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PICTORIAL POTTERY OF LH III C MIDDLE
AND ITS ANTECEDENTS*

The subject of this paper is the painted Mycenaean vessels with pictorial decoration that can be attributed on stratigraphical and/or stylistic grounds to the relatively short period of LH III C Middle (ca. 1150/1140–1100/1090 B.C.). In fact, only a selection of these pictorial vessels will be considered, focusing on what is new about them and on what has antecedents in earlier Mycenaean vase painting or other artistic media. The examples selected come mainly from settlement contexts at Mycenae and Tiryns in the Argolid, and Lefkandi on Euboea, the three sites that have up until now yielded the largest collections of pictorial material of this date.¹

Among the pottery vessels belonging to a floor deposit in the East Basement of the so-called Granary within the citadel of Mycenae is a deep bowl with pictorial decoration consisting of a row of birds (Fig. 1. – WACE 1921–23, 52, pl. 7b [p. 48–55, for the East Basement, lower level]. – VERMEULE – KARAGEORGHIS 1982, no. XI.110. – *RMDP*, 174 no. 365, fig. 49 [pp. 47, 49, 61, 76, for the East Basement, lower level]). The pottery from this deposit firmly dates to LH III C Middle, as defined by P. A. Mountjoy and E. S. Sherratt (*MDP*, 155–180. – *RMDP*, 38–41, 47–50 with tables I and II. – MOUNTJOY this volume. – SHERRATT 1981).² The birds and the subsidiary ornaments are rendered in the so-called Close Style, which was produced in the Argolid. By far the most published examples of this class of pottery come from Mycenae (for what follows, see esp. *RMDP*, 50, 77–78. – CROUWEL 1991, 17–18, 22–23, 28–29, 32. – FRENCH this volume).³ In other parts of Greece it only appears as (mostly rare) imports, or in imitations of birds or abstract motifs.

The Close Style may be defined as a miniaturist, highly ornate class of pottery, with carefully drawn, detailed motifs filling all or nearly all available spaces. It occurs mainly on small vessels of fine, thin fabric, representing a limited number of open and closed shapes. The motifs are mostly abstract, but birds and fish arranged in friezes

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¹ Much material of this date from Mycenae and Tiryns is included in VERMEULE – KARAGEORGHIS 1982, chapter XI. – SAKELLARAKIS 1992. – SLENCZKA 1974. – CROUWEL 1991. – GÜNTNER 2000. For the material from Lefkandi, see CROUWEL 2006a, and, previously, POPHAM – SACKETT 1968, 19, figs. 35, 37–46. – POPHAM – MILBURN 1971, 340, pls. 53:6; 54; 57:3. – VERMEULE – KARAGEORGHIS 1982, nos. XI.37–39, 51, 61–62, 65–66, 91.

² At the major sites of Mycenae and Tiryns the period comprises the two phases called Developed/Entwickelt and Advanced/Fortgeschritten.

³ The elite of the LH III C Middle is described in DEGER-JALKOTZY 2002, 58–63 as a warrior aristocracy.

or panels also appear. The Close Style clearly represents a ceramic phenomenon, independent of wall paintings or other non-ceramic sources. While the pictorial elements are usually no more than “a kind of calligraphic substitute for abstract ornament” (quoted from KOPCKE 1977, 33), an example of more complex pictorial decoration can be seen on a fragmentary deep bowl from the Citadel House Area, not far from the Granary at Mycenae (Fig. 2. – CROUWEL 1991, no. G 3. – Also *MDP*, 176, fig. 228:3 [one sherd]). This vessel, called the “Goats and Fish Bowl”, bears panelled decoration, with antithetically placed goats feeding on a leaved triglyph, and fish filling the spaces above the goats. A similar arrangement, involving goats, a leaved triglyph or actual tree but without the fish, is seen on fragments of two other Close Style deep bowls from Mycenae (VERMEULE – KARAGEORGHIS 1982, nos. IX.73–74, their dating corrected in CROUWEL 1991, 17, 22) and a contemporary krater from Lefkandi (CROUWEL 2006a, no. C 1. – POPHAM – MILBURN 1971, pl. 54:1. – VERMEULE – KARAGEORGHIS 1982, no. X.85). As regards panelled decoration, this is well-known in Mycenaean vase painting of LH III B and III C, particularly on deep bowls and ring-based kraters. The panels mostly have abstract motifs, but pictorial ones also occur (*RMDP*, 33, 35, 44, 49).

