

Mycenaeans up to date

The archaeology of the north-
eastern Peloponnese—current
concepts and new directions

Edited by
Ann-Louise Schallin &
Iphiyenia Tournavitou

Conclusions from the new deposit at the Western Staircase terrace at Tiryns

Abstract*

During restoration works in 1999 by the 4th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities at the west wall of the Upper Citadel in Tiryns, a dump containing large amounts of pottery and fragments of frescoes was discovered at the northernmost part of the Western Staircase terrace. The new deposit closely resembles the one with the famous Tirynthian fresco that was found about a century ago during German excavations in the same area. In the following paper I will present results from the analysis of the stratigraphy and the decorated pottery which led to the identification of three layers (Zones 1–3). Zone 2, with its rich pottery sample, marks the destruction of the palace, while the higher Zone 1 was deposited slightly later and can probably be connected with subsequent cleaning and levelling activities, necessary for the erection of the new LH IIIC megaron (Building T/the *Antenbau*). Thus this deposit offers unique stratigraphic evidence for the history of the Upper Citadel at the end of the 13th and the beginning of the 12th century BC.

Introduction

The last palace in the Upper Citadel of Tiryns is characterized by elaborate architecture which seems to have focused on the throne room.¹ Moreover, analyses of the architectural layout of the Mycenaean palaces as performative space² have

enhanced our ideas about social practices that took place within them. However, the various functions of the rooms in the Upper Citadel of Tiryns are as yet unknown. Both the lack of systematic documentation during the 1884–1885 excavations of Heinrich Schliemann,³ and the fact that a part of the material was, in all likelihood, already cleared away in the Mycenaean period⁴ hamper a more detailed analysis of function, as is the case with other Mycenaean palaces.⁵ This means that finds discovered *in situ* are very rare on the Upper Citadel. Consequently, our main sources of information about the pottery assemblages of the palace in Tiryns are secondary deposits. Two of the largest deposits of this kind include the deposit from the Western Staircase, with the famous Tirynthian frescoes, and the one from the west side of the Upper Citadel (the so called *Epichosis* excavated by Verdelis). Both of them were connected with large-scale destruction events. A smaller deposit was also excavated in the Middle Citadel (“spätmykenisches Loch”)⁶. Besides these, a fourth, smaller deposit, located again within the Western Staircase, but at its northernmost end, was recently excavated by Alkestis Papadimitriou⁷ (see below) (*Fig. 1*). Before I present the latter I will first describe the evidence available up to now from the two aforementioned larger contexts.

* I would like to thank I. Tournavitou and A.-L. Schallin for inviting me to this conference. I am grateful to A. Papadimitriou for allowing me to study the material she excavated at the Western Staircase, and for all her support in Tiryns. I would like to express special thanks to Prof. Maran, for all his support and counsel throughout my work in Tiryns. Finally, I would like to thank V. Hachtmann, U. Thaler, M. Vetter and U. Meinhardt for the many helpful discussions and comments. For the difficult task of correcting my English text my thanks go to P. Westlake.

¹ Kilian 1988b, 148; Wright 1994, 56f.; Maran 2006b, 81–85, pls. 12–13.

² Cavanagh 2001, 130f.; Maran 2006b, 81–85, pls. 12–13; Wright 2006, 61; Thaler 2006, 100f.; 104f.; 106f.; Davis & Bennet 1999, 114–118; Bennet 2007, 15–18; Thaler forthcoming, 107 and Thaler this volume.

³ See Maran 2010, 722–723 for the history of the excavations at Tiryns and also Rahmstorf 2008, 6–10 for a review of all excavation campaigns until 1985.

⁴ Maran 2001, 119, 120. Luxury objects in the Upper Citadel and in the *Epichosis* are conspicuously lacking (Vetter 2009, 257), especially in comparison with the finds from the Lower Citadel (Rahmstorf 2008, pls. 95–96; Maran 2008a, 57; fig. 38).

⁵ Compare e.g. with Pylos: Blegen & Rawson 1966.

⁶ Rodenwaldt 1912, 68; Müller 1930, 209.

⁷ Maran 2006, 124f. n. 2; Maran 2012, 153.

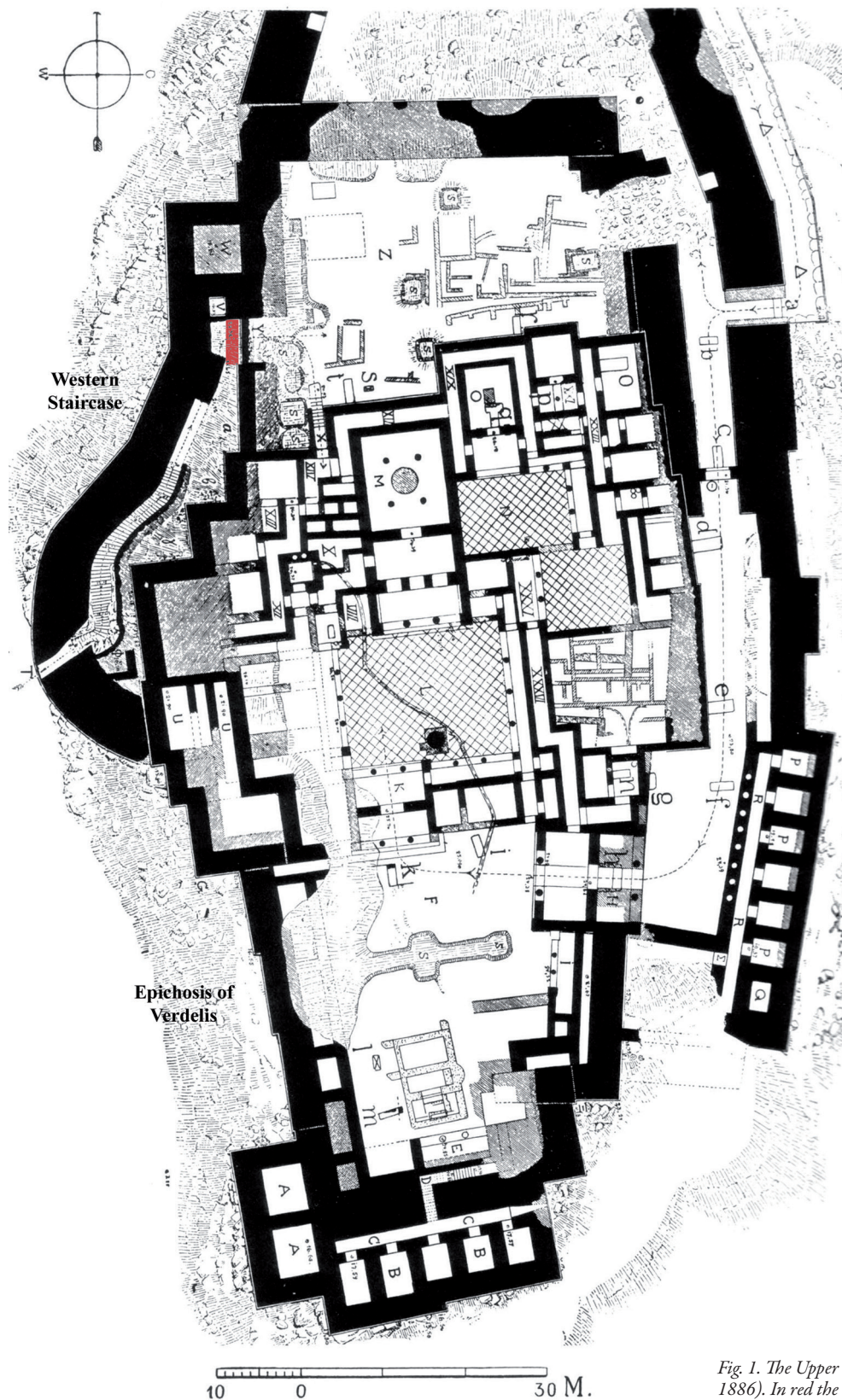


Fig. 1. The Upper Citadel of Tiryns (after Dörpfeld 1886). In red the new deposit of the Western Staircase.

