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LM III C POTTERY AT PHAISTOS: AN ATTEMPT TO  
INTEGRATE TYPOLOGICAL ANALYSIS WITH  
STRATIGRAPHIC INVESTIGATION\*

Late Minoan III Phaistos is known in the literature only through preliminary, incomplete publications of pottery coming from old excavations, first by L. Pernier and later by D. Levi.<sup>1</sup> Large quantities of pottery lie on the shelves of the Stratigraphical Museum at Phaistos, as well as in the Archaeological Museum, Heraklion, where they are waiting to be systematically edited (see e.g. KANTA 1980, 96–101).

I tried to fulfil such a task with my work on the material of the “Acropoli Mediana”, which has been finally published (BORGNA 2003a). On that occasion I attempted to establish a pattern for the diachronic, cultural and functional dynamics which characterised the development of the settlement of Phaistos in the post-palatial period from the point of view of its eminent acropolis.

This plot was submitted to a rescue excavation, which hindered the excavators from recording any indications that might help to correlate the stratigraphy and the huge deposit of pottery which was brought to light (see in particular LEVI 1956). Therefore, for the study of the ceramics, I have tried to construct internal typologies in order to build up a reliable sequence of the Phaistos productions, which I have tested by undertaking a thorough review of LM III B–III C edited pottery. The pottery, which was mostly discarded during a series of possibly ritual actions, seemed to represent a period lasting from the end of III B until somewhere in the middle of III C, with a few indications of later occupation.

The recent edition of the stratified pottery, from both the III B late and the III C settlements at Chania, strongly supports at least some of my proposals, which could not be based on either stratigraphic or contextual data (*GSE II. – GSE III*).

It now seems clear that the Minoan-Mycenaean interaction within the pottery system began well before the beginning of LM III C, as seems to be demonstrated by the occurrence of deep bowls imitating Mycenaean types already in LM III B2 (cf. KANTA 2003a, 168). At that time, the Mycenaean stylistic component seems to have been represented by both imports and imitations of Mainland types of the FS 284 deep bowl, as well as by the adoption of such decorative patterns as antithetic spirals and panels. Such a stylistic component was, however, still clearly separated from the local stylistic tradition detectable in other types of deep bowl, in particular the hemispheric, the rounded

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\* I would like to express my warm thanks to Sigrid Deger-Jalkotzy and Michaela Zavadil for inviting me to participate in the workshop. The drawings are by Giuliano Merlatti and belong to the archive of the Scuola Archeologica Italiana; I am grateful to its Director, Emanuele Greco, for permitting their publication.

<sup>1</sup> For the history of the investigations and literature on LM III Phaistos see BORGNA 2003a, 29–41. – BORGNA 2006.

or deep-bellied, and the distinctly articulated or angular bowls – all vessels that are well-rooted in the Minoan tradition, as well as the choice of the decorative language.<sup>2</sup>

Small dimensions, low walls, and unarticulated or only slightly distinct, small rims are features that distinguish III B bowls (BORGNA 2003a, pls. 2:1–2; 5:33–36; 15:164–165);<sup>3</sup> in time, the hemispheric exemplars are characterised by higher straight walls, while the rounded deep-bellied ones, which seem to have derived their shape from the repertoire of LM III cups, become much larger and show everted or flaring rims and convex walls (BORGNA 2003a, pls. 2:3–10; 5:38–39; 6). Both the type of the hemispheric bowl and the articulated one with a conical body, whose shape also depends on earlier cups, are recognisable at the beginning of LM III C by the marked outward inclination of their walls, which gives them an angular profile (BORGNA 2003a, pls. 3:11–15; 4:16–23),<sup>4</sup> corresponding to the carinated type of B. Hallager at Chania (*GSE II*, 138, pl. 35). At the same time, the Mycenaean repertoire of deep bowls is increased by the appearance of various other types, including both bowls with sinuous walls and high flaring rims (BORGNA 2003a, pls. 8–9. – *GSE III*, 208), and articulated bowls with a conical body and straight walls (BORGNA 2003a, 184–187, pls. 10–11).<sup>5</sup>

The III B chronology of a discrete variety of kraters is verified at Chania as well: the specimens which were dated earlier at Phaistos find strict comparisons in the III B2 settlement, in particular a globular type with a distinct, mostly rounded rim, and an articulated one with straight walls which seems to derive from Mainland patterns (FS 281) (BORGNA 2003a, pls. 30:2; 35:42; 60:1. – *GSE III*, 218–220, 262. – HALLAGER 2003, 109. – KANTA 2003a, 171).

Besides a few indications of III B late occupation, the bulk of the Acropoli material, however, points to a flourishing III C settlement. Due to the lack of a detailed stratigraphy, subdivisions within the LM III C pottery were obviously very difficult to detect, all the more so when we consider that III C phases are not definitely assessed in Crete on the basis of pottery, which is generally divided into an earlier and a later III C horizon (KANTA 2003b. – D'AGATA 2003, in particular 26–29. – See the discussion in this volume).

On the basis of the Acropoli evidence, I have provisionally considered as belonging to an advanced phase of III C, possibly III C “Middle”, such vessels as: later types and varieties of deep bowls, in particular slightly-articulated vessels with high convex or convergent walls, namely vessels pointing to a complete integration of models belonging either to the Minoan or the Mycenaean tradition (BORGNA 2003a, pls. 6:40; 12–14; 17); articulated kraters, which are close to the late Mainland typological FS 282 varieties, such as kraters with biconical profile and walls inclined inwards, and angular or carinated kraters with ridges below the rim (BORGNA 2003a, pls. 37:51,53; 38:64–66; for com-

<sup>2</sup> On the problem of distinct stylistic components and their integration see BORGNA 1997b. – Cf. *GSE III*, 208.

<sup>3</sup> On the typology of deep bowls and their diachronic evolution see BORGNA 2003a, 176–219, on earlier local types and their origin *IBID.*, 181–184, 187–188.

<sup>4</sup> I have constructed the morphological typology of the Acropoli pottery by assuming, as a relevant principle, the basic difference between articulated and unarticulated profiles: in the manufacture of articulated shapes the basic parts of the vessel, such as body, walls and rim, are well-defined components apparently linked organically – whether connected by a continuous profile or marked by angular junctions; by contrast, unarticulated shapes seem to have been conceived by the producers as a whole without clear partitions; cf. BORGNA 2003a, 22–23, 180.

<sup>5</sup> These bowls seem to be very close to Type 3 deep bowls of the LH III B–III C Transitional phase (MOUNTJOY 1997, 111, fig. 11:65–72).

ments and comparisons see *IBID.*, 176–219, 269–287. – Cf. BORGNA 1997b). The articulated stemmed kraters with a continuous profile, provided with slightly everted or rounded rims, which are very similar to huge stemmed bowls, have been kept as indicators of a possibly developed III C phase as well (BORGNA 2003a, pls. 32:14–16; 33).

Regarding the most recent evidence within the Acropoli pottery, I have tentatively attributed to a “late” III C phase a few isolated vessels, such as a pilgrim flask and an elongated stirrup jar decorated with cross-hatched triangles (BORGNA 2003a, 293–295, pls. 41:2.1; 76:5).

