Reconceptualizing The Middle Helladic "Type Site" From a Ceramic Perspective: Is "Bigger" Really "Better"?

Jeremy Rutter[1]

More than twenty years of strewing, sorting, and writing up sherd material of the Early, Middle, and Late Helladic (hereafter EH, MH, and LH, respectively) periods from half a dozen different excavations on the central and southern Greek mainland (Korakou, Gonia, Ayios Stephanos, Lerna, Athens, Tsoungiza, and Mitrou), in addition to ten years of similar work with Middle to Late Minoan (hereafter MM and LM) ceramics from a major site in south-central Crete (Kommos), have persuaded me that MH pottery is quite limited in its typological ranges, whether in terms of shapes, decoration, or modes of production (including assessments of paste or fabric preparation, shaping techniques, and surface treatments). I also consider the MH ceramic tradition to be extremely conservative and disciplined throughout time. Choose a typical MH ware category – dark-burnished, matt-painted, cooking pottery – and consider how much that particular category changes from the middle of the 21st century B.C. to the end of the 18th in terms of its shape range and decorative practices (or surface treatments in the broadest possible sense). Changes certainly do occur, but the pace of change is comparatively slow and the changes observed are relatively minor. In my opinion, perhaps the most impressive single change across the more than three centuries of the MH period was the decision to produce plain burnished wares in a pale-firing class rather than exclusively in dark-surfaced classes (gray, black, brown, or red) – that is, the advent of what is often referred to as "Yellow Minyan". One result of this choice was to blur the previously sharp distinction between the dark-surfaced burnished classes and the very different pale-surfaced matt-painted classes. After "Yellow Minyan's" appearance, the clay grounds – that is, the undecorated surfaces – of both the pattern-painted and the plain burnished categories, the two principal components of MH table wares, looked increasingly the same. And consequently the basic distinction between these two categories is largely lost in LH pottery, although monochrome painted Mycenaean pottery may be viewed as the direct descendant of the plain dark-burnished tradition, perhaps affected by the solidly painted fine wares at home on Aegina from MH III onward.[2]

So MH pottery is quite simple typologically. It consists of two major tableware categories, as we have just seen (that is, plain burnished and matt-painted), each of which is represented by no more than three or four major forms at a time: goblets, kantharoi, horizontal-handled bowls, and some one-handled cups among open shapes; pouring vessels with various forms of handle and mouth profiles (all of which can be lumped together under the general heading of jugs) and various forms of storage vessels with at least two, and often more, horizontal handles (all of which may be described as jars) among closed shapes. When it comes to cooking pottery, the range is even narrower: a single wide-mouthed jar form may be supplied with no handles at all, but simply some shoulder lugs; alternatively, the same basic form may have a single vertical handle from the rim or neck to the shoulder, or else a pair of horizontal handles on the shoulder. Aside from a distinctive series of wide-mouthed jars, with a comparatively high-swung vertical handle to the rim, that feature coarsely incised ornament – the class of pottery infamously christened "Adriatic ware" by the excavator of Malthi, Natan Valmin[3] – none of this dark-surfaced cooking pottery is decorated. Finally, a typical MH pottery assemblage features pithoi, but so few of these have been preserved in restorable form or with any kind of particularly distinctive ornament that MH pithoi as a class have a claim to being the most neglected ceramic types of the Aegean Bronze Age.

The MH pottery repertoire does not compare favorably with contemporary ceramic assemblages

[1] My sincere thanks to the organizers – Professor Florens Felten and Drs. Walter Gauß and Rudolfine Smetana – for the invitation to participate in an exceptionally well-organized and informative workshop. I am also grateful to J. Maran and C.W. Zerner for several helpful suggestions for improvement of an earlier version of this paper. Such errors as may remain, however, are entirely the responsibility of the author.

[2] My thanks to C.W. Zerner for this last suggestion.

