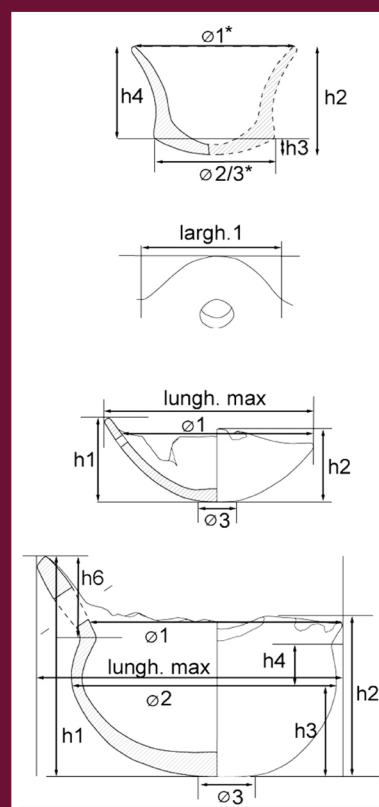
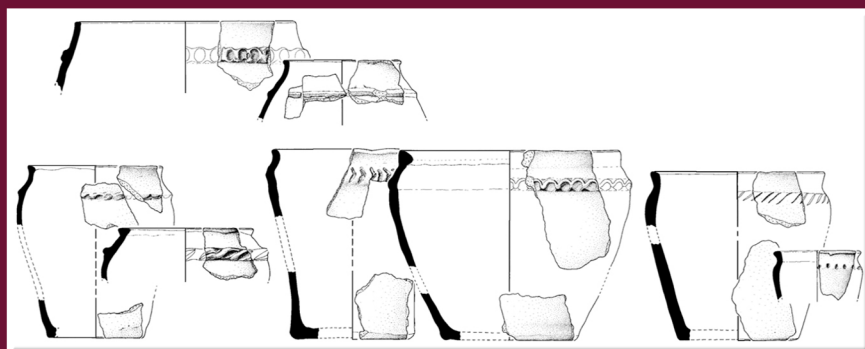
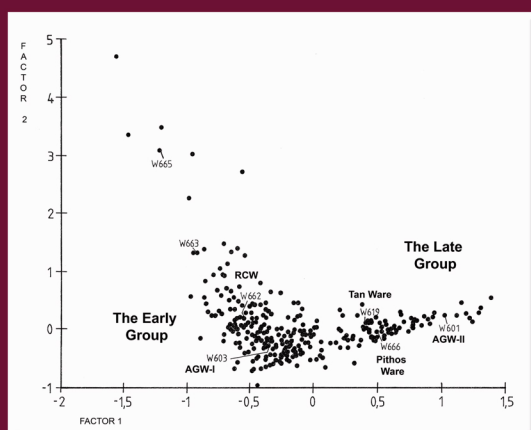


ANALYSING POTTERY

Processing – Classification – Publication



edited by

Barbara Horejs – Reinhard Jung – Peter Pavúk

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Preface

Archaeologists working on ceramic finds from long-term, large-scale excavations all face similar problems: heaps of pottery from hundreds of contexts of diverse quality, more often than not re-deposited in a secondary or even tertiary position. There can be no general approach since each site has its own specific characteristics, be it a flat settlement lasting just a couple of generations or a tell-settlement in use for millennia. Likewise, pottery with simple or no decoration must be viewed from a different perspective than pottery with complex decoration. Hand-made pottery will pose different problems to mass-produced wheel-thrown ceramics and sherds from a settlement must be treated in yet another way than whole pots from a cemetery.

It was, therefore, our intention to produce an edited volume offering fresh insight into modern approaches to processing large amounts of ceramic finds from settlement excavations, going 'back to basics' so to speak. The volume focuses on archaeological practice and more specifically on factors that determine the methodological choices made by researchers under specific working conditions. In other words: which methodological approach is appropriate to which kind of ceramic assemblage and for which type of stratigraphic context, especially if the analysis is supposed to be completed in a reasonable period of time. The choice of a suitable method also depends on the questions for which we seek answers by analysing the material: chronology, pottery production and use, social structures etc.

We believe that there is no general answer to these questions and that a methodological pluralism is justified by the specific problems which arise from the nature of the material and its archaeological contexts. Nevertheless, by concentrating on practical case studies it should be possible to assemble a list of conditions that determine which methods of analysis – and especially which statistical methods – can be employed in order to analyse most effectively certain kinds of pottery from certain types of contexts.

At this stage the volume can look back at a history of its own. Initially, a group of young archaeologists working in Slovakia, Austria and the Czech Republic met for a two-day workshop in Bratislava on 28th-29th November 2003, funded by the Österreichisches Ost- und Südosteuropa-Institut. We then attempted to bring the topic to a pan-European level and organised a session at the XII. Annual Conference of the European Association of Archaeologists in Cracow held on 22nd September 2006. Finally, to round off the issue thematically and geographically, other colleagues were invited to contribute to the volume, along with the participants at the two meetings. We are now pleased to offer perspectives ranging chronologically from the Bronze Age down to the Early Middle Ages and geographically covering the Aegean, Anatolia, the Levant, Egypt, as well as Central Europe. It was decided to arrange the volume by subject, which in the end proved a daunting task since many contributions covered several aspects and were not easy to categorise.

Even if a specific model developed for a particular site cannot be applied en bloc to other sites, there is always something inspirational about other people's models. We therefore humbly hope to offer some inspiration with the contributions collected in this volume.

Bratislava, Salzburg and Vienna, 20.11.2009

The Gold of Rhadamanthus: Ceramic Deposits and Wares Distribution at Phaistos and Ayia Triada during Middle Minoan III period.

LUCA GIRELLA

Introduction

In Greek mythology, *Ῥαδάμανθος* was known as the son of Zeus and Europa, brother of Minos, and ruler of the southern Cretan kingdom of Phaistos. In modern Crete, the archaeological site identified as Phaistos features a palace and numerous associated buildings, the flourishing nature of which testifies to the existence of the kingdom mentioned in both the Linear B tablets from Knossos (*pa-i-to*) and the Iliad (II, 648). Still inhabited during the historical time, Phaistos was destroyed by Gortys sometime the middle of the II century B.C. This part of Crete has always been praised for its numerous natural sources and the fertility of Mesara plain, the largest arable area (362 km²) in Crete. In addition, Kamares Ware, associated with this same area, has consistently been used by archaeologists to identify the Middle Minoan (henceforth MM) period here and indeed stands out for its critical importance to the understanding of the entire period.

In addition to being a useful tool for dating MM finds, Kamares Ware was a valuable product that functioned as a unifying element for regional identities within the Mesara, due to its intrinsic value and expressed prestige. Even today Kamares Ware does attract enormous attention and is always well-received at archaeological museums throughout Crete. This attraction can also be seen when considering the uninterrupted fascination that Minoan pottery has exercised on specialists since the earliest periods of investigation: it is still remarkable to me that in the well-known photograph of Miss Harriet Boyd Hawes – the first woman to lead an excavation in the Aegean and the excavator of Gournia – she holds with care a Minoan vessel fragment, taken from a biscuit tray displaying ceramic sherds like desserts¹. The photo is instructive, in that it allows for understanding the leitmotiv of the aesthetic approach to the study of Minoan pottery. In addition, it underscores the oft-explored topic of the recreation of the ‘Minoan’ past as the first ‘European civilization’, when elements of the Bronze Age Cretan culture were reordered to produce “a world of objects and images that would satisfy the Eurocentric colonial imagination and its territorial aspirations as well as the national project of the Cretan intellectuals”².

This paper focuses on the nature and composition of ceramic deposits of Phaistos and Ayia Triada, the two major settlements of western Mesara. The case study presented here focuses on the end of

¹ Allsebrook 2002, fig. 1. See also the charming description of the Minoan potters spirit by Harriet Boyd Hawes who was able to recognize their “true instinct for beauty”: Hawes – Hawes 1911, 124 f.

² Hamilakis 2006. See also Preziosi 2002.

the Middle Bronze age in Crete, the MM III (ca. 1750-1670/1650 BC), a crucial phase often labelled as intermediate or transitional period, when the form and status of the palaces and settlements were uncertain³. Pottery production reached a point of no return in MM III: it underwent major changes that implied both the twilight of the Kamares tradition and the emergence of new progressions in ceramics. For the sake of clarity, the time-span of MM IB to MM II is called *First Palace Period* or *Protopalatial* as opposed to *Second Palace Period* or *Neopalatial*, which covers MM III and LM I phases of the local Cretan development (LM = Late Minoan).

A passport to Kamares Ware

For years, Minoan pottery, and especially Kamares Ware, has been the subject of several important studies exploring both the stylistic and social aspects of its production. Leaving aside the problems surrounding the term Kamares⁴, one can say that the term in general refers to dark coated vessels with naturalistic or abstract motifs applied in polychrome (white, red, orange, ochre and purple). Kamares Ware also encompasses a wide spectrum of shapes, from small, medium small (these usually in fine and semifine fabric and wheel thrown) to medium-large and large shapes (these generally in coarse fabric and handmade). The appearance of Kamares Ware also coincides with the period defined by palatial organization on Crete (MM IB) and its production continues well into MM III. The pioneering stylistic analyses of Kamares Ware had as their main aim a typological assessment⁵, as well resolving chronological issues and correlations of sites⁶. Although Kamares Ware was considered exclusive to the main Minoan palaces – and this notion was widely disseminated by the publication of large masses of deposits from Phaistos and Knossos⁷ – over the past few decades the discovery of rich quantities of such ware from secondary sites (Ayia Triada, Kommos, Kamilari)⁸, surface surveys⁹, as well as not-Cretan settlements¹⁰ has greatly widened the current view of the function of these wares.

