

Petras, Siteia

25 years of excavations and studies

Edited by *Metaxia Tsipopoulou*



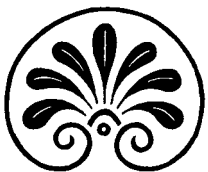
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– 25 years of excavations and studies

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Edited by

Metaxia Tsipopoulou



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Petras, Siteia – 25 years of excavations and studies

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The Lakkos pottery and Middle Minoan IB Petras^{*}

Donald C. Haggis

Abstract

The paper reevaluates the composition, taphonomy, and chronology of the Lakkos pottery in light of recent publications of contemporary deposits from Palaikastro and Knossos, commenting on two relevant problems: first that our understanding of ceramic phases is context-dependent. Although we normally construct and think about ceramic typologies in terms of broad temporal and geographical frameworks – diachronically changing styles, production centers, culture regions, and logical spheres of influence – it is in fact local systemic contexts of consumption that inform stylistic preferences and modes of production and distribution, and thus the actual composition of any given archaeological assemblage. The second problem is our understanding of stratigraphic discontinuities in visualizing social contexts of the emergence, form and function of the Protopalatial palaces. The Lakkos assemblage is discussed in light of recent work that suggests the dynamic quality of Protopalatial sociopolitical institutions, rather than static and qualitatively distinctive architectural forms, documents, or prestige goods. The discussion of the Lakkos pottery reflects on recent work that visualizes changing modes of consumption in fluid and socially variable structures.

The purpose of this paper is to offer my current thinking on the Lakkos deposit, emphasizing some formal similarities to recently published material from Palaikastro and Knossos, and then to comment on the implications of the context for understanding Protopalatial Petras and the Middle Minoan (MM) IB to IIA transition in Crete.

The Lakkos is a large pit situated on a wide terrace about 75 m north of the palace in Sector III.¹ Although Protopalatial buildings have been recovered in its vicinity – especially in trial excavations down slope on the north and west sides of the hill – the details of the topography of the area of Sector III in MM IB remain difficult to reconstruct because of dense occupation in the Neopalatial period and LM III.² The Lakkos effectively buried a late Prepalatial building or buildings, providing a MM IA *terminus post quem* date for the deposit.³ The pit, of which about 100 m³ have been excavated so far, contained ritual implements, vessels inscribed with hieroglyphic signs, and stone vases. The vast majority of the artifacts were potsherds:

a variety of fine table wares (drinking, dining, and serving vessels); medium size and small storage and transport containers (amphorae, spouted jars and hole-mouthed jars); and very few pithoi and cooking pots.⁴

The chronology of the Lakkos pottery

Detailed arguments for a MM IB date of the Lakkos pottery emphasized distinctive patterns of forming technology, and clear connections to MacGillivray's

^{*} I would like to thank Metaxia Tsipopoulou for giving me the opportunity to study the Lakkos pottery, and to acknowledge her commitment to this extraordinary site and dedication to the development of a truly international effort of fieldwork, research and conservation in eastern Crete.

¹ Tsipopoulou this volume, Introduction, Fig. 5d.

² Tsipopoulou 1999b; 2002; 2005a; this volume, 117–31.

³ Rupp 2006.

⁴ Tsipopoulou 2002; Haggis 2007.

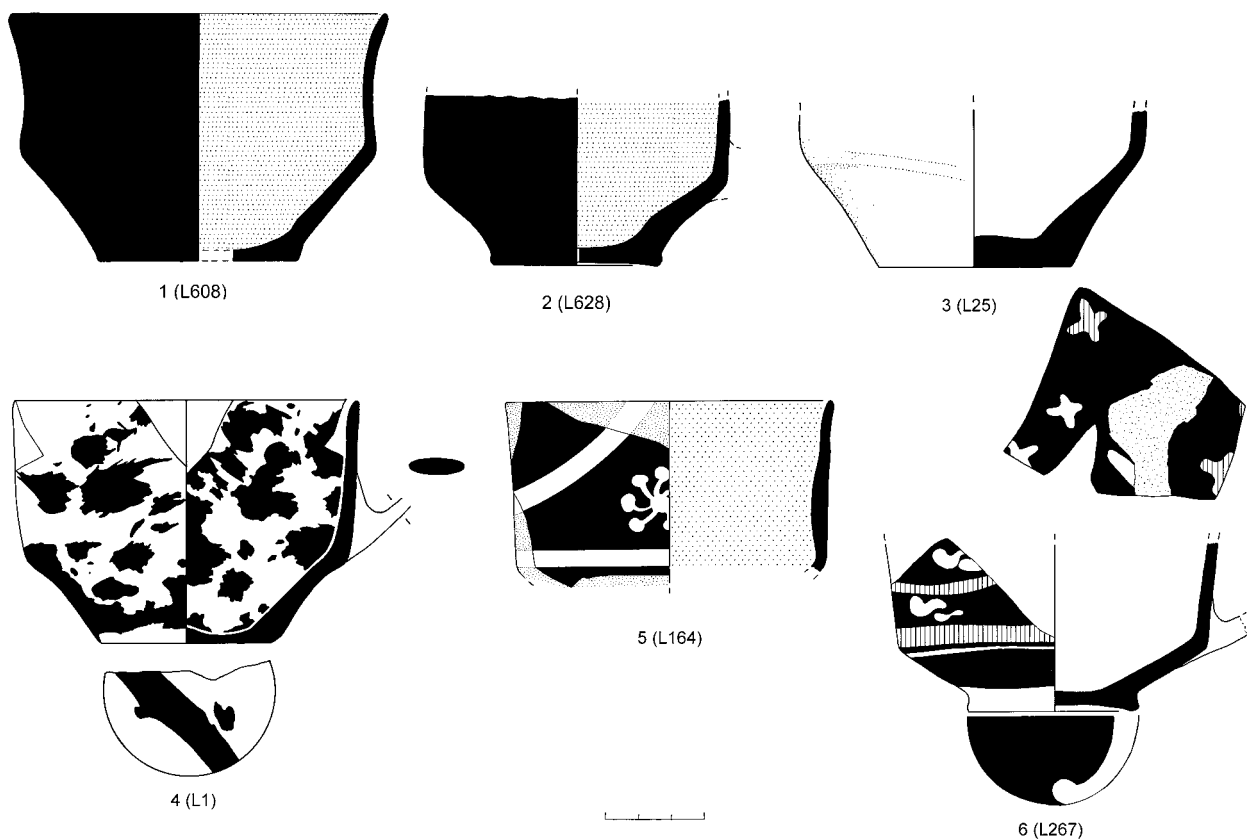


Fig. 1. Standard carinated cups in monochrome (1–2); rough burnished (3); spatter (4); white-on-dark (5); and polychrome (6) wares.