[3] Valmin 1938.

elsewhere in the southern Aegean. The inventiveness of Protopalatial Minoan ceramics is justifiably legendary, as even a brief visit to the Herakleion Museum makes abundantly clear in the three or four galleries packed with the remarkable achievements of MM potters.[4] Furthermore, this inventiveness of the Cretan artisan is manifested on just about every conceivable level when it comes to ceramics of the later Prepalatial and Protopalatial eras, most famously in the shape range and surface ornament of fine table wares, of course, but just as much in storage vessels (*especially* pithoi) and even in cooking pottery (within which the range of different major shapes puts the single wide-mouthed MH jar form to shame). The existence of palaces on Crete during much of this period, and hence of groups of palatial artisans, accounts for at least some of the phenomenal variability and creativity exemplified by MM IB and II pottery. But Prepalatial pottery of the EM III and MM IA phases is still vastly more varied than is MH pottery. Moreover, Minoan Protopalatial ceramic assemblages differ more from region to region within Crete than do the purely MH ceramic repertoires of the Greek mainland. Even a Middle Cycladic ceramic assemblage at a site like Phylakopi makes MH pottery look very dull by comparison.[5]

Given the simplicity of the basic MH ceramic repertoire, then, why has it been so difficult to come up with a taxonomic system – that is, a scheme of classification – that applies well enough to all the site-specific ceramic assemblages of the southern and central Greek mainland during the Middle Bronze Age? Especially over the past 25 years, the growing numbers of differently defined MH wares have become positively bewildering to the non-specialist. Indeed, this proliferation of different ware names had become such an issue by the late 1980s that three Argive specialists sought to introduce a standardized set of ware names applicable at least to *that* region of the Peloponnese.[6] I suspect that many ceramic specialists who have worked on MH pottery in particular (as opposed to Middle Bronze Age assemblages from other regions of the Aegean) might respond somewhat differently to this simple question: why has the equivalent of a Furumarkian classification[7] for MH pottery not yet been devised? As far as I am concerned, the basic problem is caused by ceramic imports, many of them from centers of production that lie outside of the MH cultural sphere. Since the numbers of such "extra-Helladic" production centers are multiple, and since any specific mainland Greek site imported variable amounts of their products according to where they were located and what slice of time is being considered, the resulting MH ceramic assemblages not surprisingly create the impression of being chaotically variable, notwithstanding the very simple nature of the MH core assemblage that I have just surveyed.

A simple example will serve to illustrate the problem as I see it. Carol Zerner, in a series of seminal publications spanning the years from 1978 to 1993, made us all aware of the existence of two major centers of pottery manufacture that exported their products widely throughout central and southern Greece.[8] One of these centers was located on Aegina, presumably in the neighborhood of the site of Kolonna, and appears to have specialized in the production of large closed and open vessels (water jars, barrel jars, and kraters), a restricted number of smaller drinking and eating vessels (mostly goblets, kantharoi, and handleless bowls), and four different types of cooking pots (three of them variants of the wide-mouthed jar form that I mentioned earlier).[9] The complex marking system that characterizes the pots produced at this Aeginetan center during both MH and later Mycenaean times has recently been explored in considerable detail by Michael Lindblom, who has also done much to clarify the full shape range of this impressive export industry based on Aegina (Fig. 2). The second major center or group of centers isolated by Zerner has yet to be so narrowly located, but is likely to lie either within southern Lakonia or perhaps on the nearby island of Kythera. This industry produced the class of pottery called by Zerner "Lustrous Decorated" in sufficient quantities for the various forms of decorated table ware it comprised to be distributed

[4] Betancourt 1985, 64–102; Levi and Carinci 1988; MacGillivray 1998.

[5] Atkinson *et al.* 1904; Dawkins and Droop 1911; Barber 1987.

[6] Dietz *et al.* 1988. For continuing problems with MH ceramic terminology 15 years later, see Stocker 2003, 360.

[7] Furumark 1941.

[8] See especially Zerner 1993, with references to earlier literature.

[9] For the shape range of Aeginetan MH pottery, Lindblom 2001, 22–38, figs. 4–8; also Gauss and Smetana in this volume. There is a distinct difference in some cases between the popularity of some shapes on the island of Aegina itself and their frequency as imports in off-island contexts: see Lindblom 2001, 35 (kantharoi and goblets).

widely in the eastern and southern Peloponnese.[10] MH sites located in the southern Peloponnese (for example, Ayios Stephanos) produce comparatively large quantities of Lustrous Decorated imports but negligible amounts of Aeginetan,[11] while sites located in central Greece north of the Isthmus of Corinth (for example, Kiapha Thiti)[12] produce substantial quantities of Aeginetan material but relatively little Lustrous Decorated by comparison. Sites in the northeastern Peloponnese, such as Lerna, Asine and Argos, on the other hand, produce large amounts of both.[13] Although we so far lack as much solid quantitative data as we might like for many of the MH sites in question,[14] we may imagine that the quantities of such imports differed not only relatively but also in absolute terms, depending on such factors as the distances from the production center or centers and from the sea (over which this material must have been principally distributed), local circumstances at the importing sites, and the individual economic trajectories over time of the production centers themselves.