After the initial assessments, the next step was the evaluation of the Kamares production in the light of the emergence of the First Palaces. Thanks to their undeniable artistic qualities, Kamares vessels were, in fact, considered a prestigious artefact and produced by the palaces, and this production was assumed to be controlled by palatial elites¹¹. Such an assumption has in the long run sustained the theory that Cretan palaces were centres of production and distribution, promoting their ideology by means of Kamares Ware manufactured in the palaces¹². However, new research focused on the technological aspects of the ware and scientific analyses have substantially modified previous assumptions¹³. Both approaches have revealed the strong continuity of the manufacturing tradition. Furthermore, petrographic analyses carried out by P. Day and D. Wilson have surprisingly demonstrated that a large portion of Kamares Ware found at Knossos was produced in and imported from the western Mesara. The same scholars, more specific inspections, and particular scientific approaches to the study of polychrome pottery have shown that aspects of production, such as the choices of raw materials, the forming techniques, decoration and firing, have links with practices already present in the EM period of western Mesara¹⁴. This scenario sheds new light on Minoan pottery production, because it demonstrates the longevity of pottery tradition, “the deliberate continuation of a way of doing”, and shows how continuity and changes in pottery technology

³ Knappett – Schoep 2000; Walberg 1992. For the chronology see Manning 1995, 217–220.

⁴ It derives from the first discovery of this polychrome pottery in the Kamares cave located on the southern flank of the Ida mountain range.

⁵ Zois 1968; Walberg 1976.

⁶ Andreou 1978.

⁷ Levi 1976; Levi – Carinci 1988; MacGillivray 1998.

⁸ Carinci 1999; 2003; Betancourt 1990; Van de Moortel 1997; Levi 1961-62a; Walberg 1983.

⁹ Watrous et al. 2004.

¹⁰ The bibliography on the argument is large, see the works of Kemp – Merrillees 1980; Rutter – Zerner 1984.

¹¹ The most explicit contribution was the study of ‘Peer Polity Interaction’ model by J. Cherry, who correlated Kamares ware with the emergence of complex societies in Crete: Cherry 1986.

¹² For a different approach to the emergence of the First Palaces in Crete see Schoep 2006.

¹³ Knappett 1999; 2002; Day – Wilson 1998. A synthesis is also in Day et al. 2006, 29–34.

¹⁴ Faber et al. 2002; Day et al. 2006, 58–65.

might not always be the result of political transformations. One of the main results of this last stage of the research has been to inquire the ways through which MM polychrome pottery operated at the level of negotiation of social identity in the Mesara during the Bronze Age¹⁵.

Was MM III the last stage of Kamares Ware?

MM III covered a relatively brief time-span, generally depicted as a period of instability, when both palace centres and smaller-scale settlements were shaped by different histories, and were characterized by abandonment, renovation, and new constructions. Such transitional character still leaves unanswered the fundamental question of whether to address MM III as the end of the Protopalatial phase or the beginning of the Neopalatial – made all the more perplexing as this same period is book-ended by earthquakes. Furthermore, the difficulty of interpreting the evidence is again of critical importance due to evidence obtained from recent research and excavations. Traditional pottery analysis is beset with problems: the regionalism of pottery production, the recognition of type fossils, and the difficulties encountered in establishing whether any division can be made within the material. This is especially when considering whether there is any chronological distinction between MM III deposits towards the end of the period, and deposits from the beginning of LM IA (the so-called MM IIIB/LM IA transitional phase)¹⁶. The problems of chronology, terminology and subdivision for MM III are beyond the scope of this paper¹⁷. The attempts to distinguish MM IIIA from MM IIIB have been ambiguous; thus several scholars prefer to reject the traditional divisions of the period proposed by Arthur Evans and Duncan Mackenzie in *The Palace of Minos*¹⁸. Conversely, other scholars have come back to this subdivision in recent years, and it is followed also in this article¹⁹.

A ceramic approach to the study of MM III is not totally new²⁰. Stylistic analyses have inevitably separated pottery production from historical and architectural events: MM III pottery appeared to be going downhill, thus its designation as *post-Kamares*²¹. Indeed, the period offers archaeological indicators for evaluating shifts in ceramic production: the physical destruction of the centres of power and the temporary collapse of protopalatial authorities. Likewise, from a ceramic perspective, the passage to neopalatial era has been often investigated by several scholars, who have highlighted some general trends of the production, such as the impoverishment of forming techniques, the simplification in the range of shapes and decorations, and the disappearance of high-quality Kamares pottery²². Moreover, it has been generally argued that the destruction of the first palaces played no marginal role in pottery production, causing a major break with the protopalatial tradition. A general continuity was also observed at Knossos, mostly connected with the fast rebuilding of the palace, whereas the apparent deregulation of pottery production at Phaistos has been interpreted as the result of failed reconstruction attempts²³. However, MM III pottery production followed the general trend of the protopalatial era, although it did undergo some significant developments.

Changes to and disappearances of shapes are part of pottery transformation, the characteristics of which remained substantially uninterrupted. On the one hand, there are the remarkable disappearance of the so called Egg-shell Ware (the most sophisticated, fine and thin-walled Kamares production), the decrease of incised and relief vessels, and twilight of specific shapes, such as the carinated cups and the lamps with pedestal base. On the other hand, features such as the increase of wall thickness and the sharp reduction and simplification of painted decoration lived together with some technological developments, such as the extension of the wheel throwing technique also to medium-large vessels²⁴.

¹⁵ Day – Wilson 1998; Day et al. 2006. See also Haggis 2007.

¹⁶ Warren 1991.

¹⁷ Girella 2007; in print a.

¹⁸ Evans 1921. See Stürmer 1992; Walberg 1992; Van de Moortel 1997.

¹⁹ Hood 1996; Knappett – Cunningham 2003; Macdonald 2004; Girella 2007; Hatzaki 2007; Girella in print a.

²⁰ Stürmer 1992; Walberg 1992.

²¹ Walberg 1976; 1992.

²² Walberg 1992; Van de Moortel 1997.

²³ Van de Moortel 2002.

²⁴ Knappett 1999, 128.

Furthermore, a noteworthy shift that operated at level of a Copernican Revolution, and paved the way for the subsequent LM I pottery production, was the emergence of and improvement upon Dark-on-Light Lustrous (DLL) painted pottery. This specialized ware featured surfaces from burnished to hard lustre in dark paint. The DLL painted Ware, probably conceived at Knossos already by the protopalatial period, spread to both eastern and southern Crete during MM III, and became a high-quality product by MM IIIB, by which time it was the leading export product in a market so far dominated by Monochrome and LD Wares. Thus, the perception is that, despite clear changes from MM II, the MM III pottery shows a continuity and expansion of its production as it carried Kamares Ware towards new horizons (Fig. 1).

A recent study of the ceramic deposits from Phaistos and Ayia Triada carried out by the author has revealed details in the patterns of formation, composition and distribution of deposits from the two sites, which accord with the MM IIIA and IIIB distinction²⁵. By analyzing ware distribution from both settlements it is also possible to understand the different mechanisms of pottery production and ware circulation at these two sites, which played different roles from MM IIIA to MM IIIB. Some initial conclusions of this study are presented here²⁶.

Methodological issues

Before analyzing ware distribution, it is important to review some methodological issues. The excavations strategies at Phaistos and Ayia Triada, were quite different, as was the method of pottery recording. Phaistos, first excavated by L. Pernier and later by D. Levi, has recently undergone a fresh exploration by V. La Rosa and his team (1998, 2000-2004)²⁷. Pottery analysis and recording was definitely beyond the main concerns of the first excavator, who focused on the superimposition of the two palaces and the architectonic layout of the identified structures. Only entire vessels survived from this pioneer undertaking.

Later, during Levi's excavations, the enlargement of the excavation area towards the southern, western and eastern slopes of the palace hill produced tons of pottery. Inevitably, there was an attempt to employ a stratigraphical approach, complicated by the fact that excavation on the slopes produced different types of contexts (rarely primary) evidently disturbed by later building activities and terracing. After some preliminary reports, it became clear that one of the aims of Levi's activity was also to build a new historical sequence, quite different to that proposed by Evans for Knossos. In order to achieve a substantial unity in the succession of connected building periods and pottery styles, he preferred to use the term *phase*, and he named MM III as the *III fase protopalaziale*: it appeared to be an homogeneous building phase both in the palace, though scarcely attested, and in the settlement²⁸. Since both the structures and the context had been largely removed by the builders of the second palace, only the excavations in the area beyond the palace and the Kamilari tomb allowed research to uncover rich and homogeneous MM III pottery deposits, a situation which strengthened the lines of Levi's interpretations.

The rich series of Levi's *phase III* pottery thus appear to comprise a single horizon of deposits²⁹. The pottery recording, though aimed at processing as many excavated vessels as possible (sherds were washed directly on the site), was not immune from problems: entire vessels were catalogued according to inventory numbers, whereas sherds (except for a large selection that supported the survival of mainly painted and decorated specimens) were processed and stored by levels. One of the main implications of this approach was the inevitable loss of specific wares, such as Plain and Kitchen Wares.

A similar history befell also the Ayia Triada excavations. Identified in 1901 by the excavators of Phaistos, the site was officially opened in 1902 under the direction of F. Halbherr³⁰. Despite the exceptional

²⁵ Girella in print a.