One of the friezes on a fragmentary Close Style stirrup jar from an unknown location at Mycenae carries a row of birds (Fig. 3. – VERMEULE – KARAGEORGHIS 1982, no. XI.118. – SAKELLARAKIS 1992, no. 174). The birds are quite differently rendered from those on the deep bowl from the Granary, but resemble the two creatures depicted on the well-known “Warrior Krater” from a nearby building within the citadel of Mycenae (Fig. 4. – VERMEULE – KARAGEORGHIS 1982, no. XI.42. – IMMERWAHR 1990, 149–151, pls. 85–87. – SAKELLARAKIS 1992, no. 32 [with bibliography]). On this ring-based krater the birds are placed antithetically under the twisted horns of a frontal bull’s head which form the double-arched handles. The large spaces between the handles display files of marching warriors, in one case together with a female figure standing at the rear. In sharp contrast to the small, delicately potted and painted Close Style vessels, the “Mycenae Warrior Krater” is a large, robust vessel, made in the coarse, heavy, so-called oatmeal fabric which is new in LH III C Middle. Its decoration is polychrome, combining dark brown with pale yellow and added white. At the same time, the “Warrior Krater” is linked to the Close Style vessels by the rendering of the birds.

Close Style birds can also be seen on fragments of other kraters and vases of different shapes, including a large four-handled jar of “oatmeal” fabric from the Granary at Mycenae (WACE 1921–23, 46, pl. 9b [probably from the West Basement]. – VERMEULE – KARAGEORGHIS 1982, no. XI.119. – SAKELLARAKIS 1992, no. 184. – CROUWEL 1991, 23, 28. – *RMDP*, 159). So a picture emerges of a large workshop of LH III C Middle, presumably situated at Mycenae and producing both fine Close Style pottery and robust kraters, along with other large vessels of similar heavy fabric, such as the jar from the Granary and the so-called Horses and Birds Jar from the Citadel House Area (Fig. 6. – VERMEULE – KARAGEORGHIS 1982, no. XI.13. – CROUWEL 1991, no. G 2 [“Horses and Birds Jar”]).

The “Warrior Krater” from Mycenae has other significant connections as well. First, there is the much noted close link with the Painted Stele which was found in one of the many chamber tombs in the Mycenae area (Fig. 5. – TSOUNTAS 1896. – VERMEULE – KARAGEORGHIS 1982, no. XI.43. – XENAKI-SAKELLARIOU 1985, 203–204 with frontispiece [Kato Pigadi, tomb 70]. – IMMERWAHR 1990, 150–151, My No. 21, pl. 84. – See now also *Archaeological Atlas*, 36 [called Alepotrypa, tomb 70]). This sandstone stele was clearly reused, as its original carved decoration was covered in plaster and subsequently painted polychrome. One long side has three horizontal registers, includ-

ing one with a file of soldiers closely similar to those seen on the “Warrior Krater” and presumably painted by the same hand.⁴ Another register shows a row of deer, with a hedgehog filling the space above one of them. The scene in the upper, third register is only partly preserved: part of a seated figure in a long dress facing a man, with a trace of a possible other figure behind him.

The technique in which the Painted Stele was plastered and painted is very similar to that of the paintings of the walls of the palace and other LH III B buildings at Mycenae. This suggests that the artist was trained as a wall painter or copied the technique of wall paintings that were still visible well after the destruction of the palace and other buildings.⁵

The “Warrior Krater” from Mycenae is also linked by details of its shape and elaborate pictorial decoration to other ring-based kraters, most of which are only preserved in fragments. These have been found not only at Mycenae, but also at nearby Tiryns and various sites in other parts of Mainland Greece, as well as on Euboea, Melos and Naxos (CROUWEL 2006b).

Of particular interest is an example from Lefkandi which may be called the “Warrior and Horses Krater” (VERMEULE – KARAGEORGHIS 1982, no. XI.59. – CROUWEL 2006a, no. G 1a–b). Unfortunately, only fragments of it remain, but these include a double bull’s head handle like those of the “Warrior Krater” from Mycenae. The one, partially preserved armed man on the Lefkandi krater (Fig. 7) wears a short fringed tunic, greaves or leggings and laced boots, again like the soldiers on the “Warrior Krater” from Mycenae. On the other hand, he is not carrying a spear and shield but is armed with a sword in a tasseled scabbard, while raising one arm up in front. On its other side the “Warrior and Horses Krater” from Lefkandi featured a number of horses which were not harnessed to chariots, as on other kraters, but roamed freely, as on the contemporary “Horses and Birds Jar” from Mycenae mentioned above (Fig. 6).