The deposit at the Western Staircase⁸ extended over almost the entire terrace, east of the staircase, and was excavated by Rodenwaldt and Müller in 1909 and 1910.⁹ Due to the absence of any architectural remains connected with it, all excavators soon came to the conclusion that this was a secondary deposit, part of a dump, consisting of debris most probably from a destruction event and a clearing process in the Upper Citadel which was discarded here.¹⁰ The most conspicuous find from this deposit is the famous fresco that was found together with many broken vessels and ash in the lower part of the deposit.¹¹ The fresco dump was covered by a layer, c. 1 m thick, that included only Mycenaean pottery, and that in turn was sealed by a pebble floor. Above the latter, Mycenaean pottery was found mixed with Geometric pottery.¹² Although Müller correctly dated the pebble floor to the Mycenaean period, he disassociated the frescoes from the major destruction of the Upper Citadel and assigned it to an earlier, smaller destruction event, since he assumed that after the conflagration of the palace and the Great Megaron, the Upper Citadel was not reoccupied again in Mycenaean times, and that the so called Building T that was erected directly upon the old Great Megaron was a Geometric or an Archaic temple.¹³ Unfortunately, the loss of the pottery excavated in the Western Staircase during the Second World War prevented any further discussion concerning the dating of the frescoes until recently, when the new investigations of Kilian and Maran confirmed that Building T was actually the LH IIIC successor of the Great Megaron,¹⁴ a proposal first expressed by Blegen.¹⁵ In view of this, Maran argued that the frescoes of the Western Staircase could actually belong to the palace, destroyed at the end of LH IIIB2, and that they were deposited here during

clearing and repair activities in the Upper Citadel, in the early LH IIIC period.¹⁶

The second deposit, the *Epichosis*, is connected with the Western Staircase dump (in many aspects). Excavated in the course of the restoration of the citadel wall in 1957 by Verdelis, the *Epichosis* also represented a secondary deposit, though much bigger than the one within the staircase. It consisted of four layers: a lowermost layer of yellow earth, succeeded by a layer of burnt earth, and another layer of yellow earth, followed by a second layer of burnt earth.¹⁷ Between the two higher layers the remains of two human skeletons were found.¹⁸ The whole deposit, which served as evidence for at least one, and possibly more destruction events in the Upper Citadel that were followed by cleaning activities,¹⁹ was dated to LH IIIB2.²⁰ The discussion of the *Epichosis* was recently renewed, with the analysis of the decorated pottery presented by Voigtländer.²¹ Contrary to the aforementioned interpretations, Voigtländer argued that the *Epichosis* as well as the Western Staircase dump consist of material from the last palatial floor and from the fill below it, which had slipped as a single unit after the citadel wall had collapsed, due to an earthquake.²² This event was dated by Voigtländer to LH IIIC1, based on pottery of that phase found among the material of the Western Staircase deposit.²³ However, the majority of the vases were dated by him to LH IIIB. The problems concerning the origins and the dating of the *Epichosis* will be discussed again after the presentation of the recently-excavated deposit in the Western Staircase.

The excavation

In the course of a restoration programme in 1998 and 1999, a deposit closely resembling the one with the famous Tirynthian fresco excavated earlier in the Western Staircase, was recovered in the same area, and was thoroughly investigated by Alkestis Papadimitriou. The new deposit, which lies at the

⁸ The Western Staircase was entirely covered by wall blocks and was excavated by Dörpfeld in 1885 (Dörpfeld 1886, 377f.). It consisted of, in order from west to east a) the thick west Cyclopean wall, which followed the curved line of the staircase, with a gate in the corbelled vaulting, b) the open air staircase itself, with only the lower south steps preserved *in situ*, and c) a terrace east of the staircase, with a pavement of flat stones or a pebble floor. The south part of the terrace was much higher than the staircase, while the north part was much deeper, forming a ditch with a floor of trodden earth and stones: Müller 1930, 42, 44f., figs. 28–29; 47f., fig. 32. The whole construction was attributed to the third and last major building programme of the citadel: Müller 1930, 42, pl. 4.

⁹ Rodenwaldt 1912, 179f. A small area in the southernmost part of the terrace was already excavated by Dörpfeld in 1886 (Dörpfeld 1886, 382).

¹⁰ Dörpfeld 1886, 382; Rodenwaldt 1912, 179.

¹¹ Rodenwaldt 1912, 67f.; Maran 2001, 115f.

¹² Müller 1930, 44f., figs. 28–29; 46f.

¹³ Müller 1930, 209f. For a detailed discussion of Müller's dating of the fresco dump from the staircase see Maran 2001, 115f. and Maran 2012, 152–154.

¹⁴ Kilian 1981, 160; Maran 2000, 1f.; Maran 2001, 113f.

¹⁵ Blegen 1921, 130f.

¹⁶ Maran 2001, 116; Maran 2006a, 125–126 n. 2.

¹⁷ Verdelis *et al.* 1965, 137. See also Voigtländer 2003, 3.

¹⁸ Verdelis 1956, 5.

¹⁹ Verdelis 1956, 5f.; Ålin 1962, 26f.; Schachermeyr 1962, 251. The skeletal remains were usually interpreted as evidence of warfare. According to Voigtländer (2003, 11) they belonged to burials that took place after the deposition of the layers. At a later stage Schachermeyr (1976, 120–125) tried to argue that the whole deposit of the *Epichosis* was actually part of the Schliemann excavation dump from the Upper Citadel that was discarded outside the fortification wall.

²⁰ French 1969, 87; Wardle 1973, 297, 305 fig. 4; Mountjoy 1986, 34.

²¹ Voigtländer 2003.

²² Voigtländer 2003, 11.

²³ Voigtländer 2003, 28. For a discussion see also Jung 2006 and Gauß 2006.



Fig. 2a. The excavation trench in the Western Staircase. 1:20 (after Kardamaki 2013, plan 2).

northernmost part of the staircase terrace (Fig. 1), was well preserved and mostly untouched by earlier excavations.²⁴ In the following study I will present the new deposit and the results from the analysis of the decorated pottery, and endeavour to connect it with events taking place in the Upper Citadel.

²⁴ The study of the stratification and the analysis of the decorated pottery from this new deposit formed the main part of my doctoral dissertation (Kardamaki 2013). The wall paintings are currently being studied by J. Maran, A. Papadimitriou and U. Thaler. See also Maran, Papadimitriou & Thaler in this volume.

The excavation area was divided into a north and a south sector. The north sector was occupied by the Cyclopean foundation wall of the staircase, which was revealed after the removal of only 20 cm of soil (Fig. 2a). Although the steps are not preserved, the foundation wall helps us to reconstruct the course of the staircase which, at its northern end, actually turns east towards the Middle Citadel, clearly confirming Dörpfeld's first supposition (Fig. 1),²⁵ rather than following

²⁵ Dörpfeld 1886, 381.

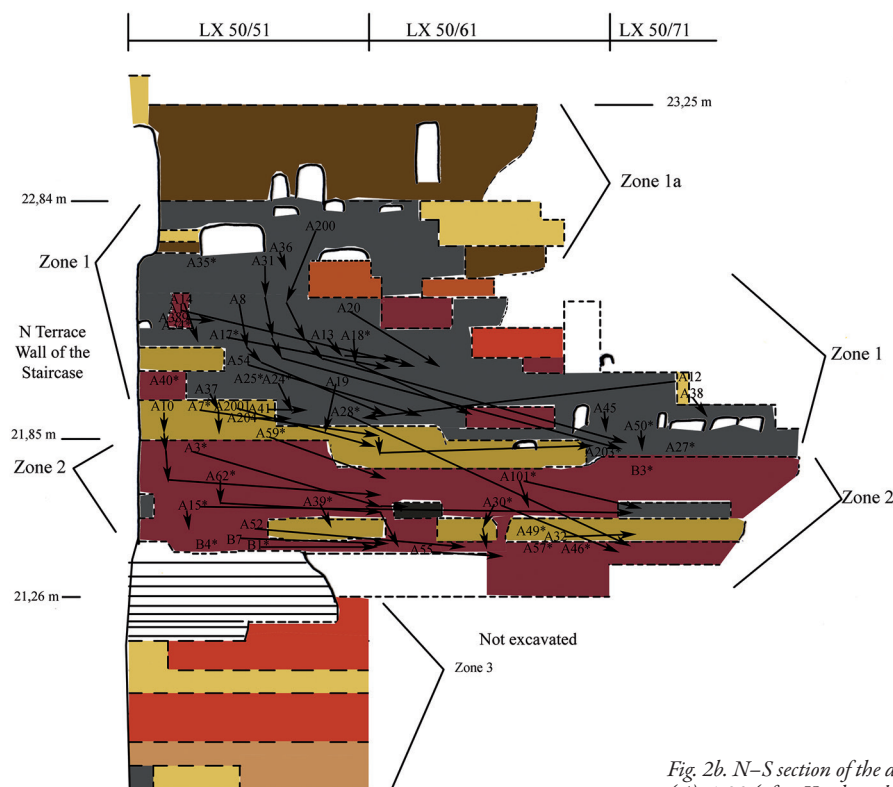


Fig. 2b. N-S section of the deposit with the Zones 1–3 and the pottery joins (A). 1:20 (after Kardamaki 2013, Profile B–Ba).

a straight line to the tower as Müller assumed.²⁶ The yellowish soil excavated between the stone foundation blocks of the staircase included mostly small potsherds, ranging in date from the Early Helladic to the Geometric and the Archaic periods. The area of the actual dump was called the south sector. The northern and western boundaries of the south sector are formed by the staircase wall, and its eastern boundary by the citadel wall, respectively (Fig. 2a).

The deposit was 3.50 m thick and covered an area of 3 by 2.50 m at most. Based on the 26 detailed surface drawings, I prepared a schematic reconstruction of nine sections (Fig. 2b), which show that the dump was better preserved at its northern part, reaching a depth of almost 3.50 m. Its southern part was probably partly affected by the early excavations, which according to the old documentation must have stopped precisely there.²⁷ All sections confirm the same sequence of layers. On top was excavated a layer of soft, brown and yellow soil with few sherds. One fragment, of Archaic date, possibly suggests a disturbance in these higher levels. Directly below, a

thick layer consisting of a soft grey soil was found, which was followed by another, of a greyish-red and greyish-yellow earth. The layers in the lower part of the dump were yellowish to reddish in colour (Fig. 2b). This layer sequence was supported by the analysis of the pottery joins. Two basic groups of joins were detected, the one belonging to the grey layer, which I call Zone 1, and the second belonging to the layers beneath, which I call Zone 2 (Fig. 2b). The third, lowest pocket of earth (Zone 3) yielded only small fragmentary pottery, with occasional joins with Zone 2. No traces of the palatial terrace pebble floor were discovered under the dump, but one has to keep in mind that the excavation was not completed. The possibility that the floor had been destroyed cannot entirely be excluded, since even in those areas where it was detected, its preservation was very poor.²⁸

²⁶ Müller 1930, 40, pl. 1.