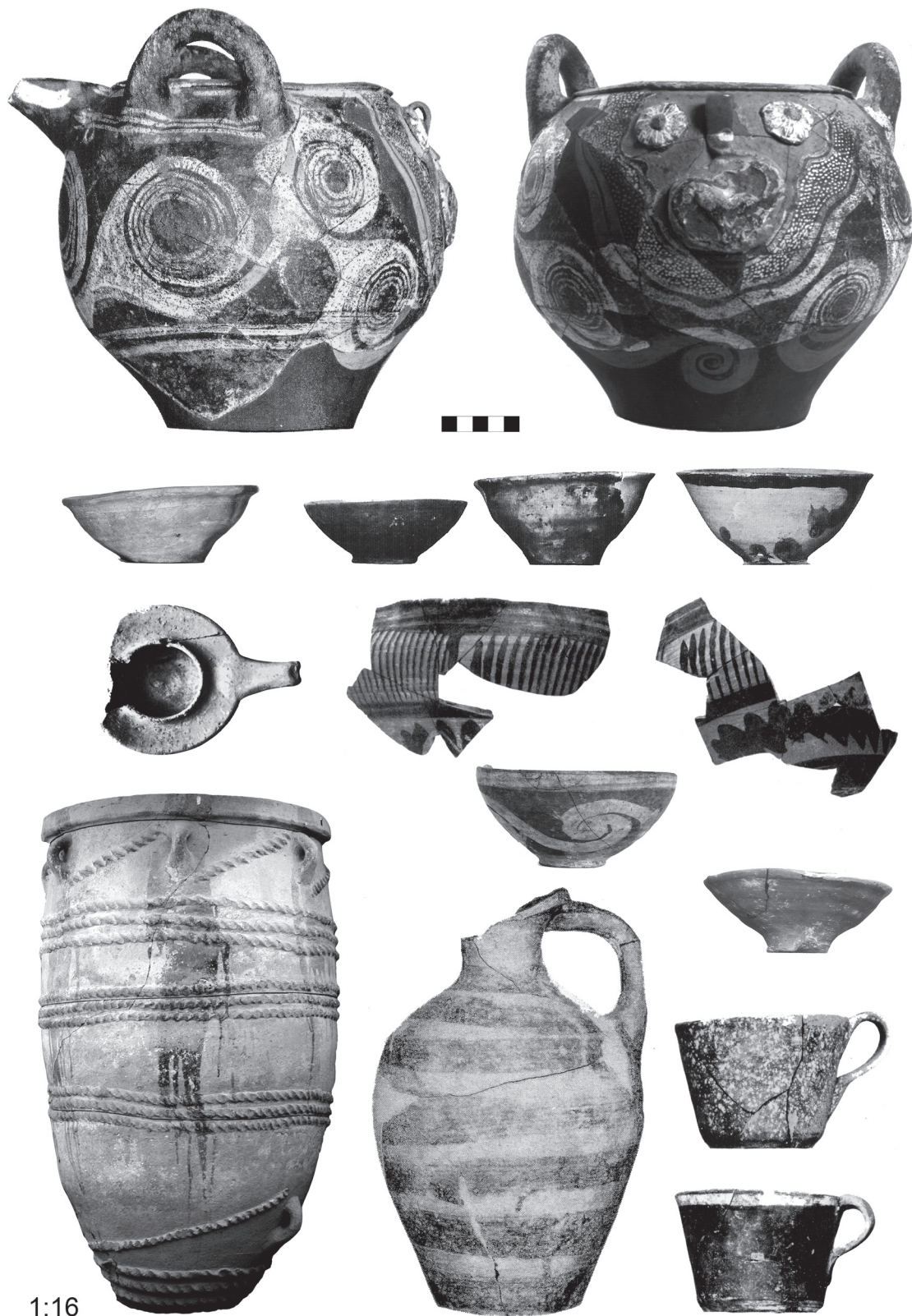
²⁶ The role of a third important site, Kommos, though not analyzed in this paper, is fundamental as it knew a radical transformation thanks to the growing of the residential quarter and the construction of monumental buildings in the so called Civic Center: Betancourt 1990; Shaw et al. 2001; Shaw – Shaw 2006. For the pottery analysis see also Van de Moortel 1997.

²⁷ Pernier 1935; Levi 1976; La Rosa 2002a; 2004

²⁸ A synthesis is also in Carinci 1989, with revisions in Carinci 2001.

²⁹ Levi – Carinci 1988.

³⁰ Report of the first cycle of excavations is in Halbherr et al. 1977.



1:16

Fig. 1. Selection of Phaistian ware groups from ceramic deposits discussed in the text (after Levi 1961-62b; 1976)



Fig. 2. Plan of the Phaistos palace with the indication of the MM III ceramic deposits

value of the finds initially recovered, Halbherr opened a large number of pits that were immediately refilled and then re-excavated as the exploration area spread. Consequently, MM III fell into the shadow of the two major palatial phases of LM I and LM III, although Halbherr did note the existence of large pottery dumps on top of which some sectors of the succeeding LM I Villa were built. Thus, 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. Therefore, the understanding of the MM III occupation at Ayia Triada is largely due to the archaeological campaigns directed by V. La Rosa since 1977³¹.

Thanks to La Rosa, the excavations of Phaistos (1998, 2000-2004) and Ayia Triada (1977-1997, 1999, 2005-2008) were re-opened and re-formulated with the aim of solving chronological, architectonical and topographical problems left behind by the old protagonists. The use of the stratigraphical methodology guaranteed a more reliable correspondence between formation processes of ceramic contexts and pottery development. The large amounts of pottery recovered were processed and stored by stratigraphical units; selection became over time less aggressive, with interest principally in rim sherds and bases and secondly body sherds. Thus, a large range of fabric and ware information has been saved in the recent years.

With these considerations in mind, the difficulty of combining old and new data to phase MM IIIA and IIIB by means of ceramic deposits is now much clearer. It is also understandable that the composition of single deposits does vary according to the nature and state of publication; thus, it is very hard to conduct a complete statistical analysis of different fabrics and forms. It is also time to stress here the methodological impact of specific approaches which have throughout time counted on the chronological validity of 'type fossils'. To my mind this matter has created problems in defining and synchronizing ceramic phases. What is not altogether clear is the life-span of a type fossil, as it theoretically must be defined as a given shape or motif no longer circulating and having entered once and for all into a given archaeological deposit. Unfortunately, at sites such as Phaistos and Ayia Triada, we find settlements lacking of hiatus, and pottery production was definitely faster than the creation of type fossils. Therefore, it seems that the validity of type fossils should be interpreted in the light of a wider range of features, from fine to cooking wares.

The assessment of the MM III ceramic sequence at Phaistos and Ayia Triada has sought to establish pottery groups based on appropriate deposits that can be placed into a sequence through both stratigraphical and stylistic analysis. It is in fact interesting to observe how MM III, identified at the site mostly by pottery contexts, is analyzed by deposits whose compositions are marked by depositional processes demonstrating a mixed composition (few primary and mostly secondary deposits). Therefore, a solution for creating a sequence has been found by combining common diagnostic wares and vessels from various stratigraphical sequences. A relevant consequence of this assumption is to bear in mind the differences of function behind deposit composition, like storage, food preparation, ritual purposes, social ranking, as well as events that might have modified depositional processes, whether natural and human. Thus, the feeling is that for a correct seriation of ceramic contexts, beside the stratigraphy and stylistic and typological analyses, one should consider what is exactly behind single deposits³².

The following information derives from deposits – both primary and secondary – with homogeneous characteristics pertaining to composition and formation processes. The analysis counts on vessel units, consisting of entire pots as well as rim sherds, bases, and rarely body sherds each representative of a vessel unit. Despite the risk of obtaining a large number, since two separate fragments can derive from the same pot, this method is preferable to the minimum number one as it allows us to consider body sherds and to take a wider look at shapes, decorations and wares³³. Furthermore, the author is conscious that the term ware is not particularly used in Minoan ceramic studies, being often distinguished from those of fabric or fabric group: usually ware indicates just the surface treatment and/or the decoration,

³¹ La Rosa 1977; 1979–80; 1985; 1989; 1992–93; 1995.

³² David 1972.

³³ Aspects of sampling and quantification in the ceramic analysis are in Chase 1985; Mills 1989; Neff 2001.

but it does not include the fabric³⁴. A different approach is followed by A. MacGillivray for the protopalatial ceramic groups at Knossos³⁵. Although the majority of the analyzed deposits are made of fine fabrics, MacGillivray intentionally applies the expression of ware groupings that combine manufacturing aspects with the ceramic decoration³⁶. Likewise, E. Hatzaki uses fabric groups to define and classify wares in the neopalatial ceramic deposits at Knossos³⁷.

Five major fabrics (fine, semifine, coarse, pithos, kitchen) are the main ones identified in the current analysis. The wares in which vessels produced in fine and semifine fabrics occur are Plain (P), Monochrome (M), Light-on-Dark (LD), Dark-on-Light Lustrous (DLL), Dark-on-Light not lustrous (DL), Polychrome (POL). Coarse fabrics produced mainly LD, DL, M and P wares, whereas pithos (Pith) and Kitchen (Kitc) fabrics represent two distinct wares.

The evidence from Phaistos

Thirty two MM III ceramic deposits have been isolated at Phaistos, and they incorporate the material excavated by L. Pernier and D. Levi³⁸. The sequence is ordered in topographical way moving from the Palace to the external quarters (Fig. 2): 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). According with investigation carried out by the present author, Deposits 1-3, 4A, 5, 6A, 6B1-7, 7, 14, 20 A-D, 21, 28A-F have been assigned to *MM IIIA*, and Deposits 4D, 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, whereas Deposits 15-16 have a mixed composition but they are more at home with *MM IIIB*.