The fragments of the “Warrior and Horses Krater” come from contexts belonging to Lefkandi LH III C Phase 2a, which firmly dates to LH III C Middle (*RMDP*, 694, 696. – SCHOFIELD this volume). Much more pictorial pottery of this phase was found in the limited area of the Xeropolis site at Lefkandi that was excavated in the 1960s. Other such finds are reported from the large-scale excavations that started there in 2003.⁶

Apart from links with the pictorial pottery from the north-east Peloponnese, there are connections with finds, again mainly krater fragments, from nearer sites, such as Kalapodi in Phocis (*RMDP*, 815 nos. 27–28, fig. 325), Volos in Thessaly (VERMEULE – KARAGEORGHIS 1982, nos. XI.57–58. – IMMERWAHR 1987) and Kynos (also called Kynos Livanates, Livanates, or Pyrgos Livanaton) on the East Locrian coast, opposite

⁴ See, most recently, GÜNTNER 2000, 358–359, where two items are also attributed to his Stele-Painter: a fragmentary krater with panelled decoration involving antithetic birds from the Unterburg at Tiryns (IBID., 111, Tiryns *Vogel* 63 = 273, *Vogel* 438 with pl. 50a–d), and a krater fragment with part of a bird from Mycenae (IBID., 272, *Vogel* 401. – See also VERMEULE – KARAGEORGHIS 1982, no. VIII.24. – SAKELLARAKIS 1992, no. 220).

⁵ There is controversy over the LH III C date that has been attributed, as yet without full contextual evidence, to a wall painting called “Lady with a Lily” from the Greek excavations in the Cult Centre at Mycenae, see KRITSELI-PROVIDI 1982, 73–76 no. G-1, 80–89, 111, fig. 8, pls. B; 24. – IMMERWAHR, 1990, 119–120, 148 with n. 5, 191 (My No. 5). – RUTTER 1992, 65 with n. 10.

⁶ For the earlier finds, see supra n. 1; for new ones from Phase 2, see WHITLEY 2003/04, 39, fig. 54 (krater sherd with part of a warrior); WHITLEY 2004/05, 51, fig. 90 (krater sherd with rowers on board of a ship).

Euboea. The pictorial pottery from the latter site comes from a well-defined destruction level of LH III C Middle (DAKORONIA this volume).⁷

Altogether, the pictorial material datable to III C Middle presents a considerable variety of motifs, compositions and styles, as well as (levels of) draughtsmanship. The rich iconography comprises armed men on foot, in chariots or aboard ships, as well as unarmed human figures, animals of various species, birds, fish and fantastic creatures engaged in a variety of activities. The shapes used are mainly ring-based kraters, but pictorial deep bowls, kalathoi and other open shapes also occur, along with stirrup jars, other types of jars and other closed shapes. Let us now examine to what extent the pictorial repertoire of LH III C Middle was an original creation and in how far it had antecedents.

By LH III C Middle pictorially decorated pottery had had a long history in Mycenaean Greece, going back to LH I and II (for what follows, see esp. VERMEULE – KARAGEORGHIS 1982, chapters III–X. – ÅKERSTRÖM 1987. – GÜNTNER 2000, 323–332. – CROUWEL – MORRIS 1996). Originally strongly influenced by Minoan prototypes as regards shapes and iconography, Mycenaean pictorial pottery subsequently went through a process of conventionalisation and standardisation. For a considerable time it was primarily a phenomenon of the Argolid, with finds concentrated in the palatial centres of Mycenae, Tiryns and Midea and in the production centre of Berbati.⁸ In LH III B, the pictorially decorated vessels were mainly kraters of a new, ring-based type, which usually carried rows of chariots, bulls and other animals. Other shapes, such as deep bowls, jugs and (stirrup) jars, were mostly decorated with birds or fish. The range of shapes, motifs and compositions is well illustrated by the substantial body of finds from the LH III B2 destruction horizon within the citadel of Midea (MCMULLEN FISHER 1998. – MCMULLEN FISHER – GIERING 1998. – DEMAKOPOULOU forthcoming). All in all, the depictions are often repetitive, taken from a stock repertoire, though more original ones do also occur. It is important to note that the pictorial material of this and any other Mycenaean period constitutes only a tiny fraction (probably less than 1% at any given time) of the total amount of patterned pottery. It is also of note that pictorial Mycenaean pottery displays the same techniques of manufacture as non-pictorial, patterned vessels.