Group A at Knossos; Andreou's Malia South Houses and Mochlos House D-Vasiliki House B groups; Dawkins' earliest G3 deposit, and the earliest levels in trench EU89 outside Building 7 at Palaikastro.⁵ Three important deposits, published after my initial 2007 report had gone to press, level 9 of H3 at Palaikastro, and soundings in the area of Magazine A (Deposit A) and the Southwest House at Knossos (Deposit B), provide interesting parallels that should allow us to begin to define precisely what constitutes this ceramic phase in eastern Crete, and to note its similarities and differences with contemporary deposits in central Crete.⁶

In comparing the Lakkos forms to contemporary material from central Crete, we can say that true hemispherical cups are absent, and straight-sided cups are extremely rare, with most examples looking like large one-handed conical cups. Straight-sided cups are of course common at Knossos in MM IB, while tumblers and conical cups are perhaps rarer in most contexts until MM IIA.⁷ The

scarcity of true hemispherical and straight-sided cups in the Lakkos might suggest a distinctive, albeit negative, characteristic of the phase in eastern Crete, although examples of both do appear in both Chi 1 (MM IA) and H3 level 9 (MM IB) deposits at Palaikastro. Such vessels types are, however, commonplace in MM IIA. The true beveled cup, on the other hand, is a standard East Cretan MM IB form, and the conical cup, as at Phaistos, probably served the role of the Knossian footed goblet.⁸ The standard carinated cup (Fig. 1), a clear development of the MM IA angular cup, is distinctive and may turn out to be a period-specific type. It has straight, or only slightly concave, tall and short

⁵ Haggis 2007, 749–55.

⁶ Knappett & Collar 2007; Macdonald & Knappett 2007; see also discussion in Caloi 2009, 415–6, on Phase B at Phaistos.

⁷ Compare for example Macdonald & Knappett's (2007) Deposits A, B and D.

⁸ Knappett & Collar 2007, 171; Caloi 2009, 415.

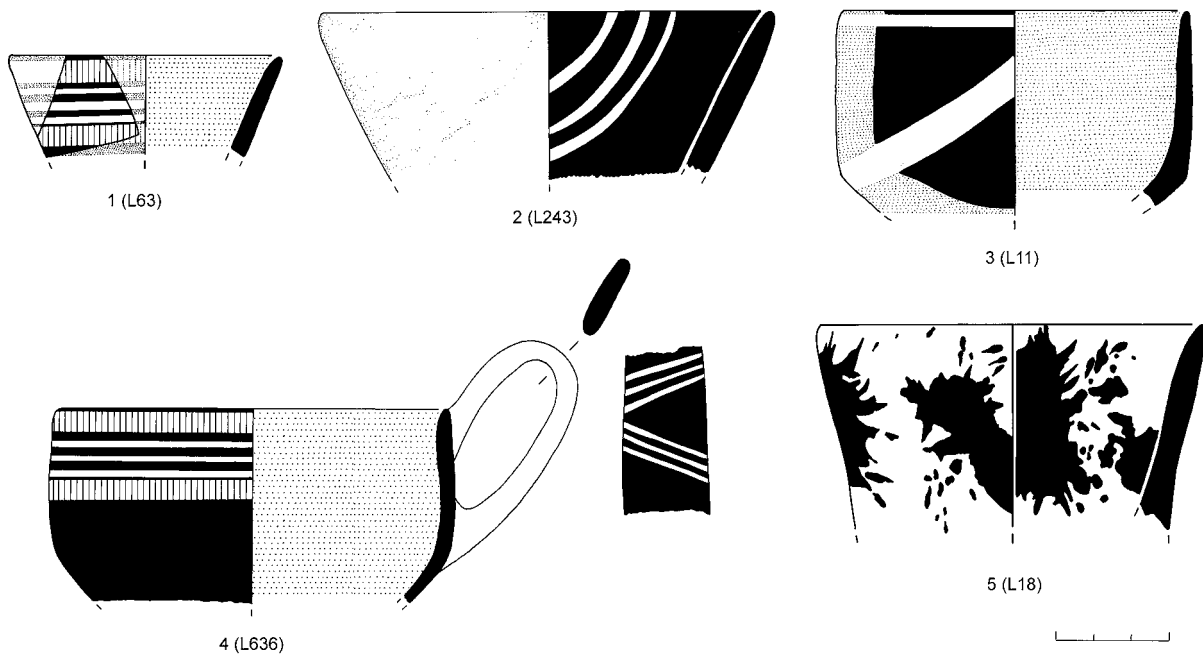


Fig. 2. EM III (2) and MM IA (1) tumblers; MM IA proto-carinated cups (3–4); possible MM IA (5) conical cup.

rims, normally with a flat, articulated, or off-set base. There are good parallels from stratified MM IB deposits at Palaikastro (H3 level 9) and at Knossos in deposits in the area of the Southwest Houses and southwest front of the palace.⁹ A careful study of this shape might lead us to see it as a type fossil for MM IB, with varieties generally approximating in profile MacGillivray's Types 3 and 4 from the Early Chamber beneath the West Court Group.¹⁰ Ilaria Caloi has also noticed the shape, emphasizing links between the Lakkos examples and those from B1 and B2 groups from Phaistos. She is hesitant to see any other tangible links,¹¹ but there may be more connections with the Phaistos deposits, such as baggy-spouted jars, globular bridge-spouted jars, and tumblers, as well as a range of polychrome decorative motifs, such as vertical and diagonal stripes and disc rosettes. The remainder of the main fine ware shapes in the Lakkos – round cups, tumblers, baggy jugs, bridge-spouted jars, and saucers – compare easily with contemporary forms from Knossos.