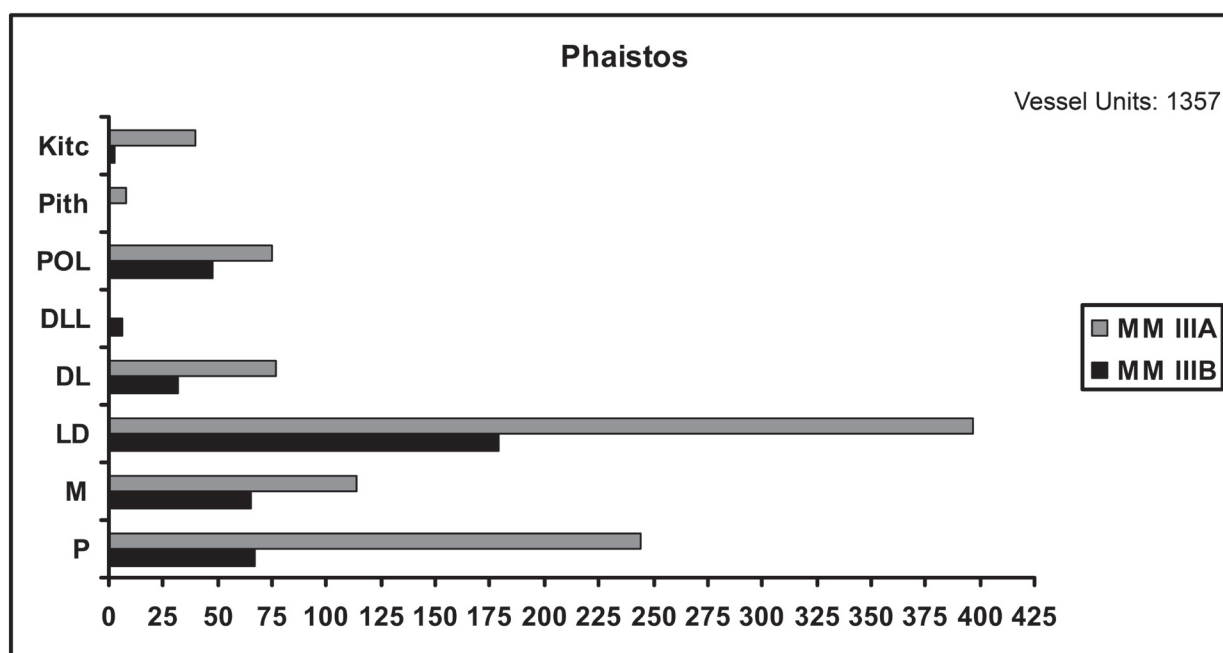


Fig. 3. Wares distribution at Phaistos

³⁴ Betancourt 1990, 5. The same approach is employed for studying the neopalatial ceramic groups from the *Artisan's Quarter* at Mochlos: Barnard – Brogan 2003, 3–32. For the term see also Rice 1987, 286 f.

³⁵ MacGillivray 1998, 55–90. The scholar includes also *MM IIIA* in the protopalatial period.

³⁶ MacGillivray 1998, 56. Thus, within the Fine Buff MacGillivray distinguishes 11 wares.

³⁷ Hatzaki 2007. She isolates in *MM IIIB* a Fine Buff Fabric, a Soft and Gritty Buff Fabric, a Coarse Buff Fabric, a Coarse Reddish Brown Fabric (also known as kitchen fabric) e a Pithos Fabric.

³⁸ Girella in print a, chapter 2.

The pottery evidence discussed is only that coming from deposits with secure dates: few are primary contexts, but those taken in consideration have similar depositional processes and thus are considered in the chronological sequence. Out of 1624 vessel units only 1357 are considered, 956 of which have MM IIIA and 401 a MM IIIB date (Fig. 3). Consequently, it is understandable that different parameters in wares distribution depend upon the number of deposits from each period, the time of excavations, and the composition and nature of the single ones.

Plain Ware (Fig. 4a) is represented largely by handleless cups, and it is the most represented ware after the LD. Plain Ware vessels with fine fabric have smoothed surfaces. Compared with the MM II specimens a wider range of types is detectable³⁹, but they show an irregular range of shapes, variable wall thicknesses, diameter, height, and capacity, as well as several technological faults (deformed and irregular walls, frequent aplastic inclusions, fingerprints left on the cups, marks from lifting the cup from the hump, sloped bases for the uneven way of cutting the cups from the hump) (Fig. 5a-c). At Phaistos, only a minimum portion of other shapes are realized in Plain Ware: bowls, basins, jugs, plates, amphoras and other types of cup. During MM IIIB, in view of the scarcity of deposits, Plain Ware is largely represented by handleless cups.

Monochrome Ware (Fig. 4b) demonstrates a large range of shapes: mostly straight-sided cups, hemispherical cups, and bridge-spouted jars, but basins, jugs, juglets, and miniature pitharakia⁴⁰ also occur. Together with Plain Ware, it is widespread during MM IIIB, occurring also on other shapes such as handleless cups (of a new type), jugs, oval mouthed amphoras, and rhyta. At the beginning of MM IIIA dark paint retains a metallic look and uniform consistency of black colour, though surfaces do not have a lustrous finish, an effect derived from the MM II production. There is in addition the rare appearance of grooving or stamped decoration⁴¹. The uniformity gradually decreases and the surfaces range from black brown to orange red. In MM IIIB dark paints, now more dilute and with a varied texture, might be related to changes in firing: the diffusion of a red-fired dark paint could be explained by a more oxidizing atmosphere in the pottery kiln⁴².

Light-on-Dark Ware (LD) is widespread at the site during MM IIIA and IIIB (Fig. 4c). It is the result of a general simplification of the MM II polychrome pottery and characterized by dark coated surfaces, either smoothed or rough, to which white paint is applied in a repertoire of decorative schemes. A complete investigation of the white paints of MM III is still ongoing, but there is already in the protopalatial period variations in the chemical composition of the paint made of talc or calcium silicate pigments. Of a great interest is the possibility that the Mesara region had more preference for a technology of talc white⁴³. From MM IIIA to MM IIIB the decorative repertoire becomes restricted to few motifs⁴⁴. Among these characteristic are multiple wavy lines, triangles, semicircles, *chevrons*, circles, lunettes, pendants, zigzags, quirks, foliate bands, floral motifs, spirals and splashes. The last one is quite common and its overall diffusion on table ware can be explained as either the imitation of stone vessels or the simplification of labour required for the increase of serial and mass-produced vessels. LD Ware occurs on numerous shapes, mainly table ware: handleless cups, straight-sided and hemispherical cups, bowls and basins, bridge-spouted and miniature pitharakia, amphoras, jugs and juglets, rhyta. Minor shapes are represented by trays, lids and candlesticks. During MM IIIB, this ware is the most prevalent one but it employs a restricted variety of decorations (splashes, and thick running or retorted spirals) and occurs mostly on handleless cups, straight-sided cups and bridge-spouted jars.

Although not very common, *Dark-on-Light not lustrous Ware* (DL) is a continuation of a protopalatial trend and includes vessels ranging from fine to coarse fabrics (Fig. 4d) – handleless cups and bell cups are very common, usually dipped in dark paint and then turned upside down. In MM IIIA handleless cups with

³⁹ For the handleless cups typology see Van de Moortel 1997; Girella 2007; in print a.

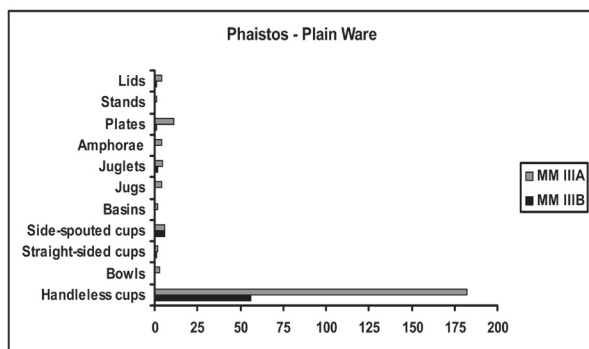
⁴⁰ The shape is addressed also as 'small open-mouthed jar'.

⁴¹ Respectively the *Grooved Ware* and the *Precision Stamped Ware*, two ware groups that occur at Knossos from mixed MM IIIB and MM IIIA contexts: MacGillivray 1998, pls. 80–83.

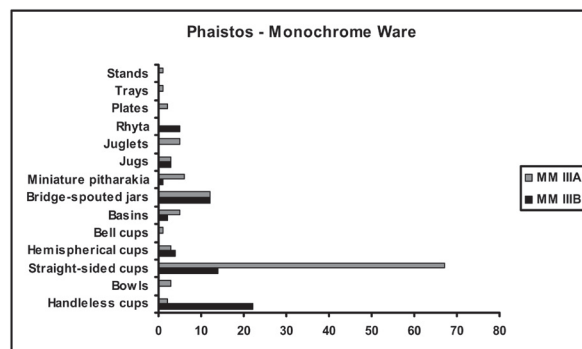
⁴² Similar effects are already known in protopalatial pottery: Faber et al. 2002, 133. See also Pappalardo et al. in print.

⁴³ Faber et al. 2002, 133; Day et al. 2006, 54 f. Pioneer work was Noll 1982, 151. Recently also Ferrence et al. 2001, where it is argued that talc white was restricted to the Mesara.

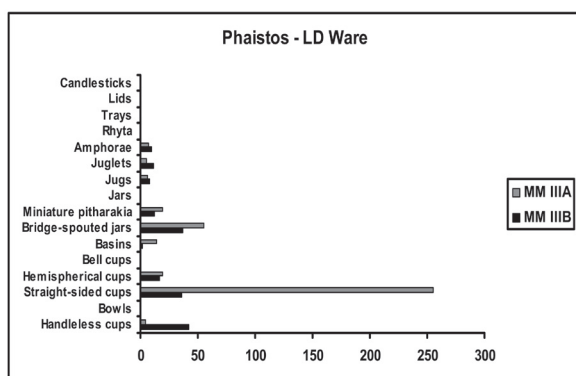
⁴⁴ Girella in print a, chapter 5.