The history of pictorial pottery in LH III C Early, a period of some 50 years (ca. 1185/1180–1150/1140 B.C.) after the destruction of the Mycenaean palaces, is rather controversial. As we shall see below, there is little material from stratified deposits of this time, with the apparent exception of Tiryns. On the other hand, a fairly large number of pieces has been attributed on stylistic grounds to LH III C Early in a recent authoritative study by Wolfgang Güntner (GÜNTNER 2000).

Among the sizeable corpus of pictorial pottery from the British excavations in the Citadel House Area at Mycenae, its stratified deposits running from LH III B to LH III C Late, only two fragments could be firmly assigned to LH III C Early by their find contexts and style. They belong to a single deep bowl with a spiral pattern which was pictorialised into a bird's head (Fig. 8. – CROUWEL 1991, no. E 27).⁹

At Lefkandi on Euboea, where LH III B is not well represented, LH III C Phases 1 to 3 cover the entire length of this period as recognised on the Greek Mainland. Among

⁷ Pictorial material of this period may also be expected from the current excavations at Mitrou, another coastal site in East Locris just 10 km south of Kynos; see RUTTER this volume.

⁸ For the potter's workshop at Berbati, see most recently SCHALLIN 2002.

⁹ I am grateful to Dr. E. French for letting me have a revised list of the dating of the find contexts of the pictorial material from the Citadel House Area that was presented in CROUWEL 1991.

the 93 catalogued pieces from the 1960s excavations only three have definite find contexts of Phase I, which dates to LH III C Early: a deep bowl (?) sherd showing a horse's head (Fig. 10), two fragments from a krater with remains of two birds, and another krater sherd also preserving part of a bird (CROUWEL 2006a, nos. A 12, E 10, E 17). In addition, six krater fragments, with remains of a horse, birds and unidentified pictorial motifs, less certainly derive from Phase I contexts (CROUWEL 2006a, nos. A 7, E 9, E 12, E 15, H 2, H 17).

The large-scale excavations by Klaus Kilian in the Unterburg at Tiryns, where the occupation levels include LH III B and all of LH III C, have produced much pictorial material. All in all, 46 pieces have been recorded from (as yet not fully published) find contexts of LH III C Early. Most of these fragmentary pictorial pieces were assigned by Wolfgang Güntner to LH III B or earlier on stylistic grounds (GÜNTNER 2000, 16, 19–20 [Tiryns *Wagen* 5, 12–13], 32–33 [*Mensch* 13–15], 40, 43–44, 46, 49, 51–58, 62 [*Stier* 3, 12, 14B, 15, 22, 33, 36, 42B, 43B, 44B, 44G, 44L, 45C, 48, 53D], 65, 68 [*Hirsch* 2C, 8], 69–71 [*Ziege* 1, 3D], 91, 96–100, 102–103, 105 [*Vogel* 19, 34A, 34F, 34R, 34U, 34Z, 34AA, 34AB, 34AC, 34AD, 34AE, 34EF, 42, 46, 53C]). These “throw-ups” present a variety of motifs, including chariot, human figure, bovid, deer and goat, and mainly bird. One fragment with a small part of a chariot team actually belongs to the so-called Tiryns Sphinx Krater of which many other fragments were found in scattered contexts of LH III B and III C Middle. The original krater must then date back to LH III B (PODZUWEIT 1979, 434 with fig. 38:5. – GÜNTNER 2000, 21 [Tiryns *Wagen* 15], 181 [*Wagen* 180], 194, 357–358 [“Tiryns Sphinx Painter”] with pl. 4:1a–b).

Only four pictorial pieces from LH III C levels, preserving a horse's head (Fig. 9), a deer and (twice) birds, were assigned by Güntner to this period itself, again for stylistic reasons (GÜNTNER 2000, 23 [Tiryns *Wagen* 22], 69 [Tiryns *Hirsch* 11], 107 [Tiryns *Vogel* 56], 109–110 [Tiryns *Vogel* 62C] with pl. 50:2, 182 [*Wagen* 196] with pl. 6:1, 245 [*Hirsch* 11] with pl. 31:10, 271 [*Vogel* 367] with pl. 49:3).

