville grecque de 4000 ans. Paris, pl. II; Pariente A. and G. Touchais (eds) 1993. Argos et l'Argolide, topographie et urbanisme. Nauplion and Athens, pl. XIV; with modifications by Eirini Dikonomopoulou and Anastasia Vassiliou)



This bowl from Argos bears a relatively close resemblance to Zeuxippus Ware regarding its decoration and to some extent its thin-walled construction and shape. However, it differs as regards its fabric, its clumsy shape, the colour of its covering glaze and its outer decoration with dots of white slip.

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