Studi di Archeologia Cretese VIII
Depositi ceramici del Medio Minoico III da Festòs e Haghia Triada

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Abstract

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This volume deals with the Middle Minoan (MM) III pottery deposits from Phaistos and Ayia Triada, and has several purposes: firstly, to provide the evidence for a reassessment of the chronological sequence of the MM III in southern Crete; secondly, to add ceramic data to the scanty architectural evidence from both sites during this crucial period; thirdly, to clarify the key passage from MM III to LM IA by presenting specific deposits that support the MM IIIA and IIIB terminologies used in this volume; fourthly, to enlarge the ceramic *corpus* already embodied by substantial data published from Kommos.

In spite of all the excavations that have been made in Crete, recent works have stressed the difficulty of stratigraphically or stylistically defining MM III. Attempts to distinguish between MM IIIA and MM IIIB have been ambiguous, and many scholars have thus preferred to reject the traditional divisions of the period proposed by Arthur Evans and Duncan Mackenzie in 'The Palace of Minos'. Nonetheless, the sequence has still not been defined for the increasingly popular term 'MM IIIB/LM IA transitional', thus leaving uncertain the passage from MM IIIB to LM IA. The difficulties lie in establishing whether any division is possible within the MM III material, and whether there is any chronological distinction between MM III deposits at the end of the period, which has been called 'MM IIIB/LM IA transitional' by several different scholars. Such chronological difficulties reflect the fact that the condition, form and status of the palace and settlements at this time are uncertain, and also emphasize the problem of attempting to extend local ceramic sequences to all of Crete, without paying sufficient attention to the regionalism that affected ceramic production during the first stage of the Neopalatial period. Indeed, the debate has so far focused almost exclusively on north-central Crete, largely because of the comparative lack of pertinent published material from the other regions of Crete, in particular the western Mesara. In fact, this part of Crete contains a rich series of MM III deposits, and it is one of the few areas of Crete that possesses a complete range of ceramic evidence, as palatial, private and funerary contexts are all represented.

The ceramic deposits examined in the present volume come from the archaeological excavations carried out by L. Pernier and D. Levi at Phaistos, and by V. La Rosa at Haghia Triada. In particular, this study incorporates research carried out by the author for his PhD in Aegean Prehistory at Udine University, during 2000-2002, on the unpublished MM III material from the Chalara quarter at Phaistos, and for a Master's research Degree at the Italian Archaeological School in Athens on the MM III deposits from the NE sector of Ayia Triada. However, this volume offers a systematic reassessment of the entire MM III pottery assemblages of Phaistos published by Levi and those from Ayia Triada presented in preliminary reports by V. La Rosa.

This study consists of six chapters. C**hapter 1** discusses chronology and terminology. The first part deals with relative and absolute chronologies (1.1). Although the MM III period has never been securely dated, an investigation of old and new data offers insights for a better comprehension of the period and its length. As for the relative chronology, the chapter discusses the validity of the main extra-Aegean correlations (the alabaster lid with the cartouche of the Hyksos King Khyan, the jug from el-Lisht, the Old Syrian cylinder seal found in the lower level of the burial pit in a chamber tomb at Poros/Katsambas, the SIP seal from a MM IIIB-LM IA level from *Quartier Nu* at Malia, the lapis lazuli seal from the *Initiatory Area* of the *NW Lustral Basin* at Knossos), but it concludes that they are not particularly helpful. Further correlations outside Crete, though not solid, come from Egypt and the Levant (*table 1*). The pottery fragments from Tell el-Dabᶜa (Area F, Stratum d/1 - Phase G/4), Byblos (levée X), Kharji, Tel Hazor (Area C), Tel Ashkelon are examined, but they do little to solve the correlation with MM III, being more at home with MM II and thus offering no more than a *terminus post quem*. However, the following preliminary conclusions are obtained: (1) the transition between MM

IIB and MM IIIA can be placed at the beginning of the XIII Egyptian dynasty; (2) MM IIIA is later than Phase G/4 at Tell el-Dabᶜa and coincides with MB IIA (Bietak) or MB I (Dever) in the Levant; (3) MM IIIB can coincide with the beginning of the XVIIth century BC and is contemporaneous to Phase F at Tell el-Dabᶜa (MB II A-B) – transition MB I/II for Dever – and/or to Phase E/3, which marks the beginning of MB IIB (Bietak) or MB II initial (Dever).

After discussing further correlations with the Levant, this study suggests the following conclusions: (1) the MM IIB ceramic fragments from Tel Ashkelon can be related to Tell el-Dabᶜa (Phase G/4); (2) MM II is largely contemporary to the Karum Ib period, whereas MM IIIA should be either later or partially coincident with it, if one agrees with the recent prolongation of the Karum Ib period beyond 1750 BC (Veenhof); (3) MM IIIB is partly contemporary to the beginning of Phase VII at Alalakh (c. 1700 BC), but the destruction of Alalakh VII should be placed at the end of the XVIIth century; (4) MM III lies in the MB IIA mature phase and initial MB IIB in the Levant.

As far as the absolute chronology is concerned, this chapter examines the recent radiocarbon dates covering the early LM IA period. In particular the sets of measurements are provided by the samples from Kommos for the MM IIIA and from Kommos and Trianda/Rhodes for the MM IIIB-LM IA. The conclusions drawn from the data contrast with the traditional 'low' Aegean chronology and the possibility to extend the MM III period between the middle of the XVIIIth century and the first part of the XVIIth, though it probably did not reach the 1650 BC.

Correlations with the Greek Mainland and the Cyclades, as well as the West Anatolian coast and North Aegean are also discussed. The following synchronisms are suggested (*table 2*): (1) MM IIIA (and in part MM IIB) corresponds to Period V at Ayia Irini, Phase II-iii at Phylakopi, Phase C at Akrotiri, Ceramic Phase J at Kolonna/Aegina, Deposit δ at Kastri/Kythera; (2) in the Mainland MM IIIA shows similarities with Deposit ϰ (Area III) at Nichoria, Phases I-II at Ayios Stephanos, Lerna Phase V.5, and Phases II and III at Argos/Aspis; (3) MM IIIB does not seem to be documented in the Cyclades, though this issue still remains debated: (a) the existence of a possible gap between Period V and VI at Ayia Irini is unclear; (b) there is evidence for an interruption after Phase II-iii at Phylakopi; (c) the passage from Phase C to LM IA at Akrotiri is still questioned, as Phase D shows non-stratified levels with mixed MM IIIA and MM IIIB pottery; (4) MM IIIB on the Mainland corresponds to Deposit λ (Area V) at Nichoria, Phase III at Ayios Stephanos (though with LM IA elements), the final phases of Period V at Lerna (Area D, Lerna V.6-7), whereas Phase IV at Argos/Aspis corresponds to both MM IIIB and LM IA. Finally, at Kastri/Kythera MM IIIB is largely coincident with Deposits ε-ζ.

The second part of the first chapter deals with *terminologies* (1.2). It is argued that many aspects of the intricate debate about the definition and division of MM III arise from confusion in applying competing terminologies to pottery. During his PhD research (2000-2002) the author had the opportunity of investigating the MM III deposits from Phaistos to examine the problem of the MM III terminology and suggested the introduction of the following labels: *MM III early*, *mature* and *late* (Girella 2003a). Afterwards (Girella 2005a, 2007), the author returned to the old terminology of MM IIIA and IIIB. This subdivision is used in the present volume, and reflects the former one as *MM III early* and *mature* in fact correspond to MM IIIA and *MM III late* to MM IIIB.

As far as the general debate on MM III is concerned, the current opinions can be summed up as follows: (1) MM III is a whole period without substantial subdivision; (2) a chronological distinction between MM III and a final stage labelled MM IIIB/LM IA transitional or Early LM IA. More recently, however, there has been a sense of unease with the transitional phase. At a number of sites (Knossos, Archanes, Kommos, Phaistos, Palaikastro) certain scholars have chosen not to use the transitional term, while others (S. Hood, C. Macdonald, L. Bernini, C. Knappett, E. Hatzaki) have pointed out the existence of two phases (IIIA and IIIB) not only stylistically, but also stratigraphically and architecturally.

In the western Mesara, the stratigraphic sequence of Phaistos has been the subject of a great deal of discussion, since Doro Levi produced a new historical sequence, quite different to that proposed by Evans for Knossos. In order to attain a substantial unity in the succession of connected building periods and pottery styles, D. Levi had presented his *IIIrd protopalatial phase* as an homogeneous building phase both in the palace, where *phase III* pottery was scarcely attested, and in the settlement. Since both

the structures and the context had been largely removed by the constructors of the second palace, the excavations in the area beyond the palace and the Kamilari tomb allowed the recovery of rich and homogeneous MM III pottery deposits, which strengthened the lines of his thought. The rich series of Levi's *phase III* pottery thus appeared to comprise a single horizon of deposits, with the consequence that these have been pulled in earlier or later directions by different parallels. In recent years, F. Carinci has produced several contributions devoted to MM III where the period remained undistinguished (Carinci 1983, 1989, 1999). Thanks to the new research program at Phaistos from 2000 onwards, this scholar had the opportunity to re-examine the issue and suggested the possibility of differentiating the *IIIrd protopalatial phase* in different stages (Carinci 2001).

Recent excavations of the other two sites have greatly expanded the number of MM III deposits: the new cycle of excavations at Ayia Triada (begun by V. La Rosa in 1977) has brought to light a substantial series of MM III deposits, which have shown the existence of a later stage of MM III. The excavation programme of Kommos has resulted in a fine publication of a large quantity of MM III pottery by P. Betancourt (1990), then expanded thanks to the study of the architectural phases by J. Wright (1996), and then followed by the thorough analysis of Protopalatial and Neopalatial pottery deposits by A. Van de Moortel (1997). This *corpus* is further extended by the new publication of Neopalatial deposits from the pottery kiln (Shaw et al. 2001), the Civic Center Area by J. Rutter (2006) and will be completed with the publication of House X (Kommos VI).

The present status of the MM III chronological sequence of the Western Mesara is defined by a series of issues concerning the synchronization of the different ceramic assemblages. The MM III ceramic assemblages from Kommos have been published by P. Betancourt as a unique period, distinguished by a transitional phase at the passage to LM IA (MM IIIB/LM IA transitional); but, recently, the same scholar has come back to a traditional MM IIIA and IIIB distinction. On the other hand, A. Van de Moortel (followed by J. Rutter), on the basis of a revision of the Neopalatial pottery of the Western Mesara, has denied the possibility that a distinction can be made within MM III and has also distinguished three LM IA chronological subphases ("Early", "Advanced", and "Final") along two LM IB subphases ("Early" and "Late").

The present study suggests that it is possible to distinguish two phases within MM III, as well as to understand the passage to LM IA in this region. Previous re-examination of the ceramic deposits from Phaistos has shown that there are some grounds for defining separate MM IIIA and IIIB phases (Girella 2007). Through the combination of stratigraphic and stylistic evidence from Phaistos and Ayia Triada, joined together with Kommos, the distinction in two phases is confirmed and considered valid for the whole south-central area of Crete. As a result of this proposal the unification of terminologies and sequences of these three sites is proposed (*table 3*).

Chapter 2 presents the analysis of the MM III ceramic deposits from Phaistos. This chapter includes the material excavated by L. Pernier and D. Levi that is ordered topographically: Palace (*Deposits 1-4*); Quarter West to Courtyard I (*Deposits 5-7*); Quarter South to the Palace (*Deposits 8-13*); Quarter West to Courtyard LXX (*Deposits 14-16*); External quarters/Acropoli Mediana (*Deposits 17-18*); External quarters/Chalara South (*Deposits 19-27*); External quarters/Chalara North (*Deposits 28-32*). *Deposits 1-18* incorporate the material already published by Pernier and Levi; however, the single contexts are now recomposed by presenting a brief archaeological and stratigraphical description of the context followed by the typologically ordered ceramic *corpus* (2.2.3). *Deposits 19-32* refer to Chalara quarter: they have been studied analytically with an extended catalogue included in Appendix III.