²⁷ See Müller 1930, 46, Abb. 30 with a photo showing the staircase terrace and the south part of the 1999 excavated deposit.

²⁸ The palatial pebble floor was found during cleaning works by the local Archaeological Service in several parts of the terrace, and also directly to the south of the new trench.

Table 1. Amount and percentages of deep bowls (FS 284) in Zones 1 and 2. Sherds that could be assigned to more than one type are not included here.

Deep bowls FS 284	Zone 2		Zone 1	
	Diagnostic sherds	Rim fragments	Diagnostic sherds	Rim fragments
Deep bowl A	27 63%	18	153 68%	91
Deep bowl A with stemmed bowl banding out	1 2.5%	1	9 4%	9
Rosette deep bowl	10 23%	9	31 14%	20
Rosette Deep bowl with linear decoration	–	–	1 0.5%	1
Deep bowl B	1 2.5%	1	4 1.2%	2
Deep bowl C	3 7%	3	13 6%	8
Deep bowl A; monochrome interior	1 2.5%	1	12 5.5%	3
Linear deep bowl	?	?	1 0.5%	1
Sum	43 (100 %)	33	224 (100.5 %)	135

Zone 2

The greyish-yellow and greyish-red colours of the layers in Zone 2 most probably come from disintegrated and burnt mudbricks.²⁹ In addition, the earth often included charcoal, pebbles, small stones, and pieces of the white mortar that was used in the walls.³⁰ In rare cases bigger stones, in an upright position, were found. The large number of fresco fragments that came to light³¹ supports the theory that parts of mud-brick walls were possibly deposited here. The pottery of Zone 2 belongs to a relatively small assemblage, but is generally well preserved. 12% of the material included sherds that joined together while few vessels were complete or almost complete and many sherds belong to large fragments.

For the analysis of the pottery various classification criteria were applied. Furumark's typology was followed for the description of the shapes and motifs,³² while for the classification of the linear decoration of the vessels, Podzuweit's system was applied.³³ In addition, I define subtypes, so called "vessel

types", by combining the shape, a specific motif group,³⁴ and a certain linear decoration.³⁵ The vessel types are named by a combination of a number and letter in the lower case (e.g. vessel type 1a is a deep bowl Group A, with panelled patterns).³⁶

Analysis of the decorated pottery of Zone 2 indicates a date of LH IIIB2, or more precisely LH IIIB Final (SH IIIB "Ende"), following the terminology applied in Tiryns.³⁷ Among the diagnostic forms of Zone 2, the Group A deep bowl (FS 284) (*Fig. 3:1* and *3:3*) and the rosette deep bowl (*Fig. 3:4*) appear in relatively high percentages (*Table 1*). In particular, the percentage of rosette deep bowls in Zone 2 is much higher than the percentages of this type of vessel from the Lower Citadel.³⁸ The significant Group B deep bowl with a wide band on the rim (3 cm), two bands around the belly and monochrome interior³⁹ is present, but rare (*Fig. 3:5*). The strict classification criteria applied here led to the recognition of another distinct type of deep bowl, that I have dubbed "deep bowl Group C". It has a medium size rim band (1.50–2.50 cm), monochrome interior, and carries a decora-

²⁹ Rodenwaldt 1912, 67; Dörpfeld also mentions that the red earth that extended over large areas of the Upper Citadel most probably comes from burnt mudbricks (Dörpfeld 1886, 292).

³⁰ Müller 1930, 178.

³¹ Maran, Papadimitriou & Thaler in this volume.

³² Furumark 1941.

³³ Podzuweit 2007, 19, 311f.; Beil. 78a–j.

³⁴ For example, all types of triglyphs are grouped together.

³⁵ Very similar linear decorations are also grouped together, such as two variations of rim decoration from stemmed bowls (Podzuweit's decoration 6.1 and 7.1).

³⁶ Kardamaki 2013, 15f.

³⁷ Podzuweit 2007, Beil. 80.

³⁸ Podzuweit 2007, Beil. 20.

³⁹ Mountjoy 1986, 131.

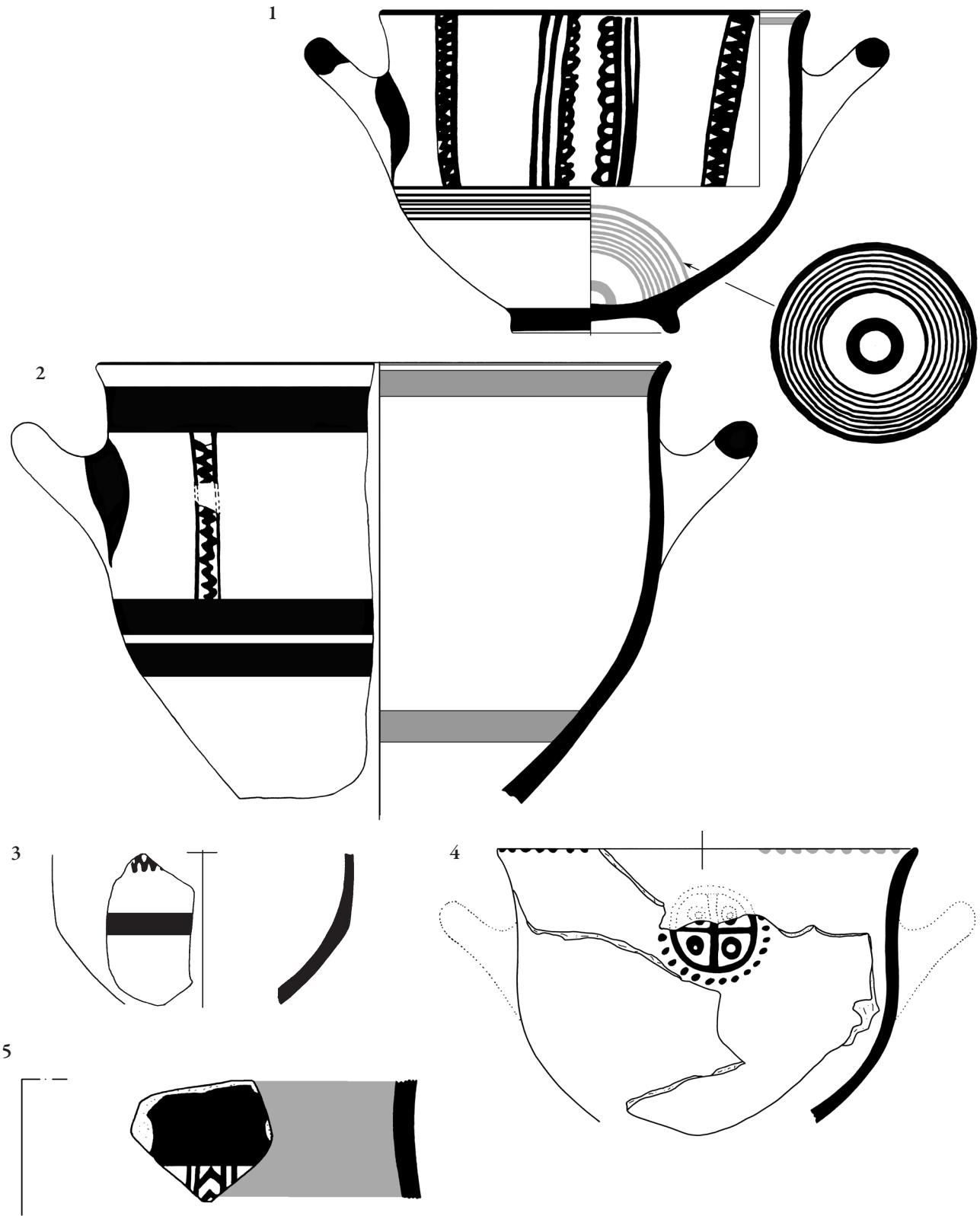


Fig. 3. Pottery from Zone 2, nos. 1–5 (after Kardamaki 2013), scale 1:2.