Of course, there are unlikely to have been just two such centers of production, although these may well have been the principal ones affecting the eastern Greek mainland for much of the MH period. That is, we know of Cycladic imports at a number of MH sites, as well as of Minoan imports which differ sufficiently from Lustrous Decorated vessels to be attributable to centers of production on Crete proper.[15] The numbers of all these imports are understandably highest at sites which are at the larger end of the range of MH site size and which are also located on the coast (such as Lerna, Asine, Ayios Stephanos and Lefkandi). Unfortunately, these have also tended to be those sites which have been chosen as type sites at which the MH ceramic repertoires for specific regions have been considered to be best represented. These sites also tend to be multicomponent sites, selected for excavation precisely because they can contribute significantly to a diachronic view of MH culture. Of course, problems caused by kick-ups and remnant sherd material in later deposits are far more serious at sites of this kind than they would be at smaller sites occupied for shorter periods of time. It is thus fairly clear that the sites we have chosen for the characterization of regional MH pottery assemblages are in some important ways by definition poorly suited for this purpose. What we need instead of large, multicomponent coastal sites, one might argue, are small, single-component inland sites where the complications resulting from large quantities of imports produced at multiple centers of manufacture, some of them not yet located and others perhaps not even isolated or identified, are removed.

Do such ideal sites exist? The answer is yes, and there are at least two different varieties of them, each with its own particular virtues. In some ways the most desirable would be a MH site occupied for only a brief period of time and then abandoned. An example of such a site is the transitional EH III/MH I locale of Deriziotis Aloni located 500 m southwest of the Mycenaean palace at Pylos on the Englianos Ridge in western Messenia.[16] The site consists of just

[10] For the most recent overview of this industry, see Philippa-Touchais 2003 on its shape and decorative ranges as these are represented in the Aspis excavations at Argos.

[11] Rutter and Rutter 1976.

[12] Maran 1992.

[13] Zerner 1986, 1988, 1993 (Lerna); Nordquist 1987 (Asine); Philippa-Touchais 2002, 2003, and in this volume (Argos).

[14] The quantities of Aeginetan pottery imported to Asine in MH III times have been estimated at 16% of the total sherds recovered at that site, but amount to as much as 25% in some portions of the site (Lindblom 2001, 41). The amount estimated from the site of Kiapha Thiti in MH III levels reaches as high as ca. 22.5–30% (Maran 1992, 218, Befundcomplex Schn. 153, SE 7/Schn. 154, SE 5; 33 of a total of 107 feature fragments [Signifikante Stücke] or 12 of a total of 53 as a minimum number of individual pots); see also Lindblom 2001, 41 and n. 165. At Tsoungiza in the Corinthian interior, Aeginetan imports increase enormously from only a couple of identifiable examples in MH III (Lindblom 2001, 41 n. 165) to between 9 and 12% of the total ceramic assemblage by both sherd count and weight in LH I (Rutter 1989, 12). On the Aspis at Argos, the amount of imported Aeginetan pottery may have been as high as 9 to 10% of the total assemblage in the earlier stages of the MH occupation of the hill (Philippa-Touchais 2002, 4–5, table 1). Further west on the other side of the Isthmus of Corinth, the quantities of Aeginetan material imported to Kirrha between MH I and LH III range between 1 and 6% (Lindblom 2001, 42 and n. 168). The limited evidence available suggests that there was a dramatic rise in the quantity of Aeginetan pottery imported at virtually all sites at the transition from the MH to the LH period (Lindblom 2001, 42), but the example of the Aspis at Argos shows that the quantities of imported Aeginetan material (and in this case also Lustrous Decorated) may also decline with time in some instances (Philippa-Touchais 2002, 4, 39, table 1; 2003, 4). Finally, at Asine, Nordquist has estimated that imports from Aegina make up as much as 86% of all identified ceramic imports to the site in the MH III phase (Lindblom 2001, 41 and n. 160).

[15] For Cycladic and Minoan imports into early MH Lerna, see Zerner 1978.