To these pieces may be added a remarkable document in the form of a restored bull-shaped figure from the Unterburg at Tiryns (Fig. 13. – KILIAN 1992, 21 n. 136, pl. 3:2. – VERMEULE – KARAGEORGHIS 1982, no. XI.85.1. – GUGGISBERG 1996, 46 no. 111, pl. 8:1–4. – GÜNTNER 2000, 252, 256 [*Ziege* 56], 322). It is well stratified, coming from the LH III C Early shrine Room 117, which in III C Middle was overbuilt and replaced by shrine Room 110.¹⁰ This bull-figure is so far unique in having (incompletely preserved) pictorial decoration on all four sides of its body involving male goats and fish. The goats are mostly raised on their hind legs, which are alternately painted solid and patterned, but at least one appears to be shown leaping. The pair of goats depicted on the back of the bull's body are walking to the right while holding long sticks, which suggests a supernatural setting. Assuming that the bull is not an heirloom from LH III B,¹¹ it offers an example of elaborate pictorial pottery of LH III C Early which is not decorative but rather carries a specific meaning.

Elsewhere, only a few pictorial pieces can be attributed to LH III C Early. They include a fragmentary ring-based krater, with apparently rather simply drawn birds in panels, belonging to a floor deposit of this date at Korakou in the Corinthia (*RMDP*, 230, 234 no. 190, fig. 76; cf. no. 192, a contemporary fragmentary krater with fish [?]). Also

¹⁰ For the shrine Rooms, see esp. ALBERS 1994, 105–106. – Also MÜHLENBRUCH this volume.

¹¹ As was suggested at the Vienna Workshop by E. French on the basis of the shape of the bull's feet. It may be noted that the bull figures found in the sanctuary at Phylakopi on Melos, although contextually late Mycenaean, may stylistically date to LH III B or even earlier; see FRENCH 1985, 238–239, 279–280.

belonging here is a stirrup jar from Perati in east Attica (Fig. 15. – IAKOVIDIS 1969/70, vol. 1, 434–435 no. 892; vol. 2, esp. 139, 150, 181, fig. 65; vol. 3, pl. 129γ. – VERMEULE – KARAGEORGHIS 1982, no. XI.83. – SAKELLARAKIS 1992, no. 113. – *RMDP*, 572). The vessel was locally made and comes from chamber tomb 124 which has been assigned to the cemetery's Phase I, corresponding to LH III C Early (*RMDP*, 497). The elaborate pictorial design, which is unparalleled, includes a goat eating from a palm tree, as well as what looks like a big stylised plant and many birds of different sizes.

In addition, Wolfgang Güntner attributes to LH III C Early a good number of pictorial pots or fragments that have no find context of this date. These pieces, presenting a variety of both simple and elaborate motifs and compositions, come not only from the Unterburg but also from other parts of Tiryns, as well as from Mycenae and elsewhere. Here again the arguments are stylistic (GÜNTNER 2000, esp. 323–333 with table 7, also 182, 195–196 [*Wagen* 182–200], 203, 212–213 [*Mensch* 106–115], 252, 255–256 [*Ziege* 54–60], 289–291 [*Vogel* 357–399], 296, 303–304 [*Fisch* 66–92]).

Yet when we examine more closely the stylistic criteria used by Güntner, they appear rather vague and inconclusive. This concerns both his distinction between pictorial pottery of LH III C Early and III B, and his distinction between pictorial pottery of LH III C Early and Middle. At a general level, Güntner observes two tendencies among the material attributed by him to LH III C Early: one towards simplification, after the more complex motifs and compositions of LH III B, the other towards the detailed motifs seen in LH III C Middle. A problem here is that, while the first tendency is paralleled by the contemporary non-pictorial, patterned pottery of Mainland Greece and Euboea, the second one is clearly not. Indeed, it is the commonly held view that there was a clear fall-off in the production of pictorial and other elaborately decorated pottery in these parts of the Aegean world after the demise of the palaces (for general assessments, see *MDP*, 134–154. – MOUNTJOY 1993, 90–91. – *RMDP*, 41–47. – SHERRATT 1981. – RUTTER 1992, 65–66).

On a more specific level, Güntner regards as typical of LH III C Early, apart from the rendering in perspective of the hind legs of running animals, the often observed contrast between solidly painted and reserved or patterned body parts of animals and human figures. The latter feature, however, can also frequently be seen among the pictorial finds from Lefkandi Phase 2a, which dates to LH III C Middle.