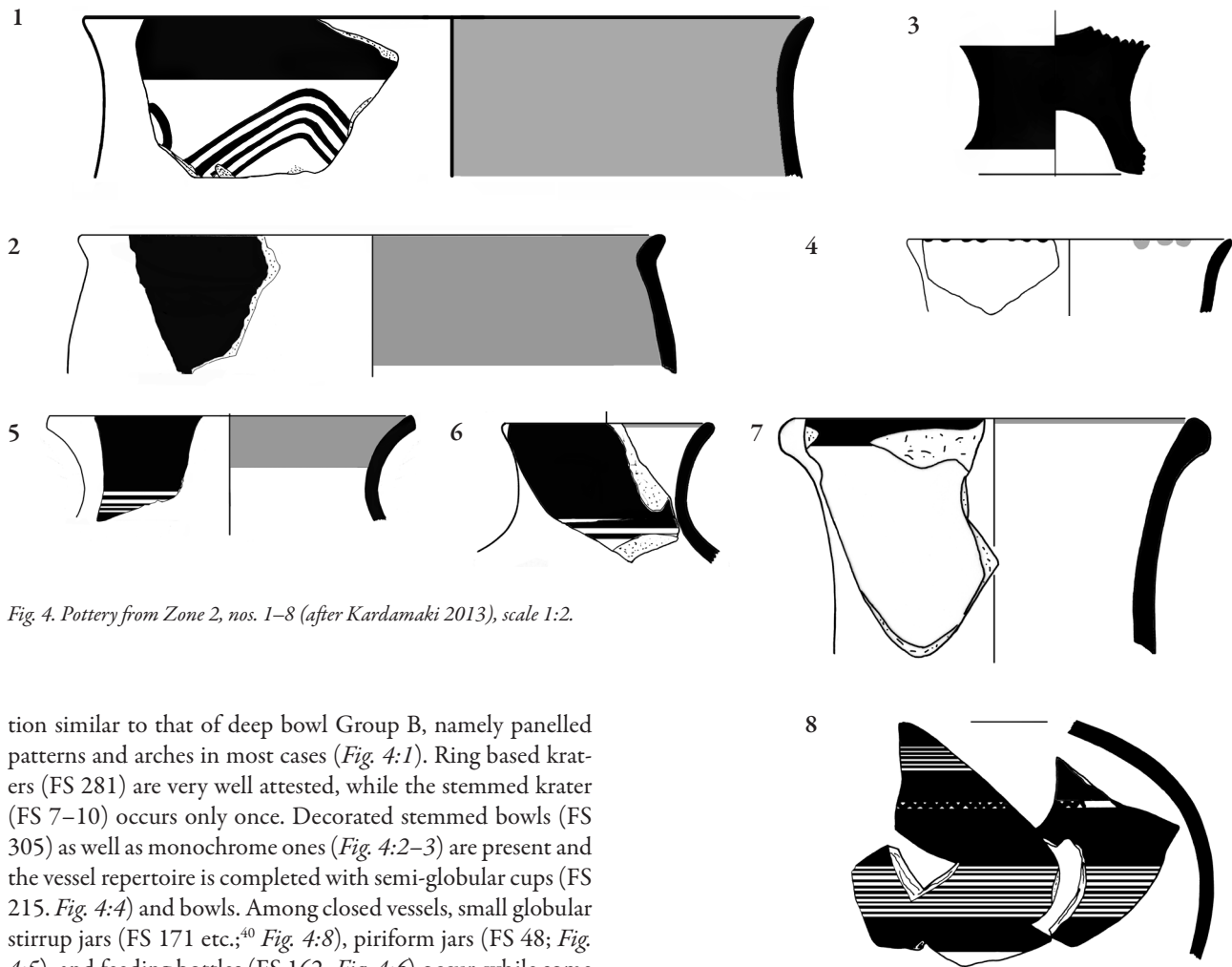


Fig. 4. Pottery from Zone 2, nos. 1–8 (after Kardamaki 2013), scale 1:2.

tion similar to that of deep bowl Group B, namely panelled patterns and arches in most cases (Fig. 4:1). Ring based kraters (FS 281) are very well attested, while the stemmed krater (FS 7–10) occurs only once. Decorated stemmed bowls (FS 305) as well as monochrome ones (Fig. 4:2–3) are present and the vessel repertoire is completed with semi-globular cups (FS 215, Fig. 4:4) and bowls. Among closed vessels, small globular stirrup jars (FS 171 etc.;⁴⁰ Fig. 4:8), piriform jars (FS 48; Fig. 4:5), and feeding bottles (FS 162; Fig. 4:6) occur, while some diagnostic sherds cannot be attributed to only one form (Fig. 4:7).

Some types that were considered to be of a slightly later date have already appeared in this layer, and owing to their low percentage some of them could belong to innovative pieces of the phase.⁴¹ This is the case with the Group A deep bowl, with carination on the lower body (Fig. 3:3), or the big deep bowl Group A, with the stemmed bowl decoration and the everted rim (vessel type 2, Fig. 3:2), which were both put forward by Mountjoy as being diagnostic features for her Transitional LH IIIB2/LH IIIC Early phase, following the destruction of the palace in LH IIIB2.⁴² Other progressive features previously

thought to appear only with LH IIIC Early, like the semi-globular cups FS 215⁴³ (Fig. 4:4), are present in Zone 2, but are rare. The rarity of these features is also suggested by the re-evaluation of LH IIIB2 Late contexts of the Lower Citadel.⁴⁴ Furthermore, the low percentage of Group B deep bowls in Zone 2 (Table 1), one of the diagnostic types of LH IIIB2,⁴⁵ that is equally represented as deep bowl Group C, is also attested in other contemporary contexts (LH IIIB Final) of

⁴⁰ Here I follow Stockhammer 2008, 106f. for the description of the form of the small stirrup jars in fragmented condition.

⁴¹ With the terms “floruit”, “fading” and “innovativ(e)”, Schönfeld 1988, 156f. and Kilian 1988b, 117–118, figs. 2–3 describe the main stylistic tendencies and percentages that may define a pottery phase.

⁴² Mountjoy 1999, 37, fig. 3, 177; 561, fig. 205, 291.

⁴³ Mountjoy 1999, 38 dates the earlier appearance of the medium-band cup in her Transitional phase. See French & Tylour 2007, 426 for a cup with dots on the rim from a LH IIIB2 Late context in Mycenae.

⁴⁴ As a reference context from the Lower Citadel, for purposes of comparison, I investigated the pottery of the so called *Zwinger*, an open air area between Building VI and the west fortification wall (Kilian 1979, 400f., 402 fig. 27), as this context forms, according to Podzuweit 2007, 207 the main source for LH IIIB2 pottery (LH IIIB “Entwickelt” and LH IIIB “Ende”). See Kardamaki 2013, 292–306.

⁴⁵ French 1969, 74.

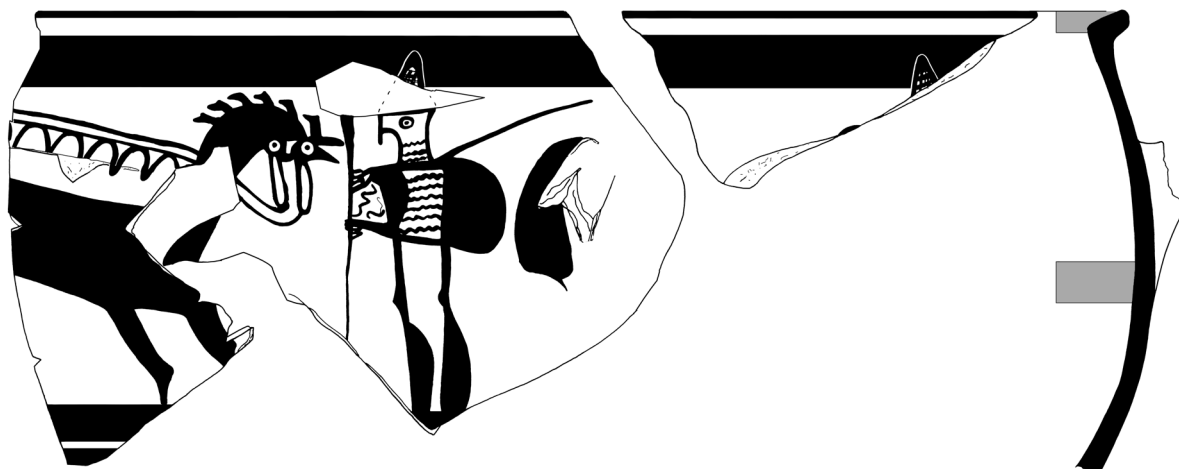


Fig. 5. Pottery from Zone 2 (after Kardamaki 2013), scale 1:3.

the Lower Citadel.⁴⁶ The presence of monochrome stemmed bowls, a vessel thought to be a type fossil of LH IIIA2,⁴⁷ is confirmed also in LH IIIB2 contexts from the Lower Citadel⁴⁸ and from the *Epichosis*.⁴⁹ The diagnostic forms of Zone 2, most probably part of a destruction debris dumped in the Western Staircase terrace, seem to suggest a typical LH IIIB2 Late assemblage, following the term newly proposed by Vitale,⁵⁰ or LH IIIB Final, according to Podzuweit,⁵¹ thus

⁴⁶ Kardamaki 2013, 395. Concerning deep bowls with monochrome interior, Podzuweit (2007, 29) unfortunately grouped deep bowls with all kinds of decoration together under the term “Skyphos B”. Although he differentiated deep bowls with a small rim band (decor 9.2), from others with a bigger one (decor 9.1), there are still vessel types that need to be separated (this refers especially to the deep bowls with decor 9.1).

⁴⁷ Mountjoy 1986, 92, fig. 112, 7.

⁴⁸ The type is present in the *Zwinger*. The proposal made by Podzuweit (2007, 55; Beil. 34) that the type decreases in the second half of LH IIIB (LH IIIB “Entwickelt-Ende”), as the percentage of the monochrome deep bowl increases, should probably be revised.

⁴⁹ Voigtländer 2003, pl. 133, Mo1–Mo9; pl. 135, Mo19–Mo25. Some of the bowls have reserved circles on the interior. Due to the concentration of monochrome open vessels, especially of stemmed bowls and basins, in the lower layer of the *Epichosis*, Voigtländer 2003, 9f. assumed a LH IIIA2 assemblage here. However, such vessels are also very well represented in LH IIIB1 contexts, as in Tsoungiza (Thomas 2005, 499, fig. 22, 1–9). A possible explanation could be that they form part of a different room assemblage, within the *Epichosis*, maybe a storeroom for monochrome vessels, and not pottery from a LH IIIA2 deposit. See Kardamaki 2013, 320.