Though the criteria used for distinguishing different III C phases within the Acropoli pottery are not objective, and therefore not completely reliable, the indications of a continuous occupation during an earlier part of III C are indisputable. The correlation I have tried to suggest between the end of this occupation – namely the sealing of the deposit on the Acropoli – and an earlier part of III C Middle on the Mainland (III C Middle developed) (BORGNA 1999a, 360), seems now to be encouraged by the dynamics that have been put forward for the occupation of several Cretan III C sites. These, according to A. Kanta and other scholars, flourished during an earlier part of III C and possibly lasted up to the middle of the period, namely until the beginning of a new pottery horizon, which was characterised by the appearance of elaborately decorated kraters (KANTA 2003b, in particular 526–529. – KANTA 2003a, 168). Patterns of cultural and social unity, together with continuity in the pottery production, seem to mark this settlement phase, which would have come to an end towards an advanced III C date, possibly coinciding with dramatic gaps in the island settlement patterns as a consequence of change and disturbance (BORGNA 2003b).

A kind of continuity in pottery productions from the beginning of III C well into III C Middle (developed, according to Mainland subdivisions) has already been inferred in other Aegean contexts as well, as for example in Rhodes, where, according to P. A. Mountjoy, III C Early vessels cannot be easily distinguished from III C Middle developed products (*RMDP*, 45).

On the present occasion I would like to offer a deeper insight into the pottery system of post-palatial Phaistos by verifying by the way of stratigraphic support the previous results that had been obtained on a purely typological basis. A careful review of the structural growth and the stratigraphy of the “Casa a ovest del Piazzale I” – an important LM III building on the western edge of the palatial site and at the foot of the Acropoli (Fig. 1:1) – has enabled me to find grounds for testing the evolution of the pottery during a sequence of sub-phases beginning with LM III B2 and ending with LM III C Late or Subminoan (see already LAVIOSA 1977. – BORGNA 2001, with literature).

The building was excavated in the 1960s by the Italian School under the direction of D. Levi and the supervision of C. Laviosa. Obviously the methods and criteria then adopted for both the fieldwork and the processing of the findings do not meet present-day expectations. The location of the building on a slope which was intensely inhabited in both previous Neopalatial and later Hellenistic times makes it clear that reading and comprehending the stratigraphy are very difficult and subjectivity cannot be avoided.

To go into detail, the most recent floors were most probably removed in Hellenistic times, so the upper layers are not to be considered as closed deposits; nor is the southern part of the building, including the walls founded on the lower part of the slope, retrievable. Furthermore, the structural and depositional dynamics that affected the building seem to account for the lack of reliable floor deposits such as homogeneous associations of vessels. These could attest short spans of time and be used as chronological markers of limited sub-phases. In very few cases sherds can be considered as found in situ on a floor. The pre-depositional frameworks have been thoroughly modified by means of continuous interventions and structural changes – in particular the raising of the floors, which were

based on thick layers of broken ceramics mostly belonging to previous phases of inhabitation. When nothing was added something was removed, so that we are obliged to suppose that drastic clearances took place, which the huge deposits of discarded pottery, together with architectural and structural remains, would seem to confirm.

In short, a careful, albeit provisional and not definitive, revision of the stratigraphy indicates that the building seems to have developed in several phases which may be summarised as follows:

- at some point in LM III B the earliest rooms were founded, as seems to be attested by the sherds beneath the lowest floors, at least as far as the eastern sector is concerned, namely Rooms 1, 2, 4 and possibly 3;
- the life of the building in the period that immediately succeeded the foundation is not directly attested by material in situ, but only by considerable amounts of III B2 ceramics which were included in the deposits created in order to raise the floor levels;
- such floors were most probably laid at the beginning of LM III C, as a small percentage of the material (Room 1) seems to indicate. At the time of such rebuilding, the western sector of the house (future Rooms 5 and 6) was possibly an outdoor space, paved with pebbles;
- as for the III C Early occupation, we have no in situ evidence at all, as the floor deposits are mostly not preserved and most material which looks III C Early is included in the upper layers along with many more recent sherds;<sup>6</sup>
- a huge amount of III C Early broken vessels, which were found in the relatively small Room 4, together with remains of removed floors, point to a break in the depositional growth, involving some kind of clearance and discarding of pottery. This huge deposit consists mostly of ceramics whose style is markedly consistent with a III C Early date, and includes a few possibly later vessels which could date the sealing of the deposit a little further into III C. The consideration of some significative joins from different locations in the building, together with the finding of a cluster of removed pebbles within the deposit, help to clarify the dynamics of clearance and removal, including the outdoor pebbled floor in the western sector (Rooms 5 and 6) and, in Room 4, the III C Early floor, which seems to be attested by remains of unconnected stone slabs at the bottom of the huge deposit. Perhaps not a single but a series of discards, ritual in origin, might have brought about the deposition of the pottery and the final closing of the deposit during a span of time which may be correlated with the chronology of the “Acropoli Mediana” assemblage, itself an outcome of a series of possibly ritual discards during a period which was tentatively dated to III C Early and the earlier part of III C Middle;<sup>7</sup>
- as for the “Casa a ovest” we may conclude that well into III C an important reorganisation of the area took place, which, together with the discard in Room 4, implies the addition of a large new room provided with a continuous floor taking in both Rooms 5 and 6 on the western side of the building, and the foundation of new floors in the eastern sector, at least for Rooms 2 and 4;

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<sup>6</sup> The floor in Room 1 may be considered an exception, though the material which was recorded in association with it may hardly be considered as a part of a set of vessels in situ.

<sup>7</sup> For ritual activities in both places see BORGNA 1997a. – BORGNA 2003a, 354–371. – BORGNA 2004a. – BORGNA 2004b.

- though the occupation in this III C Advanced phase is only scantily attested in the “Casa a ovest” on a stratigraphic and architectural basis, some evidence has been preserved thanks to the subsequent foundation of Room 5, which entailed the raising of the floor level in the residual part of Room 6, as well as the sealing of some broken pottery which had been used on the floor beneath. By comparing these sherds with those which have been classified as most recent in the deposit of Room 4, and, furthermore, with some other relevant evidence coming from the upper layers in the other Rooms (1–4), an advanced III C phase seems recognisable and distinguishable from a still later phase;
- more recent evidence comes, in particular, from the uppermost floor of Room 6 and the layers relating to the use of Room 5, whose late chronology has already been commented upon on a previous occasion (BORGNA 2001, 285–288).

On this basis I would like to introduce the most relevant pottery that will support the diachronic pattern which I have proposed for the building. From a pottery point of view in particular, such diachronic development may be discerned by visualising a sequence of five phases.