There are decisive formal parallels between the Petras Lakkos and deposits Chi 1 and H3 at Palaikastro, recently published by Knappett and Collar in the BSA. The publication of the Lakkos and H3 deposits now present sizable assemblages, providing

a starting point for reconstructing the details of a MM IB ceramic phase in East Crete. In Chi 1 there are good parallels for Lakkos MM IA forms such as white-on-dark and polychrome angular cups and tumblers; the presence of spatter ware in Chi 1 suggests that some hand-built forms in the Lakkos could be earlier than MM IB (Fig. 2:5).¹² While individual sherds in the Lakkos are arguably EM III (Fig. 2:2) and MM IA (Fig. 2:1, 3–4), they are on the whole rare and I am reluctant to assign all of the protocarinated cups, simple white and polychrome banding on tumblers, and roughly-shaped coil-built forms squarely to MM IA, preferring to consider the possibility of an early MM IB date. Alternatively, it is possible that these late Prepalatial vessels survived in actual use, or represent material belonging to the lowest levels of the pit, as it intruded on late Prepalatial levels. Regardless of the actual date of these early looking sherds, the forms in the Lakkos assemblage seem to reflect back on

⁹ Knappett & Collar 2007, 171, figs. 18.97–8, 22; Macdonald & Knappett 2007, figs. 3.3, 3.6.212.

¹⁰ MacGillivray 1998, 94; cf. MacGillivray 2007, 116–8.

¹¹ Caloi 2009, 416.

¹² Knappett & Collar 2007, 158, fig. 6.

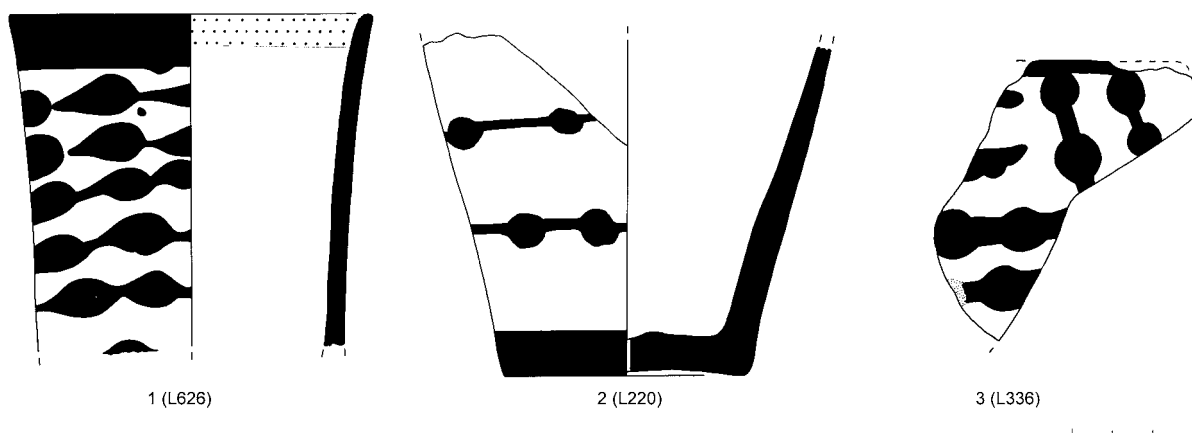


Fig. 3. Seaweed style or *capsules d'algues*: tumbler? (1); jug (2); bridge-spouted jar (3).

and interpret Prepalatial types, with very few basic shapes – such as the beveled cup and some forms of carinated cup – being conceptually new in MM IB.¹³

Turning to MM IB at Palaikastro, the H3 Level 9 deposit mirrors the Lakkos in virtually every detail, with the exception of rough-burnished ware, which is not present in the pottery selected at Palaikastro.¹⁴ It is probably important that H3 Level 9 is also a deep fill deposit lying to the north and outside the buildings of Block B.¹⁵ The formation processes of substantial MM IB deposits – the attraction of material into fills or pits on the exterior of buildings – may ultimately prove to be a pattern related to use or depositional contexts, resulting from communal activities in exterior spaces, and significant phases of rebuilding. I will discuss this in more detail below.

The H3 Level 9 pottery is nearly identical to that of the Lakkos in the range of shapes and decorations: white-on-dark, polychrome, and monochrome wares were principally selected, and typical features include woven style designs, such as diagonal red and white stripes.¹⁶ Spatter ware is present at Palaikastro in both MM IA and IB, but is less apparent than in the Lakkos. While this may be the result of a selection bias, the ware is also evidently a local Petras creation. Some interesting parallels between the assemblages include white-on-dark speckled ware used for tumblers, which we can now place definitively before MM IIA, and the alternating floral style.¹⁷ Also a kelp-like sea-weed style in dark-on-light ware appears in both the H3 level 9 and Lak-

kos groups, in the latter for jars, jugs and cups (Fig. 3); this peculiar style of decoration is also found in foundation deposits of Quartier Mu.¹⁸ An interesting form appearing in the H3 level 9 deposit and a regular feature of polychrome ware in the Lakkos (Fig. 4), is a tall distinctively s-shaped, carinated cup.¹⁹ Finally, noticeably lacking in the selected H3 assemblage, but I think present in Dawkins' G3 deposit, is the thick polished brown ware, which is probably equivalent to rough-burnished ware, a significant ware group in the Lakkos.²⁰

What is remarkable about the pottery from the Lakkos, and now the material from H3 level 9 at Palaikastro, is the overall stylistic diversity. This complex array and juxtaposition of decorative wares might be a characteristic of MM IB, perhaps in contrast to the monochromatic character of MM IIA, and tendencies of simplification, standardization, or stylistic rationing in MM IA and MM IIA.²¹ The question remains as to why this diversity exists, and how it relates to social practices of production

¹³ See Haggis 2007, 753, 770, on the Prepalatial character of MM IB.