⁵⁰ Vitale 2006, 199.

⁵¹ Podzuweit 2007, 321. Note though that Podzuweit’s thesis, that some ceramic types like the decorated carinated cup FS 240, are diagnostic of LH IIIB Final, is not shared here (Kardamaki 2013, 397). See also Stockhammer 2008, 55 n. 296.

suggesting that the palace of Tiryns was destroyed at the same time as Mycenae⁵² and Midea.⁵³

While the division of LH IIIB2 into an early and later phase is now broadly accepted, the redating of some old contexts is currently being discussed. In Tiryns the pottery phase LH IIIB “Entwickelt”, the earlier stage of LH IIIB2,⁵⁴ was assigned together with LH IIIB “Ende” to LH IIIB2 Late, while LH IIIB “Mitte”, a phase that according to Schönfeld and Kilian belongs to LH IIIB1, was assigned to LH IIIB2 Early.⁵⁵ But this new proposal should be treated with caution, since new analysis of the pottery from the *Zwinger* rather confirms the division suggested by Kilian and Podzuweit.⁵⁶

Finally, two other pottery groups worth mentioning, well represented in Zone 2, are the ring based kraters (FS 281) decorated in pictorial manner (Fig. 5) and Cretan imports, including transport stirrup jars (FS 164) and rare amphorae, such as the one with the oval mouth (Fig. 6:1–2, Table 3). The Cretan imports seem to support new data from Tiryns⁵⁷ and

⁵² French & Tylour 2007, 4 table 1.

⁵³ Demakopoulou 2003, 91.

⁵⁴ According to Kilian 1988b, 118, fig. 3, the Tiryns pottery phase LH IIIB “Entwickelt” is equal to the LH IIIB2 pottery phase.

⁵⁵ French & Stockhammer 2009, 197.

⁵⁶ The percentages of the decorated stemmed bowls and the deep bowls Group B, which are higher in the LH IIIB “Entwickelt”, than on the LH IIIB “Ende” floor, seem to support the separation of the two horizons (Kardamaki 2013, 302f. 386–388). Furthermore, the high percentage of diagnostic LH IIIB1 shapes on LH IIIB “Mitte” floors, makes a re-dating of the Lower Citadel building horizon 16 (LH IIIB “Mitte”) in the early stage of LH IIIB2 questionable (French & Stockhammer 2009, 183, table 4). According to the published material (Schönfeld 1988, Tab. 1–2) the ratio of whorl shells (FM 23) to triglyphs (FM 75) is 1:2.1 and of the kylikes (FS 256–258) to the deep bowls is 1:2. These ratios recall typical pottery assemblages of the LH IIIB1 period (Wardle 1969, 264f.; Wardle 1973, 305, fig. 4). See also Thomas 2005, table 3.

⁵⁷ Maran 2005, 416f., 418 fig. 1.1.

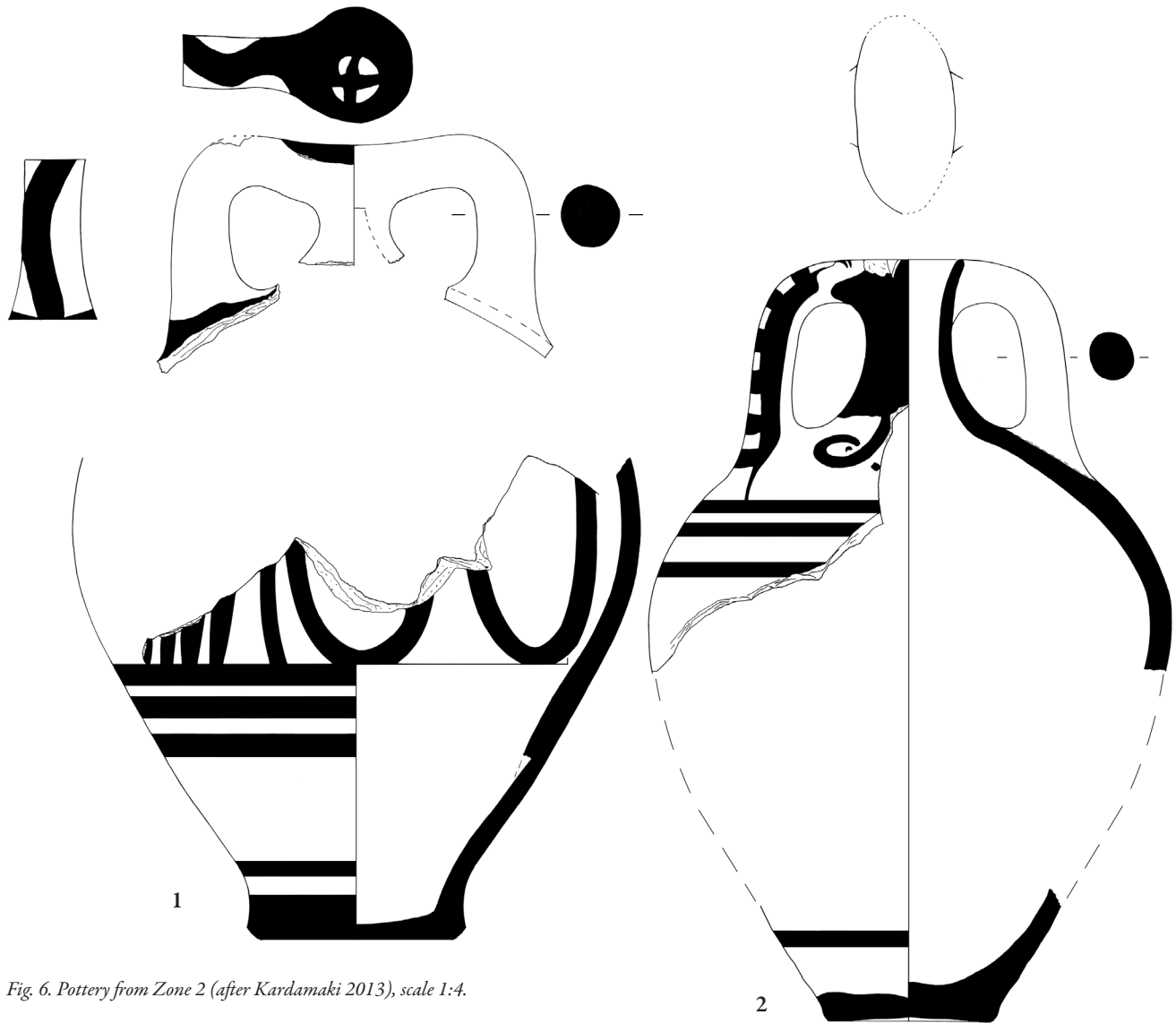


Fig. 6. Pottery from Zone 2 (after Kardamaki 2013), scale 1:4.

Midea,⁵⁸ according to which the export of Cretan vessels was not reduced, as was believed until recently,⁵⁹ due to periods of unrest in LH IIIB2.

Zone I

The higher level, Zone 1, is characterized by loose grey earth with ash, including small stones and pebbles, occasionally interrupted by reddish or yellow layers (*Fig. 2b*). It was almost twice as thick as Zone 2, while in some areas it has intruded

into the lower Zone, most probably as a result of animal activity. A part of Zone 1, especially the higher levels in the south, was probably removed during the first excavations in 1909.⁶⁰ The colour and consistency of the earth most probably derive from burnt wooden objects or wooden structural elements from walls. Zone 1 yielded many more sherds than Zone 2, but the general character of the pottery is more fragmentary, and fewer vessels were complete or half complete. In addition to that, fragments of Cretan imports are very rare, as is also the case with pictorial pottery.

⁵⁸ Demakopoulou 2009, 243f.

⁵⁹ Haskell 2005, 207.

⁶⁰ See Müller 1930, 46 Abb. 30 for a photo showing the upper south part of the newly-excavated deposit by Alkisti Papadimitriou already partially cleared by the German campaign in 1910.