The aim of this chapter is twofold, as it intends to reconstruct the depositional processes of single contexts and their original composition (2.2.1-2.2.2). The presumed lack of stratigraphic and contextual data has made it impossible to construct a chronological framework for the pottery assemblages. The rich series of Levi's phase III pottery appeared, in fact, to comprise a single horizon of deposits, with the consequence that these have been pulled in earlier or later directions by different parallels. However, the investigation of single ceramic contexts combined with typological analysis has allowed an inner sequence of the entire material to be presented. Moreover, the deposits presented here – both primary and secondary – have homogeneous characteristics as far as their composition and formation

processes are concerned. These last points are also used to evaluate the typological aspects and to match them with the single depositional process and the wider chronological framework.

The stratigraphic situation of the analyzed deposits is: in the palace the MM IIIA foundation deposit of room 50 (*Deposit 3*) was discovered under the alabaster slabs of the Second Palace. The MM IIIA floor deposit of room 18 (*Deposit 1*) was stratified below a previous LM IB layer. *Deposit 2* was a fill dumped in a lustral basin, below room 70 of the Second Palace. On the NE area of the palace, another complex of buildings was explored by Pernier. Only the central sector (room 103) was modified in LM I, while the eastern and western blocks were in use and abandoned during the MM III. The scant stratigraphic information does not allow us to clearly interpret the deposit of room 101 (i.e. floor deposit, collapsed deposit, fill?) (*Deposit 4A*). While the pottery assemblages from rooms 102 and 104 belong to floor deposits (*Deposits 4B, D*).

Two main areas were intensely occupied in the settlement during MM III. The homogeneous deposit from the North room of the *Bastione Ovest* was a fill associated with the construction of an LM I house (*Deposit 5A*). A little to the south, a MM IIIA floor level was represented in the small room CIV (*Deposit 5B*), which was connected with a new MM III building East of *Bastione Ovest*. The *Casa a Sud della Rampa* (rooms LXXXVI-XCIII, XCVI), connecting the lower and the upper court, is represented by the basement of a large building that contained two basic bodies of material: the fill dumped after the closing of rooms LXXXVI-LXXXVII (*Deposit 6A*) and the MM IIIA floor deposits of room LXXXVIII-XCIII, XCVI (*Deposits 6B1-7*), covered by stones and slabs that had fallen from upper floors when the house went out of use. Close to this mansion is the material dumped in *Kouloura* III (*Deposit 7*).

An almost complete sequence is documented in the southern area. Underneath LM IA or IB floors are the stratified MM IIIB floor deposits of rooms LXXI, LXXIII (*Deposits 8-10*) and that below Geometric room CC (*Deposit 15*), whereas a fill was found in room LXXIV, near the so-called Rhea Temple. The floor deposit north of the Geometric room was found at the same level, but, in this part, the MM III floor was stratified above an MM IIB level (*Deposit 16*). Likewise, an LM IA fill covered a similar deposit with MM III vases. Underneath the geometric level of room AA were two MM IIIA floor deposits (related to rooms LXXV-LXXVI) (*Deposit 14*). The pottery recovered in the 'House of the SW Slopes' (*Deposit 12*) belongs to a floor deposit. Three other bodies of material come from the Acropoli Mediana: *Deposit 17A*, from a 1955 rescue excavation, provides mixtures of MM II and MM III pottery, while two, no better specified, floor deposits are respectively that from the 1966 excavations (*Deposit 17B*) and that identified on the southern slopes of the same hill in 1969 (*Deposit 18*) west of room CVII. As for the Chalara quarter, two main sectors have been distinguished, according to the preliminary publication. In the southern one *Deposits 20A-D* and *21* are fills recovered below rooms η'-ε'. The dump was pushed into a MM IIB-IIIA building for levelling operations during the construction of a LM I house, and included a great deal of fine pottery, primarily MM IIB and MM IIIA. Likewise, below the Hellenistic rooms x' e z' are three other homogeneous fills (*Deposits 25-27*) that provide a mixture of MM IIIB and LM IA pottery. A mixed chronology is also discernible in *Deposits 19, 24, 22-23*: the first two present contaminations with LM I and LM III re-occupations, while the last ones refer to the construction of rooms β' and ζ' which belonged to a LM IB house (Palio 2001a).

In the northern sector *Deposits 28 A-F* come from the destruction level of a MM IIIA house from which only rooms ι, ϰ, λ and λ^1 survive. The eastern sector of these rooms exhibit evidence of reoccupation in the LM III and Geometric periods; therefore the related deposits (*29-30*) present a mixed composition. Finally, *Deposits 31-32* are two fills recovered in rooms β and γ.

As far as the chronological division into MM IIIA and IIIB is concerned, Phaistos offers the chance of phasing MM IIIA in two stages, as already proposed by F. Carinci and the author a few years ago (Carinci 2001; Girella 2001; 2007). New excavations carried out during 2000 and 2001 in the *Casa a Sud della Rampa*, whose complex and ceramic material were already published to some extent by Levi, offers a combination of architectural and ceramic information which might prove the development in the same context from an early to a mature MM IIIA subphase (La Rosa 2002a). This house can be considered a guide-context, as it demonstrates that the two MM IIIA subphases were not represented

by successive superimposed levels, but rather by architectural changes which were marked, at the beginning and the end, by fine closed ceramic deposits. The most relevant result was the discovery that the house had already been a large seven-room complex in MM IIB (LXXXVI-XCI, XCVI), and that it was simply re-adapted with the addition of more rooms during MM IIIA: two (XCII-XCIII) were added to the southwest; at the same time, two eastern rooms (LXXXVI-LXXXVII) were abandoned and the resulting debris was pushed inside and used for levelling operations covering the earlier MM IIB floor. Observation of the architecture and the stratigraphy has now made it possible to distinguish between different architectural phases, all of them datable within MM IIIA. The most important acquisition is the identification of the layers of preparation and the foundation deposits of four rooms of the house, just after MM IIB (that is, the initial stage of MM IIIA). These basement rooms produced substantial groups of pots abandoned after the collapse of the house at the end of MM IIIA, but it is clear that the archaeological deposits must be understood in light of different formation processes. In the case of rooms LXXXVI and LXXXVII, a great deal of material seems to have been deliberately dumped to fill up these spaces. The deposits from these two rooms belong to an initial stage of MM IIIA. Moreover, the presence of fine tableware and ritual vessels in this fill suggests the deliberate selection of specific types of vessels in the depositional process (perhaps a form of ritual refuse deposition). On the contrary, the well known groups of pots found on the floors of rooms LXXXIX-XCIII represent the destruction deposit of the house at the end of MM IIIA (a mature stage of MM IIIA). After this event, the whole house appears to have been abandoned.

According to the results of the present study, Deposits 1, 3, 5, 6A, 7, 20 A-D, 21 have been assigned to *early MM IIIA*, Deposits 2, 4A-B, 6B1-7, 14, 20 A-D, 28 A-F to *mature MM IIIA*, and Deposits 4B, 8-11, 17-18, 25-27 to *MM IIIB*. On the other hand, Deposits 4B, 17A, 19, 22-24, 29, 30-32 have a mixed MM IIIA and IIIB chronology, while Deposits 15-16 have a mixed composition but they are more at home with MM IIIB.

Deposit 1: is a level stratified below a previous one of LM IB.

Deposit 2: is a fill dumped in a lustral basin, below room 70 (west to room XLIV-38).

Deposit 3: is a closed deposit (foundation deposit) recovered under the alabaster slabs of room 50.

Deposit 4A: is a possible collapsed upper floor deposit recovered in room 101.

Deposit 4B: is a floor deposit from room 102.

Deposit 4C: is the floor deposit of room 103 of LM I.

Deposit 4D: is a floor deposit from room 104.

Deposit 5A: is a homogeneous fill discharged on the northern part of the *Bastione Ovest* with mixed MM IIIA and a few MM IIB and LM IA pots and sherds.

Deposit 5B: is a floor deposit of room CIV.

Deposit 6A: is a homogenous fill discharged to seal rooms LXXXVI-LXXXVII of the *Casa a Sud della Rampa*.

Deposit 6B1-7: are the destruction floor deposits of rooms LXXXVIII-XCIII, XCVI of the *Casa a Sud della Rampa*.

Deposit 7: is a homogeneous secondary deposit (fill) identified inside *Kouloura* III.

Deposit 8: is a floor deposit in room LXXI.

Deposit 9: is a mixed fill with LM IA pottery discharged in room LXXII.

Deposit 10A: is a floor deposit in room LXXIII.

Deposit 10B: is a mixed MM II and MM III fill discharged in the well located NE of room LXXIII.

Deposit 11: is a non-homogeneous level identified in room LXXIV, seriously damaged by operations in Geometric times.

Deposit 12: is a floor deposit recovered in house placed on the SW slopes of the palace hill.

Deposit 13: is a MM III level stratified below a LM IA one.

Deposit 14: is the floor deposit recovered in rooms LXXV-LXXVI below the Geometric room AA.

Deposit 15: is a floor deposit of a room identified below Geometric room CC and stratified below a LM I level.

Deposit 16: is a floor deposit of a room identified north of Geometric room CC and stratified on top of a MM IIB level.

Deposit 17A: is a mixed fill recovered on the *Acropoli Mediana* in 1955 in the area of the Stratigraphical Museum and identified in a space between the fortification wall and a LM IIIA period room.

Deposit 17B: is a floor deposit recovered on the *Acropoli Mediana* in 1966 in the area of storehouse 5.

Deposit 18: is a non-stratified level recovered on the southern slopes of the *Acropoli Mediana* and identified west of room CVII.

The second part of the chapter examines the ceramic deposits from the Chalara quarter (*Deposits 19-32*) (2.3). This part is divided in five sections: after a brief introduction on the history of the excavations carried out by Levi between 1960 and 1964 (2.3.1), a detailed description of the architectural evidence is presented (2.3.2) to which the analysis of the ceramic deposits (2.3.3) and their chronological discussion (2.3.4) are joined. Finally, a last paragraph (2.3.5) is dedicated to the role of Chalara during MM III and its relationships with the Palace.

The composite stratification and occupation of the Chalara quarter on the western slopes of the palace hill has surprisingly consigned this area to a secondary interest, aside from the recent studies on the most visible structures dated to the Hellenistic (Portale 2001) and LM I periods (Palio 2001a). However, the area was inhabited from the Neolithic up to the Late Roman period, with complicated and superimposed terraced dwellings, which had been destroyed and rebuilt several times. As for the MM III period, the reading of notebooks and the direct examination of the depositional patterns of the ceramic material have made it possible to identify the main areas of occupation in this period and to reconstruct several patterns of settlement activity. In the northern sector, surviving rooms dated to MM III by Levi are α, β, and γ below the Geometric A and B. Further east, on a different terrace, the area below Hellenistic rooms d and g appears to have been used several times and seriously modified, with the removal of large parts of the eastern side of a MM III house represented by rooms ι, ϰ, λ-λ[1], excavated between 1962 and 1963. In the southern sector, the major evidence is represented by rooms η'-ε'. In particular, it has been possible to identify an intense occupation activity for this space: it was respectively an open courtyard (η') and one room (ε') of a LM I house, re-occupied in the early Mycenaean period (LM II-IIIA1). On the other hand, the LM I levels stood on an earlier large structure (from which two large orthogonal walls constructed with regular blocks survive) which was reasonably used in MM IIIA. The outline of this structure is not easy to determine as it was blocked on its northern side by the substructures of magazines θ' and ε' of the LM I house.