In the first phase, which is represented by the pottery underneath the lowest floors, the eastern sector of the building was constructed. At that moment bowls provided with low walls, mostly hemispheric or provided with a globular, deep-bellied body,<sup>8</sup> but also bowls with a much more sinuous profile, which are very close to the Mycenaean types of deep bowls,<sup>9</sup> and furthermore globular or hemispheric fine deep cups, shallow cups with low straight walls,<sup>10</sup> large bowls or kraters, provided with articulated profiles, very simple everted rims and flat bases<sup>11</sup> – all point to a date still well into LM III B. As for closed shapes, it is worth mentioning the presence of fine medium-sized globular belly-handled amphorae.<sup>12</sup> The clear connections of such pottery not only with the productions of the III B late settlement of Chania but also with some III B earlier assemblages, such as the one recently published from the South House at Knossos by P. A. Mountjoy (MOUNTJOY 2003: for deep bowls: 148, fig. 4:42 nos. 783–784, 796–797; for cups: 148, fig. 4:42 nos. 779, 781), might indicate that the “Casa a ovest” at Phaistos was founded not very late into III B2. Decorative patterns, such as chains of quirks, semicircles, and bivalve shells seem to find resemblances within III B assemblages, as is possible to detect at Chania (*GSE III*, 206–207, fig. 49, 262) and Kommos (WATROUS 1992, figs. 45–46; 52; pl. 36). Other features such as, from a technological point of view, the irregular manufacture and thickness of the walls and the uncertain outline of many drawn patterns

<sup>8</sup> BORGNA 2001, 289, fig. 8; see above. – Cf. e.g. at LM III B Malia: FARNOUX 1997, 264, 266, figs. 5; 7. Chania: *GSE III*, pls. 49–50, in particular pl. 49:71-P0813. Kommos: WATROUS 1992, nos. 1247, 1557. Knossos, Unexplored Mansion: POPHAM 1984, pl. 179:1. For more detailed comments and comparisons cf. BORGNA 2003a, 181–184.

<sup>9</sup> Phaistos: BORGNA 2003a, pl. 9. Cf. Chania: *GSE III*, pl. 51. Kommos: WATROUS 1992, no. 1155. – RUTTER 2003, fig. 14:2. The common occurrence of solidly painted inner walls is not to be considered a chronological marker in Central Crete; cf. HALLAGER 2003, 109.

<sup>10</sup> BORGNA 2001, 289, fig. 8, 291, fig. 9:2. For III B deep cups with comparisons: BORGNA 2003a, 220–237. – Cf. WATROUS 1992, no. 1431. – POPHAM 1970a, pl. 49b. – POPHAM 1984, pls. 179:1; 180:3. – WARREN 1997, fig. 32. – *GSE III*, pls. 45–46. For low-walled cups BORGNA 2003a, 226–227 with literature.

<sup>11</sup> BORGNA 2001, 289, fig. 8:4–5. Chania: *GSE III*, pls. 58:84-P0950, 73-P1071; 59:80-P0472. – KANTA 1997, fig. 3:2 (“Mycenaean import” in level 11 of Kastelli).

<sup>12</sup> See for comparisons in particular a typical shape of the “italo-micenea” ware from Broglio di Trebisacce and Termito: VAGNETTI – PANICHELLI 1994, 402–403, no. 13, fig. 132:3. – VAGNETTI 1982, pl. 22:1.

(BORGNA 2001, 290), and the presence of particular coarse ware shapes, such as incense-burners or pedestal bowls and wide-mouthed pots<sup>13</sup> among the kitchen ware may be considered as indicators of an early chronology as well.

The second phase is represented by the layers which may be interpreted as filling deposits suitable for the preparation of new floors, in particular in Rooms 1, 2 and 3. In such deposits, several features may be isolated as relevant for defining a ceramic horizon still rooted in LM III B: the as yet limited occurrence of Mycenaean types of deep bowls, which belong almost exclusively to either a type with high vertical walls or a type provided with only slightly flaring walls and everted rims (Fig. 1:2. – See at Chania *GSE III*, pl. 51:73-P0581, 84-P1451, 80-P0478); the occurrence of both hemispheric and globular bowls with low walls (Fig. 1:3); the persistence of a technological horizon that we are tempted to define as “experimental” or “formative” as regards both manufacture and decoration – which is particularly manifest in the field of a new shape, namely the deep bowl. These are the most significant features, together with the almost general absence of bowls with inner reserved band, as well as of linear deep cups resembling the Mainland FS 215 cup (RUTTER 2003, 197), and of typical III C decorative patterns such as streamers, hooked spirals and elaborate motifs (except some uncertain instances) (*GSE II*, 140–141, fig. 31). Kraters, mainly globular with an everted rounded rim, but also slightly articulated with vertical walls and a simple everted rim,<sup>14</sup> as well as decorated cups and footed bowls,<sup>15</sup> seem to point to III B productions as well. The most helpful comparisons for such pottery are to be found in LM III B late contexts, as we may verify at Chania, Malia and Kommos, in particular for the articulated bowls with straight walls and everted rims,<sup>16</sup> and also at Kommos for hemispheric bowls with high walls and deep-bellied ones (*GSE III*, pl. 50. – WATROUS 1992, figs. 56:1483; 61:1648. – Cf. also WARREN 1997, 173, fig. 28 row 2); at III B Knossos we find a good comparison for the shallow bowl (Fig. 1:4. – WARREN 1997, fig. 22 row 3). A few vessels which seem to be closer to III C products, such as an amphoriskos with dotted rim and a globular krater with a markedly everted rim, find reliable comparisons in LM III B Late contexts as well, in particular at Chania.<sup>17</sup> However, some isolated pieces, which seem to be actually datable to III C, such as a large articulated deep bowl or an unarticulated one with high convex walls and decorated with inner reserved band and streamers, may be explained either as intrusive on stratigraphic grounds (as they were mostly found at points where later structural interventions are documented, for instance the foundation of stairs built at the cost of earlier deposits) or as chronological markers of the sealing of such deposits at the beginning of LM III C for laying the new floors. Both an isolated rim with inner reserved band and an elaborately decorated sherd from a krater seem to point to such a date.<sup>18</sup> As has

<sup>13</sup> Both shapes do not seem to be typical of III C coarse assemblages, which are mostly characterised by pots provided with restricted openings; cf. BORGNA 1997a. – KANTA 2003a, 173–177. For incense-burners see e.g. POPHAM 1970b, 192, fig. 1. – *GSE III*, 243.

<sup>14</sup> Chania: *GSE III*: for globular shapes with rounded rims: pls. 58:71-P0417; 59:80-P1457; for articulated rims with straight walls: e.g. pl. 59:80-P1429, 84-P0531, 80-P0482, 01-P0656.

<sup>15</sup> For footed bowls cf. KARANTZALI 1986, 63, fig. 12, 70. – HALLAGER 1997, 408 B 4. – *GSE III*, 198, fig. 48 no. 11, 209; cf. at Malia: FARNOUX 1989/90, 31, fig. 17.

<sup>16</sup> Chania: *GSE III*, pl. 52:71-P0761. Kommos: WATROUS 1992, no. 1557. Malia: FARNOUX 1992, 210, fig. 14.

<sup>17</sup> For the krater: *GSE III*, pl. 59:82-P0167. For the dotted rim and coated neck of the amphoriskos see at Sklavoi: KANTA 1980, fig. 76:1 (piriform jar, III B).

<sup>18</sup> For the sporadic occurrence of bowls with inner reserved bands at III B Chania see, however, *GSE III*, 210.

already been suggested, however, only a very low percentage of the material from this second phase may be classified as III C Early, while most of the pottery seems to be consistent with an earlier chronological horizon, namely the lifespan of the building from its initial construction until the first rebuilding. The inclusion of III B sherds within the walls which, on stratigraphic grounds, are supposed to have been raised at the beginning of III C, seems to support such a conclusion.