[16] Stocker 2003.

two poorly preserved apsidal buildings, one superimposed over the other, accompanied by a small assemblage of heavily worn but nevertheless quite closely datable pottery.[17] Of the 191 sherds published from this site, three ring bases reused from EH II vessels and two kylix fragments and a coarse handle attributable to Mycenaean pots are chronologically extraneous,[18] but the remainder appears chronologically homogeneous. Just one of the items published from the site has any claim to being a possible import.[19] The remaining sherds all belong to a narrow range of shapes encompassing the three basic functions of food preparation (in cooking pots), bulk storage (in pithoi), and eating and drinking (from table wares). No pattern-painted pottery whatsoever is attested, but this is as likely to be the result of the extreme wear suffered by this material as it is the reality of the ceramic assemblage that it represents.

A second kind of site that might be ideal for defining a typical MH ceramic assemblage of a particular phase is a site freshly reoccupied during the MH period after a substantial period of abandonment. Such a site is the small settlement at Tsoungiza in the Corinthia, resettled in the late MH period after two to three centuries of desertion.[20] Unfortunately, in this and similar cases, the site's subsequent occupation – in the case of Tsoungiza, for as long as four centuries during the Mycenaean era – has done considerable damage to the underlying MH levels. Sufficient MH sherd material nevertheless survived from two spatially discrete areas at Tsoungiza – trenches EU2 and EU6 – to allow isolation of two slightly different stages of a late MH ceramic assemblage that are broadly contemporary with the first phase of use of Grave Circle B at Mycenae (Fig. 1). Among the 176 inventoried pieces, a figure that includes a disproportionate percentage of table wares (over 85%), no more than 5% (8 or fewer pieces, to be exact) were suspected of being imports, including one probable and one possible Aeginetan fragment.

In both of these instances, we are able to gain an impression of a MH ceramic assemblage that does *not* consist largely of imports from locales other than one or more reasonably nearby places of manufacture. Sites such as Deriziotis Aloni and Middle Helladic Tsoungiza are by their very nature – they were, after all, small and occupied for only a short period – unlikely to have been loci of ceramic production. For these same reasons, they had not established during their initial phase of resettlement a network of contacts that had introduced them to substantial numbers of imports from a potentially quite widespread set of suppliers. In both cases, the range of ceramic types represented is limited, although only in the case of Tsoungiza is it possible to provide even roughly quantified data.[21]

Why have I gone to such lengths to make the case that the basic MH ceramic repertoire is so simple and restricted, a case that involves finding sites where the numbers of ceramic imports are minimal? After all, this is a workshop dedicated to the topic of intercultural connections and synchronisms, for which the detailed study of as many exchanged items as possible is desirable. Why am I focusing on sites of a kind that appear virtually antithetical to the ones in which those attending this workshop have traditionally been interested – the Lernas, the Kolonnas, the Ayios Stephanos's, and the Pefkakias? My answer is a simple one: rather than devoting most of my attention to identifying the large numbers of imports at major MH sites and wrestling with the taxonomic problems inherent in devising a scheme of ceramic classification that will incorporate all of these, I am interested instead in isolating a core MH ceramic assemblage because I would like to explore the processes whereby large amounts of imported containers were introduced into MH settlements and to investigate the effects of this activity on the lifeways of MH populations. After all, it is the fact of such large-scale importation of ceramics that is one of the

[17] Stocker 2003, 363 and ns. 36–8.

[18] EH II ring bases: Stocker 2003, 365 (P6, P7), 372 (P35); LH III kylikes: 365 (P8), 393 (P142); Mycenaean (?) coarse strap handle: 369 (P17). An additional body sherd is hesitantly attributed to an EH II shape, but without any compelling argumentation: 400 (P180).

[19] The medium coarse hemispherical bowl identified by Stocker as an EH II type (2003, 363–4, 387 [P119], figs. 22, 23) has perhaps a better claim to be an example of a shape well attested in late EH III and early MH contexts at Kolonna on Aegina as well as imported to contemporary sites such as Lerna: Walter and Felten 1981, 163–4, nos. 270, 271, pl. 102; Rutter 1984, 99 (Group IA [3]), fig. 1a.

[20] Rutter 1990.