To confuse matters further, Güntner notes the overall decline in the production of pictorial pottery after the end of LH III B and also admits that stylistically it is hard to distinguish between pictorial pottery of LH III C Early and that of the end of LH III B. In this case he even speaks of a transitional style.¹²

All in all, at Tiryns and elsewhere on the Greek Mainland and Euboea, it is clearly difficult to date pictorial pottery to LH III C Early on purely stylistic grounds, without the backing of stratigraphical evidence, and to confidently assess how far the rich repertoire of pictorial pottery datable to LH III C Middle has antecedents in the immediately preceding years. For the time being, there must remain considerable doubt as to whether Güntner is correct in attributing to LH III C Early rather than Middle such elaborate pieces as, for instance, the well-known jar fragments with a chariot race and a seated female figure holding up a kylix (Fig. 11. – KILIAN 1980. – VERMEULE – KARAGEORGHIS 1982, no. XI.19.1. – GÜNTNER 2000, 22 [*Tiryns Wagen* 17], 182 [*Wagen* 190], 195, pl. 5:1a–b), and the fragments of a krater with a dog pursuing fleeing deer from

¹² GÜNTNER 2000, 332–333, recalling the “transitional period” discussed in VERMEULE – KARAGEORGHIS 1982, chapter X. – Cf. CROUWEL 2003.

Tiryms (Fig. 12. – SLENCZKA 1974, no. 139. – GÜNTNER 2000, 37 [another fragment, Tiryms *Jagd* 2], 217 [*Jagd* 12], 219–220, pl. 14:2 = KNELL – VOIGTLÄNDER 1980, pl. 69:167. – Also IMMERWAHR 1990, 153, pl. 89) to LH III C Early rather than Middle.

Things seem to have been different in the eastern Aegean, where, as recent research suggests, pictorial pottery may have been more common in early LH III C. Among the pieces attributed to this time are an extraordinary, very large fragmentary krater with a naval battle, recently found at Bademgediği Tepe in western Anatolia, and a long-known three-legged mug with birds and fish from Miletus. In general, the LH III C pottery from the eastern Aegean displays clear regional characteristics and did not pass through the same stylistic developments as took place in the Argolid and other parts of Mainland Greece or nearby Euboea (MOUNTJOY 1998, 51–63. – MOUNTJOY 2004 [including a discussion of the mug from Miletus]. – MOUNTJOY 2005 [the new ship krater]).

To focus again on LH III C Middle, it is a period of increased prosperity and contacts throughout the Aegean world. This prosperity is reflected in a new demand for elaborately and imaginatively decorated pottery, such as the Close Style of the Argolid which represents a table ware of very high quality (for general assessments of the pottery of LH III C Middle, see *MDP*, 155–180. – MOUNTJOY 1993, 97–108. – *RMDP*, 47–51. – SHERRATT 1981. – RUTTER 1992, 66–67, 69). LH III C Middle also marks the hey-day of the well-known Octopus stirrup jars, many of which at this time feature birds, fish or other additional pictorial motifs. In contrast to the Close Style, these distinctive jars were widely used in the Aegean and had several production centres, mainly on islands but also in Attica (RUTTER 1992, 63–64. – VLACHOPOULOS 1997. – *RMDP*, 50–51, etc.).

The pictorial pottery of LH III C Middle may be described as a mixture of old and new. With regard to the vessel shapes used, the favourite, ring-based type of krater first appeared in LH III B and remained in use throughout LH III C. The shape obviously for a long time appealed to vase painters and their patrons, offering as it did relatively large surfaces for elaborate designs in the handle zones. Besides, the kraters are large and impressive-looking. For instance, the “Warrior Krater” of LH III C Middle from Mycenae and another pictorial example from Grotta on Naxos, presumably of similar date, have rim diameters of ca. 0.50 and 0.65 m respectively.¹³ Such mixing bowls of water and wine must have been commissioned by male elites and used primarily as centre pieces in wine drinking sets, both in LH III B and later (see STEEL 1999). A new feature of kraters, attributable to LH III C Middle and attested at various sites, are the plain or slashed ridge(s) below the rims (JACOB-FELSCH 1996, 32–33. – *RMDP*, 49, etc.). New at that time are also the occasional bull’s head handles of kraters,¹⁴ as is the heavy “oatmeal” fabric that was used at Mycenae, and apparently also at Tiryms, for kraters as well as some other large vessels. Other shapes favoured for pictorial decoration, such as the deep bowl, kalathos and stirrup jar, like the krater go back to LH III B.