The chronological interpretation of this pottery horizon is subject to much dispute as, according to some scholars – in particular on the basis of clear connections with III B2 Chania – the pottery horizon without reserved bands and elaborate style would be consistent with a LM III B2 date;<sup>19</sup> according to others, however, the appearance of both bowls with reserved bands and the elaborate or noble style only after the beginning of III C would support an attribution of such pottery to the very beginning of III C Early.<sup>20</sup> This seems to be the case, for example, at Kastelli Pediada and at Thronos/Sybrita.<sup>21</sup> The stratigraphic position of the Phaistian deposit, which seems to include mostly pottery used immediately after the foundation of the house, would perhaps fit better with a chronology still late in III B. Comparisons and connections for such pottery may be found, however, not only in pure III B contexts but also within possibly later assemblages, such as the LH III B–C Early Transitional ones, according to the terminology of P. A. Mountjoy, which might be useful for establishing Mainland-Cretan chronological correlations (MOUNTJOY 1997. – See in particular *RMDP*, 36–38).<sup>22</sup>

As for the third phase, we have to turn to the huge amount of pottery discarded in Room 4. There, together with some undisputedly earlier – namely III B – and a few possibly later ceramics, to be dated well into III C, we recognise a typical III C Early pottery horizon, which fits in very well with the bulk of the material from the “Acropoli Mediana”.

As for deep bowls, the inner reserved band occurs sporadically; the “Mycenaean” stylistic connection is now shown by more types of deep bowls, such as bowls with markedly sinuous walls and high flaring rims (Fig. 1:5)<sup>23</sup> together with articulated bowls with a conical body and straight walls (Fig. 1:6),<sup>24</sup> while types well-rooted in the Minoan tradition include hemispheric bowls with high walls inclined outwards (Fig. 1:7).<sup>25</sup> Some hybrid shapes, namely bowls with convex walls, which cannot be easily attributed to either the Minoan or the Mycenaean tradition, occur as well (see BORGNA 2003a, 181, type B 5). Bowls are mainly decorated with chains of linear motifs belonging to both the Minoan and the Mycenaean stylistic languages, but a discrete variety of more complex motifs occurs, which expresses an impressively rich and lively stylistic milieu, much

<sup>19</sup> In particular *GSE II*, 147, 172–173 for the beginning of III C with the appearance of bowls with inner reserved bands and the elaborate style.

<sup>20</sup> KANTA 1997. – KANTA 2003a, 176–178 in particular for the reserved bands; for the occurrence of vessels decorated with the elaborate style already in III C Early layers see *IBID.*, 179.

<sup>21</sup> Kastelli Pediada: RETHEMIOTAKIS 1997, phase I (consider however the discussion on pp. 327–336). Thronos/Sybrita: D’AGATA 1999, 192–193. – D’AGATA 2001, 54, fig. 5. – D’AGATA 2003, in particular 28 for the appearance of both reserved bands and a more complex decorative style on deep bowls.

<sup>22</sup> For a more articulated chronological assessment of the deposits included in Mountjoy’s Transitional phase see however VITALE 2006. I am very grateful to S. Vitale for permitting me to read his work when it was still unpublished.

<sup>23</sup> See e.g. *GSE II*, pl. 36:84-P0689; for the typological classification of LM III C deep bowls depending upon Mycenaean influence see BORGNA 2003a, 181–189, types B 2–4.

<sup>24</sup> *GSE II*, pl. 36:70-P0160. – KANTA 2003a, 168–171, fig. 1a. – D’AGATA 1999, 189, fig. 4:3.40. – Cf. also the Type 3 bowl of Mountjoy’s Transitional phase, e.g. *RMDP*, 282 no. 164, fig. 94.

<sup>25</sup> “Carinated” bowls according to the terminology adopted at Chania: *GSE II*, pl. 35 (e.g. 71-P0728).

influenced by Mainland patterns. Typical Minoan III C motifs, such as streamers, are very common as well. The elaborate style participates in the creation of such a milieu, but it is mainly limited to kraters (Fig. 2:1). Kraters have now the typical III C look as regards not only decoration but also shape, which is mostly articulated and provided with triangular or other clearly distinct rims (Fig. 2:2. – *GSE II*, 146–147, pls. 40–41. – In general, with literature: BORGNA 2003a, 273, 277–279. – KANTA 2003a, 171). As for other open vessels, while the ornamental style is exclusively adopted for deep bowls, blob cups and champagne cups occur (BORGNA 2003a, 229. – KANTA 1997, 96. – *GSE II*, 137. – D’AGATA 1999, 190–191, figs. 5:3.17; 6:3.1 [phase 1, III C Early]) together with many deep linear cups similar to FS 215 (Fig. 2:3) or cups decorated with wavy bands. Apart from hemispheric, globular and articulated cups with conical body and straight walls, which are well-rooted in the earlier local tradition, the occurrence of both deep cups provided with profiles very similar to deep bowls and monochrome carinated cups or FS 240 might be considered as diagnostic (Fig. 2:4).<sup>26</sup> The occurrence of some typical Mycenaean shapes, such as the linear basin or shallow bowl (FS 294–295) (Fig. 2:5), which seems to have been very common in the Aegean during LH III C Early and Middle (BENZI 1993. – Aigeira, LH III C Early: DEGER-JALKOTZY 2003, 56. – Cf. *MDP*, 153. – *RMDP*, 43, 49. – RUTTER 2003, 197), could also help to establish chronological correlations and connections. For the time being, the most manifest connections seem to be detectable in some III C Early Mycenaean peripheral assemblages, such as those in Laconia (*RMDP*, 282–287) and in the Aegean islands, particularly in III C Early (and possibly Middle developed) Phylakopi and Rhodes (*RMDP*, 912–927, figs. 374–375 [Melos] and 1027–1066 [Rhodes]), but also in III C “Früh” Tiryns (PODZUWEIT 1978, in particular 475, fig. 28. – PODZUWEIT 1979, 416, fig. 37). As for Crete, the LM III C settlement at Chania provides us once again with the closest comparisons (*GSE II*).

Some evidence in the III C pottery discarded in Room 4 might, on a stylistic and typological basis, be dated later in the period: some deep bowls provided with very high walls, whose profile is a mixture of the local Minoan and the Mycenaean traditions, such as vessels with a very low body and high vertical or slightly convex walls (Fig. 2:6) together with very deep bowls with expanded rounded body and markedly convex walls, as well as bell-like exemplars with an expanded rounded body and restricted mouths (BORGNA 2001, 286, fig. 7:2); in addition, some bowls with complex but roughly executed patterns. All are features that seem to anticipate a more advanced III C stylistic horizon and find comparisons in LM III C “Late” contexts, such as at Chalasmenos (COULSON – TSIPOPOULOU 1994, pl. 12:6. – See now TSIPOPOULOU 2004 [III C “Middle”]), Kavousi Vronda (DAY 1997, 400, fig. 6:2. Kavousi Kastro: MOOK – COULSON 1997, fig. 18:80 (Phase II). Thronos: D’AGATA 2003, fig. 2:6. – See also D’AGATA 2003, 30, fig. 3:2).