[21] It should be possible to create a similar table for the extensive body of data published from Kiapha Thiti, a site which like Tsoungiza was barely if at all inhabited during the earlier MH period (Maran 1992, 200–1). Here, however, due to the location of the site in much closer proximity to both Aegina and the sea, the quantities of imports from that source are comparatively high right from the start of the MH III period (see n. 14 above).

	EU2					EU6					
DECORATIVE CATEGORIES / SHAPES	Matt-painted	Plain Pale-burnished	Plain Dark-burnished	Cooking Fabric	Coarse	Matt-painted	Plain Pale-burnished	Plain Dark-burnished	Cooking Fabric	Coarse	TOTALS
Goblet	13	14 + 15?	1 + 2?			6	8 + 2?	1			43 + 19?
Kantharos	7	8 + 5?				6	3 + 3?				24 + 8?
Miniature kantharos	1	4				1	3				9
Cup, round-bodied		1 + 1?									1 + 1?
Cup, angular		1					1				2
Dipper						1?	1 + 1?				1 + 2?
Juglet with cutaway neck	2						1?				2 + 1?
Neck-handled Jug	1	1					2				4
Side-spouted Jug	1	1									2
Misc. Jug	6	4				3	2				15
Bridge-spouted Jar	1										1
Narrow-necked Jar	6	1				6	3				16
Wide-mouthed Jar, vertical handle to rim				1?					2		2 + 1?
Wide-mouthed Jar, vertical handle to neck				1							1
Wide-mouthed Jar, horizontal handles				1					1		2
Misc. Wide-mouthed Jar				10					5		15
Lid				1							1
Tripod Cooking Pot									1 [Aiginetan]		1 [Aiginetan]
Pithos					2						2
TOTALS	38	56	3	14	2	23	30	1	9		176

Fig. 1 Shapes and Decorative Categories of MH III Ceramic Assemblage from Tsoungiza (Corinthia) [source of data: RUTTER 1990]

most striking features of MH material culture. Whether, in fact, this behavior is more or less pronounced on the Greek mainland during the Middle Bronze Age than in contemporary Crete or the Cyclades is an issue that might repay further study, as would a comparison of the nature and numbers of mainland ceramic exports to the islands with whatever the reverse traffic in Cycladic ceramic exports may have been.

One-period sites lacking any significant numbers of imports, such as Deriziotis Aloni seems to be, will certainly *not* be very informative for the study of ceramic exchange, intercultural contacts, or synchronisms, no matter how helpful they may prove to be in establishing the basic building blocks of a MH ceramic assemblage. But I wonder how many such single-component MH sites really exist. For example, Deriziotis Aloni itself may simply represent the initial occupation of the MH site that would go on to become the palatial Mycenaean center of Pylos. That is, if the Englianos Ridge were to be more thoroughly explored by excavation, it might well turn out that the ridge's occupation is continuous after the phase represented by the two superposed and heavily eroded structures uncovered at Deriziotis Aloni, but that the spatial organization of the site changed significantly from phase to phase during the early stages of the MH period before eventually becoming centered in the area of the later palace and adjacent lower town to the southwest.

By far the more common kind of import-free site we have so far discussed is the sort that constitutes a new settlement during the MH period, whether at a previously occupied locale (as in the case of the Tsoungiza hill) or at one never before chosen for settlement (such as Koumoula in Phokis),[22] but in either case one occupied for some time thereafter rather than for only a very short duration.[23] The combination of surface survey and excavation conducted by the Nemea Valley Archaeological Project during the 1980s revealed that a substantial number of sites in the vicinity of Tsoungiza (including Zygouries and Ayia Irini in adjacent valley systems to the east and west, respectively) were, like Tsoungiza itself, initially occupied in the late MH period either for the first time ever or after centuries of abandonment. Moreover, this phenomenon of the later MH colonization of the Greek mainland's interior does not appear to be limited to the Corinthia, since sites with similar histories may be cited from both Phokis and Attica.[24] At sites of this kind, it is possible to investigate the development through time of what often becomes the large-scale importation of ceramic containers in a more satisfactory way than would be possible at the much larger coastal emporia. Thanks to the lack of continuous occupation at such sites, problems caused by earlier kick-ups during the initial stages of their MH occupation are minimal. At the same time, the fact that their external contacts during these initial phases of MH occupation are also minimal allows the pathways by which such contacts first came into being, and then subsequently grew, to be plotted in a more sharply defined way than might otherwise be the case. In theory, it should be possible to track the growing numbers of imported types according to their various places of origin, and to consider at the same time the disparate functions of the container types represented, so as not only to reconstruct the nature of what are often extremely heterogeneous MH ceramic assemblages but also to *explain how* and perhaps even *why* they developed as they did.