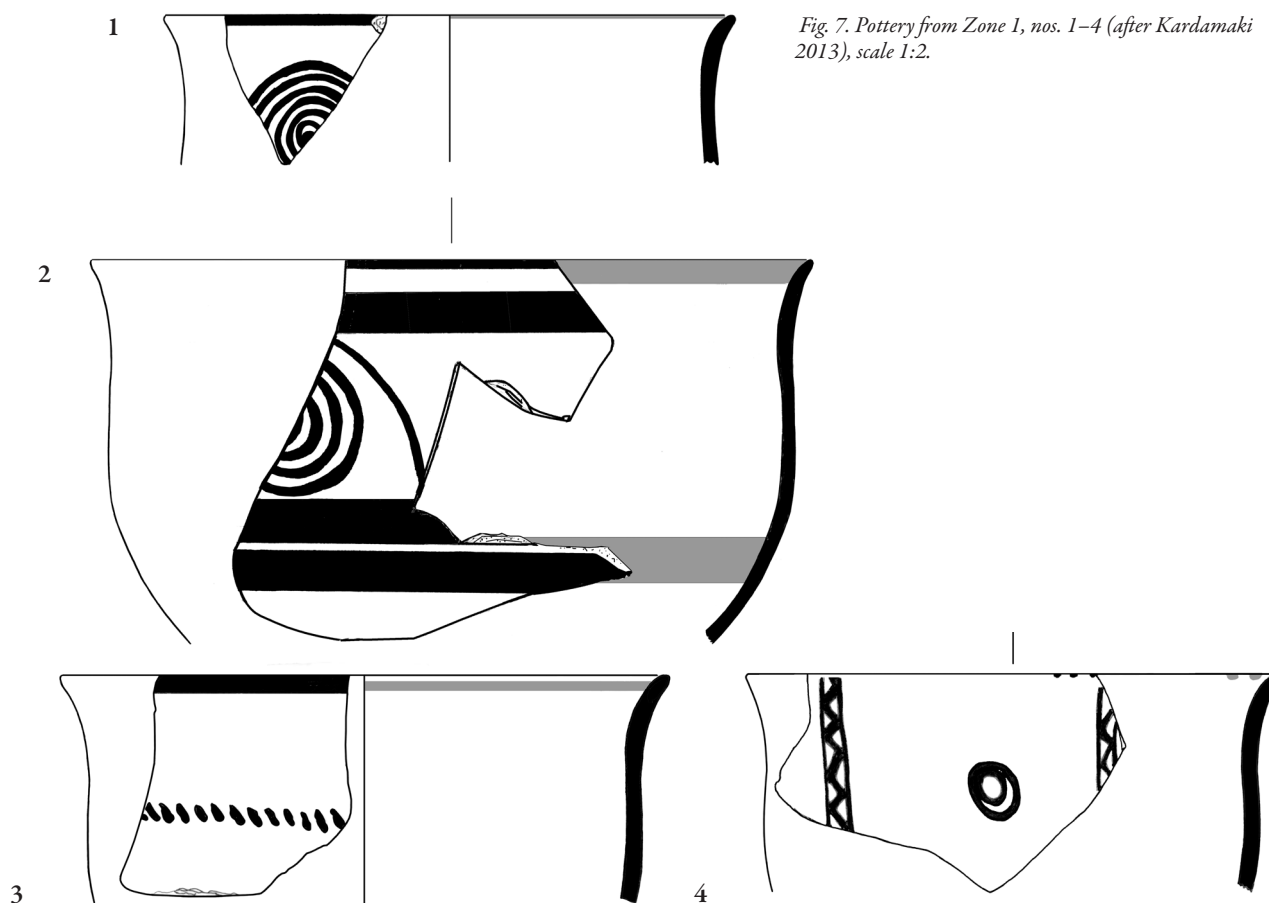


Fig. 7. Pottery from Zone 1, nos. 1–4 (after Kardamaki 2013), scale 1:2.

The pottery analysis and comparison with Zone 2 showed that although typical pottery features of the LH IIIB2 period are abundant, there are two noticeable differences. Firstly, some vessel types occur in much higher percentages in Zone 1, and secondly, specific vessel types, motifs, and even decoration are limited to Zone 1. For example, the Group A deep bowl, again the most frequent vessel type, is now often decorated with antithetic (FM 50), running spirals (FM 46) and narrow zonal patterns, such as foliate band (FM 64) (Fig. 7:1 and 7:3), while other forms of decoration, such as lozenges (FM 73), are becoming rare (Table 2). In addition, the percentage of the rosette deep bowl drops in Zone 1 (Table 1), while the better-preserved vessels of this type belong to small vessels, with the motif high up, close to the rim, a feature that at Mycenae occurs in early post-destruction levels⁶¹ (Fig. 8:2). Among deep bowls with monochrome interior, the Group B deep bowl is the least frequent type, while the deep bowl Group A with monochrome interior, increases in numbers

Table 2. Frequency of selected vessel types in Zones 1 and 2.

Vessel types	Zone 2		Zone 1	
	Diagnostic sherds	Rim frs	Diagnostic sherds	Rim frs
Deep bowl A FM 46 (GT1c), FM 50, 51 (GT1f)	3	2	36	15
Deep bowl A FM 75 with FM 58 (GT1e)	5	4	2	1
Deep bowl A FM 75; stemmed bowl banding out (GT2a)	1	1	1	1
Deep bowl A FM 46 or 51; stemmed bowl banding out (GT2b-c)	–	–	3	3
Deep bowl A wavy band	–	–	3	1
Deep bowl C FM 46 (GT5a)	–	–	7	4
Sum	6	6	37	19

⁶¹ Mountjoy 1986, 151, fig. 190, 1–2; French 2011, 34, fig. 9, 66–412.

Table 3. Categories of decorated pottery in Zone 2. Amount and percentages of estimated vessel individuals.

Vessel individuals (Zone 2)	Kraters (pictorial decoration)	Other open vessels	Cretan imports (closed vessels)	Other closed vessels	Miniatures	Sum
Amount	3	41	9	15	4	72
Percentage	4%	57%	12.5%	21%	5.5%	100%

(Table 1). The latter is decorated with either triglyphs (Fig. 8:3) or narrow zonal patterns, while one of the most popular vessel types, that is also restricted to Zone 1, is the deep bowl Group C, with running spirals (Fig. 8:4, Table 2). Other vessel types of deep bowls only attested in Zone 1 are: the deep bowl with wavy band (Fig. 8:1), the big Group A deep bowl with the banding of a stemmed bowl and running spirals (Fig. 7:2) or other eclectic linear decoration (Fig. 7:4), the medium band bowl,⁶² or the linear decorated deep bowls, with a very narrow rim band on the exterior⁶³ (Fig. 8:5–6). The increase of the big Group A deep bowl, with the linear decoration borrowed from the stemmed bowl, is accompanied by a decrease of the stemmed bowl (FS 305). Semi-globular cups (FS 215) are also very well attested, most of them decorated with dots on the rim or with a small band on the exterior rim, with monochrome interior, and, less frequently, with a medium rim band (medium band cups) (Fig. 8:8–10). The last two mentioned versions of FS 215 could not be identified in Zone 2.⁶⁴

No secure examples of stemmed kraters were found, and the ring based kraters with monochrome interior (FS 282; Fig. 9:1–3) are as frequent as the ones with linear decoration inside. Running spirals are the most frequent motifs of the form. The number of basins (FS 294) with monochrome interior has increased. Furthermore, a bowl with horizontal handles, occasionally with decorated rim (FS 295B; Fig. 8:11), and possible rim fragments, belonging to linear decorated conical bowls or kylikes (FS 242/274; Fig. 8:12) are attested only in Zone 1, while a stem with monochrome interior might belong to a painted carinated kylix (FS 267) (Fig. 8:13).

Concerning the closed shapes, the small stirrup jars (Fig. 9:4) occur more often, and some rims have slightly hollowed

lips (Fig. 9:5). The tassel on the shoulder of one fragment is noteworthy as a more progressive feature⁶⁵ (Fig. 9:6).⁶⁶ Another wall fragment possibly belongs to a big collar necked jar (FS 63; Fig. 9:7).

The general features of the pottery listed above seem to differentiate Zone 1 not only from Zone 2, but also from other LH IIIB Final contexts in the Lower Citadel, and they particularly seem to recall features of the earliest LH IIIC Early phase, called LH IIIC Early 1 at Tiryns⁶⁷ and Mycenae.⁶⁸ The recognition and isolation of the earliest post-destruction pottery sub-phase in Tiryns has proved to be difficult, first of all because of the rarity of closed contexts belonging to that period.⁶⁹ Secondly, intensive later building activities are often responsible for the mixing of relevant contexts.⁷⁰ Finally, the changes that have taken place in pottery style since LH IIIB2 are still minor,⁷¹ and inhibit the identification of type fossils, as is the case with previous or later pottery phases. A dating of Zone 1 to Mountjoy's Transitional phase would create some problems, since, as we have seen, diagnostic features assigned by her to that phase⁷² appear already in Zone 2 (Fig. 3:2–3).

Despite possible regional differences during the earliest LH IIIC period, Rutter's definition for the earliest post-destruction pottery sub-phase, known as LH IIIC Phase 1, a term that is maybe methodologically clearer than the term "Transitional Phase,"⁷³ has prevailed.⁷⁴ According to Rutter, characteristic features of Phase 1 include the appearance of the

⁶⁵ French 2007, 527, fig. 2.

⁶⁶ This fragment comes from the south part of the trench, where the grey layer of Zone 1 had intruded into the lower layers. For this reason it is assigned to Zone 1.

⁶⁷ Podzuweit (2007, 213f., Beil. 84) uses the term even though he hardly differentiated the pottery belonging to that sub-phase, since he assumed a continuity of the pottery tradition from LH IIIB to LH IIIC Early. The only form Podzuweit connected with an earliest stage of LH IIIC Early was the conical cup FS 242. See also Stockhammer 2008, 54f.

⁶⁸ French 2011, 35f.

⁶⁹ Podzuweit 1979, 412; Damm-Meinhardt forthcoming.

⁷⁰ Kilian 1979, 410.

⁷¹ Podzuweit 2007; Stockhammer 2008; Maran 2011, 174.

⁷² Mountjoy 1997, 111f. For this aspect see Vitale 2006.

⁷³ In most cases the term "Transitional" only replaces Rutter's term of LH IIIC Phase 1; Rutter 2003, 197.

⁷⁴ Vitale 2006.

⁶² This rim fragment comes from the south part of the trench, where the grey layer of Zone 1 had intruded into the lower layers.

⁶³ The existence of the linear deep bowl as a diagnostic LH IIIB2 Late type (French & Stockhammer 2009, 210, fig. 19, 7) needs further confirmation; the relevant piece comes from a layer that includes both LH IIIB and LH IIIC pottery (Podzuweit 2007, 224).