As regards the iconography, many motifs were known before, including chariots, animals like goats and deer, birds and fish, as well as fantastic creatures such as griffins and sphinxes. In contrast, bovids and their protomes, which had been quite popular motifs in LH III B vase painting, no longer seem to occur in LH III C Middle.

¹³ Cf. supra p. 74 (Mycenae “Warrior Krater”). VLACHOPOULOS 1999. – VLACHOPOULOS 2003, 225, fig. 10 (Naxos krater). The rim diameter of the new ship krater from western Turkey (see above) falls within the same range.

¹⁴ Apart from the Mycenae “Warrior Krater” and the “Warrior and Horses Krater” from Lefkandi, there is a krater fragment with such a handle from Athens; see BRONEER 1939, 353–354, fig. 27g. – *RMDP*, 598. According to HALLAGER this volume, the double handles were adopted from kraters on Crete, where there are examples from LM III B at Chania and from LM III C Early contexts at sites in the east.

Traditional motifs were often used in novel, imaginative ways, free from the conventions of the past. For instance, the slow-moving chariots of old now often carry warriors and not civilians.¹⁵ Similar heavily armed men are shown marching on foot, as on the Painted Stele and the “Warrior Krater” from Mycenae, in the latter case juxtaposed with a – unique – female figure. Yet other such military men are seen on board of ships, where they are sometimes clearly engaged in battle (DAKORONIA this volume. – CROUWEL 1999. – WEDDE 1999, 467, 470 nos. A 4–6, C 9).¹⁶ The latter subject may have a predecessor in the stylistically very different krater from western Anatolia that was mentioned above.

As regards animal scenes, there are quite a few involving dogs pursuing or attacking deer or wild boar. The theme of hunting was of course not unknown in LH III B vase- and wall paintings which include the Boar Hunt Tableaux from Tiryns and Orchomenos (VERMEULE – KARAGEORGHIS 1982, no. V.60 [ring-based krater from Aradippo, Cyprus]. – Cf. MYLONAS 1975, pl. 124β. – SAKELLARAKIS 1992, no. 98 [fragments of two kraters from Mycenae with deer hit by spears]. – IMMERWAHR 1990, 129–130, pl. 70 [Ti No. 6], 132 [Or No. 3]). But it is treated in a particularly lively and sometimes even dramatic way on kraters and fragments thereof datable to LH III C Middle. As an example is illustrated a krater fragment in “oatmeal” fabric from Mycenae which preserves the head of a fierce dog and part of a hind leg of a fleeing deer (Fig. 14).¹⁷

Other animal scenes include one of goats mating, a subject that is otherwise known only from a much earlier Minoan gold ring (KENNA 1967, no. 68). Equally new in vase painting is the presence of a foal among horses seen roaming freely on the “Horses and Birds Jar” from Mycenae (Fig. 6). On the other hand, the several scenes of goats feeding from trees or leaved triglyphs in panel compositions (Fig. 2), original as they are, ultimately derive from the theme of antithetic goats feeding on “the tree of life” that was adopted much earlier in Bronze Age Aegean iconography from the Near East (CROUWEL 1991, 17, 22. – CROUWEL 2006a, no. C 1. – ÅKERSTRÖM 1987, 2, 60. – VERMEULE – KARAGEORGHIS 1982, 23 no. III.26, 55 no. V.110. – For the Near East itself, see GENGE 1971). Among the other animals, hedgehogs are depicted for the first time (Fig. 5. – CROUWEL 1991, no. C 22. – GÜNTNER 2000, 257–258).

As to the many representations of birds dating to LH III C Middle, krater fragments from Lefkandi may be singled out. They illustrate young birds in nests or flying up to a parent (Fig. 16. – CROUWEL 2006a, nos. E 2a–c, E 1 = POPHAM – SACKETT 1968, fig. 45. – POPHAM – MILBURN 1971, pl. 54:4. – VERMEULE – KARAGEORGHIS, no. XI.141) – subjects which are rare in earlier Aegean iconography.¹⁸

A different family group, consisting of a parent sphinx standing over its wingless young, is depicted on a krater fragment also from Lefkandi (Fig. 17. – CROUWEL

¹⁵ Among these chariot scenes is, in my view, a fragmentary krater from Tiryns which was attributed by Güntner to LH III C Early on vague stylistic grounds: GÜNTNER 2000, 23 (Tiryns *Wagen* 23), 182 (*Wagen* 197), 195, pl. 6:2a–c. – SLENCZKA 1974, nos. 115–116. – VERMEULE – KARAGEORGHIS 1982, no. XI.16. – IMMERWAHR 1990, 152–153, pl. 90.