Again, a specific example may serve to illustrate the points I am seeking to make. Figure 1 shows the range of shapes and functional categories represented at MH III Tsoungiza, with the table wares further broken down into the three principal decorative classes recognized: dark-on-light matt-painted, plain pale-burnished, and plain dark-burnished. The two sections of the table headed EU2 and EU6 display some basic ceramic statistics from two previously mentioned, spatially distinct areas of the site. A number of comparatively minor differences between these two bodies of material suggest that the finds from EU2 are slightly earlier than those from EU6.

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[22] Touchais 1981.

[23] The MH settlement on the Aspis at Argos is anomalous not only in that the quantities of ceramic imports represented during at least three distinct phases of occupation (Philippa-Touchais 2002, 3) decline with time (see n. 14 above), but also in that substantial numbers of both Aeginetan and Lustrous Decorated imports are present from the moment of this locality's resettlement after more than a millennium's abandonment following the Final Neolithic (or Chalcolithic) era. This peculiarity of the Aspis settlement may be explained by viewing it as an extension of an already well-established site rather than an entirely new foundation. That is, the initial MH occupants of the Aspis might not represent altogether new settlers in Argos, but rather simply a (higher status?) group within the larger population of MH Argos that was seeking a more dominating residential locale. For MH settlement throughout the limits of the modern town of Argos, see Touchais 1998.

[24] Rutter 2001, 131 and ns. 146–7.