Cups with high flaring rims (Fig. 2:7),<sup>27</sup> small or miniature bell-shaped cups with a wavy band immediately below the rim (Fig. 2:8),<sup>28</sup> narrow raised or slightly hollowed bases or low conical feet for open vessels<sup>29</sup> are further features which might indicate that the deposit in Room 4 was definitively sealed at some point later than III C Early, and

<sup>26</sup> For the carinated cup in LH III C Early assemblages see e.g. DEGER-JALKOTZY 2003, 57, fig. 2:12 (Aigeira). – Cf. *RMDP*, 230 no. 182, fig. 74 (Rutter phases 2 and 3). – RUTTER 2003, 197.

<sup>27</sup> Kavousi Vronda: DAY 1997, 400, fig. 6:2. Kavousi Kastro: MOOK – COULSON 1997, fig. 18:80 (Phase II). Thronos: D’AGATA 2003, fig. 2:6.

<sup>28</sup> See in particular in III C “Entwickelt” Tiryns: PODZUWEIT 1981, 209, fig. 58:5. – *RMDP*, 169 no. 358, fig. 48.

<sup>29</sup> KANTA 1997, 86, fig. 1. – Cf. D’AGATA 2003, 29, as a feature of LM III C “Late” contexts.



possibly at the same time when pottery included in our next phase (4) was circulating. Also the isolated occurrence of the monochrome deep bowl might be considered as an indicator of a later date as well as an indication of chronological correlations with LH III C Middle contexts.<sup>30</sup>

In particular the depositional situation at the top of the deposit, where a cluster of removed stones was recorded by the excavators, might indicate that the deposit of pottery in Room 4 is to be interpreted as the result of a series of discards, and the upper level might have been created from a later clearance of the supposed outdoor pebble floor under Rooms 5 and 6.

For the definition of phase 4 we can adopt only a negative perspective by trying to enucleate from the upper non-closed layers the features that are not attested in the earlier deposits and are very likely to reveal a later III C pottery phase, possibly the one dating the sealing of the deposit in Room 4.

For such a task we also have at our disposal the pottery abandoned on the surface that constitutes the lower floor of Room 6, which was possibly created immediately after the huge discard in Room 4 and was modified after a while by raising its floor and creating Room 5.

A notable feature of this phase – which is, however, very difficult to isolate within the stratigraphy of the building – might be the appearance of huge bell-shaped bowls with a high, rounded conical body and sinuous walls, slightly restricted mouth and high flaring rims (Figs. 2:9–10; 3:1).<sup>31</sup> These bowls are associated with highly complex decorative systems, pointing to the “vulgarisation” or diffusion of the elaborate style,<sup>32</sup> which is adopted for decorating many different vessels; an intensely creative and free stylistic language is perceivable in the use of decorating differently the two faces of a single vessel. As for kraters, we record the occurrence of huge kraters or storage jars provided with highly articulated or quasi-squared rims with ridges or ropes below.<sup>33</sup> Also articulated kraters with carinated walls or inclining walls, with everted or squared rims, are possibly to be attributed to the same phase (BORGNA 2003a, 271, types C 3–4). Stemmed kraters with a continuous profile, provided with straight or slightly everted rims (Fig. 3:2. – In the “Acropoli Mediana” deposit: BORGNA 2003a, 270, types B 1–3) might also be considered widespread in this advanced III C phase, not only on internal stratigraphic grounds but also on the basis of external comparisons. Comparable elaborately decorated kraters, which do not seem to occur frequently at LM III C Early Chania, are very well attested in some advanced III C Cretan contexts, as at Thronos pit 36, Karphi, Moulia, possibly Knossos SEX and Vrokastro, though they seem to be known from III C

<sup>30</sup> For the treatment of the foot with reserved lines cf. *MDP*, 178, fig. 229; in Crete, cf. D’AGATA 2003, 29 with literature.

<sup>31</sup> For comparisons and correlations consider e.g. the appearance of “larger dimensions of deep bowls” in phase 2 at Kavousi Kastro: MOOK – COULSON 1997, 353; see now MOOK 2004, 169: III C “late”. On the Mainland see the “bulged” shape of deep bowls in some LH III C Middle contexts, such as at III C “Entwickelt” Tiryns: PODZUWEIT 1979, 426–427, fig. 43:12, 429, fig. 45; and in particular III C Fortgeschritten: PODZUWEIT 1983, 369, figs. 3:12; 4:9–11; Lefkandi, Phase 2: POPHAM – MILBURN 1971, 339, fig. 4:1.

<sup>32</sup> For Close Style deep bowls in III C Middle advanced or III C Mitte–Fortgeschritten in Greece see e.g. PODZUWEIT 1983, 371–372; for a “late type” of Close Style decoration in Crete see KANTA 2003b, 519.

<sup>33</sup> E.g. BORGNA 2001, 284, fig. 6. For a possible correlation with LH III C Middle pottery: *MDP*, 175, fig. 225 (squared rims FS 282 kraters in III C Middle advanced or Rutter phase 4b in Greece). – Cf. PODZUWEIT 1979, 428, fig. 44:7 (III C “Mitte–Entwickelt”). In Crete cf. in particular SACKETT – POPHAM – WARREN 1965, 292, fig. 12 (Palaikastro Kastri). – KANTA 2003b, 523, fig. 7H. For the occurrence of ridges below the rims of many shapes already in LM III C Early see, however, KANTA 2003a, 171.

Early contexts as well.<sup>34</sup> Monochrome or blob-decorated bowls occur in these later layers as well, and their late diffusion seems to be confirmed in other sites, such as at Chania, Thronos/Sybrita, and Chalasmenos.<sup>35</sup> Conical feet for bowls, cups and carinated kylikes provided with a high carination just below the rim seem to complete this advanced III C repertoire.<sup>36</sup>

Some correlations with LH III C Middle advanced pottery may be proposed, especially as regards the style of both kraters and deep bowls, as is suggested, in particular, by the decoration with huge solid streamers with a linear outline (Fig. 3:1), which finds a direct comparison in Lefkandi, Phase 2a (POPHAM – MILBURN 1971, 343, fig. 6:2, pl. 55:1–2).<sup>37</sup>

Phase 5 is best represented in the western sector of the building, including the later Rooms 5 and 6. Here the depositional processes have brought about a better preservation of the stratigraphic sequence, which elsewhere was more radically interrupted by the later Hellenistic building activity. Room 5 seems to be a later addition towards the end of III C, when the level of Room 6 was raised by creating a new floor. The evidence of the material included within the stones of both the southern and the western walls of Room 5 seems to show that this last building activity is later than the III C horizons so far considered. The upper level excavated in Room 1, albeit not closed, may be considered a rather homogeneous and reliable indicator of an on-the-spot activity, contemporary with the life of Rooms 5 and 6. Only here, as well as in the upper layers of Rooms 5 and 6, are we able to record the occurrence of some very late pottery such as angular and bell-like cups, with very high flaring walls and rims, which are treated with a simple linear decoration (Fig. 3:3) or, more rarely, with very roughly executed decorative patterns as well (Fig. 3:4). Such cups invite particular comparison with some Subminoan products at Knossos, Stratigraphical Museum Site (WARREN 1982/83, 85, fig. 60a,b. – Knossos SM: POPHAM 1992, pl. 43) and at Thronos/Sybrita (D'AGATA 1999, 197, fig. 9:31.5, 203, fig. 14:41.5). Monochrome deep bowls include a range of solutions, such as monochrome coating with an inner reserved band under the rim, with a reserved lower part or with a reserved window under the handles (Fig. 3:5), all of these solutions may be compared to Subminoan contexts such as Knossos, Thronos/Sybrita, and Chalasmenos.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Thronos: D'AGATA 1999, 199, fig. 10. Karphi: SEIRADAKI 1960, fig. 15:1. Moulana: XANTHOUDIDIS 1905. Knossos: WARREN 1982/83. – See WARREN this volume in particular for stage III. – POPHAM 1965, 332, fig. 9, pl. 84a. Vrokastro: HAYDEN 2003, fig. 13:67–68. – Cf. KANTA 2003a, 170–171, fig. 2 (in particular a,b,g): most dated to “the middle of the period”. Other III C evidence at Kastelli Pediada: RETHEMIOTAKIS 1997, in particular 322, fig. 33b, 323, fig. 34a. Palaikastro Kastri: SACKETT – POPHAM – WARREN 1965, 292, fig. 13. – Cf. also KANTA 2003a, 171 for the intensification of the use of dashed rims in “later LM III C stages”.