¹⁴ Haggis 2007, 739, 754.

¹⁵ Knappett & Collar 2007, 168–9.

¹⁶ Knappett & Collar 2007, 170–1.

¹⁷ Knappett & Collar 2007, 170.

¹⁸ Knappett & Collar 2007, 171, fig. 20; Haggis 2007, 743.

¹⁹ Knappett & Collar 2007, 171, fig. 18.96.

²⁰ Haggis 2007, 739.

²¹ Contrast H3 level 8 and level 9 deposits at Palaikastro (Knappett & Collar 2007, 178–9).

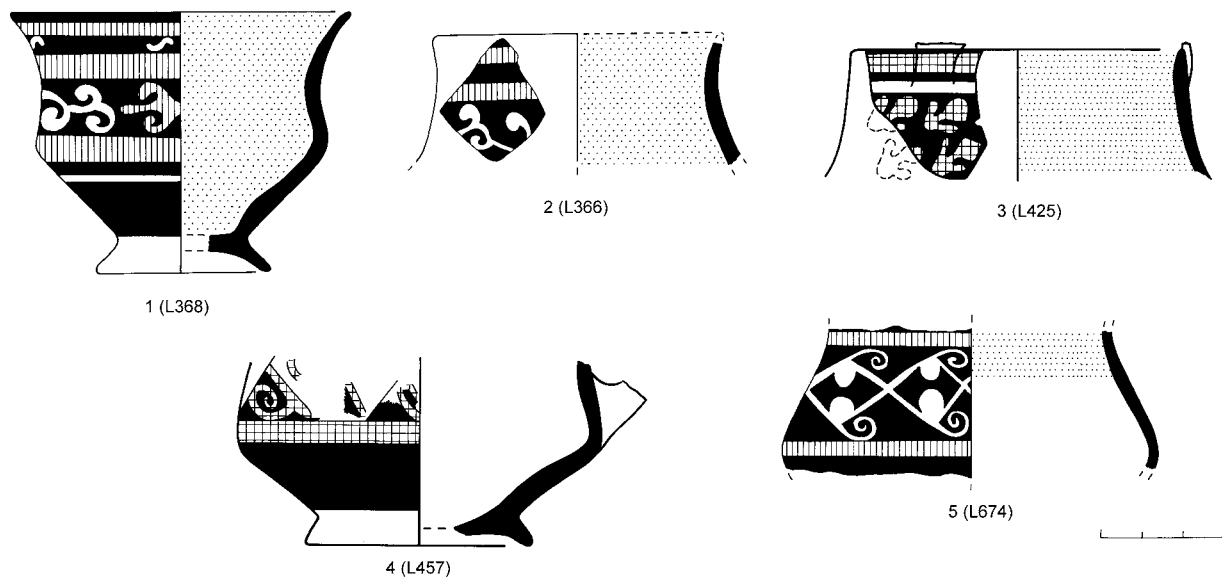


Fig. 4. Polychrome S-shaped carinated cups

and consumption. It has been recognized that critical phase transitions, periods of sociopolitical reorganization, correlate to material innovation and stylistic novelties, the competitive proliferation of symbolic attributes, and ceramic diversity.²² I have argued before that MM IB is one such phase of sociopolitical restructuring, and that the decorative pottery indicates an intensification of stylistic interaction, a dynamic and exuberant experimentation with styles of pottery, with the expressed purpose of creating distinctly different pots, and indeed sets or groups of table wares, that served to articulate the horizontal and vertical differentiation of their users in specific feasting or drinking ceremonies.

A central problem in characterizing assemblages will be in trying to visualize patterns of primary use derived from secondary contexts or notional “discard” situations, which is often the case with MM IB. The interpretation of the activities themselves will depend upon qualifying and modeling the specific function of forms in their systemic contexts. A step in this general direction is suggested by Macdonald and Knappett in analyses of deposits in the southwest area outside the palace at Knossos; they have used the interpretive term “intermediate”, as a way of broadly qualifying something as being different from “non-palatial,” or completely “domestic” or “palatial”.²³ That

said, our reconstruction of taphonomy is as much an interpretive process as is the formal definition of systemic or behavioral contexts; normally it involves the assessment of formation processes as determining primary (*de facto*) or secondary (*post de facto*) contexts, stratigraphic events, or conditions. In the case of the Lakkos, the eponymous label – terms such as “dump” or “fill” or “secondary deposit” – are descriptive and qualitative, meretriciously limiting our perspective on the range of possible behaviors that might have resulted in its actual formation. The analysis of context, however, requires consideration of the physical condition of cultural material and matrix, the chronological and formal interrelationships among artifacts of various types and styles, and perhaps above all the act of discard as a deliberate process of deposition and primary behavior. This is say, disuse, destruction, discard, burial, and fill formation, are themselves important parts of the primary use-life of artifacts, involving ritual acts and social actions that may preserve a palimpsest of origins, actors, and activities, while crystallizing and codifying memories of the event.

²² E.g., Clark & Blake 1994, 28–30; Wenke 1997, 48.

²³ Macdonald & Knappett 2007, 165–7; cf. 174.

Stylistic complexity and patterns of consumption

I argued in 2007 that the stylistic diversity present in the Lakkos – especially white-on-dark, polychrome, spatter, rough burnished, and monochrome wares – represents different stylistic groups in parallel ranges of shapes, suggesting the apposition of wares, visibly juxtaposed in contexts of communal consumption, and containing or embodying symbolic markers of social identity by their users.²⁴ The extreme stylistic variation on a communal scale, that is, a large number of ware groups with visually distinctive (and distinctly different) attributes, suggested strongly horizontal variability; if taken as social messaging devices in original or final display and use contexts, the wares could reflect juxtaposition of users or groups of users of equal or contested rank in performative contexts.