Analysis of the ceramic deposits (2.3.2) follows the main architectural unities identified, but it is enriched by secondary deposits discovered below LM I structures. Only selected pieces of the full ceramic record are presented in the catalogue of Appendix III.

Deposit 19: is a mixed secondary deposit connected with the Mycenaean occupation of space η' through room M4, the pottery is mixed, mostly MM IIIA.

Deposits 20 A-D: are four rich homogenous fills discharged in a unique operation for filling MM III structures and building the LM I house, below room η'. The pottery is mixed MM II and MM IIIA that is more consistent and shows clear elements of the *early* and *mature* stages of the period. Only a few are of MM IIIB.

Deposit 21: is a homogenous fill with mixed MM IIIA and a few MM IIIB pottery identified below magazine ε' and probably connected with the same operations of Deposits 20 A-D.

Deposit 22: is a mixed MM IIIA and LM IA deposit underneath a Hellenistic space placed north to the northern wall of the LM I house where there was an external space (β').

Deposit 23: is a selection of MM III pottery from space ζ', a possible lustral basin of the LM I house.

Deposit 24: is a mixed MM IIIA and IIIB deposit identified in the NW sector of the LM I house that appears to have been used continuously from MM III down to the Geometric (room A') and Mycenaean periods (rooms M2-3).

Deposit 25: is a mixed MM IIIB and LM IA deposit below Hellenistic room x'.

Deposit 26: is a mixed MM IIIB and LM IA deposit below Hellenistic room i', but the space was used several times and disturbed by Mycenaean room M6 and the fill for the construction of the LM I house to which this deposit refers.

Deposit 27: is a mixed MM IIIB and LM IA deposit below Hellenistic room z'.

Deposit 28 A-F: refer to the MM IIIA house of which only rooms ι, κ, λ-λ^1 survived. Deposits 28 A-B are the floor deposits of room λ-λ^1; 28 C is a fill sandwiched between Hellenistic room g and Minoan κ, whose floor deposit is 28D; 28E is the floor deposit of room ι, whereas 28F collects the material discovered at the door between rooms ι and κ.

Deposits 29-30: are mixed deposits east of rooms κ, λ-λ^1. This space was disturbed for the construction of Geometric wall 48 opposite rooms κ and λ, and of a Mycenaean wall opposite room λ^1.

Deposits 31-32: the selected MM III material comes from fills with mixed MM IIIA and a few MM IIIB and LM IA pottery.

A final paragraph (2.3.5) discusses the role of Chalara during MM III. Because of the intense activity concentrated in the central part of the quarter, the occupation of this area during Protopalatial and Neopalatial periods remains an *argumentum ex silentio*. Relationships with Protopalatial structures (rooms α-ζ in the northern sector, for instance) are explored and it is argued that the MM IIIA occupation after the earthquake at the end of MM IIB involved the same topographical unities. These two areas placed at North and South of the quarter display different characteristics. On the South, the persistence of consistent architectural unities between MM III and LM I is worthy of note. The MM IIIA rooms were, in fact, part of a large building, though poorly preserved, as the following LM I mansion has destroyed and reused most of its parts. The structure survived below rooms η'-ε': as they do not have any entrance, they are possibly storerooms of the house. The presence of ceramic pithoi guarantees that storing activity somehow took place in the house. Besides, the massive table wares, embodied by handleless and straight-sided cups, bridge-spouted jars and jugs suggest food and drink consumption. Furthermore, the unique Kamares ware fragment, decorated with the plastic figure of a running feline (**Deposit 20A.42**), implies that some kind of ritual activity occurred in this area. On the other hand, in the northern part, the MM IIIA floor deposits of rooms ι, κ, λ-λ' are the surviving part of a three-room-complex, preserved only along the western side, under the Geometric and Hellenistic constructions. The architectural quality of this house is beyond doubt lower than the house in the southern area. A paved floor was recovered in the main room (λ), whose ceramic assemblage consisted mostly of fine tableware for the consumption of food and drink. However, the most impressive find was the large number of stone vessels, which were stored in rooms ι and λ. The storage activity of this small house is limited to medium and small jars, for small quantities of solid or liquid food. The more consistent part of this house was the group of three stone vessels joined with the bull-shape head ceramic rhyton. Despite the structural differences of the two house unities in the northern and southern part of Chalara, the coupling of domestic and ceremonial activities that resembles similar cases such as the *Casa a Sud della Rampa* close to the Palace is worthy of consideration. As the author has tempted to demonstrate elsewhere (Girella forthcoming a), the role of the palace during MM III is questionable: even though some important elements survived, there are sufficient grounds to suggest that other specific functions were moved outside. It is argued that several elite groups were scattered around the palace, in houses which had a multifunctional activity, where household and ritual actions took place. In this vein, after the final destruction of MM IIB and during MM IIIA, it is reasonable to propose a non-centralized model, when some houses around the palace had taken over the control of one part of palatial ritual activity or were involved in private ritual performances. As for the case of Chalara, this hypothesis could be supported by the concentration of stone and clay ritual vessels. On the one hand, it has been stressed that shapes, such as the footed lamp, the tablet, the bird's nest bowl and the block vase, which were previously attested in the palace, now circulated in the settlement (Palio 2008). On the other, attention must be paid to the presence of specialized and ritual vessels: of importance are the shape, dimensions and elaborate painted and plastic decoration. The conical rhyton,

for instance, is attested in both the *Casa a Sud della Rampa* and Chalara. Therefore, the diffusion of a widespread variety of rhyta shapes – conical, piriform, ovoid, bull's head – might be related with an interest in ritual equipment on the part of people living around the palace. Likewise, the use of similar cult symbols, such as the Cretan *agrimi*/wild goat and the feline (lion?), is attested only in the settlement and on vessels which have probably been produced by the same workshop. The distribution of such vessels suggests that they functioned not merely as a symbolic statement about the status of the individuals who lived in the houses, but also as the main mechanism of the palatial elites to reinforce their power. Indeed, the amount of table ware and especially the occurrence of shapes for drink consumption in such houses could be interpreted as the counterpart of the ritual practices: the attention to drink consumption would reflect palatial banqueting performances, but now making use of more simple vessels (mostly handleless cups), and modified and unelaborated ceremonial sets.

Finally, the character of the quarter during MM IIIB is explored. Although it is in not a clear period in this part of the settlement, it is argued that occupation took place continuously down to LM IA period.

Chapter 3 presents the analysis of the MM III ceramic deposits from Ayia Triada. The first paragraph (3.1) deals with the history of the excavations and the problem of recognizing and evaluating the MM III in the settlement. Our knowledge of the MM III occupation at Ayia Triada is, in fact, largely due to the archaeological campaigns directed by V. La Rosa since 1977. That year coincided both with the publication of the first part of the earlier excavations conducted by F. Halbherr, and with a new series of stratigraphic test trenches aimed at understanding the many chronological, topographical and historical problems left behind by the first excavators. As for the old excavations (1902-1905, 1910-1914), the tale of MM III remained in the shadow of the two major palatial phases of LM I and LM III, although Halbherr had already noted the existence of large pottery dumps that had been built on by some sectors of the succeeding Villa, such as the area of the north magazines (Halbherr – Stefani – Banti 1977). From these and other trenches, the Italian excavator was able to distinguish sherds of MM III date, but they were regularly associated with the pottery of the previous and following periods, pointing to the secondary nature of the deposits laid down in the large area disturbed by LM I building operations. However, for Halbherr, the existence of a MM III phase was proved by pottery and, as clearly expressed in a letter to L. Pernier dated to 1912, filled the crucial gap between MM II and LM I.

After a series of preliminary reports since 1977 (La Rosa 1977, 1979-80, 1985b, 1989, 1995b), several specialized contributions have offered a more detailed picture of the period. At the end of the eighties, A.L. D'Agata (1989) presented a selection of pottery from a burnt level under Room Q, thereby shifting to southern Crete the debate on a MM III-LM IA 'transitional phase', which was refined at Knossos slightly later by P. Warren with the publication of the Trench D, Pit VI deposit from the Stratigraphical Museum Excavations. In particular, the Italian scholar observed the existence of a phase following typical MM III at Phaistos and suggested, like Popham, the possibility of an overlap between MM IIIB and LM IA. At Phaistos, as noted by F. Carinci (1989), nothing could be referred to this transitional stage.

A systematic overview of the Middle Minoan period at Ayia Triada was recently offered by F. Carinci in two contributions (1999, 2003) in which he gave a preliminary and updated synopsis of the Prepalatial and Protopalatial periods, and clarified the depositional processes of single ceramic deposits. MM III emerged as a minor episode in the history of the site, poorly represented, especially during its initial stage, but with significant signs of change at the end of the period, when pottery production fluctuates between Phaistian and Knossian models.

The next step towards a more comprehensive picture was the analytical examination of new MM III and LM I pottery deposits. For the latter period, D. Puglisi has produced a review of the LM I archaeological evidence from the old and new excavations (2001, 2003); he has also distinguished two stages in LM IA that followed a transitional one named MM IIIB/LM IA (2006). Preliminary results from the study of MM III material at Phaistos and Ayia Triada (Girella 2003a, 2005a) suggested that it was possible to distinguish two phases within this period, as well as to understand the transition

between MM III and LM IA in this region (Girella 2007, forthcoming b). Moreover, typological and stratigraphical considerations at Ayia Triada now allow us to distinguish MM IIIA from MM IIIB deposits and to verify, for the first time, the superimposition of MM IIIA, IIIB and LM IA levels, albeit in a restricted trench opened in 2006 (La Rosa 2006).

The following section examines the chronological sequence of the MM III ceramic deposits (3.2). A major point in the long debate on MM III sequences is the identification of stratigraphical evidences regarding the subdivision in two phases, a fact that is not unanimously accepted. The Mesara, notwithstanding its rich MM III deposits, apparently lacks a clear stratigraphical superimposition of MM IIIA and IIIB levels. It is clear at Phaistos that none of the MM IIIA floors was modified or repaired after the impressive destruction, and the author drew an equal and preliminary conclusion in 2004 for Ayia Triada (Girella 2007). The obstacle in the Mesara can be sidestepped by combining a typological study of pottery groups with the synchronization of sequences of the three major sites. The main point of this interpretation is that, although not stratified one on top of each other, the MM III deposits show a homogeneous composition, hence the possibility to match them through a stylistic analysis (Girella forthcoming c). It is in fact interesting to observe how, MM III being represented at the site mostly by pottery contexts, the analyzed deposits have a mixed composition in terms of depositional processes (few primary, and mostly secondary deposits). Therefore, one solution for creating a sequence should be to combine diagnostic wares and vessels from various common stratigraphical sequences (Girella forthcoming c).

Section 3.3.1 examines the ceramic deposits of the site. A topographical order, starting from the southern part of the Villa and moving towards the NE sector, is followed. *Deposits 1-4, 6, 7B, 14* are assigned to MM IIIA, and *Deposits 5-6, 8, 7A, 9, 11-13, 15* to MM IIIB.