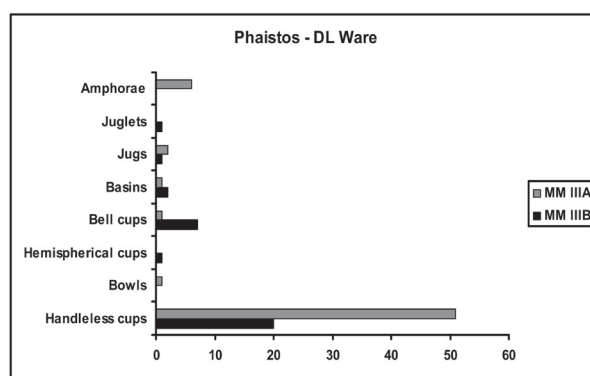
a)



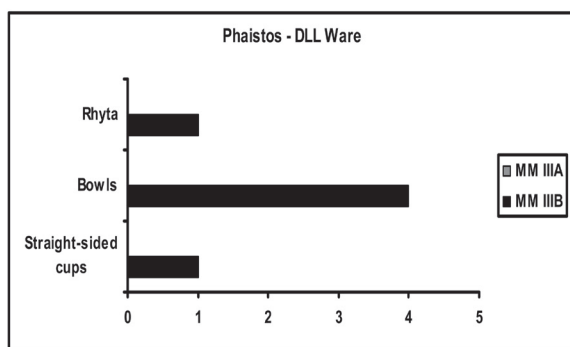
b)



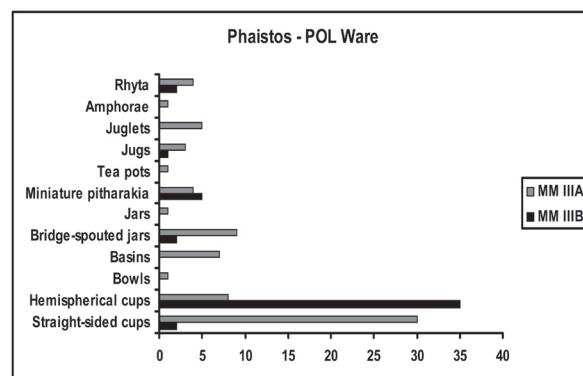
c)



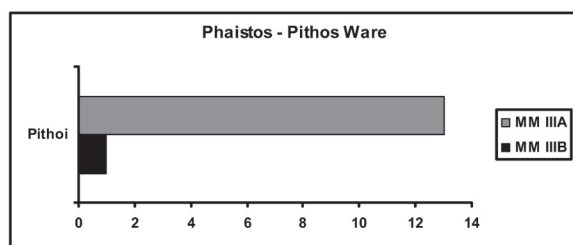
d)



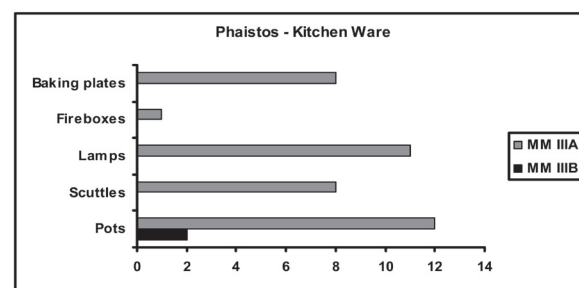
e)



f)



g)



h)

Fig. 4. Ware groups at Phaistos

out-turned rim and basins can be dark-coated inside. A few of the specimens show a dilute consistency in the paint, in a possible attempt to imitate stone surfaces. Vessels with semifine and coarse fabrics include basins, jugs, and amphoras.

Vessels in *Dark-on-Light Lustrous Ware* (DLL) are of highest quality (Fig. 4e). The ware is not attested in stratified MM IIIA deposits at Phaistos, although the existence of one case of a straight-sided cup with central bulge (Vapheio cup) imitating the decoration in tortoise-shell ripple in the light-on-dark version is worthy of note⁴⁵. During MM IIIB vessels in DLL Ware start appearing, but they are not very common and are characterized by open vessels, such as straight-sided cups and bowls. Motifs are restricted to tortoise-shell ripple and wavy or horizontal bands.

Polychrome Ware (Fig. 4f) derives from a simplification of the rich MM II pottery production. Thus it is less common than MM II, but, as in that period, it is characterized by high-quality vases with fine fabric: straight-sided and hemispherical cups, bowls, basins, bridge-spouted jars, miniature pitharakia, conical and globular rhyta. Occasionally jugs and amphora do occur. In MM II vessels in Polychrome Ware were dark coated and decorated by a combination of white and red, ochre and orange paints, often employed on the same vessel. Decoration covered the entire vase and employed a wide variety of motifs (pictorial, linear, vegetal, human) often combined with each others. As early as MM IIIA this system underwent major changes that increased in frequency towards the MM IIIB: both the dark coat and the colour paints depart from the metallic look to be less shiny, the orange and ochre hues disappear, with only the red one surviving (Fig. 5d). The red paint has a purple colour and it is relegated to an auxiliary role (mostly horizontal bands and lines, dots). Unlike the MM II, when several shades of orange, red and deep red decorations coexisted, the purple paint is the dominant hue of the MM III pottery and it was probably made of iron-rich substance⁴⁶; the assessment of only one shade of red might indicate a low degree of experimentation accompanied by regularization in decoration technique.

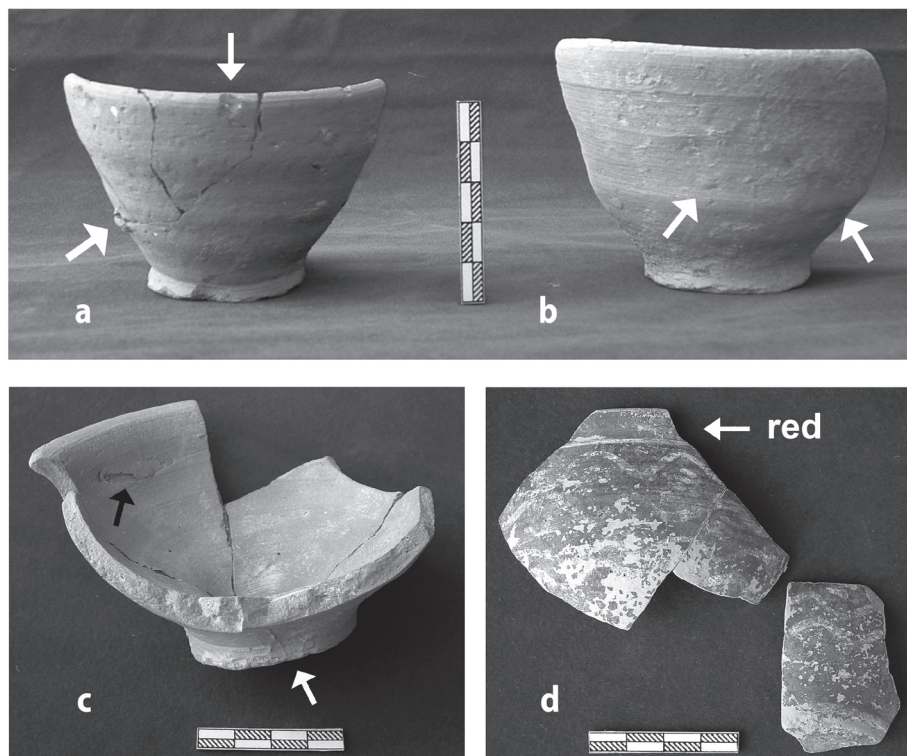


Fig. 5. MM IIIA plain and polychrome vessels from Phaistos (Chalara quarter) with the indications of technological faults (a–c) and the decay of painted decoration (photos by the author)

⁴⁵ Levi 1976, pl. 212 r; Girella 2007, fig. 8. Vapheio cups with such a ware are common at Knossos already in MM IIIA, for a synthesis see Hatzaki 2007, 165.

⁴⁶ Faber et al. 2002, 133; Day et al. 2006, 53 f.

Pithos Ware (Fig. 4g) is mostly documented in the better preserved and numerous MM IIIA contexts at Phaistos. It was used largely for making pithoi, but also basins or large jars. The paste has a buff pink to yellow or light brown colour, with coarse stone inclusions with rounded contours. The ware is also used for the manufacture of handles with a round section of medium-large vessels suitable for transport, such as oval-mouthed amphorae and big bridge-spouted jars⁴⁷. Vessels in this ware are handmade; surfaces are left plain (usually with a rope decoration), with rare instances of painted light on dark and polychrome decorations during MM IIIA.

Likewise, the scarcity of *Kitchen Ware* from MM III deposits (Fig. 4h) is largely due to the invasive selection of sherds from the initial excavation in the site. The specimens recovered are, in fact, entire vessels, mostly consisting of tripod cooking pots, lamps and scuttles. Vessels in Kitchen Ware are made of coarse red clay, commonly described also as cooking fabric⁴⁸. The paste is porous and friable, rich in aplastic inclusions. Surfaces are left rough or smoothed, whereas the distinct burnished treatment employed to manufacture footed lamps does not continue into MM III⁴⁹. Smoothed surfaces are observable on pots and inner side of baking plates. Tripod cooking pots can have inner sides painted or washed with a dilute paint, which produces the effect of a thin slip ranging on colour from light yellow to pink.