By way of contrast, a clear qualitative and quantitative hierarchy of goblets in the MM IB Deposit A in Early Magazine A at Knossos presented a textbook case of vertical stylistic variability, suggesting to the excavators an instance of patron–role feasting, perhaps in a courtyard on the outside of the south front of the palace.²⁵ The Lakkos shows very little evidence of such marked hierarchical divisions, though the visual complexity and redundancy of designs in white-on-dark and polychrome groups could indicate qualitative and diacritical hierarchies, or assertive and individualizing motives of display. There may also be a weak hierarchical differentiation between the technical quality and decorative elaboration of white-on-dark and polychrome wares and the other ware groups.

Furthermore, I suggested that painted and incised motifs on the pottery, such as hieroglyphic signs, and nearly all figural and geometric patterns, were transferred across media such as jewelry, figurines, sealstones, and perhaps textiles, to be used as distinguishing symbols in a variety of public or communal activities encouraging or requiring visual display and communication.²⁶ The clearest connection, perhaps because of the abundance and survivability of the media, is between pottery and sealstones. Maria Relaki has recently emphasized the potential

performative function of seals and sealing in Prepalatial ceremonies, indicating both emblematic and assertive functions – and indeed the longevity of motifs and practices into the Protopalatial period.²⁷ Building on Sbonias’s work, a central part of Relaki’s thesis is that the Prepalatial seals in the Mesara form “iconographic clusters” relating to specific communities, and structured relationships between and within corporate groups.²⁸ Turning to Protopalatial seal use at Phaistos, Relaki concludes that “it seems likely, therefore, that the variations and duplications of motifs in tight clusters represent seal-owners with equivalent social or political roles or people with common group affiliations, as was probably also the case in the Prepalatial period.”²⁹ She ultimately argues that these distinct iconographic groups, especially the more conservative motifs, were “commensurate with the existence of specific corporate groups” in the Protopalatial period. Considering the potential functions of symbolic transference,³⁰ the hieroglyphic, figural, and geometric seal motifs in the Lakkos white-on-dark, polychrome, and rough-burnished wares could suggest a similar social-symbolic display in one or more contexts centering on feasting, in which potters produced certain wares and applied specific motifs, making pots for the use of certain individuals, groups, and occasions. This is to say, whatever active role the seal motif played in articulating group identity or status in sealing activities within the cloisters of palace storerooms or pantries might have been translated to a more visible medium among groups on the outside. That is, the symbols were related or transferred to more publically visible contexts of display and inter-group interaction, in courtyard areas directly outside the palace.

A context suggesting a combination of inter-group and intra-group feasting is presented by Militello for rooms of the southwest quarter oppo-

²⁴ Haggis 2007, esp. 755–62.

²⁵ Macdonald & Knappett 2007, 163.

²⁶ Haggis 2007, 762–9.

²⁷ Relaki 2009; 2012.

²⁸ Sbonias 1999; Relaki 2012.

²⁹ Relaki 2012; cf. Sbonias 1999, 40–3.

³⁰ Haggis 2007, 762–9.

site the Lower West Court at Phaistos, and particularly for a room of House C directly opposite the Middle West Court, where a ratio of 1:7 of bridge-spouted jars to cups closely parallels the 1:9 ratio of pouring to drinking vessels in the Lakkos.³¹ Both Lakkos and Phaistos contexts represent a scale of participation clearly beyond what we have modeled for normal or routine household consumption. At Protopalatial Phaistos, however, feasting was diversely structured with large communal gatherings suggested for the House C and L assemblages, and more restrictive or exclusive activities in the South and North Wings.³² That both the Middle and Lower West Courts at Phaistos were used for communal gatherings involving public feasting is clear enough, as evidenced by largely primary deposits of stored vessels in adjacent buildings – a situation echoed by Deposit A in the south front at Knossos.

At Phaistos, a situation possibly more like the Lakkos, is the Strada del Nord deposit, which is a series of five stratified dumps consisting of thousands of MM IB sherds. Todaro connects the wasters in the deposit to pottery production – a public display of ceramic manufacturing in the Upper West Court, in support of ceremonies of consumption in the Middle Court.³³ We might easily imagine House C, if not this production activity as well, provisioning feasts in the Middle Court in the Protopalatial period. The problem of course with the Lakkos is that it is normally considered a secondary deposit, that is, post-de facto refuse. In this sense, it might be more like the Strada del Nord dumps than the pantries of House C, the southwest quarter, or the south front at Knossos. In light of these contexts at Phaistos and Knossos, I have begun to ask whether it is possible to characterize the deposit in systemic terms and to attempt to reconstruct its original primary use context.

The Lakkos assemblage and problems with taphonomy

The character of the pottery in the Lakkos suggests distinctly non-domestic, communal feasting, and ritual activities. While the vast majority of identifiable vessels are cups, at a ratio of 9:1 to pouring