Deposit 1: is a layer below *Sacello*: room γ stratified below a LM IA deposit.
Deposit 2: is a layer below *Sacello*: room α stratified above a MM II deposit.
Deposit 3: was isolated underneath the LM IA plaster floor of the *Sacello* by Luisa Banti.
Deposit 4: is a closed deposit below Corridor 74 in the Villa.
Deposit 5: is a homogeneous fill below rooms 62, 65a and 66a (layer VII), covered by a second layer (VI) with LM IA ceramic debris.
Deposit 6: is a fill identified south of the *Bastione*.
Deposits 7 A-B: identified below room P, they are the sole MM IIIA (7B) and MM IIIB (7A) deposits to be stratified one on top of each other so far.
Deposit 8: is a fill identified to the east of the *Bastione*.
Deposit 9: is a series of fills recovered below the *Edificio Ciclopico*.
Deposit 10: is a level identified in room Z/4, to the north of the so called *Muraglione a Denti*.
Deposit 11: is a closed deposit identified below the Mycenaean building *Edificio Ovest* (below room b/2).
Deposit 12: is the destruction deposit identified below Mycenaean room Q (related to a house named *Casa della Soglia Alabastrina*).
Deposit 13: is the destruction deposit to the north of Mycenaean room Q and R.
Deposit 14: is a homogeneous fill isolated below a LM IB floor in room a that is part of the so called *Complesso della Mazza di Breccia* in the NE sector of the settlement.
Deposit 15: is a dump discharged in the NE sector to the north of rooms n-o of the *Complesso della Mazza di Breccia*.

The second part of this chapter examines the pottery assemblages recovered in the NE sector: *Deposit 15* (3.4). The recent excavations in the NE sector have confirmed the extension of the settlement towards the north. A paved structure, connected with a road, marked a ceremonial area which was in use during MM II. The road, with some restoration, was still in use during MM III, running close to the so called *Tomba degli Ori* – built in LM IA – and guaranteeing the connection with the settlement. During LM IB the nearby *Complesso della Mazza di Breccia* was built close to the *Tomba degli Ori* and facing the necropolis area that apparently went out of use. The archaeological campaigns

of the first half of the nineties have further discovered a series of Protopalatial and early Neopalatial levels (mostly dumps and fills, seldom stratified deposits), located below and nearby the *Complesso della Mazza di Breccia* (La Rosa 1995b). Between 1993 and 1995, in the N part of this sector, in the area of Trench M/3 and M/4, a relatively large portion of a big pottery dump was brought to light (Carinci 2003, 137; Girella 2003b, 2005a, forthcoming b). The upper levels belong to the LM II and LM IA and B periods; the MM III deposit was struck immediately below them and consisted of a series of dumps that have been preliminarily distinguished on the basis of different soil colour and consistency. The similar composition of these layers, as well as the presence of cross-joining sherds, suggested that this area was continuously in use for dumps but also that its chronological breadth was relatively short, so that it was possible to understand that the single dump layers belonged to the same period. During the excavations it became clearer, and especially after the 1995 campaign, that the dump operations were related to a very simple wall (built in rubble masonry) that turned out to be the eastern side of the large and open-air space named room z. It therefore seemed reasonable to consider the excavated dump as rubbish discharged from this area. The bottom of the dump was not reached. Other features proved to be in agreement with the short duration of the operation. Especially common to several of the single layers were the jumbled condition of the material and the dense packing of the vessels, with almost no earth preserved among them. The secondary nature of the deposit was also suggested by the lack of any floor or building debris and the semi-complete conditions of large and small vessels.

Section 3.4.1 examines the composition of the pottery deposit and discusses its shapes, decorations and chronology. Out of more than 2600 sherds (from which 1200 vessels have been reconstructed) the volume presents a selection of 477 pieces whose catalogue forms Appendix IV. The deposit contains small, medium and large-sized vessels discussed according to five major fabrics (fine, semi-fine, coarse, pithos, kitchen).

The deposit yielded almost 500 handleless cups of various types, straight-sided and hemispherical cups. The basin is another well attested open shape that occurs in several types and varieties. Bridge-spouted and open-mouthed jars (*pitharakia*) complete the picture of a drinking set. The unexpectedly low number of pouring vessels, such as jugs of various sizes, might suggest that the handleless cups and bowls were both, in this context, designated for food rather than drink. Furthermore, the deposit boasts a significant number of transport/storage vessels, mostly oval-mouthed amphoras, while proper storage activity is clearly attested by the presence of large parts of pithoi, mainly decorated with rope bands, and bucket jars with bridged spout. It is also worth noting the occurrence of large amounts of cooking ware, which greatly enriches our knowledge of cooking activity in this period (Girella 2005b). In particular, tripod cooking pots (type B), cooking jars, plates, cooking dishes, trays, fire-boxes and lamps have been identified. The occurrence of unique or specialized vessels whose ritual function cannot be ruled out is also noteworthy: an oval-mouthed jar with multiple handles, a biconical stand, a fragmentary conical rhyton with an agrimi/wild goat *appliqué*, and an intriguing piece which was probably part of an elegant architectural model. Finally, the deposit yielded two fragmentary clay figurines (one bull's head and one bird's head), one loomweight and three whetstones.

The main characteristic of the deposit is the enormous popularity of monochrome pottery, with an interesting trend towards simplicity in dark-ground decorative repertoire, restricted to horizontal or diagonal bands and rare thick spirals. The wide variety LD motifs from Phaistos are on the contrary restricted to a few cases; polychrome decoration is also very rare in the deposit and largely limited to auxiliary horizontal red purple bands. The range of dark-painted motifs is small, consisting mostly of dipped rims, tortoise-shell ripple, horizontal bands and, in a few cases, spirals. Despite the presence of a few MM IIB and MM IIIA vessels it is argued that the deposit is later than MM IIIA and earlier then LM IA.

Section 3.4.2 reviews the relationship between Deposit 15 and the other pottery deposits at Ayia Triada. It is argued that Deposit 15, despite its MM IIIB date, stands out for specific characteristics that are thought to be connected to both depositional processes in the area and its nature.

The last section (3.4.3) analyzes the nature of Deposit 15. By evaluating the composition and depositional processes of the deposit, it is argued that the pottery dump is a waste produced by pottery

of no value and left *in situ*. As a result, the area of the dump and its nearby spaces are interpreted as a *working area* specialized in pottery production.

Two bodies of evidence are analyzed: the stratification of layers rich in pottery alternating with others that are sterile suggests a specific formation process of the dump, and indicates repeated discharge of waste material over a short time span. On the other hand, aspects of the internal composition of the deposit are discussed: (1) the jumbled condition of the material and the dense packing of the vessels; (2) the range of manufacturing and morphological imperfections that have been observed in almost all identified classes. The case of the handleless cups, the best represented class in the deposit, is, for example, illuminating. They are all made in a very sloppy way, with an irregular range of shapes, variable wall thicknesses, diameter, height, capacity and a number of faults: deformed and irregular walls, mostly small but sometimes medium and large non-plastic inclusions, frequent fingerprints left on the cups, marks from lifting the cup from the hump, sloped bases due to the uneven cutting of the cups from the hump. Likewise, cups and bridge-spouted jars show other imperfections, such as impractical or come off handles and beaks; (3) the almost absolute diffusion of monochrome decoration and the use of low-quality paints, often of dilute consistence and with a varied texture that might be related to changes in firing; (4) the short range of shapes with a narrow range of decorative solutions; (5) the presence of misfired and broken pots.

It is argued that the dump was pottery waste originating from a working area specialized in the production of plain and monochrome vessels, mostly related to drinking and pouring purposes. On the other hand, the wide range of transport vessels as well as the kitchen ware suggests that this second group of material was the equipment employed for producing the pottery. In particular, vessels with showy traces of fire are worth noting; the presence of pithoi, basins or large bowls with inner incrusted surfaces; as well as the discovery of pieces of clay.

Thus, the analysis suggests that open-area z, directly south of the excavated pottery dump, might be considered as working space. Furthermore, the dump forming Deposit 15 might show that at least three activities took place in the nearby working area: the technical equipment for forming and producing pottery (potter's jars for settling, separating, mixing and working the clay, forming and drying tools), the vessels produced and wasted and, finally, the vessels used for food and drink by the artisans who worked in the area.

Subsequently, a brief overview of previous studies focused on how to identify working areas through archaeological criteria is presented. By examining the main contributions on this topic (Evely 1988; Tournavitou 1988; Michaelidis 1993; Evely 2000; Hasaki 2002), a list of five criteria is suggested; the proposed list adapts conclusions mostly formulated by Tournavitou (1988) and Hasaki (2002). The criteria are: (A) stratigraphy; (B) elements concerning the deposit composition; (C) permanent features: architectural elements; (D) movable objects: elements concerning production as well as the final product; (E) topographical elements. As far as the last point is concerned, our analysis points out: (a) the nearness of this area to the proper settlement of Ayia Triada, so that one can think of an attached workshop; (b) the moderate building activity in the NE sector of Ayia Triada: in particular, the area of the dump and the nearby spaces also remained undeveloped during previous and later periods; (c) the proximity to the Ieropotamos river that would have guarantee access to water and fuel (wood); (d) the topographical and functional continuity with the subsequent LM I period, when an artisan area, specialized in working textiles, wood and stone, was added to the residential unities of the *Complesso della Mazza di Breccia* (Militello 2000).

Chapter 4 provides an analysis of pottery shapes. Thirteen shapes are selected, as they are considered relevant in the context of MM III archaeological deposits and allow, in several cases, a distinction to be made between MM IIIA and IIIB phases. The sections are arranged according to each shape by presenting a brief history and definition of the form, followed by single catalogue cards for each type identified. The following items are listed: number of catalogued vessels, fabric, ware group, morphological aspects, decoration, dimensions, chronology, correspondences with other typologies, comment.

Section 4.1 analyzes **handleless cups** (or conical cups, *skoutelia*). Eight types are distinguished (Girella 2007): *Type 1* is a conical cup with slightly convex or straight-flaring walls, and rounded or flattened rim; it is generally unpainted, though from MM IIIB its rim is dipped in dark paint. *Type 2* is an unpainted cup with semi-ovoid profile, mostly bell shaped. *Type 3* is a semi-globular cup with convex walls and straight rim, always unpainted. *Type 4* is a large unpainted cup with convex walls, thick and gently out-turned or in-turned rim, characterized by spiralling finger marks on the interior. *Type 5* is a convex side cup with out-turned rim, unpainted or dipped in orange/red/brown paint. *Type 6* is a straight rimmed cup, with or without lug handles. The rims are usually dipped in dark paint and a variant has swashes of paint on the interior and drips on exterior. *Type 7* is an ovoid or semi-globular cup with straight and rounded rim, dark coated inside and outside. *Type 8* is an ovoid cup with straight rim, dark coated with thick light-on-dark retorted spirals and white bands on the rim and base.

Straight-sided cups are examined in section 4.2. Eleven types are distinguished; aside from Type 11, Type 1-10 have strap handle attached at the rim and the middle of the side. *Type 1* is a tall cup with a narrow and almost rounded profile at the base. *Type 2* is the lower version of Type 1. *Type 3* is a tall cup with bevelled vase. *Type 4* is the lower version of Type 3 and two varieties are isolated: a, with straight rim and b, with slightly everted rim. *Type 5* has straight-flaring walls and conical profile. *Type 6* is a medium size cup with straight walls, a larger counterpart of Type 4. *Type 7* is a medium size cup with straight-flaring walls and bevelled base. *Type 8* is a straight-sided cup with spaced horizontal grooves creating ridges. *Type 9* is a cup with a rounded horizontal bulge at the middle. Three varieties may be distinguished: a, is small with large base and almost rounded profile; b, has a narrower base; c, is a medium-large size counterpart. *Type 10* is a large straight-sided cup with bevelled base. *Type 11* is a conical cup with a raised-rounded base and round handle.

Section 4.3 analyzes **hemispherical cups** (known also as rounded, semiglobular or tea cups). Eight types are identified, all with strap handles: *Type 1* has a rounded profile on the lower side, raised base and out-turned rim. *Type 2* is a hemispherical cup with deeper walls, raised base and out-turned rim. *Type 3* appears to be similar to Type 2 but with a wider base. *Type 4* is a deep walled cup with flaring rim. *Type 5* is a pseudo-carinated cup of which three varieties are isolated: a, with out-turned rim; b, with round everted rim; c, with angular everted rim. *Type 6* is a hemispherical cup with cut-off, angular ring base, and horizontal grooves in the walls: of the two varieties identified, a, has straight rim, b, out-turned rim. *Type 7* is a large semiglobular cup, with raised base and out-turned rim. *Type 8* is a deep walled cup with flaring rib rim.