The evidence from Ayia Triada

Fifteen MM III ceramic deposits have been isolated at Ayia Triada, comprised of the material excavated by La Rosa since 1977⁵⁰. The deposits belong to different contexts encompassing the area of the Villa towards the NE sector of the settlement (Fig. 6). Deposits 1-4, 6, 7B, 14 are assigned to *MM IIIA*, whereas Deposits 5, 7A, 8, 9, 11-13, 15 to *MM IIIB*. Aside from a single context (7A-B), none of the other ceramic deposits have been found one on top of each other, although they do show direct relation with previous or following levels, respectively MM IIB and LM IA⁵¹. MM IIIA is represented by contexts with different characteristics: destruction deposits, fills, and one closed deposits below Corridor 74 in the Villa. On the contrary, MM IIIB deposits in the site, apparently more sizable, are largely represented by fills and destruction deposits, such as that from the so called *House of the Alabaster Threshold*⁵². Significant changes now occur in the pottery production with expected holdovers from MM IIIA.

Of the 1354 vessel units, only 79 have MM IIIA, whereas 1275 a MM IIIB date (Fig. 7). Such a discrepancy is relevant to the pottery production and ware distribution, and thus has historical meaning.

Plain Ware (Fig. 8a) is represented almost exclusively by handleless cups, which continues to be the most commonly represented shape during MM IIIB. Handleless cups of MM IIIA have larger dimensions than those attested associated with the following period, and they show strong correlations with the rich Phaistos assemblages. In MM IIIB, major developments are seen in the handleless cups⁵³: the conical type is strictly conical, with narrower base and thick and flattened rims. We also note variants with faintly everted rims or gently ogival profile, the latter with dipped rims in and out. The type with everted and dipped rim is on the average smaller and narrower than the MM IIIA examples, whereas the type with semi ovoid profile is taller than before and the belled outline variant does not appear. Noteworthy, the large cup with thick and out-turned or in-turned rim, characterized by spiralling finger marks on the interior, a key mark of MM IIIA, is not attested⁵⁴.

⁴⁷ The technique is used already in the protopalatial period. However, it is not attested during MM III the so called layering technique, a procedure documented throughout the Early and Middle Minoan Bronze age Crete that consisted of using different clay bodies in the same pot. For this aspect see Day et al. 2006, 46.

⁴⁸ Betancourt 1990, 11.

⁴⁹ It is probable that their drop was due to the high labour investment in producing them, especially for the burnished surface and the impressed decoration.

⁵⁰ La Rosa 1977; 1979-80; 1985; 1989; 1992-93; 1995; Girella in print a, chapter 3.

⁵¹ Aspects discussed also in Girella in print b.

⁵² D'Agata 1989.

⁵³ Van de Moortel 1997; Girella 2007; in print a.

⁵⁴ Synchronisms for this cups-typology are illustrated from few contexts at Phaistos: Girella 2007, figs. 9-10, whereas a good selection of contexts comes from Kommos: Van de Moortel 1997, fig. 7; Shaw et al. 2001, fig. 32.

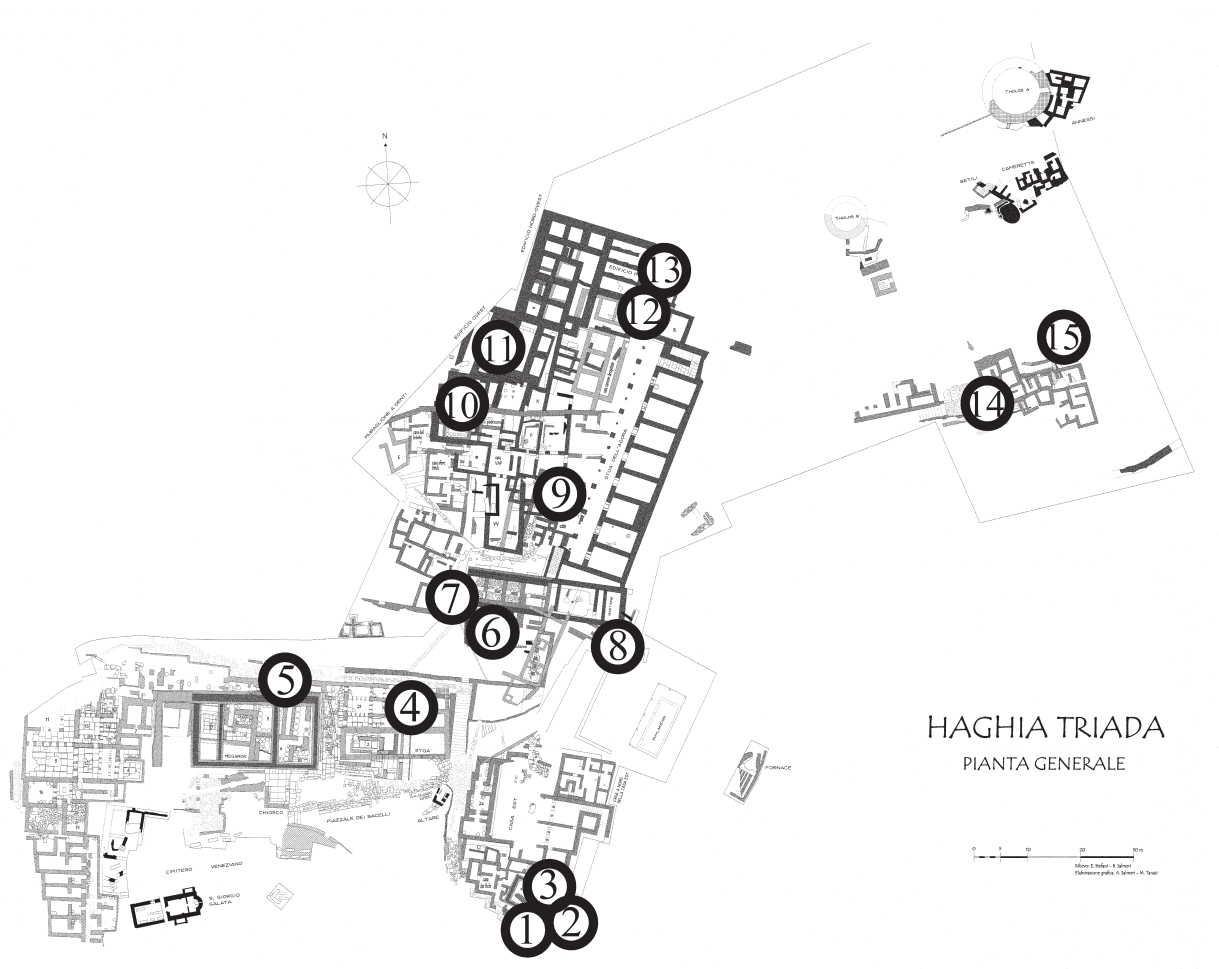


Fig. 6. Plan of Ayia Triada with the indication of the MM III ceramic deposits

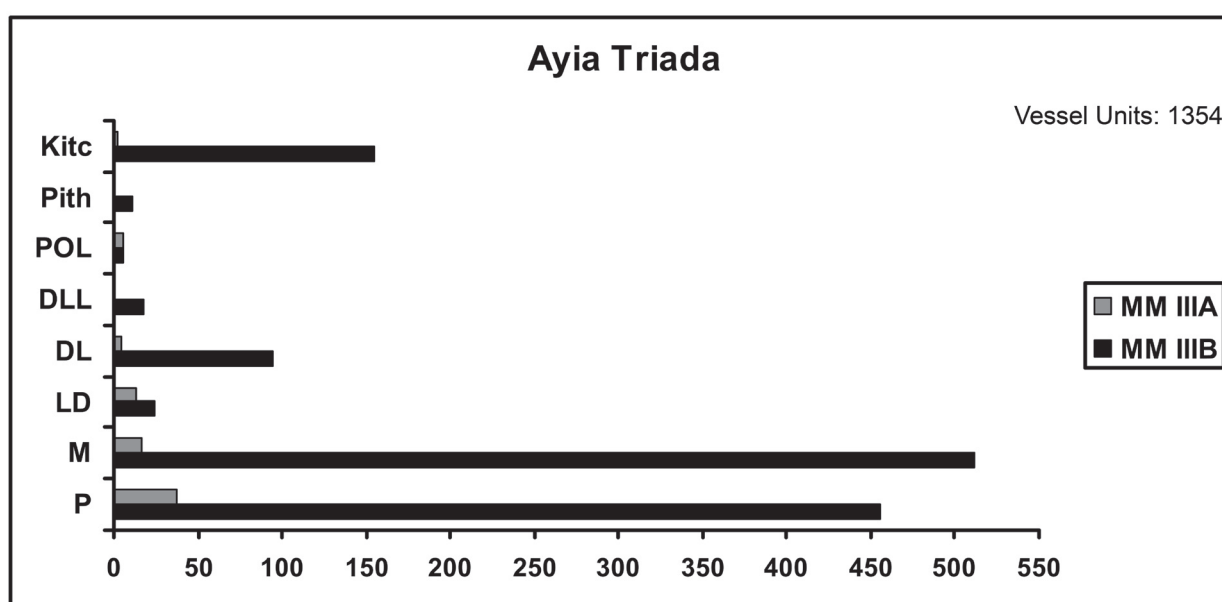
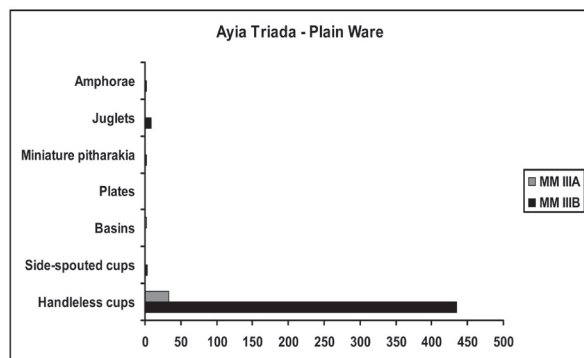
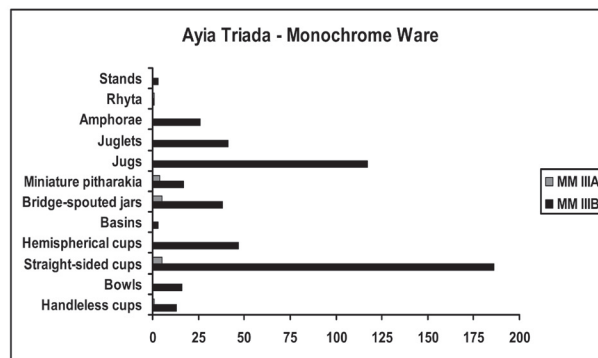