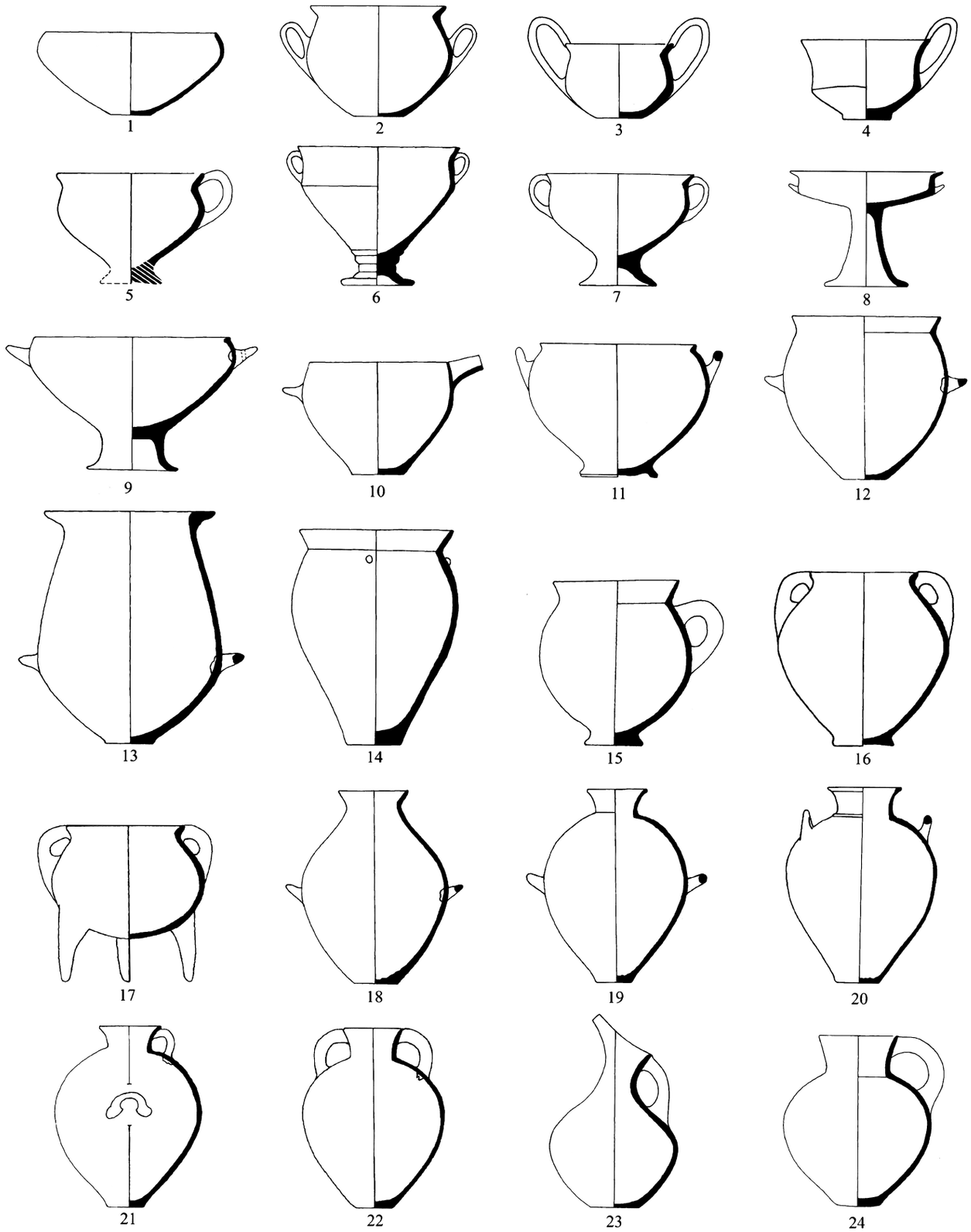

Fig. 2 Major Middle and Late Helladic Aeginetan Vessel Shapes (after Lindblom 2001:26 fig. 4)

In neither case, however, does the number of recognizable imports exceed 5% of the pottery recovered. Within one or perhaps two generations, however – that is, by the developed LH I period, attested in a number of discrete deposits at the site – the ceramic situation has changed dramatically, imports accounting for 20% or more of the total assemblage. Space considerations preclude any detailed analysis of these changes, whether according to formal types or to vessel provenances, but a few comments on some functional aspects of these changes and their broader cultural significance may be worthwhile.

The largest corpus of imports at LH I Tsoungiza comes from Aegina and consists of cooking pots (Fig. 2.14–5), matt-painted water jars (Fig. 2.19–22) and kraters (Fig. 2.11), and solidly coated goblets (Fig. 2.6) and kraters. To reach Tsoungiza, all of this material had to be transported a minimum distance of some 40 km overland from emporia located along the coasts of either the Saronic Gulf or the Gulf of Argos. Note that the range of imported Aeginetan shapes includes no one-handled cups, no ladles or dippers, and no small to medium-sized pouring vessels (that is, jugs). These imports were chosen for their functional utility in specific daily activities, namely food preparation, the fetching of water from springs or wells, and the consumption of beverages in substantial quantities, presumably (but not yet demonstrably) wine mixed with water in the kraters and then drunk from the goblets. It is not difficult to see the appeal of the Aeginetan imports to the second- and third-generation residents of Tsoungiza. The cooking pots were lighter in weight than the locally produced variety because they were better made, and furthermore their volcanic fabric better resisted thermal shock. The water jars – stamnoi, hydrias, amphoras, and large jugs – were also lighter in weight because much thinner-walled than the locally produced jars, thus allowing larger shapes to be produced and reducing the number of trips to be made to the local water source. Moreover, the greater porosity of their fabric resulted in more sweating of their unburnished or only very lightly tooled surfaces, thus promoting cooling of the liquid inside. Finally, the kraters satisfied a need for mixing bowls, and the goblets presumably came along with the kraters as part of a drinking set. The absence of any obvious dippers or ladles from the Aeginetan assemblage is an interesting fact. At Tsoungiza, the need for this shape already in late MH times is apparent from a pair of fragments from the later MH III horizon represented by EU6 (Fig. 1). In LH I, this shape became more standardized in form and much more common as a locally produced type.[25] What makes the example of the dipper noteworthy is that the failure of the external supplier to provide it required its local manufacture. The implication is surely that Aeginetan drinking behavior did not include a need for a decorated dipper to go with its kraters and goblets – or for small and attractively decorated jugs and juglets, either.