Section 4.4 examines **footed cups**. *Type 1* is a low cup with carinated walls and flaring rim. *Type 2* is a deep walled cup with a raised ring cup and out-turned rim.

Bell cups (known also as S-profile or dip-rim cups) are discussed in paragraph 4.5. *Type 1* has a raised base, straight and dip rim and strap handle. *Type 2* is larger than Type 1 with a flaring rim. *Type 3* is a taller counterpart of Type 1 with a pseudo-carinated wall at the middle. *Type 4* is a fine fabric counterpart of Type 1, dark coated inside and outside. *Type 5* has an almost rounded profile with raised base and straight rim. *Type 6* is a hybrid cup between a carinated and bell shape.

Deep cups are rare and two types are isolated in section 4.6. *Type 1* has a curvilinear profile with flaring rounded rim and a flattened oval handle attached below the rim. *Type 2* has a semi-ovoid profile, raised base and flattened oval handle attached at the lip and rising above the rim.

Side-spouted cups (section 4.7) are also known as milk jugs. The spout is pulled out from the rim and an oval or rounded handle is attached at 90 degrees from the spout. *Type 1* has a roughly bell-shape profile and flaring rim; variant b is dark coated inside and outside. *Type 2* is taller than Type 1, but with a squat profile in the lower part and a vertical handle rising above the rim. *Type 3* has a hemispherical and low profile. *Type 4* has a gently carinated profile with flaring rim. As for Type 1 a second variant is dark coated. *Type 5* has a tall and deep profile, with angular everted rim. *Type 6* has a tall and deep profile, lug handle, out-turned rim and raised foot. *Type 7* has a deep and ovoid profile, angular everted rim, raised base; it is with or without lug handle.

Basins show a wide range of types (section 4.8). The term is used to refer to open vessels with or without horizontal handles, omitting the size limit. *Type 1* has no handle, straight-flaring walls with rounded (variety a) or thickened rim (variety b). *Type 2* has a hemispherical or deep profile and everted

rim. *Type 3* has hemispherical walls and horizontal thickened rim. *Type 4* is a hemispherical basin with overhanging and rounded rim. *Type 5* has a deep profile with flaring rim. *Type 6*, known also as *kalathoi*, *pot-à-fleurs* or flaring bowls, has straight-flaring walls with gently overhanging and ledge rim. *Type 7* is a convex-sided basin with ledge rim. *Type 8* is similar to Type 7 but with a short pedestal base. *Type 9* is a globular basin, probably with a pedestal foot, with a bulge at the middle. *Type 10* is a conical basin with lug handles. Type 11 is a hemispherical and deep basin with vertical handles rising above the rim. *Type 12* is a conical basin with rounded and thickened (variant a) or everted rim (variant b). *Type 13* is a hemispherical basin with straight rounded rim and horizontal handles. *Type 14* is a large hemispherical basin with a squared everted rim. *Type 15* is a shallow cylindrical basin with angular everted rim and horizontal and vertical handles. *Type 16* is a shallow globular basin with a squat profile, horizontal handle and lug feet. *Type 17* is a large deep conical basin with folded-back rim and a plastic rope band below it. *Type 18* has a convex-sided profile with square-sectioned rim. *Type 19* is a shallow conical basin with round flattened rim.

As far as the **bridge-spouted jars** are concerned (section 4.9), a large typological family emerges from the morphological analysis. Out of the 14 types recognized, a broader distinction between medium-large (Type 1-2) and medium-small size jars (Type 2-14) has been followed. Types 1-2, 9-13 have round thick horizontal handles, whereas Types 3-8 and 14 have strap grooved horizontal handles. *Type 1* is a medium-large jar with globular body and thick oval or round handles attached on the shoulders and rising above the rim. *Type 2* is the ovoid counterpart of Type 1. Both 1 and 2 types are typical of MM II deposits at Phaistos and they are still documented in early MM IIIA. Furthermore, the type with 'barrel' profile no longer appears during MM III. *Type 3* has a globular body and narrow base. *Type 4* has a biconical body that gives a squat profile at the lower side. *Type 5* is an ovoid jar with tapering base. *Type 6* is similar to Type 5 but with tapering base; variant b has wider shoulders. *Type 7* has an ovoid body and pedestalled base. Two varieties may be recognized: a, with an off-set pedestal; b, with a rib between the pedestal and the lower body. *Type 8* is the globular counterpart of Type 7. Three varieties are distinguished: a, with a rib between the pedestal and the lower body; b, with a rib between the pedestal and the lower body but with a higher foot; c, with an off-set pedestal. *Type 9* has a globular body and flaring pedestalled base. *Type 10* has a biconical profile with a short pedestalled foot and round horizontal handles. *Type 11* has a tapering profile towards a ring base, back-folded rim and round horizontal handles. *Type 12* is a hybrid shape between tea-pot and bridge-spout jar; it has a globular body with tapering base, short neck, everted rim, and round horizontal handles. *Type 13* is similar to Type 12 but with a squat profile at the lower side. *Type 14* is a globular squat jar similar to Types 12-13 but with large flat base and strap grooved handles.

Miniature *pitharakia* (section 4.10) are small open-mouthed jars carrying from two to four coil handles applied on the shoulder. The shape is already documented during MM II, but during MM III an articulated typology can be recognized. *Type 1* is a small *pitharaki* with flaring rounded rim and pedestalled base. The pedestal can be cylindrical (variety a) or conical (variety b). *Type 2* is a piriform pedestalled *pitharaki* with flaring/everted cut off rim. *Type 3* is a small jar with flaring base and rim. Variant a, has a rounded lip; variant b, has a wavy plastic lip. *Type 4* is a small ovoid *pitharaki* with raised base. *Type 5* has an ovoid body with ring base and out-turned rim. *Type 6* has a piriform body with tapering base and everted rim. *Type 7* has an ovoid body with back-folded rim and short conical pedestalled base. *Type 8* is a medium size ovoid *pitharaki* with short neck and everted rounded rim. Variant a has the pedestal separated from the rest; in variant b pedestal and body have been thrown in one piece; the jar also has double-role horizontal handles alternating with vertical coil ones. *Type 9* is a medium size ovoid *pitharaki* with short neck and everted rounded rim. The pedestal is flaring, conical and thrown separated from the body. *Type 10* is a medium size ovoid *pitharaki* with everted rim. Instead of a pedestal the jar has a tapered flaring base. *Type 11* is a medium-large size *pitharaki* with ovoid profile. It has a square-sectioned rim, eight coil handles attached on the shoulder, a high foot separated from the body by means of a moulded ring, and it ends with a moulded square-sectioned base.

Jugs are examined in section (4.11). Though less frequent than Protopalatial, jugs occur at Phaistos and Ayia Triada with a wide range of types. *Type 1* is a medium-small size three handled jug (known also as *hydria*) with globular/ovoid body, one vertical coil handle in the back and two side

horizontal and smaller ones. *Type 2* is a small size three handled jug (one vertical on the back and two horizontal at the sides) with ovoid profile. Variant b of this type has an off-set pedestal at the base. *Type 3* is a small size three vertical handled jug with ovoid profile. *Type 4* is a medium size beaked jug with globular body; a moulded ring is at the base of the neck. *Type 5* is a medium size beaked jug with ovoid body; two lateral lugs are attached on the neck. *Type 6* is a small size beaked jug with ovoid body and two lateral lugs on the neck. Variant b of this type is more elongated with separate foot and a moulded ring at the neck base. *Type 7* is a small size beaked jug with globular body; in one case the jug carries a plastic head of *agrimi*/wild goat on the neck. Variant b of this type is a miniature version. *Type 8* is a beaked jug with globular body, high neck and cut-away spout; it can be considered a MM III continuation of the Creamy-bordered class attested in MM II at Knossos. Variant b of this type shows a bigger neck and a pedestal at the base distinguished from the body by means of a moulded ring. *Type 9* is a medium size trefoil-mouthed jug with ovoid body. *Type 10* is a medium-small size trefoil-mouthed jug with globular/ovoid body. *Type 11* is a medium-small size trefoil-mouthed jug with globular squatted body. *Type 12* is a small size trefoil-mouthed jug with globular (variant a) or ovoid (variant b) body and tapering base. *Type 13* is a medium size round-mouthed jug with ovoid body (known also as ewer). The jug has a flaring rim and the vertical handle is attached on or below it and on the shoulder. *Type 14* is a medium size round-mouthed jug with ovoid body and short everted rim. *Type 15* is a small size round-mouthed jug with ovoid profile. *Type 16* is the globular counterpart of Type 15. *Type 17* is a small size round-mouthed jug with globular profile and pedestalled base. *Type 18* is a small size round-mouthed jug with globular profile and flaring rim; a moulded ring is attached at the neck base. *Type 19* is a medium size askoid jug with globular body and tapering base.

Amphoras are common during MM III (section 4.12) and ten different types are examined. Firstly, typological analysis distinguishes large, medium and small sized vessels and, secondly, between vertical and horizontal handled types, which give a different look to the mouth: oval in the first case and round in the second. *Type 1* is a large size amphora with ovoid body and tapering base. *Type 2* is a medium size amphora with globular/ovoid body. *Type 3* is a large size amphora with ovoid and elongated body and tapering base. *Type 4* is a medium size amphora with ovoid and elongated body. *Type 5* is a small size amphora with ovoid and elongated body. *Type 6* is a medium size amphora with globular body: variant a has a tapering base, variant b has a squat profile. *Type 7* is a large size amphora with ovoid and elongated body and two coiled horizontal handles at the middle. *Type 8* is a medium size amphora with globular body and two horizontal strap handles at the middle. *Type 9* is a small size amphora with ovoid body and two coiled horizontal handles at the middle. *Type 10* is a stirrup jar, documented so far only at Kommos. The vessels of this type have a narrow closed-off mouth opening, a tubular spout at the shoulder and from two to three handles connecting the false spout to the shoulder. Lugs can be attached to the true spout. The only entire example has squat ovoid body.

Nine types of **rhyta** are distinguished (section 4.13). *Type 1* has a conical shape, strap handle with a plastic button at the upper attachment and lugs on the rim. *Type 2* is a globular rhyton. *Type 3* has an alabastron shape, with a nipple at the bottom, splaying neck with a moulded ring on it. Types 2 and 3 do not have handles. *Type 4* has a piriform body, flaring rim, a moulded ring at the neck base and one strap handle. *Type 5* is a rare type of tumbler with holed base; it has two horizontal handles below the rim and a conical profile ending with a tapering pedestalled base. *Type 6*, already documented in MM II, is an entire bull rhyton. *Types 7* and *8* are bull's head rhyta. *Type 9* is the sole specimen of a pig rhyton from Ayia Photini (Phaistos).