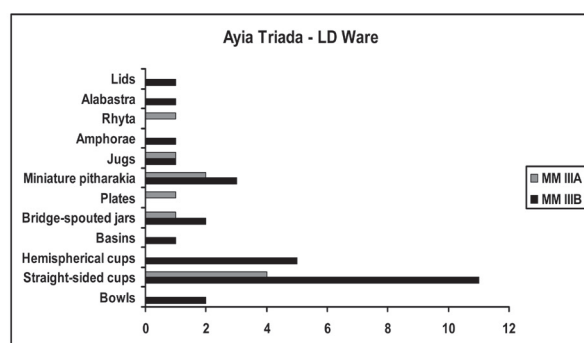
Fig. 7. Wares distribution at Ayia Triada



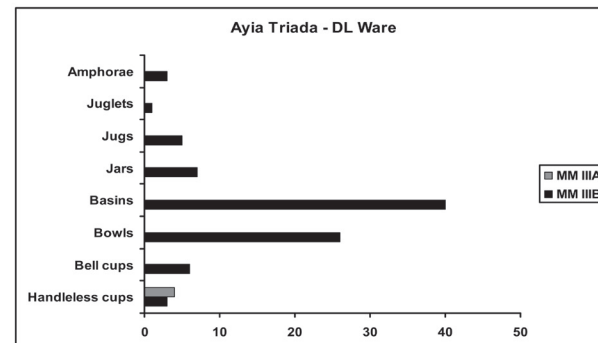
a)



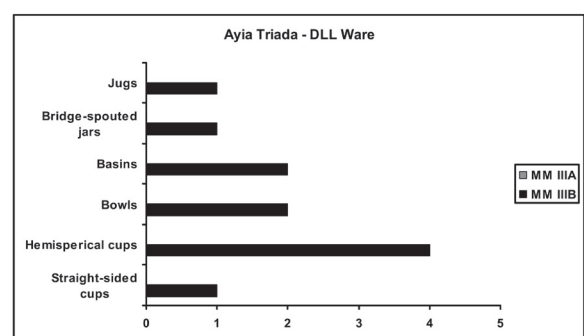
b)



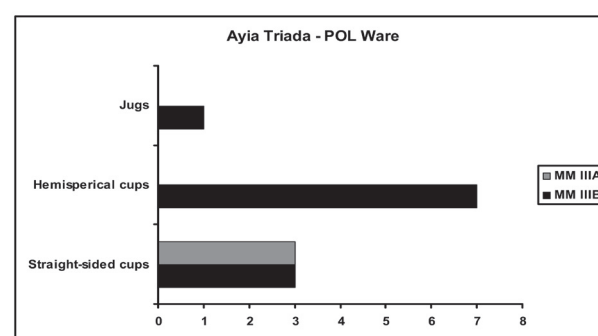
c)



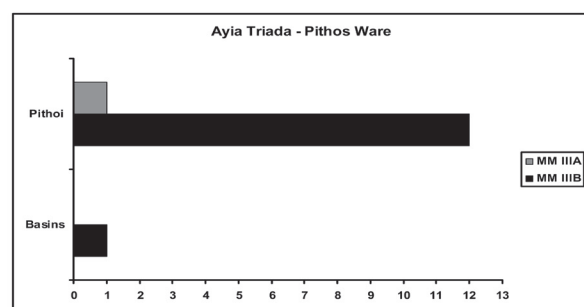
d)



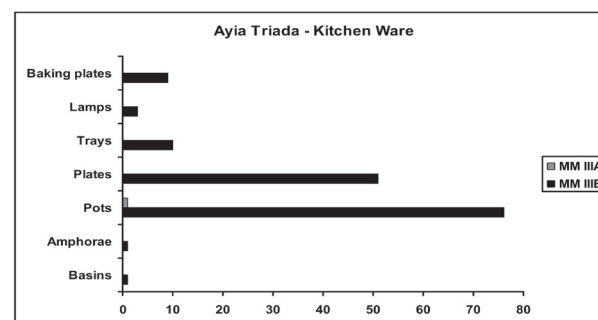
e)



f)



g)



h)

Fig. 8. Ware groups at Ayia Triada

Monochrome Ware (Fig. 8b) is well represented in a larger range of shapes (mostly straight-sided cups, bridge-spouted jars and miniature pitharakia), but vessels in this ware are more widespread in MM IIIB than before, and includes both open and closed shapes. The large percentage of this ware is one of the most striking novelties of the period, and it is mostly evidenced by the material recovered in the dump of the NE sector, recently interpreted as a waste produced by faulty pottery and left *in situ* nearby a space interpreted as working area⁵⁵.

Light-on-Dark Ware (Fig. 8c) shows a more limited set of decorative motifs in comparison to those documented in this period at Phaistos. It is generally found on table ware, mostly straight-sided cups and bridge-spouted jars with the following motifs: running spirals, diagonal lines on the rim. Splashes are surprisingly not very common. This ware continues in MM IIIB, but compared with the Phaistos evidence it is definitely less common at Ayia Triada: it consists of both open and closed vessels with few patterned motifs (thick retorted spirals, horizontal or wavy bands, diagonal bands, diagonal lines on the rim).

Dark-on-Light not lustrous Ware (Fig. 8d) is documented from MM IIIB contexts. Vessels in this category are less well manufactured than the lustrous surfaced counterpart and with several faults. They were usually dipped in dark paint and then turned upside down: handleless and bell cups, miniature pitharakia, everted rim or ledged-rim bowls; among closed shapes jugs and amphoras do occur.

Likewise *Dark-on-Light Lustrous Ware* (Fig. 8e) is the big novelty of the period, but documented only from MM IIIB onwards. Vessels in this ware are of highest quality and they are not a result of a mechanic transposition of motifs derived from the opposite technique. Table ware is represented by cups (straight-sided or hemispherical), bowls (many decorated in and out), closed vessels, such as miniature pitharakia and bridge-spouted-jars. Tortoise-shell ripple is well represented with clear traits, often on open shapes combined with wavy isolated or multiple bands in the inferior part. Spirals occur in this stage in the tangent and thick edge varieties. Other patterns documented are: crescents, and vegetal motifs, such as sapling and ivy leaves. Bands are secondary patterns combined usually with ripple or spirals, and they already show an arrangement heralding the LM IA; isolated bands occur with the characteristic scribble rendering, whereas multiple wavy bands in this stage are coupled to ripple on bowls. Finally, added white paint is applied on the rim of cups and bowls, as well as in closed vessels, and this trend decreases gradually along the LM IA Initial.

Polychrome Ware (Fig. 8f) is scarcely attested at Ayia Triada in both MM IIIA and IIIB stages. It occurs on a quite restricted number of vessels decorated with white and purple red paints forming a very simple decoration (horizontal, wavy or diagonal lines).

Pithos Ware (Fig. 8g) is not well represented, but it yielded numerous basins from secondary deposits, as well as the two basic types of pithos which occur at both Phaistos and Kommos: ovoidal with thick rim, decorated either with rope pattern in relief or dark painted trickles and the basket type with deep body and folded-back rim.

Scarcely attested in MM IIIA, *Kitchen Ware* (Fig. 8h) occurs abundantly in MM IIIB when it is possible to isolate a full range of shapes: tripod pots, plates, trays, baking plates, basins, lamps, and also amphoras⁵⁶. It is entirely plain, and its large quantity has been linked with artisan activities identified in the NE sector⁵⁷.

Conclusions

Taking the above observations into consideration, it is easy to draw some conclusions from our investigation. By considering fabrics, surface treatments, construction technology, and morphological details one can observe a substantial continuity between MM II and MM III pottery production. The impoverishment of the aesthetic qualities typical of the MM III pottery production is a widespread phenomenon in Crete generally linked with a cutting production costs and speeding up manufacturing processes⁵⁸. MM III ware

⁵⁵ Girella in print a, chapter 3.

⁵⁶ Girella 2005. See also Betancourt 1980.

⁵⁷ Girella in print a, chapter 3.

⁵⁸ These two aspects are fully explored in Van de Moortel 1997, 642–648.

distribution shows pattern of similarities between Phaistos and Ayia Triada. In this respect, composition of fabrics, quality of dark paints, firing and manufacturing techniques might indicate a prolonged use of ceramic technologies beyond the Protopalatial.

Inferences about the connection between the two sites can also be made from observing macroscopically pottery forming technology. In addition to 'coil-building' and 'wheel-throwing' techniques, there is the possibility of 'handmade and thrown' or 'semi-thrown' pots, which have been suggested for Minoan Crete, though there may not be sure ways of distinguishing them⁵⁹. At present, evidence for a change from Protopalatial to early stages of Neopalatial is limited, but documented at both sites. The majority of small and medium sized vessels are wheel-thrown, the latter using a combination of coiled and thrown technique. Coil seams are quite visible at the interior upper body of these shapes still in MM IIIA, and surprisingly such features survive throughout MM III⁶⁰. Medium-large vessels can be coil-built still in MM IIIA, where one can observe, like in MM II, vertical finger marks from smoothing of coils.