<sup>35</sup> At Chania bowls with a blob decoration appear in the pits related to a later III C occupation: *GSE II*, 94, no. 82-P1084, pl. 73:e8, cf. p. 141. Thronos/Sybrita: D'AGATA 1999, 200, fig. 11:20.2. Chalasmenos: COULSON – TSIPOPOULOU 1994, fig. 19:3.

<sup>36</sup> For conical feet see above, n. 29; furthermore KANTA 2003b, 526. For kylikes, cf. e.g. at Karphi: SEIRADAKI 1960, 26, fig. 18:1–2. Chalasmenos, Tomb A: COULSON – TSIPOPOULOU 1994, fig. 8:1. – TSIPOPOULOU 2004, 121, fig. 8.13:94–180. Kavousi Kastro, phase 1: MOOK – COULSON 1997 (for a chronology of this phase possibly a little later into III C see the discussion, pp. 366–370). Vrokastro: HAYDEN 2003, fig. 8:53. See also Kavousi Vronda, Building B, “later phase”: DAY – SNYDER 2004, 72, fig. 5.11.

<sup>37</sup> For a correlation of Lefkandi 2a with III C Middle advanced see now *RMDP*, 696; see furthermore *RMDP*, 599, fig. 223 (LH III C Middle in Attica). In Crete see in particular the decoration of the elaborate kraters at Kastelli Pediada (Church's plot): RETHEMIOTAKIS 1997, 322, fig. 33 (“III C Middle?”).

<sup>38</sup> Knossos: WARREN 1982/83, 86, figs. 62; 64–65. Thronos: D'AGATA 1999, 202, fig. 13:41.6 (SM I); for a window reserved under the handles *IBID.*, 204, 206, fig. 16:2.23 (SM II). Chalasmenos: COULSON – TSIPOPOULOU 1994, 75, fig. 10, 78, fig. 13:7, 79, fig. 14; see also DAY 1997, 396, fig. 3:8. For several varieties of monochrome bowls and cups at Kavousi Vronda: *IBID.*, 400, fig. 6.

Monochrome bowls provided with a narrow zone reserved for a wavy line-pattern (Fig. 3:6) find Cretan comparisons at Knossos and Kephala<sup>39</sup> and Mainland Greek ones in several III C Late and Submycenaean assemblages – such as III C “Spät” Tiryns and “Final Mycenaean” Asine in the Argolid (PODZUWEIT 1983, 398, fig. 16:6. – SANTILLO FRIZELL 1986, fig. 16:139. – Cf. *RMDP*, 634 no. 652, fig. 244 [“III C Late” and “SM”]) and Kynos and Kalapodi in Phocis (DAKORONIA 2003, 46, fig. 18. – JACOB-FELSCH 1996, pls. 6:418; 45:418). In addition to high-footed bowls, also deep bowls with linear inner walls, together with bell-like bowls with a very low rounded articulation between the body and the walls (Fig. 3:7), seem very late in the post-palatial period, as comparisons to clusters dated to the Subminoan period at Thronos seem to suggest (D’AGATA 1999, 206, fig. 16 [SM II]). As for kraters, bell-shaped exemplars, which look very similar to huge bowls (Fig. 3:8), fit well with the evidence of Karphi (SEIRADAKI 1960, figs. 15:2; 16:3), Subminoan Knossos (POPHAM 1992, pl. 44) and Thronos/Sybrita (D’AGATA 2003, 32 [SM]. – D’AGATA 1999, 205, fig. 15:2.15 [SM II]), while large weighed-down bowls or kraters decorated with double wavy bands (Fig. 3:9) find comparisons within a wider Aegean area including Mainland Greece, as seems to be attested at III C Late Kalapodi (JACOB-FELSCH 1996, pls. 11:264; 38:264).<sup>40</sup> Hard, over-fired fabrics and uneven manufactures can be observed, which match the evidence of other late productions, such as at Thronos/Sybrita (D’AGATA 1999, 198).

As for correlations with the Mainland, besides the monochrome deep bowls with a reserved zone for the decorative patterns, we may mention the occurrence of a new shape in the Phaistian repertoire, namely the tray (Fig. 3:10).<sup>41</sup> In Crete this is already attested at both Karphi (SEIRADAKI 1960, fig. 6:8) and Subminoan Knossos (POPHAM 1992, 63), while in the Aegean it seems to have been diffused since at least III C Middle advanced (*RMDP*, 928 no. 204, fig. 379 [Melos], 1066 no. 252, fig. 436 [Rhodes]). Finally, it is worth mentioning some close comparisons regarding decorative patterns, such as the ladder pattern from III C Fortgeschritten at Kalapodi (Fig. 3:8).<sup>42</sup>

We may add to this very late III C documentation some pieces coming from the nearby Room 7, an area most probably belonging to the “Casa a ovest del Piazzale I” but completely unstratified: huge deep bowls with a reserved lower part and a ribbed-stemmed kylix (BORGNA 1999b, 200, fig. 2, with comments and discussion. – *RMDP*, 53 [III C Late]), for example, seem to fit with a SM chronology in Greece.

The state of our evidence does not permit, however, a thorough description of ceramic sets used in III C Late or Subminoan Phaistos, as this late pottery comes mostly from unclosed filling deposits and is mixed with earlier pottery dating from III C Early and even III B.

From the framework that I have tentatively introduced, it emerges that the “Casa a ovest del Piazzale I” seems to have had a long life, beginning somewhere in the middle of LM III B and lasting most probably until the very end of the Bronze Age. As for

<sup>39</sup> Knossos Kephala: CADOGAN 1967, 260, fig. 2:14. Knossos SEX: WARREN 1982/83, 86, fig. 62:2. – See also BORGNA 2001, 286, fig. 7.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. PODZUWEIT 1983, 380–381, for the appearance of “Doppelwellenband” decoration in III C Mitte-Fortgeschritten.

<sup>41</sup> BORGNA 2001, 286, fig. 7:6. FS 322: *MDP*, 155 (III C Middle/Rutter 4a). – *RMDP*, 49 (III C Middle advanced); cf. at III C Late Lefkandi: *RMDP*, 721, fig. 277:97. – JACOB-FELSCH 1996, pl. 12 (Schicht 8: III C Fortgeschritten).