Finally, section 4.14 draws conclusions according to the early and mature MM IIIA and MM IIIB phases distinguished. As far as the **early MM IIIA** is concerned, notable changes from MM IIB production concern an increase in ordinary vases and a decrease in the variety and value of the high-quality pottery. Whereas morphological changes are less pronounced among the pouring and closed vessels, there is a high variability among the open shapes. Table ware shows the major shifts in production; in particular, lower manufacture and investment of labour are visible in the drastic reduction of high quality Kamares Ware. The disappearance of eggshell ware, the decrease of specific productions, such as incised and relief vessels, and the twilight of specific shapes, such as carinated cups and lamps with pedestal base are noteworthy. The latter are very rare in MM III deposits, and it is

probable that they were dropped because of the high labour investment needed to produce them, especially for the burnished surface and the impressed decoration. Other general features are the increased thickness of the vessel walls, the sharp reduction and simplification of LD patterned motifs with a decrease in polychrome decoration. Among the handleless cups, type 1 and 4 are still not very common, whereas types 2-3 are definitely more frequent in this subphase. Worth noting is the absence of types 6-8. Types 1, 2 and 8 are well documented and their numbers decrease constantly through MM III mature and MM IIIB. Type 4 is already attested, whereas type 9 is not present. New types of hemispherical cups appear (1-4) and the production with grooved surfaces (type 6) still continues. Basins occur with fragmentary specimens; types 7 and 8 are the best documented, decoration is quite homogeneous on both types, for the use of monochrome surfaces and of white painted motifs applied on the ledge rim: spiky foliate bands, thin running spirals, crescents. In early MM IIIA the medium-large bridge-spouted jar of MM II variety occurs without stunning variations (types 1-2), with the exception of the barrel shape, which is no longer present. As far as the medium-small type is concerned, types 3 and 5 are well attested, whereas types 6 (elongated) and 7-9 (pedestalled) are not present. There are no significant changes in the miniature *pitharakia* production: few types are documented (1, 3, 5, 7) and they show a general continuity with MM II. The same trend is also observable with jug and amphora production, whose exiguity may be due to the composition of pottery deposits. The occurrence of several rhyta among early MM IIIA deposits is a notable feature: types 1 and 2 are present.

Remarkable changes are detected for the **mature MM IIIA** subphase: (1) shape standardization; (2) low-quality manufacture and execution; (3) decline of elaborate painted, incised, moulded, plastic decoration. A poor control in the manufacture of ordinary vessels is now more visible, as tested by the production of plain ware and handleless cups in particular: they have, in fact, irregular walls, from small to medium non-plastic inclusion, frequent fingerprints left on the cups, marks from lifting the cup from the hump, sloped bases due to the uneven way of cutting the cups from the hump. Surfaces are generally not well smoothed and wheel ridges are more visible than before, two facts that might indicate a drop in labour input and are connected with a hurried manufacture. Types 1, 4 and 5 of handleless cups are very common in this phase and type 6 may be considered an invention of this stage. Aside from types 3 and 4 of the straight-sided cups, 5 and 9 are now new types. Basins show a similar trend, but the frequency of types 1 and 6 (kalathos) should be highlighted. Among the closed shapes, the bridge-spouted jar shows a remarkable change by means of the diffusion of peculiar types such as 3, 5 and 6, or hybrid types with tea-pot, such as 12 and 14. Miniature *pitharakia* of types 1 and 3 are frequent in this sub-phase, and new types are 2, 4, 10 and 11. Jugs are not very common, and the scarcity of the beaked types should be noted when compared to the round-mouthed type, which may be considered as a sign of some change in pottery production. The amphora family contains large (1, 3), medium (4, 6a) and small size (5) vessels. Among the rhyta types documented are 2, 4, 7 and 8.

One of the main features of **MM IIIB** in southern Crete is the emergence of local aspects in the pottery production. Despite the use of several etiquettes, the MM IIIB phase is distinguished from both MM IIIA and LM IA by several characteristics. Furthermore, the absence of remarkable changes, sometimes noted, can be explained by the relatively short length of this period.

General features are: (1) monochrome decoration occurs in both open and closed vessels, with a wide range of shapes that also include ritual vessels. The dark paint, now more dilute and with a varied texture, might be related to changes in firing; indeed, the diffusion of a red-fired dark paint could be explained by a more oxidizing atmosphere in the pottery kiln; (2) notable changes among the handleless cups; (3) significant changes among the straight-sided cups and bridge-spouted jars. The production of pedestal vases (mainly bridge-spouted jars, open mouthed jars, jugs), in particular, albeit rare at Kommos, constitute a distinctive mark of Phaistos and Kamilari/tholos tomb. The widespread diffusion of pedestal vessels in the latter sites might suggest the existence of a specialized workshop apparently not connected with the coastal site of Kommos, and involved in the production of shapes that basically had a funerary destination; (4) the large diffusion of monochrome decoration among both the open and the closed shapes; (5) the sharp reduction of the previous LD patterned motifs, with a drastic decrease in polychromy, as well as a reduction of motifs to a single one (thick retorted spirals).

The 'Thick-Retorted Spiral Style', although present in a few MM IIIA and LM IA deposits, can definitely be considered an MM IIIB hallmark, and it occurs in both closed and open shapes, the latter comprising complete drinking sets; (6) a restricted use of polychrome decoration, mainly floral stylized motifs in red and white on dark ground, occurring on cups and bowls. Simple auxiliary red bands on closed vessels; (7) the first occurrence of DLL patterned vases, attested in different ways and with a non-homogeneous distribution of new motifs (tortoise-shell ripple, diagonal and horizontal bands, tangent and thick edge spirals, isolated semicircles, lunettes and solid waves). In-and-out bowls with bands, wavy lines and tortoise-shell ripple. Tortoise-shell ripple on cups and bowls. Spirals and lunettes rarely occur. The vessels with this technique have well fired clay and are coated with a pinkish, pinkish/yellow slip and with dark or reddish lustrous paint.

Among handleless cups, the conical type (1) is smaller and has a thick and flat rim, whereas the ovoidal/semiglobular type, overall dark coated (with or without white painted motifs) (types 7 and 8) makes their first appearance. The occurrence of the convex sided cup with out-turned and dipped rim (types 5-6) as well as the decrease of the large and low convex sided cup with everted or in-turned rim (type 4), which was an MM IIIA hallmark, are also worth stressing. Type 5 is new among the straight-sided cups. Another notable feature is the production of large drinking shapes, such as types 6 and 10 for straight-sided cups and type 7 for hemispherical cups. In this class we have also identified types with a deep profile and flaring rim (4) and pseudo-carinated walls (5). Type 8 with rib rim may also be an MM IIIB invention. Basins are well documented from Ayia Triada (Deposit 15) where types with deep body (2-3, 5, 10-14) are frequent. As far as the closed shapes are concerned, we have noted the occurrence of pedestalled types (6-9) among the bridge-spouted jars. The same feature also occurred on miniature *pitharakia*. Aside from the known types, it is also worth noting for this period the presence of narrower and higher foot (type 6) and the relatively large diffusion of medium (7-8) and large size (9-11) types. Pedestalled types are also observable among the jugs (types 2b, 8b, 17b). Type 2 of the oval-mouthed amphoras is the most popular together with types 1 and 3 of larger and taller body. Rhyta, finally, are well documented in MM IIIB and the diffusion of bull's head types (6-7) is also remarkable.

Chapter 5 discusses decorative aspects of MM III pottery production. The chapter is organized in three parts: after a brief introduction on previous studies and researches (Walberg 1976; 1978, 1983, 1986, 1992a; Stürmer 1992), a list of the basic decorative types and subtypes is illustrated. Finally, a third part examines the main aspects of decorative solutions. As for the motifs identified, a list of twenty-nine items is illustrated: the list is meant to exemplify the basic occurrence of single motifs on open and closed shapes according to the morphological analysis carried out in the previous chapter.

Mt I. Horizontal lines. (1) double lines LD; (2) band + double lines LD; (3) double lines + band LD; (4) three lines LD; (5) isolated band LD; (6) isolated band DL; (7) double bands LD; (8) multiple bands DL; (9) lines + band POL; (10) band + line POL.

Mt II. Vertical lines. (1) isolated LD; (2) Continue LD; (3) bands + lines LD; (4) alternating LD.

Mt III. Diagonal lines. (1) isolated LD; (2) bands + lines LD; (3) bands + antithetical lines LD; (4) spaced LD; (5) bands DL; (6) continue LD.

Mt IV. Wavy lines. (1) simple LD; (2) multiple LD; (3) scale LD; (4) alternating LD; (5) alternating POL; (6) simple DL; (7) multiple DL; (8) scribble DLL.

Mt V. Arcs. (1) multiple filled LD; (2) multiple LD; (3) pendent, simple LD; (4) pendent, multiple LD.

Mt VI. Triangle. (1) pendent LD; (2) rising LD.

Mt VII. Semicircles. (1) pendent LD; (2) pendent, filled; (3) rising LD; (4) detached rising POL.

Mt VIII. Chevrons. (1) continue, from left LD; (2) continue, from right LD; (3) groups LD.

Mt IX. Crossed lines. (1) net pattern LD; (2) detached LD; (3) petal-shaped LD.

Mt X. Lozenges. (1) with opposite arcs LD; (2) with arcs and crosses LD; (3) interlaced POL.

Mt XI. Circles. (1) series LD; (2) series red LD ; (3) series filled POL ; (4) multiple linked LD ; (5) multiple filled POL; (6) double linked LD; (7) chain LD; (8) scattered LD; (9) series DL.

Mt XII. Lunettes. (1) multiple LD; (2) multiple DL; (3) alternating LD.

Mt XIII. Pendants. (1) hooks LD; (2) hooks with flowers LD; (3) spirals LD.

Mt XIV. Zigzag. (1) simple LD; (2) with alternating arcs LD.

Mt XV. Quirks. (1) horizontal series; (2) oblique LD; (3) running from right; (4) running from left LD; (5) linked LD.

Mt XVI. Foliate band. (1) horizontal spiky LD; (2) horizontal spiky LD; (3) horizontal thick LD; (4) oblique thick LD; (5) oblique spiky LD; (6) vertical series LD; (7) vertical spiky LD; (8) vertical spiky LD; (9) vertical thick LD; (10) stylized LD; (11) horizontal thick POL.

Mt XVII. Stone. (1) splashes, dense LD; (2) splashes, scattered LD.

Mt XVIII. Rock. (1) wavy bordered LD/POL; (2) circular POL.

Mt XIXI. Pendent lines. (1) multiple LD; (2) isolated LD.

Mt XX. Spirals. (1) thin running LD; (2) thin running; (3) detached LD; (4) wavy running LD; (5) wavy running filled POL; (6) double wavy running LD; (7) eye spirals LD; (8) oblique thin running LD; (9) thin detached LD; (10) big thin running LD; (11) thick running; (12) thick retorted; (13) thick isolated LD; (14) thick isolated DL; (15) thick edge DLL; (16) tangent DLL.

Mt XXI. Flowers. (1) palm tree POL; (2) palm tree LD, I; (3) crocus POL; (4) crocus POL; (5) crocus POL; (6) crocus LD; (7) lily LD; (8) lily LD; (9) lily POL; (10) ivy leaf LD; (11) ivy leaf POL; (12) ivy leafs, crown LD; (13) rosette series LD; (14) rosette series LD; (15) rosette series POL; (16) rosette isolated LD; (17) rosette plant LD; (18) thistles LD; (19) olive spray LD; (20) peas LD; (21) papyrus LD; (22) papyrus combined LD; (23) branches and flowers stylized LD; (24) combined LD; (25) ivy spray LD; (26) ivy spray DL; (27) sapling DLL.

Mt XXII. Pictorial. (1) vases LD; (2) petal DL; (3) bordered petal DL.

Mt XXIII. Plants. (1) double vertical leaf DL; (2) multiple vertical leafs DL; (3) bush DL; (4) alternating bushes DL.

Mt XXIV. Circular. (1) simple LD; (2-9) filled LD; (10) interlaced LD.

Mt XXV. Tortoise-shell ripple. (1) DLL; (2) LD:

Mt XXVI. Drippings. (1) DL.

Mt XXVII. Plastic. (1) horizontal rope A; (2) vertical rope A; (3) oblique and horizontal ropes A; (4) with drippings DL; (5) ring M, LD; (6) button A, M; (7) lug M, LD; (8) double horns LD; (9) *agrimi*/wild goat M, POL; (10) shells A; (11) dolphins A, M.