⁶⁴ The dating in LH IIIB2 of a medium band cup from Building I of the Lower Citadel (French & Stockhammer 2009, 210, fig. 19, 8) should be treated with caution, since pottery joins from the area (Podzuweit 2007, Taf. 24, 4) suggest LH IIIC levelling work that intruded into older layers.

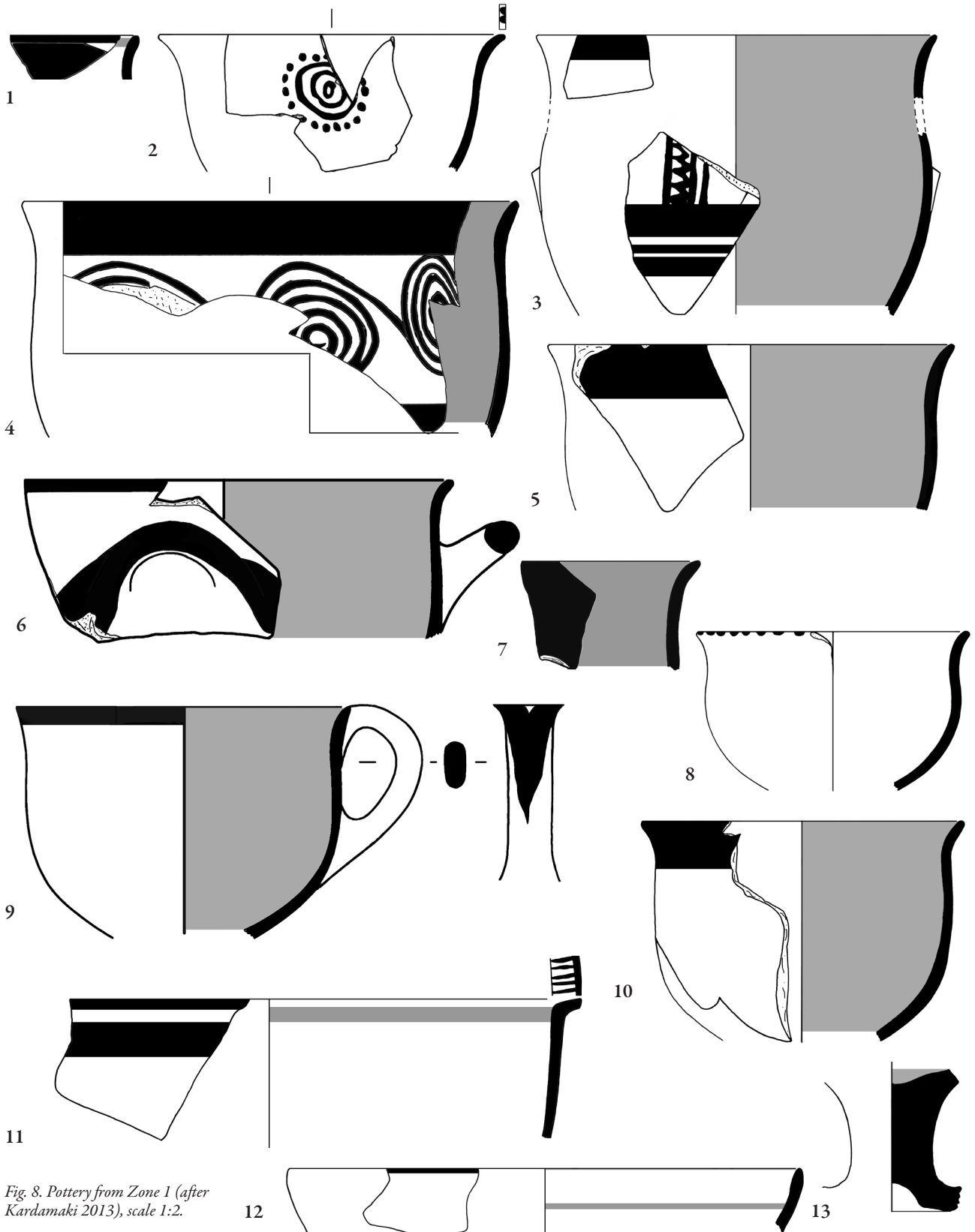


Fig. 8. Pottery from Zone 1 (after Kardamaki 2013), scale 1:2.

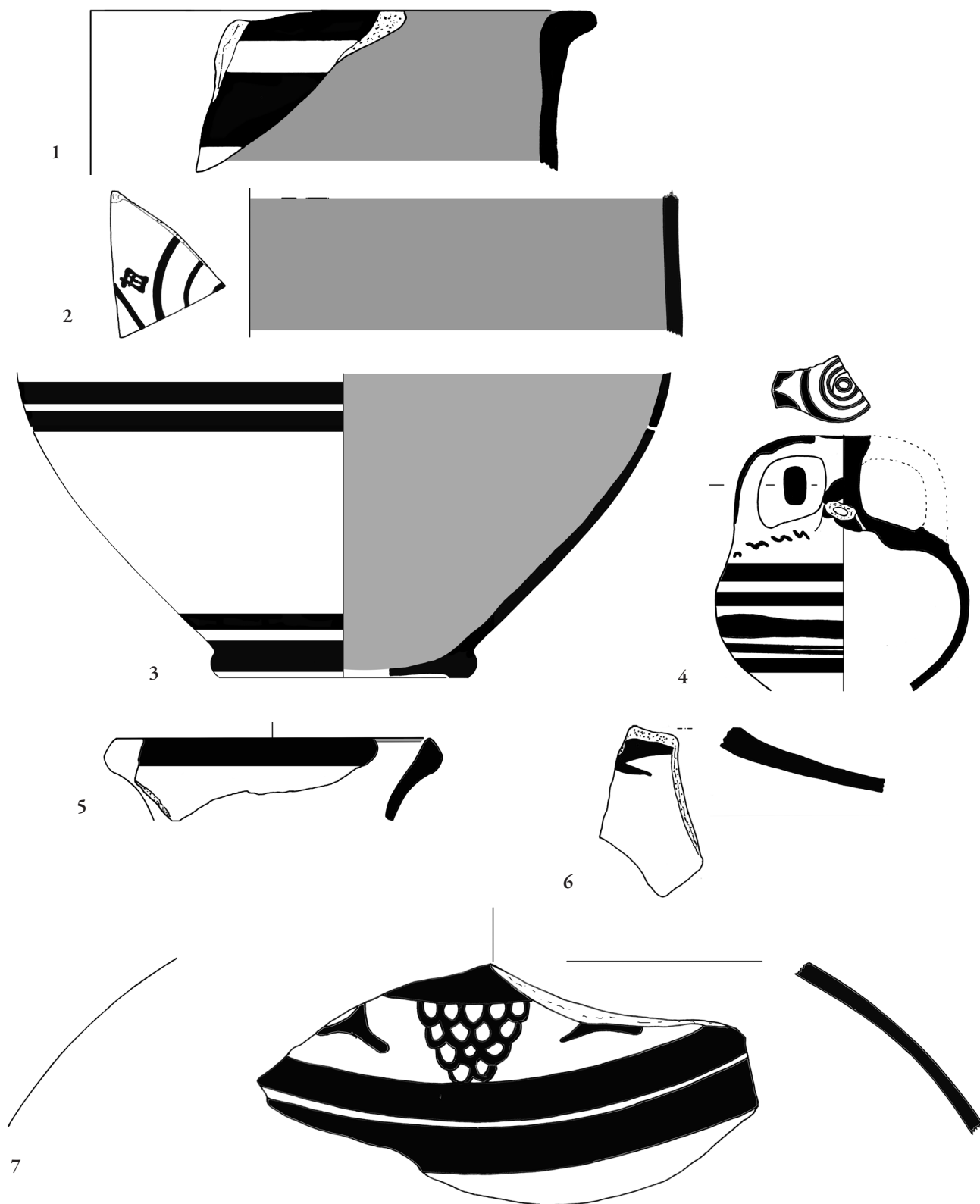


Fig. 9. Pottery from Zone 1 (after Kardamaki 2013), scale 1:2, except no. 3, scale 1:3.

linear deep bowl (including the medium band bowl), or the linear semi-globular cup (FS 215), at a time when developed LH IIIC Early (Rutter's Phase 2–3) diagnostic types, like the linear decorated carinated cup with high swung handle (FS 240) and the carinated bowl (FS 295A) are still absent.⁷⁵ Some other types, like the linear conical kylix (FS 274) or the linear carinated kylix (FS 267), that, as we have seen above, occur with very low percentages in Zone 1 (*Fig. 8:12*), could be treated as innovations within Rutter's Phase 1. In any case, they appear at the same time in areas outside the Argolid, as for example in Attica, where this horizon is much better attested than in the Argolid,⁷⁶ while for some of these an earlier beginning could be shown.⁷⁷ The deep bowl with wavy band, that appears at Iria⁷⁸ and is now also attested in Attica,⁷⁹ is represented with low percentages in Zone 1. The linear carinated bowl (FS 295A), attested in LH IIIC Early 1 levels at Mycenae,⁸⁰ a type otherwise missing from contemporary contexts in Tiryns,⁸¹ Iria, and Attica,⁸² could possibly reflect local variations in pottery tradition. Finally, I would like to add that some old vessel types such as the rosette deep bowl or the deep bowl Group B continue to be in use during the whole LH IIIC Early period in the Argolid, although the latter has become very rare.⁸³

Conclusion

The analysis of the newly-excavated deposit in the northernmost part of the Western Staircase led to the recognition of two distinct layers that were not deposited simultaneously. The lower Zone 2, that included well-preserved pottery and dumped sections of walls with frescoes, provides evidence for the destruction of the palace by fire in LH IIIB2 Late, contemporary with the destructions at Mycenae and Midea. On the other hand, the pottery from the higher Zone 1 suggests a slightly later deposition date, in LH IIIC Early 1 (Rutter's Phase 1).