<sup>42</sup> JACOB-FELSCH 1996, pl. 34:209; on a bell-shaped krater see at SM Knossos: POPHAM 1992, pl. 46c, no. 4; also for impressed patterns on the rim of pithoi cf. JACOB-FELSCH 1996, pls. 21:414; 45:414.

the middle phase of LM III C, whose definition constitutes the main purpose of this conference, we should concentrate our attention on phase 4, though it does not succeed in emerging as a well-defined phase marked by new appearances and novelties as regards the pottery system. By contrast, we may recognise a continuous evolution of shapes and decorations during an earlier part of III C, possibly over a rather long span of time. Some evidence, however, such as highly decorated and intensely elaborated stemmed kraters, may be considered as a link to certain new trends and developments which participated in the formation of a new pottery milieu towards the middle of III C. At that moment in the history of Crete, many clusters of pottery seem to have been discarded and many deposits been sealed, possibly coinciding with some important events involving major gaps in settlement patterns and changes in the social life of post-palatial Crete. Among the pottery, which occurs in stratigraphic contexts, to be considered as either contemporary with or immediately following upon these events, we may mention later varieties of articulated kraters, including huge storage jars with squared rims and ridged walls, huge bell-like deep bowls with a bulged body, a restricted mouth and high flaring rims, hollowed bases and conical feet for bowls and cups, as well as the intensification and deterioration of the elaborate style, which is then often associated with deep bowls; otherwise both bowls and cups are monochrome or dipped. Other features possibly relating to such a phase – such as marked hollowed lips of jars, carinated kylikes, the application of hooked patterns underneath the handles of jugs (cf. *RMDP*, 49 [III C Middle]), which are attested in the “Casa a ovest” and might be useful for a thorough definition of the LM III C Middle pottery – need a more detailed assessment.

Whether Phaistos phase 4 may be called “LM III C Middle” preceding an actual III C Late(/SM? Phase 5?) horizon or is to be defined as “III C Late” followed by a pure SM sequence, is a problem of terminology, which we should try to solve by comparing the results presented at this conference and by exploring the Dark Ages contexts at Phaistos more closely.

#### Index to illustrations

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- Fig. 2 “Casa a ovest del Piazzale I”: pottery from phase 3 (1–5: kraters from Room 2-4 and 4; cups and shallow bowl from Room 4); and phase 4 (6–10: deep bowls and cups from Room 4; deep bowl [9] from Room 3)
- Fig. 3 “Casa a ovest del Piazzale I”: pottery from phase 4 (1–2: deep bowl from Room 4 and krater from Room 6) and phase 5 (3–10: cups from Rooms 1 and 6, deep bowls from Rooms 4, 1, and 6; bell-kraters from Rooms 1 and 6; tray from Room 5)

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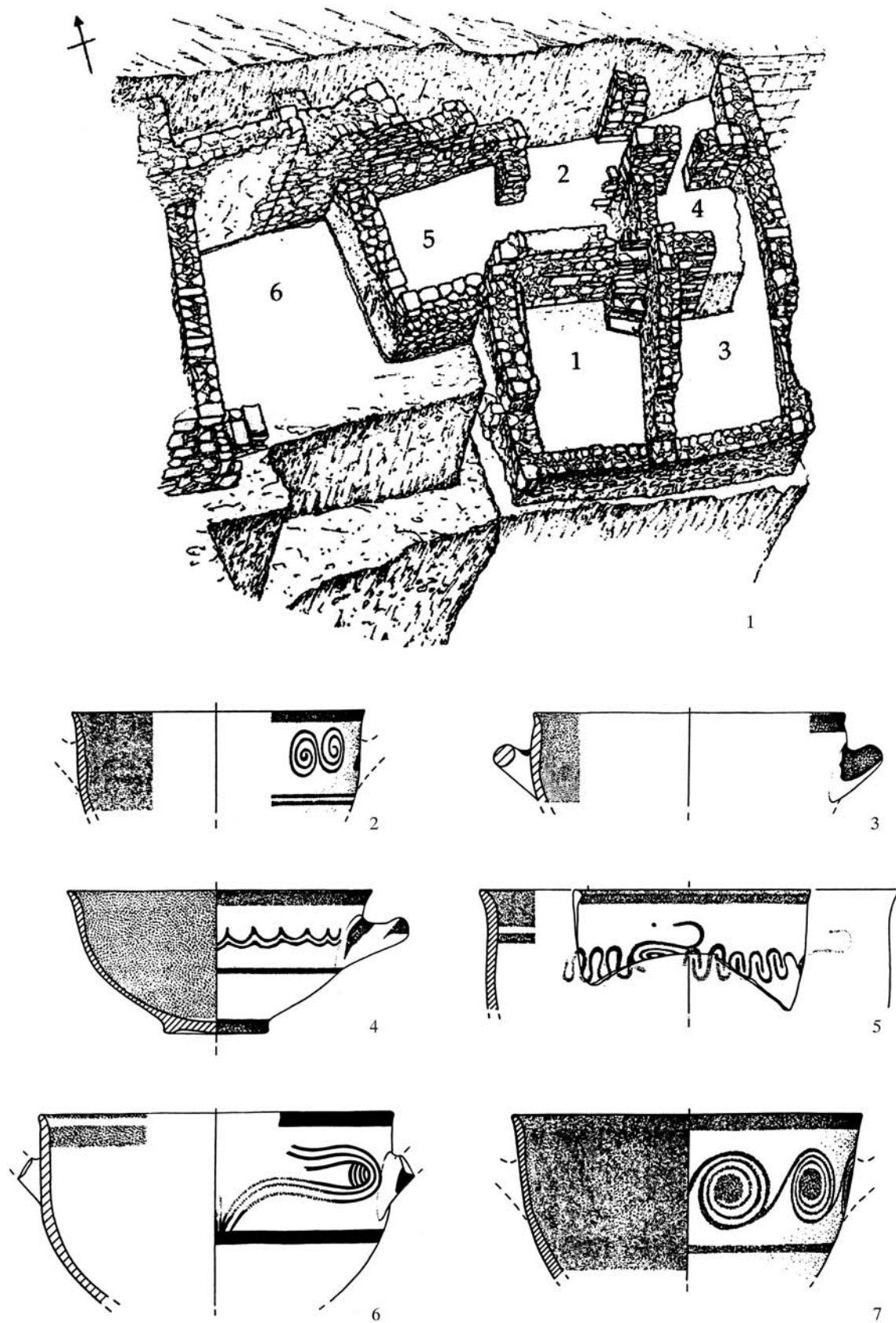


Fig. 1 "Casa a ovest del Piazzale I" at Phaistos: isometric reconstruction.  
Pottery from phase 2 and phase 3 (1:3)