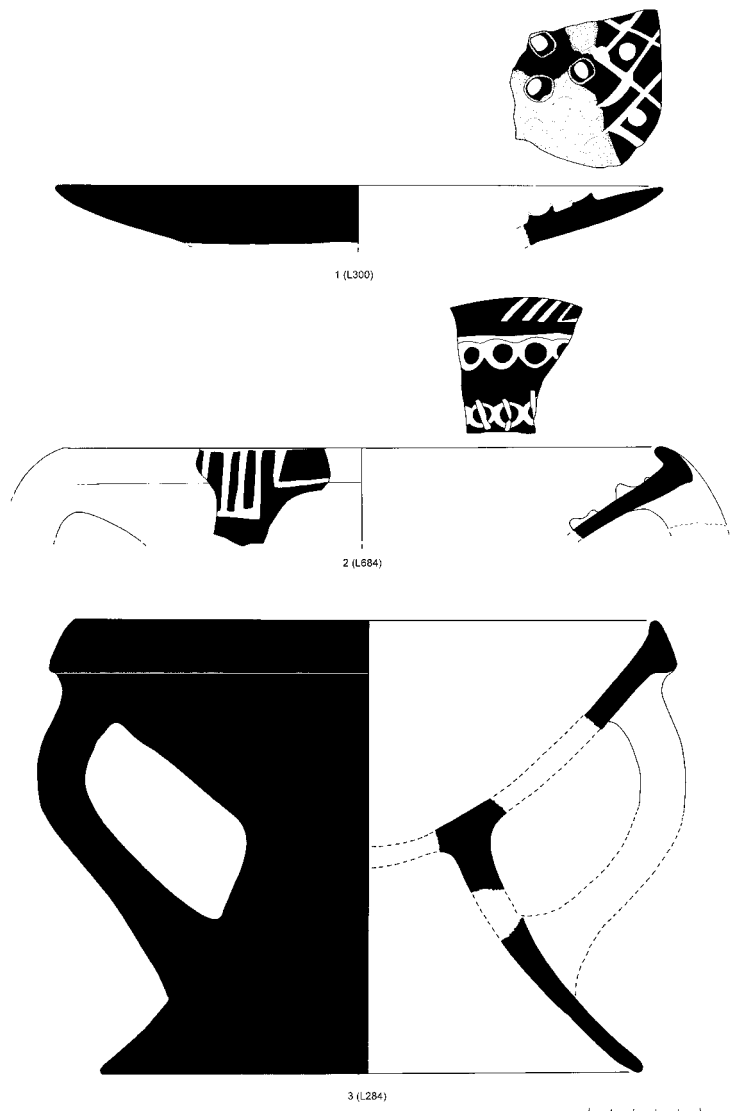


Fig. 5. Fruitstands: white-on-dark (1–2) and dark/red wash (3) ware.

vessels (bridge-spouted and baggy jars, and jugs), even more striking is the ubiquity of fruitstands (Fig. 5), which are scarce in contemporary domestic and palatial assemblages on Crete but make up at least 4% of the total dining and serving assemblage in the Lakkos. Contemporary examples are hard to find. They are present but very rare in the Ja deposit at Kommos (also a Protopalatial fill),³⁴ also a

³¹ Militello 2012; Haggis 2007, 756.

³² Militello 2012.

³³ Todaro 2012.

³⁴ Haggis 2007, 756.

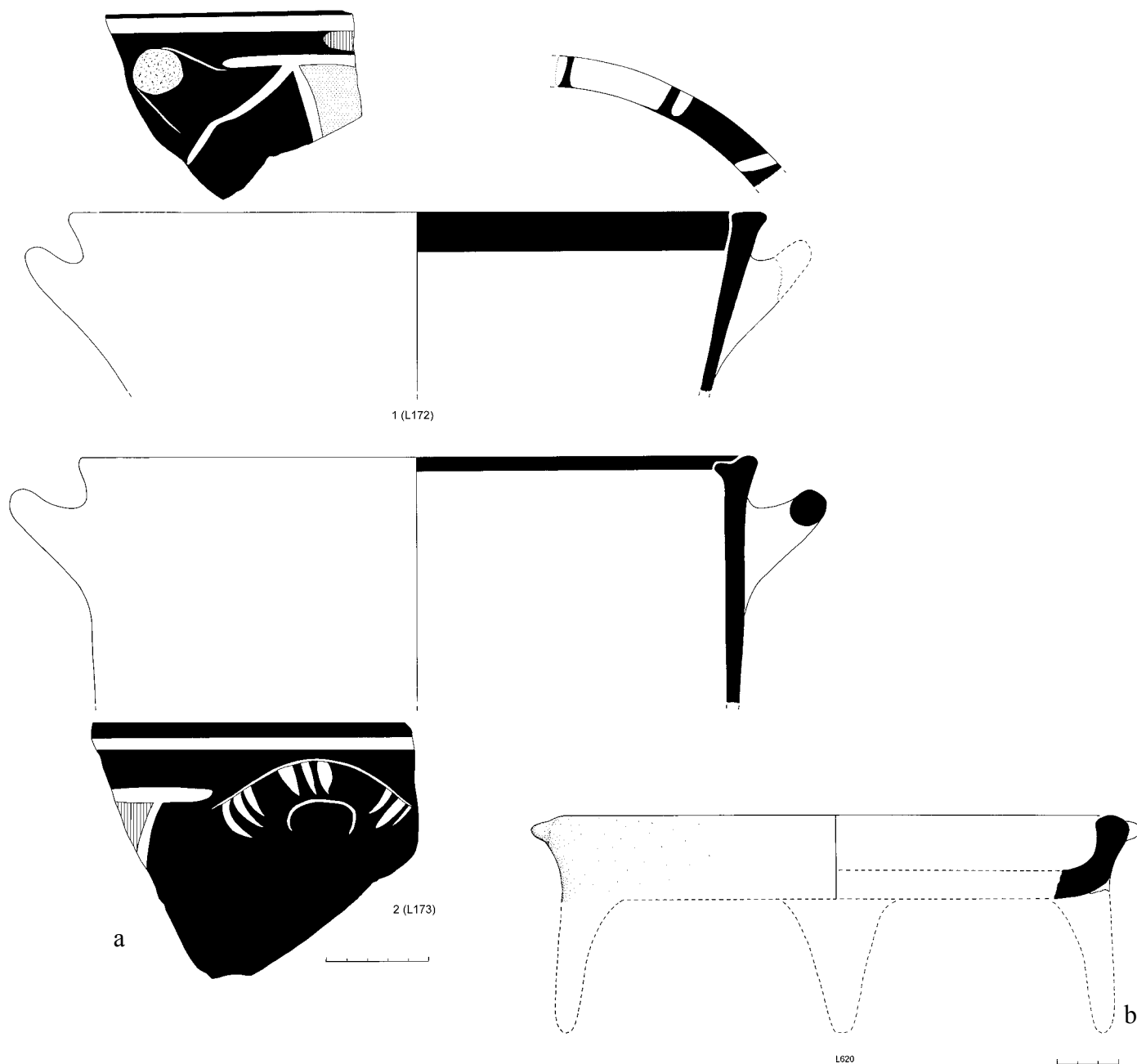


Fig. 6. a) Polychrome *lekanes*; b) Tripod tray.