Moreover, the stratigraphy of the new deposit, described above, closely resembles the stratigraphy noted by Müller for the fresco dump, extending to the south part of the staircase terrace. There, too, he observed the existence of two layers; a lower one that contained the dump with the Tirynthian frescoes, and a second layer above it, which was eventually sealed by a pebble floor. Thus, it seems possible that Zone 2 of the new deposit, and the old fresco dump were part of the same layer deriving from the LH IIIB2 destruction debris of the Upper Citadel. This would mean that the Tirynthian frescoes adorned the walls of the palace destroyed at the end of LH IIIB,⁸⁴ and not those of an older building destroyed before the Great Megaron, as Müller first suggested.⁸⁵ The first results from the analysis of the fresco fragments from the new deposit revealed that most fragments from Zone 2 belong to medium scale scenes that could have adorned the walls of one and the same room.⁸⁶ On the other hand the re-evaluation of the frescoes excavated in the Western Staircase in 1909 and particularly of the famous procession of women led to the striking result that it was most probably placed on the walls of the vestibule of the Great Megaron.⁸⁷ Whether or not the Great Megaron was also the original location of the new fresco as well as of some of the pottery from Zone 2 is, however, still hypothetical. Another possible origin of the pottery from Zone 2 could be a room near the Great Megaron, where vessels used for feasting activities were stored. This last hypothesis is, however, not supported by the diversity of the pottery assemblage of Zone 2.⁸⁸ Finally, Zone 1 (*Fig. 2b*) is probably part of Müller's second layer, which must have served as a levelling ground for the new pebble floor, and can possibly be connected with general repair⁸⁹ in the area of the staircase.⁹⁰

The same general rebuilding project must have taken place also in other parts of the Upper Citadel. According to Voigtländer, the *Epichosis* represents material eroded down the slope after an earthquake had caused the fortification wall to collapse.⁹¹ However, our impression is that the existence of the *Epichosis* and the Western Staircase dump is connected with the same systematic repair and cleaning activities that took place in the Upper Citadel after the large-scale destruction. Verdelis, while excavating the *Epichosis*, actually found

⁷⁵ Rutter 1977, 1f.; Rutter 2003, 194, 197.

⁷⁶ Mountjoy 1995, 205, fig. 5, 58–59; Kardamaki 2011, 222, 228, 245 fig. 12, 74–82; 247, fig. 13.

⁷⁷ French & Taylour 2007, 405. A linear decorated kylix from the Citadel House at Mycenae is dated to LH IIIB2 Late but was found in a LH IIIB2 Early horizon (French & Stockhammer 2009, 182, table 3, 195, fig. 8, 3, 224).

⁷⁸ Döhl 1973, 183, fig. 16, A5, A7, A8, pl. 69.3–5; 70, 1, A13/6.

⁷⁹ Kardamaki 2011, 226, 236 fig. 7, 21–23. Rutter's opinion that the type is missing in Athens (Rutter 2003, 198) should be revised.

⁸⁰ French 2007, 534, fig. 7 (row 3, right).

⁸¹ Stockhammer 2008, 139.

⁸² See also Gauß 2003, 101, table 1 and Vitale 2006, 200, table 2 for the forms in LH IIIC Phase 1, although some details should be revised.

⁸³ Stockhammer 2008, pl. 16, no. 309; pl. 51, no. 1200.

⁸⁴ See Maran 2001, 116; Maran, Papadimitriou & Thaler, this volume.

⁸⁵ Rodenwaldt 1912, 68f.; Müller 1930, 209.

⁸⁶ Maran, Papadimitriou & Thaler in this volume.

⁸⁷ Thaler forthcoming; see also Maran, Papadimitriou & Thaler in this volume.

⁸⁸ See Hruby 2006, 46–70 for the pantries 18–22 at Pylos where many pots were stored by type. See Kardamaki 2013, 416–427 for a discussion on the origin of the pottery from Zone 2.

⁸⁹ Müller 1930, 45f.; fig. 29 reported a repair of the east wall of the staircase that he connected with the destruction.

⁹⁰ Maran 2006a, 124f. n. 2.

⁹¹ Voigtländer 2003, 10f.

a very similar situation to the one Dörpfeld found on the Western Staircase,⁹² since the *Epichosis* deposit was found outside the wall, covered by blocks.⁹³ If Voigtländer's proposal was correct, we would expect the reverse sequence, with the wall blocks at the bottom—while the deposit as part of a fill would start from the area inside the wall and cover the fallen blocks. Furthermore, the good preservation of the pottery and the relatively few sherds from older periods⁹⁴ do not support the argument that a part of the *Epichosis* was a fill underneath the last palace floor. Although the bulk of the deposit can be dated to LH IIIB2 Late, some vessel types have very good parallels to pottery only found in Zone 1. Thus it is possible that the *Epichosis*, like the Western Staircase deposit, represents a dump, resulting from the same cleaning and levelling activities that started after the destruction and ended in LH IIIC Early 1.⁹⁵ Although what caused the fortification wall to collapse, an earthquake or some kind of human agency, is not clear, the collapse of the fortification wall apparently does not mark the destruction of the palace at the end of LH IIIB2, but took place in a later period.⁹⁶

Apart from the west façade of the Upper Citadel, smaller deposits, like the ones from the Middle Citadel and from the dump of the Small Court X, in all probability also represent debris dumps from the large-scale destruction, and indicate that the cleaning activities were focused around the Great Megaron and the court. This area is also believed to be the only one that was actually reoccupied and reused after the smaller megaron (Building T) was built in LH IIIC. That all these deposits probably derive from such cleaning activities in the area of the former palace is further supported by the fact that Schliemann discovered very few wall paintings *in situ* on the Upper Citadel,⁹⁷ whereas they were found in large quantities in the aforementioned deposits.⁹⁸ In many other areas of the former palace, parts of the destruction debris were even left *in situ*, probably levelled.⁹⁹ This partial reoccupation of the

former palace seems to contrast with the extensive rebuilding and even replanning of the Lower Citadel¹⁰⁰ and the establishment of the new settlement in the north-west and north-east Lower Town, that also started in the phase represented by Zone 1, namely in the earliest part of LH IIIC Early.¹⁰¹

These differences in reoccupation are perhaps better understood if we accept that the reactivation of the Upper Citadel was defined by a symbolic and selective abandonment and reoccupation of old structures and features.¹⁰² The removal of the wall paintings with their powerful meanings, which ended in the huge dump of which Zone 2 forms a part, along the terrace of the Western Staircase, is maybe one of the best examples of such selective abandonment of symbols that followed the destruction of the palaces.¹⁰³

The whole procedure of the reoccupation that included the removal and levelling of the debris, the reactivation of the Western Staircase and the preparations for the erection of Building T, possibly ended, according to the evidence from Zone 1, in LH IIIC Early 1. This would indicate a rapid recovery from the destruction, even though the Upper Citadel with Building T, the new megaron, now had a completely new appearance and symbolism.¹⁰⁴

ELEFThERIA KARDAMAKI
elkardamaki@yahoo.gr

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⁹² Dörpfeld 1886, 377.

⁹³ Verdelis *et al.* 1965, 137. See also Gauß 2006, 319.

⁹⁴ Voigtländer 2003, 9, Abb. 3. See also Jung 2006, 190.

⁹⁵ According to Voigtländer (2003, 10) the pottery joins come from all layers, suggesting the *Epichosis* comprises a fill formed in a single deposition episode. The re-evaluation of the material could possibly clarify whether this is a general characteristic or if it is attested only in specific areas of the *Epichosis*. The latter could be due to disturbances in specific areas, a phenomenon observed also in the Western Staircase deposit. The re-evaluation of the material from the *Epichosis*, currently undertaken by French and Gauß, will certainly shed light on all these questions.

⁹⁶ The youngest piece found on the *Epichosis* can be dated to the Early Iron Age (Voigtländer 2003, pl. 129, Si 127). See Kardamaki 2013, 311–314.

⁹⁷ Dörpfeld 1886, 338f.

⁹⁸ Maran 2001, 115.

⁹⁹ Maran 2001, 118f.; Maran 2006a, 126; Maran, Papadimitriou & Thaler, this volume.

¹⁰⁰ Also the pottery from the filling in of the well in casemate 14 closely resembles that from Zone 1, suggesting that its abandonment took place in LH IIIC Early. *Contra* Kilian 1988a, 114, who has dated the fill to LH IIIB Middle, and *contra* French & Stockhammer 2009, 201, who date the fill to LH IIIB2.

¹⁰¹ Stockhammer 2008, 139, 158.

¹⁰² Maran 2006a, 128, 144; Mühlenbruch 2010, 103.

¹⁰³ Maran 2001, 118–119; Maran 2006a, 144.

¹⁰⁴ Maran 2006a, 128.

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