Implications about the speeding up of technology can be made by observing rilling on the interior surface of MM III vessels⁶¹. Rillings are more pronounced on MM IIIA than MM IIB vessels, and they occur like uneven and heavy ridges. The experimental study conducted by M. Courty and V. Roux shows that heavy and irregular ridges are typical of rapid lifting of the clay through more or less symmetrical pressures while throwing. According to some scholars, it seems reasonable to trace the major change not in the speed of the wheel but rather in the manufacture modes of the potters. It is this aspect behind which the deregulation symptoms are hidden, which is quite visible in the MM IIIA mature and IIB ceramic production⁶².

Although both Phaistos and Ayia Triada appear to have shared traditions of ceramic decoration and an exchange of knowledge concerning the ceramic technologies, major differences emerge by observing the distribution of wares between MM IIIA and MM IIB. The persistence of POL and LD Wares in MM IIB at Phaistos is worth of noting, whereas at Ayia Triada P, DL, DLL and M Wares had more success. On the other hand, the high incidence of Kitchen Ware at Ayia Triada is largely due to its provenance and to sorting from recent excavations. The existence of these co-variations in a limited topographical area might allow us to reflect on the existence of separate production groups.

In this sense, it is important to observe that pottery study takes into account not only the spheres of production and distribution of the material, but also consumption aspects, which are beyond the task of this article. Nevertheless, the links between these spheres are varied and create the character of single ceramic contexts, in addition to composition and formation processes. Although a substantial similarity between Phaistos and Ayia Triada in pottery production and continuity with the MM II period does still exist in MM IIIA, several discrepancies emerge in MM IIB. These discrepancies include not only the distribution of wares but also visible regional varieties. A significant role, for instance, is played by the DLL Ware, which occurs with different patterns between Phaistos, Ayia Triada and Kommos⁶³. DLL Ware is the major novelty of the ceramic production at Ayia Triada in MM IIB, but its distribution reaches unparalleled percentages with those documented at Kommos, while at Phaistos it stands out for its apparent dearth. It is also interesting to note that some motifs on this ware are interchangeable with those attested on 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 syntactic arrangement – or the joining of primary and secondary motifs in two registers, are new at Ayia Triada and have the strongest parallels at Knossos.

Such diversities, if not charged with a lack of data, may reflect either dissimilar mechanisms of pottery production or different depositional processes in the contexts formation. The feeling is that the sole stylistic argument cannot be persuasive, as the absence or presence of specific wares could in fact have a functional and not necessarily a chronological significance. Furthermore, DLL Ware occurs mostly on table

⁵⁹ Knappett 1999; Roux – Courty 1998.

⁶⁰ For Knossos see Knappett 1999, 125.

⁶¹ Rilling has defined by Rice as "the spiral ridges or striations around the interior or exterior surface of a vessel thrown on wheel formed by finger pressures in 'lifting' the clay"; they are also called throwing marks: Rice 1987, 481.

⁶² "No rilling appears when the pressures applied onto the clay wall are perfectly symmetrical and of regular strength while slowly lifting the clay. The faster the rising of the clay, the more uneven is the rilling": Courty – Roux, 28 f., fig. 5.

⁶³ For this aspect at Kommos see Van de Moortel 1997, 235–237.

and fine vessels, whose circulation in a given settlement could not have been homogeneous but rather might have followed social implications and consumption aspects.

Thus, the possibility to deal with different production groups is not minimal, though these groups can be more clearly identifiable and interpretable by ceramic petrology and chemical analysis⁶⁴. Macroscopically the co-existence of several technical variations might reveal a critical point in the organization of pottery production and distribution. Despite the mentioned discrepancies in the Kitchen Ware distribution, for instance, it is observable that tripod cooking pots are less worked and show more variety in terms of shapes at Ayia Triada than at Phaistos. Furthermore, shapes usually obtained through LD and Monochrome Wares at Phaistos are, on the contrary, used in Plain and Kitchen Wares at Ayia Triada. This is not entirely surprising, especially for the Kitchen Ware, but this aspect when combined with the general lower investment in pottery manufacture and the disappearance of high-quality vessels appears to be compatible with the fully employed categories of 'dispersed workshop' or 'non-centralized production'⁶⁵.

Apart from the validity and applicability of these models, the question of why different patterns of wares distribution appear throughout MM III in a restricted region can be solved only by focusing of the strong relationship between pottery production and political organization. This aspect has been explored in the recent past. In particular, the study of Minoan craft production has assumed that changes in pottery production can be connected to political events⁶⁶. The idea often formulated and largely reasonable is that ceramic production was a crucial activity influenced by socio-economic and political conditions. Therefore, any sort of political instability would have had inevitable impact on the pottery activity.

MM III was beyond doubt a period of instability in southern Crete. Past and recent contributions have largely demonstrated the survival of the palace of Phaistos after the MM IIB earthquake damage, as well as the fact that, after this transitional phase, which covered the entire MM IIIA period, the architectural program of new construction failed⁶⁷. On the other hand, the role of Ayia Triada in MM IIIA is still unclear, and it is reasonable to see this site as being still dependent from Phaistos, as the ceramic production can also show.

As far as MM IIIB is concerned, the dearth of the evidence at Phaistos can plausibly be related to the crisis that took place after the destruction in MM IIIA. A further violent destruction at the end of MM IIIA could have created a critical situation for the Phaistian rulers and town residents. The evidence is now limited to few domestic units around the palace, whereas in the palace itself only the NE sector seems to have survived and functioned⁶⁸. Significantly, MM IIIB was a more intense period of activity than MM IIIA at Ayia Triada, when several activities and events left traces in the settlement, including a possible first architectonic unit of the Villa, but the overall evidence seems to have been largely compromised by the subsequent building activity in the settlement⁶⁹.

With these brief considerations in mind, it seems logical to expect different production strategies among crafts, though it is also important to stress that a direct relationship between changes in ceramic production and the weakening of palatial organization is not easy to demonstrate. The key point is the presumed control of this production by palatial elites; however there are three reliable indicators of direct elite control of pottery production: the written sources, the evidence of craft activities within elite areas, and the recovery of administrative items in production spaces. In the absence of these indicators archaeologists use indirect data such as *skill*, *labour investment* and *standardization*⁷⁰. The problem in applying these parameters to archaeological evidences is to encapsulate the data inside variables that have often two opposite values (high, low), whereas they should reflect a continuum.

⁶⁴ A program of complete survey and sampling of MM pottery at Phaistos and Ayia Triada is still ongoing, but it has already shown for the protopalatial period strong connection with the polychrome pottery of Knossos: Day – Wilson 1998; Faber et al. 2002; Day et al. 2006.

⁶⁵ The first term is used by Costin 1991, the second one by Sinopoli 1988, 582.

⁶⁶ Limited to Minoan studies see: Knappett 2002; Van de Moortel 1997, 664–669; 2002.

⁶⁷ Carinci 1989; 2001; La Rosa 2002; Girella 2007.

⁶⁸ Girella in print c.

⁶⁹ Girella in print b.

⁷⁰ Costin 1991; Costin – Hagstrum 1995, 621–624.

As for the Kamares Ware, different models have been proposed. According to Cherry and Walberg, the high degree of decoration and the distribution trend indicate that vessels were produced by *attached specialists* in workshops controlled by palaces⁷¹. On the other hand, MacGillivray also takes into consideration the wide distribution of Kamares Ware, including non palatial settlements and sanctuaries, and believes that it was produced by *independent specialists*⁷². Admittedly, the meagre number of pottery kilns discovered so far, the absence of written sources proving a direct control of the production by palatial elites, as well as our ignorance about the social identity of potters (were the potters male or female? Was the potting a seasonal or a permanent employment?) make it difficult to accept exclusive models.

By considering the physical weakness of the western Mesara as early as MM IIIA, the ‘non-centralized production’ model used by C. Sinopoli allows us to consider a more effective relationship modes and conditions of production. This approach also can be applied to periods characterized by brief lacks of power, as it was for the western Mesara, which did not mean an entire reduction of the specialized production that, on the contrary, could have taken place on a smaller scale and in more dispersed locations. Particularly, in regard to the present case study of a certain impact, is the following explanation: “When the products of such workshops are considered over a region or over a large urban site, considerable diversity in the overall industry, be it ceramic, metal, or stone, might be expected, as a result of variation between each individual shop in methods or material”⁷³.

While it is hard to prove a direct responsibility of the weakening of the palatial organization in the changes of ceramic production, on the contrary it is more cautious and logical to imagine a reshuffling of ruling elites during MM III, especially in the light of the monumentality of the Kommos buildings program already in MM IIIA, and the emergence of Ayia Triada as the new administrative centre of the region. Therefore, such a state of re-definition of a political control over a large region might have favoured the existence of multiple production groups and the increase in pottery exchanges between nearby sites.

The use of traditional technologies at Phaistos is extremely instructive by observing the persistence of LD Ware throughout the MM III and the apparent resistance to new trends, such as the lustrous dark-on-light patterned pottery. On the other hand, this ware appears at Ayia Triada accompanied by different patterns of wares distribution, such as the rising of Plain, Monochrome, and Kitchen Wares, which indicates a major independence of this site from Phaistos. At the same time, the circulation of new wares shed light on the existence of a growing competition and emulation with Knossian potters⁷⁴. Being more populated than southern Crete and having suffered less after the MM IIB earthquake, Knossos and its region could have favoured the potter’s circulation towards south and initiated forms of competition and innovation. From that point on Kamares Ware, produced, exchanged and consumed for almost two centuries, came out totally transformed and entailed a different relationship between the pottery and the elites thought to have used it.

⁷¹ Cherry 1986, 37; Walberg 1976, 126.

⁷² MacGillivray 1987.

⁷³ Sinopoli 1988, 582.

⁷⁴ On these two aspects see Van de Moortel 1997, 664-669.

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