pedestalled bowl and fruitstand were recovered in the MM IA–B votive pit or feasting assemblage in Room 19 (XIX) in the northwest wing at Phais-tos.³⁵ The consistent presence of fruitstands in the Lakkos samples is striking, given their long devel-opment and history of ritual use in the Prepalatial period, and their rarity in Protopalatial contexts. The standard plain versions, produced exclusively in dark/red wash ware and rough-burnished ware

(Fig. 5:3), are large heavy pedestalled bowls, con-sistent in shape, with a distinctive articulated rim and prominent vertical handles connecting the bowl and foot. They were certainly intended for serving food to a number of diners, and the deeper varieties might have functioned as kraters or bowls

³⁵ Todaro 2009, 127–8.

for serving liquids as well. More elaborate versions in different shapes, produced in polychrome and white-on-dark ware are rare. The white-on-dark versions are clearly special-function vessels, with concentric rows of cupules in the interior of the bowl, suggesting a ritual use, perhaps for portioning offerings not unlike kernoi (Fig. 5:1–2).

Thus the context and condition of the assemblage suggest the debris from communal rituals involving feasting. The impression of the excavator, however, in her earlier reports was that the Lakkos fill represented occupation debris derived from the clearing of elite houses on the hilltop on the occasion of the construction of the palace, which was then dumped into this spot in Sector III. In this scenario, the acts of destruction and redeposition would have been not only responses to the exigencies or practical concerns of rebuilding at the site, but important processes of reshaping the cultural, and in this case, palatial, landscape. In my view, Tsipopoulou's proposal for the origins of the Lakkos is particularly attractive, especially in light of recent studies suggesting that a critical social group in Minoan society was the household writ large: an economically and socially complex kinship corporate group, operating and replicated on various scales, and materialized in distinctive agglomerative plans of houses that contained ritual apparatuses and attached craft specialists.³⁶ In light of this work, it might be useful to think of a series of large houses at Petras in MM IB, proximate or co-residential agglutinative compounds,³⁷ structured in separate neighborhoods, perhaps looking and operating like the houses at Quartier Mu. In such a case, and given that the Lakkos pottery is locally manufactured, could we reconstruct a number of local households, each producing independently (or commissioning the production of) stylistically homogenous drinking and dining vessels for use in both intra- and inter-household communal and ritual contexts? Indeed analyses of kinship-corporate groups have shown that the degree of stylistic homogeneity among artifact assemblages within a household might turn out to be a very useful archaeological correlate of corporate-group boundaries, strength, and coherency.³⁸ But such a scenario is not yet provable given the extensive rebuilding at

Petras in MM IIA, nor is the Lakkos context itself a probative indicator of original systemic context. In short, such a connection between households and differentiation of ceramic styles, while certainly a fascinating possibility, cannot be made yet for MM IB.

Moreover, if the Lakkos represents debris from houses, one might expect a range of artifacts and features reflecting the actual remains of houses, similar perhaps to the MM IA–B *terminus ad quem* and *post quem* deposits at Phaistos: stone tools, querns, stucco fragments and architectural elements.³⁹ One might also expect a preponderance of food and food processing debris, as well as pithoi, bowls, *lekanes*, plain wares, and cooking pots; that is, a greater variety of normal household materials. Pithoi, bowls, *lekanes* and cooking wares are found in the Lakkos, but they are relatively rare. And even the *lekanes*, the most common large serving containers, are normally elaborate in form, and are found represented across the ware groups, suggesting that they should be included among the group-specific sets (Fig. 6a). While normal tripod cookpots are also found, the most prevalent are fragments of large tripod trays made in a very distinctive quartz-quartzite fabric; the smallest is about 25–30 cm in diameter (Fig. 6b). Pithoi are extremely rare and the standard closed shapes in the deposit are hole-mouthed and spouted jars and amphorae in dark/red wash ware.

The condition of the Lakkos pottery might also help us understand the process of deposition. The material is extremely fragmentary, but individual sherds are in good condition, with well-preserved surfaces, edges, and breaks (Fig. 7). That is, they show no evidence of extensive or long-term use, surface erosion, or tread wear normally associated with routine discard, secondary use life or long *post-de facto* conditions. Although complete forms are hard to make up, whole or nearly whole vessels were recoverable (Fig. 7), perhaps indicating

³⁶ Schoep 2002a; Knappett 2009; Driessen 2010; forthcoming; see also Haggis forthcoming on the Prepalatial household structure.

³⁷ Driessen 2010; forthcoming.

³⁸ Hayden & Cannon 1982, 148.

³⁹ Todaro 2009, 127.



Fig. 7. Large fragments of rough burnished (1), white-on-dark (2), spatter (3), and polychrome (4) ware vessels.

that the events of destruction and discard did not involve considerable movement of material or a particularly long span of time. Thus, if we are to imagine an original domestic use context for the pottery, the destruction of such houses must have involved a rather careful and selective destruction and movement of their contents at the time of abandonment, not merely the displacement of discarded household assemblages or occupation debris. Thus, the patterns of wear and breakage give me the impression of a localized event or series of events over a relatively short period, perhaps in an open courtyard or space on the Sector III terrace or someplace nearby.

Given the striking parallels from the south front at Knossos, and the Strada del Nord at Phaistos, we can, however, begin to visualize a MM IB pattern of communal feasting in courts outside palaces. At Petras, though, again, we face a problem of taphonomy. There is no extant palace attributable to MM IB. But at the same time we know far too little about the topography of the site or the houses or other buildings that occupied the site in this phase, that could provide a comfortable archi-

tectural framework in which to contextualize feasting activities. Not dissimilar problems are faced by excavators at Knossos, and perhaps to a much lesser extent at Phaistos.