Among the other classes of imported pottery from LH I levels at Tsoungiza are Gray Minyan, Mainland Polychrome Matt-Painted (as well as other kinds of bichrome matt-painted in lesser amounts, presumably from distinct centers of production), Light-on-Lustrous-Dark-Burnished, and of course the Lustrous Painted that is the earliest manifestation of what we call Mycenaean decorated pottery. Each of these classes of imports is characterized at Tsoungiza by an idiosyncratic shape range, as they are also at other sites of the LH I period throughout central and southern Greece. The question of why this wide range of "specialty wares" all of a sudden came into being at the MH/LH transition is often raised, as should also be the question of why virtually all of them went on to disappear by the end of the LH IIA phase. Surely part of the answer to at least the first question is that they responded to a widespread demand for new collections of household pottery inspired by the colonization of large swaths of the Greek interior which had been effectively deserted since late in the 3rd millennium B.C. A question for the future is whether the sudden rise in the number of "specialty wares" in LH I is matched by a boom in the production of already long-established Aeginetan export wares. From the limited amount of data already available on this subject, it would appear that the Aeginetan ceramic industry responded to a sudden demand for large amounts of pottery at around the time of the MH/LH transition not only by an increase in production, but also by the development of a range of new vessel types, prominent among which are the kraters and several varieties of water jars that are such a prominent feature of the picture of Aeginetan imports at LH I Tsoungiza.[26] The rise to prominence of Lustrous Painted pottery at precisely this time presumably reflects a corresponding boom in the output of the

[25] Rutter 1990, 440 n. 50.

[26] Lindblom 2001, 26–7, fig. 4 (S11, S19–S22), 40–2.

similarly long-established producers of Zerner's Lustrous Decorated class. Do we, in fact, have enough data yet to conclude that it was an episode of late MH colonization of the mainland's interior that resulted in the dramatic changes in MH pottery that define the beginning of the Mycenaean era? Might the discovery of late MH pottery in the central Mediterranean at sites such as Lipari and Vivara (and perhaps Monte Grande) be another expression of either the rise in population or a sudden interest in decentralization or both that resulted in the phenomenon that I have been calling "colonization"? And last but not least, how is this "colonizing" behavior connected with the explosion of wealth and power manifested in the Shaft Graves of Mycenae at much the same time?

However these very large as well as loaded questions may ultimately be answered, there are two aspects of MH social behavior that *cannot* be called upon to explain the changes in MH pottery and in the importing of non-local containers that we have been surveying. Thanks to studies by both Carol Zerner and Gullög Nordquist, we know a good deal about how pottery was employed for funerary purposes in MH times, whether as grave goods, as grave furniture, or as the containers of bodies along with the associated lids.[27] Relatively few MH graves – only some 25–30% – contain pottery, and of those that do, rarely do the amounts exceed one or two vessels. Since most such tomb pottery consists of locally produced items rather than imports, there seems to be no connection possible between MH funerary behavior and a growing MH appetite for ceramic imports. Nordquist has also drawn attention to the curious phenomenon of the deposition of MH vessel types in pairs, whether in tomb or settlement contexts.[28] The range of such paired examples of the same shape is comparatively narrow and clearly points toward drinking behavior as the activity lying behind these instances of ceramic twins. The most popularly paired shapes are goblets and kantharoi, but jugs, cups of several kinds, and even dippers are also attested.[29] The temporal range of this pairing is also quite narrow, the least ambiguous examples dating exclusively from the MH III and LH I periods.[30] Virtually all examples of the twinned forms are local products rather than imports, a single exception being an Aeginetan goblet from a MH III settlement context on the Barbouna slope at Asine.[31] Once again, whatever drinking customs may have given rise to this pairing of vessels in the latest MH and earliest Mycenaean contexts, they cannot be cited as behavior that would have dramatically affected the importing of pottery from abroad. The hypothesis presented here, that a significant change in settlement patterns, loosely identified as "colonization", was responsible for some major ceramic changes in the late MH and LH I periods, though it certainly requires additional testing before it can be considered valid, may in the meantime serve as an example of an approach to MH ceramic analysis that is more problem-oriented than purely descriptive.

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[27] Zerner 1990; Nordquist 2002, 121–7.

[28] Nordquist 2002, 127–33.

[29] A pair of rim-handled bowls from Prosymna grave 1 cited by Nordquist (2002, 127 and n. 82) and a possible pair of wide-mouthed cooking jars from Tsoungiza with different handle systems (Rutter 1989, 9–10, nos. 18, 19, fig. 7) are anomalies.

[30] Two earlier MH rim-handled cups with quite different feet, from the tumulus at Aphidna cited by Nordquist (2002, 127 and n. 93), are not very convincing as an example of the pairing phenomenon.

[31] Nordquist 2002, 130, fig. 13b.

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