Mt XXVIII. Impressed. (1) spirals M; (2) flower LD, POL; (3) circles with cuts; (4) circles with crosses.

Mt XXIX. Incised. (1) horizontal lines M; (2) crossed lines A; (3) crosses with circles A; (4) crosses with multiple circles A; (5) crosses with cuts A; (6) cuts A.

The third part of the chapter focuses on a decorative analysis of MM IIIA and MM IIIB. The majority of the decorative solutions used in MM IIIA pottery derive from MM II, but they are organized in simplified syntactic arrangements with a predominance of the circumcurrent one. MM II designs continue, particularly in early MM IIIA, in a relevant variety and combined with the use of polychromy: multiple wavy lines (Mt IV. 2), triangles (Mt VI.1-2), semicircles (Mt VII.1-4), *chevrons* (Mt VIII.1-2), circles (Mt XI.1-4), lunettes (Mt XII.1), pendants (Mt XIII.1-3), zigzag (Mt XIV.1-2), quirks (Mt XV.1, 3-4) and circular motifs (Mt XXIV.1-9). Plastic decoration is still used and specific products testify to inspiration from the natural and marine world. Pictorial animal motifs also occur as *appliqués*, such as the *agrimia* found on a bridge-spouted jar and a conical rhyton.

As regards painted decoration, white splashes (either dense or scattered) are quite common and their overall diffusion on table ware can be explained by either an attempt to imitate stone vessels, or to the simplification of labour input due to an increase in serial and mass-produced vessels. On the other hand, scattered white splashes could be related to the White-spotted Style at Knossos, and a few examples from Chalara have been considered to be imports from North Crete. The identification of motifs and syntactic arrangements typical of the early MM IIIA subphase is noteworthy: (1) multiple-registered decoration on straight-sided cups and bridge-spouted jars; (2) bi-facial and circumcurrent decoration on bridge-spouted jars; (3) wavy-line style on hemispherical cups; (4) thin running spirals; (5) spiky vertical or horizontal foliate bands. The circumcurrent decoration involves the use of motifs organized in multiple horizontal registers without interruption, whereas the so called 'bifacial decoration' is characterized by two different motifs that occupy the front and back zones of the jar. A

notable feature of this period is the considerable use of naturalistic decoration, basically divided in two families: the foliate bands and the floral motifs (mostly lilies, crocuses, palm trees, ivy leafs), which now appear for the first time and will survive with significant modifications into the LM period.

Simplification and reduction of decorative solutions are two of the main characteristics of the mature MM IIIA subphase. Two new tendencies, which seem to bring forward the general stylistic trend of MM IIIB, are: (1) the "finicky" style, which occurs on serving vessels (vases decorated in this style carry conglomerate patterns, dot rosettes, rows of arcs, lozenges, triangles); (2) the use of thick running spirals on table ware. The most important evidence for this second sub-phase is illustrated by the rich floor deposit of room CH 25 at Kommos (the Pithos Room) and those from the *Casa a Sud della Rampa* at Phaistos. These patterns, which appear in the mature stage of MM IIIA, continue during MM IIIB, but seem to drop out of use in LM IA. DL patterns are reduced to dipped rims on open shapes and dripping. On the other hand, while it seems to already be documented at Knossos, the tortoise-shell ripple occurs on few non-local ceramic fragments from Kommos. This is the only evidence of lustrous DLL patterned designs found in MM IIIA contexts in the western Mesara.

The general trends of MM IIIB decoration have already been mentioned in chapter 4. The monochrome coated vessels are more frequent than before, and are associated with a strikingly simple decorative repertoire. The polychromy is also reduced to marginal and subsidiary motifs. A possible successor to the MM IIIA pictorial group is the so-called "lyrical floral" style, so far reported from Kommos, Ayia Triada, Phaistos, Kamilari (tholos A), Kousès. The new decorative tendency attested in serving as well as in transport vessels, with its high quality manufacturing, shows strong links with the vessels in "finicky" and pictorial style of MM IIIA. As far as the LD decoration is concerned, we have noted the use of horizontal lines (Mt I.1, 5), multiple pendent lines or veining (Mt XIX.1) and isolated pendent lines (Mt XIX.2), isolated wavy lines (Mt IV.1), circles (Mt XI.1), diagonal lines (Mt III.1), running spirals (Mt XX.11-12), isolated spirals (Mt XX.13). Quirks do not disappear (Mt XV.1) and they can occur as oblique or (Mt XV.2) linked (Mt XV.5). White splashes (Mt XVII.1) already occur but, judging from the composition of the deposits, it is possible to say that this motif drastically decreases during MM IIIB. Thin running spirals disappear, whereas the thick running (Mt XX.11) and the thick retorted spirals (Mt XX.12) are common. Among the floral motifs, foliate bands occur in quite stylized arrangements (Mt XVI.6-7), while the olive spray (Mt XXI.19), judging from the evidence on both open and closed vessels from Phaistos, Ayia Triada, Kamilari and Kousès, is first elaborated in this period.

DLL patterned decoration counts as the first reliable evidence from MM IIIB deposits. Tortoise-shell ripple – with thin and well distinguished strokes characterized by concentrated paint – is applied on open shapes and through horizontal registers closed by two lines: Ayia Triada and Kommos show the main evidence of this production. Spirals are not very common, but they appear in two basic varieties: thick edge and tangent spirals. Running spirals are not attested. Other DLL pattern motifs are: circles (Mt XI.9-10), lunettes (Mt XII.2), single wavy lines (Mt IV. 6), scribble (Mt IV. 8), and multiple lines (Mt IV.7). Rare floral patterns are saplings (Mt XXI.27) and ivy spray (Mt XXI.26).

These features are not present in all three main sites of southern Crete, and in fact they demonstrate regional varieties that, if not due to a lack of data, may reflect either dissimilar mechanisms of pottery production or different depositional processes in the formation of deposits. My personal feeling is that the stylistic argument alone is not convincing, as the absence or presence of specific wares could in fact have a functional and not necessarily a chronological significance. Furthermore, DLL decoration occurs mostly on table and fine ware, whose circulation in a given settlement would not have been homogeneous; rather it might have followed social implications.

At Ayia Triada DLL table ware consist of cups (straight-sided and hemispherical), Vapheio cups, bowls (many decorated in-and-out), closed vessels such as open mouthed or bridge-spouted-jars. Ripple is often associated on open shapes with wavy isolated or multiple bands in the inferior part. Bands are secondary patterns combined usually with ripple or spirals, and they already show an arrangement heralding LM IA; isolated bands occur with the characteristic scribble rendering, whereas multiple wavy bands in this stage are coupled with ripple on bowls. Finally, added white paint is applied

on the rim of cups and bowls, as well as in closed vessels, and it decreases gradually during LM IA Initial.

As far as Phaistos is concerned, the decline of the settlement is highlighted by the strong decrease of deposits around the palace. The pottery assemblage is characterized by a prevalence of monochrome coated vessels, associated with a strikingly simple decorative repertoire. The deposits recovered in the destruction level of the houses South of the Palace are representative, for they show the same composition of Plain fine ware and monochrome or LD ware; on the other hand, we still consider the dearth of DLL Ware from this site to be a central topic for discussing the different mechanisms of circulation of this new technique. Exploration of MM III deposits from Chalara quarter has in fact led to the recognition of DLL ware from mixed MM IIIB and LM IA deposits. Likewise, from secondary deposits (such as those in the area of *Bastione Ovest* and west to *Bastione II*) it has been possible to identify sporadic DLL open vessels of MM IIIB mixed with others of later and older periods. The overall evidence, though scanty, invites analysis of the problem of the MM IIIB ceramic phase at Phaistos, and its apparent incongruities with contemporary deposits judged in this work to be of MM IIIB chronology, from a new light.

Chapter 6 addresses some historical conclusions about the transition towards the Neopalatial era in the western Mesara. Using Evans' terminology is far from being a mere revising of old schemes and terminologies, but is rather the only way to reassess the MM III sequence of single regions of the island. Applying old labels, aside from reflecting a modern perspective in evaluating past societies, better synthesizes cultural differences truly active in the prehistoric Aegean, and does not hamper the construction of a systematic chronological framework valid for the entire Aegean. The synchronisms between the western Mesara and other regions of Crete deserve an appropriate study: this chapter, however, only suggests the main synchronisms with Knossos and other important sites of central and eastern Crete. From a historical perspective, MM IIIA is marked by a great destruction (perhaps a seismic event); this event could be the same that affected Knossos, Galatas and Archanes/Anemospilia in North Crete. A MM IIIA destruction has recently been identified at Palaikastro and Zakros in eastern Crete. Furthermore, the overall impression given by the deposits assigned to MM IIIB is that this second stage was again marked by a great destruction. Furthermore, there are good grounds to consider as valid the idea that the so-called Great Destruction at Knossos and damage incurred elsewhere in the island was the result of a single earthquake datable to MM IIIB, whereas the idea that this event was contemporary with the Seismic Destruction on Thera (Early LC I) is still questionable.

This chapter then moves into a discussion of specific details about the MM IIIA and MM IIIB periods. As far as the first period is concerned, it coincides with the MM III used at Kommos and the MM IIIA at Knossos. Synchronisms with other Cretan contexts are suggested (*table 9*): Jouktas/Alonaki Building B, Archanes/Anemospilia (destruction deposit), and Galatas whose palace was built in this period. As for the eastern part of the island, the definition of a MM IIIA phase at Zakros is questionable and it should be placed between *Zakros III* (MM IB-II) and *Zakros IV* which has a mixed MM III and LM IA character. On the other hand, MM IIIA contexts and ceramic deposits have recently been identified at Palaikastro in the area of Block M (Building 6). Returning to the western Mesara, MM IIIA was a rich and decisive period for this area. As regards Phaistos, past and recent contributions have largely demonstrated the survival of the palace after the MM IIB earthquake damage it suffered, and that (after this transitional phase, which lasted for the entirety of MM IIIA) the architectural program of reconstruction failed (Carinci 1989; 2001; La Rosa 2002b; Carinci – La Rosa 2009; Girella forthcoming a). This interpretation is proved by analyzing three patterns of evidence: the distribution of ceramic deposits, the scanty administrative evidence, and the houses surrounding the palace. MM III pottery deposits recovered from the palace and discussed in chapter 2 show that the north (rooms 101-102, 50), north-west (lustral basin under room 70) and south-west (room 18, and probably the *polythyron* XLV) sides of the palace were somehow operative. Proof of a kind of administrative registration – though very skimpy in comparison with the MM II archive of room 25 – come from these three parts (table PH 1 from room 101, tablet PH 3 from the lustral basin under room 70, and sealing PH Wb 32 from room 10, north of room 18). Moreover, houses around the palace were

inhabited throughout MM III, and it is possible to isolate the following clusters (Girella forthcoming a): the area west of the Palace, mainly represented by the *Casa a Sud della Rampa* ; (b) the area south of the Palace and west of Court LXX, with a series of houses documented under Geometric buildings; (c) the Chalara quarter on the southeast slopes of the Palace hill; (d) the building on the western hill (the *Acropoli Mediana*). In addition, the spatial distribution of the houses shows that they were located along the main paved road, which connected the lower quarter with the Palace; this road closely followed the Protopalatial course and was renovated and expanded during MM IIIA in order to facilitate communication between the lower quarters and the West Court. The issue of palace access and use of the courts is a thorny one. As it is highly probable that the central court (40/XXXIII) was still in use during MM IIIA, and the use of the West Court (I) is now confirmed by the occupation of the area east of the West Bastion, it should be reasonable to find a connection between the two courts and the main western access to the Palace in Corridor III/7. Unfortunately, the use of the upper court (94/XXXII) remains unclear, as does the possible connection between this and the lower West Court through staircase 6/XXXI. In considering each of these issues, there are grounds to suggest that Phaistos palace, though a difficult 'concept' to grasp, was still functioning somehow during MM IIIA.