Possible contexts of consumption

In the past decade or so, we have begun to recognize that the definition of Minoan palaces is conceptually formed, tending to conflate social practices with single stratigraphic contexts, types of features, and architectural forms. That is, we attract data from individual phenomena and sometimes unique conditions or archaeological contexts, into a conceptual picture of the palace, an interpretive framework that dominates the narrative, shaping an idea of organization, structure, and function, through time and space. If we disaggregate notional palatial functions from our materialist view of single abandonment phases or functional categories of material (MM IIB in Protopalatial terms), such as archives and certain architectural forms, and visualize long-term patterns of cultural production,

we might more easily be able to imagine a place for feasting in the area of Sector III at Petras. An analogous situation can be seen at Phaistos as discussed above, where reasonably coherent buildings frame MM IB feasting in west and central courts, and Todaro has emphasized that these same areas had always, since Prepalatial times, been used as open-air gathering places for the performance of communal rituals. The archaeological analogies of Phaistos and Knossos are thus significant and worth exploring further in respect to Petras, where the Lakkos could reflect one example of a pattern of palatial feasting at a crucial phase-transition visible across the island.

While the Phaistos west wing was constructed in MM IB, a process marked by the destruction of MM IA buildings and the creation of ritual foundation and fill deposits, it is important to remember that it also went through a dramatic monumentalization, or rearticulation of its form in MM II. In my view, MM IIA also marks the construction of Quartier Mu, and I am of course partial to Macdonald and Knappett's interpretation of an original MM IB façade at Knossos, radically rebuilt in MM IIA.⁴⁰ Similar to Phaistos,⁴¹ rebuilding at Knossos included a MM IB dedicatory pit in the blocked entrance in Magazine II, and the new paving that sealed MM IB pottery in the MM IIA south front of the palace. That is to say, the practice of building or more likely rebuilding, in MM IIA constitutes a stratigraphic horizon, an island-wide process and phase transition. In sorting out ceramic chronologies, the MM IB-IIA transition may be obscuring or confusing our efforts to understand the formal characteristics and original use contexts of MM IB pottery; on the other hand, the condition of MM IB deposits might help us to understand the transition, that is, the cultural processes involved in reconstructing and transforming Protopalatial palaces. Of course at the other end of the Protopalatial sequence, the continuity of use of buildings

through MM II, and the destructions in MM IIB, have probably obscured the neat stratigraphic identity of MM IIA in many areas of the island, which I think may be a bigger chronological problem altogether.

The building of the palace at Petras in MM IIA, or in my view, the reconfiguration of the palatial landscape, would place the event along with major changes at Knossos and Phaistos and perhaps Malia. It is possible, but not provable, that the pottery and other artifacts in the Lakkos are the remains of a series of communal rituals, feasts, or other events before or contemporary with a palatial reconstruction phase. The condition and chronology of the deposit do however point to a transitional *ad quem* date, similar to that postulated for late MM IA deposits at Phaistos at the very start of MM IB,⁴² that is, the same kind of event or change, but a phase earlier than Petras.

In conclusion, the Lakkos represents a period of intensified communal feasting and public ceremony. The great diversity of wares is dissimilar to what we see in Deposit A outside of the south front of the palace at Knossos, the Lakkos demonstrating less sharply vertical, diacritical, or patron-role feasting. In contrast, the assemblage seems to be the result of a series of meetings of local elites, probably configured in corporate affiliations, displaying, and ritually breaking and discarding, distinctive banqueting equipment just before the MM IIA palace was constructed. In their forms, as parts of distinct ware groups, the pots embodied visual symbols that acknowledged and projected group, sub-group, and even individual assertive identities.

⁴⁰ Macdonald & Knappett 2007, 172.

⁴¹ Todaro 2009, 127–8.

⁴² Todaro 2009.

Bibliography

Bibliographic abbreviations

AASOR – *Annual of the American School of Oriental Research*

ActaArch – *Lov Acta archaeologica Lovanensia*

AJA – *American Journal of Archaeology*

AJPA – *American Journal of Physical Anthropology*

AR – *Archaeological Reports*

ArchDelt – *Archaeologikon Deltion*

ArchEph – *Archaiologike Ephemeris*

ASAtene – *Annuario della Scuola archeologica di Atene e delle Missioni italiane in Oriente*

BAR-IS – *British Archaeological Reports, International Series*

BASOR – *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*

BCH – *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique*

BCH Suppl. – *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique. Supplément*

BÉFAR – *Bibliothèque des Écoles françaises d'Athènes e de Rome*

BICS – *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies of the University of London*

BSA – *Annual of the British School at Athens*

BSPF – *Bulletin de la Société préhistorique française*

CHIC – Olivier, J.-P. & L. Godart 1996. *Corpus hieroglyphicarum inscriptionum Cretae* (Études Crétoises 31), Athens and Rome.

CMS – *Corpus der minoischen und mykenischen Siegel*, Berlin 1964–2000; Mainz 2002–

GORILA – Olivier, J.-P. & L. Godart 1976–1985, *Recueil des inscriptions en linéaire A*, 1–5 (Études Crétoises 21, 1–5), Paris.

CretChron – *Kretika Chronika*

CurrAnthr – *Current Anthropology*

JAnthArch – *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology*

JAS – *Journal of Archaeological Science*

JMA – *Journal of Mediterranean Archaeology*

JPR – *Journal of Prehistoric Religion*

Kentro – *Kentro: The Newsletter of the INSTAP Study Center for East Crete*

OpAth – *Opuscula Atheniensia*

Prakt – *Praktika tes en Athenais Archaiologikes Etaireias*

SIMA – *Studies in Mediterranean Archaeology*

SkrAth – *Skrifter utgivna av Svenska Institutet i Athen*

WorldArch – *World Archaeology*

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