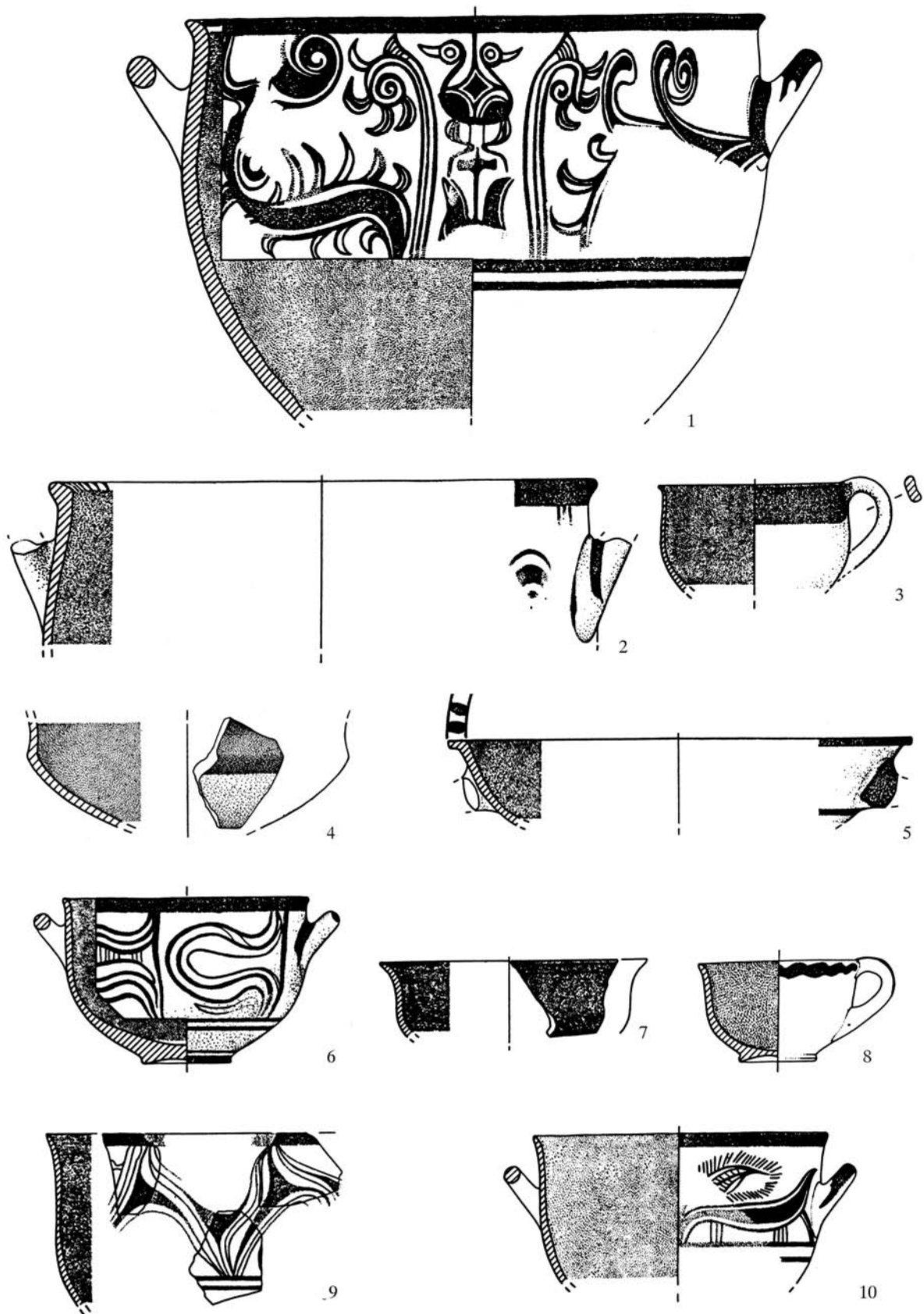


Fig. 2 "Casa a ovest del Piazzale I": pottery from phase 3 and phase 4 (1:3)

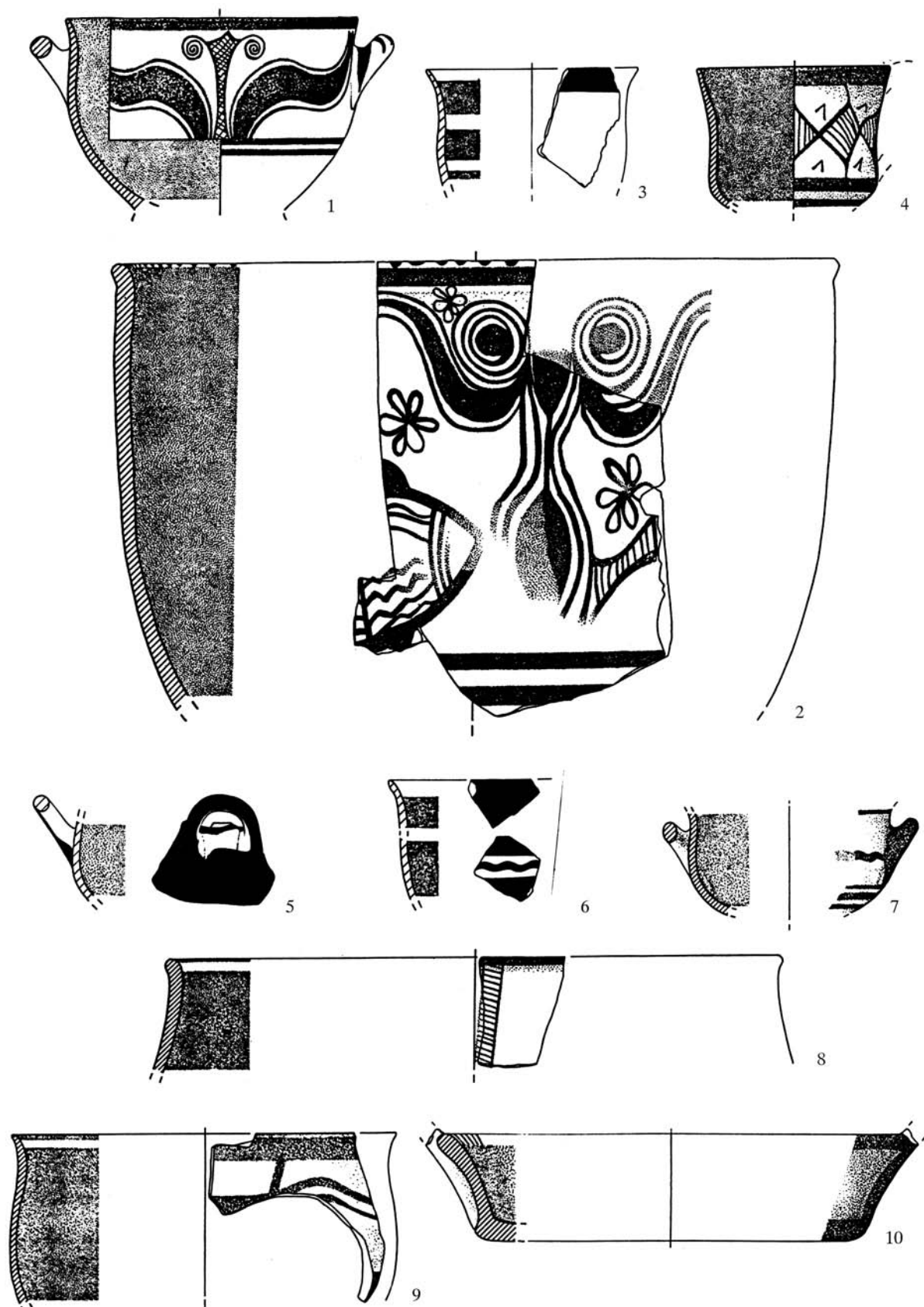


Fig. 3 "Casa a ovest del Piazzale I": pottery from phase 4 and phase 5 (1:3)