The role of Ayia Triada in MM IIIA is so far unclear, and it is reasonable to see this centre as still being dependent on Phaistos, as shown by the ceramic production. In other words, according to Carinci (1999; 2003), the site would have played the same role between MM II and MM IIIA. The MM II occupation, in fact, is largely embodied by pottery deposits and a significant extension of the settlement towards the North, with the construction of a ceremonial area in the area of the *Tomba degli Ori*. Considering the scanty architectural remains and the quality of pottery production, Carinci has convincingly interpreted Protopalatial Ayia Triada as 'a satellite centre of Phaistos'. The same model can be applied for MM IIIA, as the ceramic production demonstrates. Pottery production between Phaistos and Ayia Triada was so highly homogenous that it is possible to propose the existence of workshops with potters working at both sites. Visual inspection of patterned vessels from the two sites suggests that they could easily have been produced at the same locale, or even in the same workshop. Nevertheless, Ayia Triada, according to Carinci, maintained a kind of 'provincialism' in the execution of low quality products. Grounds for this interpretation can be found in the strong relationships between the two major sites of the Mesara and the pottery production that was the result of a gradual involvement of Ayia Triada under the control of Phaistos as its satellite centre. As early as MM IIIA we observe a general continuation of this trend as regards plain fine ware and LD fine ware; however, what is also interesting to note is the circulation of pattern solutions and wares – I am talking here about the ridged and Precise Stamped Ware – that are almost or totally absent at Phaistos, and which suggest either an autonomy for Ayia Triada and/or an involvement of Knossian workshops in the South.

As far as Kommos is concerned, a large collection of collapsed or abandoned floor deposits come from the main four areas so far explored: the Hilltop, the Central Hillside, the area north of House X and the Civic Centre. The evidence suggests that Kommos saw a radical transformation after MM II thanks to a growing residential quarter (divided between the Central Hillside and the Hilltop) and the construction of Building T. This building appears to have replaced the earlier structure AA: the huge proportions, the use of double North and South stoas, the location next to the shore, have led to it being interpreted as an adaptation of the central court buildings for commercial purposes.

The evidence seems to suggest a radical, though slow, transformation of the western Mesara as early as MM IIIA: the watershed generated by the MM IIB earthquake might also have created a new balance in the area with a progressive development of Kommos and the emergence of its commercial role. What it is not clear so far is the possible Knossian involvement in this project, as it seems that this palace did not suffer from the MM IIB earthquake (Macdonald 2002; 2005) and could have been interested in extending its dominion towards the South. Turning to pottery production, the presence of possible non-local vessels painted with tortoise-shell ripple may speak in favour of Kommos' capacity to maintain long-distance relationships. Moreover, it has recently been pointed out that, despite the regionalism of MM II, larger interregional contacts and homogeneity characterize pottery production from MM III onwards, and that this latter phenomenon may have happened under the inspiration of Knossian potters (Van de Moortel 1997; 2006). How much this change can be explained by Knossian

political control of the western Mesara or an 'increased exchange of ideas' is still open to discussion. Turning to a minimal perspective, our analysis suggests a progressive decentralization of the Protopalatial model under Phaistos' control: in particular, it is proposed that people from the Phaistos settlement could have participated in the re-population of Kommos as well as the construction of Building T. Further signs of new territorial markers in the area can be found in the massive use of the two tholos tombs at Kamilari (Grigory Koryphi, Milona Lakkos).

Moving to MM IIIB, this book has tried to demonstrate that there are at least two good reasons to accept a ceramic phase in south-central Crete that should be called MM IIIB: first, it includes contexts that represent, from a ceramic and architectural point of view, a stage that is successive to MM IIIA and earlier than LM IA. Second, although some LM IA stylistic features have already appeared, MM III elements are still quantitatively dominant. Thus, the validity of using one single terminology for MM IIIB, as proposed here, is supported by the similarities of the major sites in the western Mesara. On the other hand, internal variations are interpreted as local differences in the ceramic production, which turn out to be much more pronounced than in MM IIIA. As in MM IIIA, the synchronisms between the western Mesara and Knossian subdivision need to be worked out further, but a number of issues have been raised in this study (*table 10*). The composition of the large deposit from the Stratigraphical Museum at Knossos (SEX Pit VI) indicates that the label MM IIIB is preferable to the MM IIIB/LM IA transitional term. Another two deposits outside the palace could be fitted into the same label: the deposit from the South Corridor of the Unexplored Mansion (MUM SC, east half), and the deposit from the Hellenistic Kilns Area (KS 178). These three deposits are secondary in the nature of their contexts and they belong to the same destruction horizon that affected the palace at the end of MM IIIB. Levels and deposits of this period have been identified at Galatas and Jouktas/Alonaki Building B. Moving to eastern Crete, synchronisms with the MM IIIB phase can be detected at Mochlos, from the so called Plateia Deposit, and perhaps at Zakros, though its phase IV has mixed MM III and LM IA elements. MM IIIB stratified levels have been identified at Palaikastro in Block M, whereas secondary deposits come from Block Γ and Block B (Square H_3), as well as from Sarantari, close to Roussolakkos.

The dearth of MM IIIB at Phaistos can plausibly be related to the crisis that took place at this centre after the MM IIIA destruction. However, a few deposits in and outside the palace have already been considered to be 'MM III late' (Carinci 2001) or *Early LM IA* in date (Van de Moortel 1997), but the present analysis has demonstrated that it is reasonable to call them MM IIIB rather then undifferentiated MM III or an initial stage of LM IA (Girella 2007). A further violent destruction at the end of MM IIIA could have created a critical situation for the Phaestian rulers and town residents. The evidence is now limited to a few domestic units around the palace, whereas in the palace itself only the NE sector seems to have survived and functioned. The use of the central court, possibly connected to the NE houses, is questionable.

Kommos suffered a comparable retrenchment of the settlement: several houses on the Central Hillside were abandoned and Building T suffered major damage, especially in the southern part, where a pottery kiln was constructed later in the period, or at the beginning of LM IA. As for the ceramic point of view, the deposits dated to Early LM I*A* have been considered MM IIIB in this volume. Using this adjustment, more then twenty deposits assignable to MM IIIB have been identified at Kommos (Betancourt 1990, 41-48; Van de Moortel 1997, 235-244, 721-730; Rutter 2006, 379-389; Girella 2007, 239). In the area of Building T, from a stratigraphical point of view, the fact that in several cases MM IIIB floors – and fills – are stratified above MM IIIA floors is decisive; likewise, in other cases, MM IIIB floors or fills have been found immediately below LM IA levels (Rutter 2006a, 410). Although the majority of these deposits do not contain a large quantity of pottery, they provide a good picture of this last stage of MM III at Kommos, and they fit quite well with the deposits from the Central Hillside Area that Betancourt has defined as 'Transitional MM III/LM IA' (Betancourt 1990). In general, Kommos has small sized and largely fragmentary deposits for this period. Moreover, the large percentage of handleless cups and plain table vessels allows the identification of diagnostic features, while there are no obvious changes among the pouring and storage vessels. On the one hand, deposits of Early LM IA show characteristics that can be related to those of the MM IIIB contexts isolated at Phaistos and Ayia Triada. On the other, discrepancies emerge when 'initial' and 'final' LM IA stages at

Ayia Triada are compared with the sequence used at Kommos. Initial LM IA ceramic deposits at Haghia Triada (Puglisi 2006) in fact seem to show elements that are chronologically subsequent to both Early and Advanced LM IA stages at Kommos.

This study has also proved that MM IIIB was beyond doubt a more intense period of activity than MM IIIA at Ayia Triada. Several activities or events left traces in the settlement: (1) a series of fills that took up the area of the Villa, the sector of the *Bastione* (east of *Bastione*, Room P, *Edificio Ciclopico*); (2) a destruction event, apparently not contaminated, to the North of the settlement, below Mycenaean Rooms Q and R; (3) a large dump, the result of cleaning operations of a non-identified building in the NE sector. The common character of these three events is the large mass of pottery stored in the single deposits, which hints at both the proportion of the destruction event (and consequently of the cleaning operations) on the one hand, and the quantity of pottery circulating and consumed in the site on the other. However, the only surviving architectural unit is that below Room Q (the *Casa della Soglia Alabastrina*). The building operations in this area (deposits 12-13) at the beginning of LM IA, when the house went out of use, might indicate the importance of this sector. Furthermore, the big dump in the NE sector (deposit 15) that we have linked to a working area demonstrates a feverish activity in pottery production.

DLL ware is the major novelty of the ceramic production at Ayia Triada in MM IIIB. Thus far its distribution reaches unparalleled percentages in comparison to those documented at Kommos, while at Phaistos it stands out on account of its apparent dearth. It is also interesting to note that some motifs were interchangeable with the LD ware, probably hinting at a gradual adaptation of the new technique. On the other hand, the introduction of tortoise-shell ripple, the organization of the decoration in codified languages, such as the in-and-out system, or the joining of primary and secondary motifs in two registers are new at Ayia Triada and find their strongest parallels at Knossos. MM IIIB is the time in which it would be more appropriate to see Ayia Triada as a 'centre in transformation', for it moved from being a Phaistian satellite to an independent site. Nevertheless, a proper role for Ayia Triada in this period is clouded by some doubts, whether or not the shift of Ayia Triada was catalyzed by a Knossian supervision or control that profited from the decline of Phaistos and, most of all, how much of the Villa complex was already built in MM IIIB. Patterns of transformation in the surrounding area are also recognized through the continued use of the Kamilari tholos tombs and the gradual birth of autonomous small centres and mansions: this is the case of the Volakakis house at Selì where a foundation deposit and other material underneath the house suggest a MM IIIB as a *terminus post quem* for its construction (La Rosa-Cucuzza 2001). We have an almost identical chronology for the house excavated by Sp. Marinatos at Kouses (south of the modern village of Kamilari) (1924-25) which is mostly unpublished, but whose known vessels hint again at a MM IIIB date; the Kannia and Pitsidia houses are later and slightly more distant. In other words, we cannot give up the idea that this stage coincided with a much more consistent decline of Phaistos, and that the area around Kamilari reveals a different exploitation of the territory and its natural resources. It is reasonable to connect the data with the shift of power and administrative activities from Phaistos to Ayia Triada.

In sum, the overall impression is that MM III was a watershed period for the western Mesara: the re-establishment of Phaistos was partially successful in MM IIIA, but the palace was apparently non-existent as a political and administrative entity in MM IIIB; rather, the emergence of Ayia Triada as an autonomous centre is definitely clearer and the large labour investment in the construction of Building T at Kommos was probably carried out under a non-local influence. Knossian control of Ayia Triada becomes much more visible during LM IA and IB, but that this region was already politically controlled by Knossos in MM III it is not altogether clear. Signs of boundary extension by the Knossos palace are discernible in view of recent evidence, such as that from Galatas palace on the Pediada, whose construction in MM IIIA, as well as the floral fresco decoration and pottery with Knossian character, speak in favour of an expansion of Knossian influence on the Pediada region (Rethemiotakis 2002). In the same vein, other sites, excavated by the Greek Ephoria, inhabited during MM III and located along a north-south cross-road, could demonstrate a progressive growth of Knossian influence southwards (Warren 2004, 160): (1) Galeni/Petrokopio, south-west of Vatypetro; Sokaras overlooking the Mesara

from the north; and (3) Protoria/Damandri, where part of a large building with ashlar masonry blocks has been explored.