¹⁶ Add the fragments reported from the resumed excavations at Lefkandi (supra p. 75).

¹⁷ CROUWEL 1991, no. G 5A with pl. 3, also nos. G 4, 5B, and G 1 with fig. 7 and pl. 4 (larnax fragment). Cf. a possible hunting scene on krater fragments from Lefkandi, CROUWEL 2006a, no. G 3a–b. – POPHAM – SACKETT 1968, 19, fig. 46. – POPHAM – MILBURN 1971, pl. 54:6. – VERMEULE – KARAGEORGHIS 1982, no. XI.79.

¹⁸ Birds feeding in nests are seen on a LH III A2 amphoroid krater from Maroni in Cyprus (VERMEULE – KARAGEORGHIS 1982, no. IV.38) and possibly on an undated fragment from Mycenae (SAKELLARAKIS 1992, no. 122). Swallows feeding in a nest are depicted on a wall painting from Akrotiri on Thera, see DOUMAS 1992, 128, pls. 97–99.

2006a, no. G 2. – POPHAM – SACKETT 1968, fig. 37. – POPHAM – MILBURN 1971, pl. 53:6. – VERMEULE – KARAGEORGHIS 1982, no. XI.65). The two sphinxes are looking in opposite directions, recalling various earlier scenes of mother cows and other animals suckling their young in different artistic media of the Aegean Bronze Age (see e.g. SAKELLARIOU 1966, 49–50). The sphinxes wear beret-like caps in two tiers. Similar headdresses, but usually plumed, are commonly worn by the sphinxes in earlier Mycenaean vase paintings and other representations.¹⁹ On the Lefkandi krater fragment the group of sphinxes is shown side by side with a standing or walking human figure wearing a long, richly patterned robe in combination with cross-hatched boots such as are seen in other contexts on the Mycenae “Warrior Krater” and the “Warrior and Horses Krater” from Lefkandi (Figs. 4; 7).²⁰ It remains uncertain what the long-robed person, who carries a jug, is doing beside the sphinxes. There seems to be no obvious relationship with earlier representations of human figures associated with sphinxes.²¹ The decorated long robe recalls those worn in cultic contexts on wall paintings of the Mycenaean palaces.²²

Three family groups can be distinguished on the well-known, completely preserved alabastron from Lefkandi which is painted in white-on-dark rather than in the common dark-on-light (Fig. 18. – CROUWEL 2006a, no. G 1. – POPHAM – SACKETT 1968, fig. 35 and cover. – POPHAM – MILBURN 1971, pl. 53:6. – VERMEULE – KARAGEORGHIS 1982, no. XI.65. – DEMAPOULOU 1988, no. 68. – IMMERWAHR 1990, 152, pl. 88). One of these groups consists of two griffins feeding their young in a nest – a theme known in connection with birds in LH III C Middle and earlier (Fig. 16), but unique in the extensive repertoire of griffin representations in the Aegean Bronze Age. The latter are all earlier (DELPLACE 1967. – POURSAT 1977, 64–68. – MORGAN 1988, 49–54).²³

The second group is formed by three goats, quite probably a (larger) parent facing its two young which are placed one above the other. There are no obvious parallels for the lively composition of the three goats, nor for their individual rendering.

The third family group consists of two deer, with an antlered parent looking back at a fawn standing on its back and facing in the opposite direction. Exactly the same poses can be seen on some LH III B ring-based krater fragments, but not earlier nor later (SLENCZKA 1973, no. 43, pl. 35:1a [Tiryne]. – VERMEULE – KARAGEORGHIS 1982, no. IX.48 [Menelaion]). On the other hand, the antlered deer and its young with its incipient antlers on the Lefkandi alabastron do not share the characteristic wavy line body fill of the earlier vase representations. The spotted hide of the fawn rather recalls the deer on the contemporary Painted Stele from Mycenae.

¹⁹ VERMEULE – KARAGEORGHIS 1982, nos. V.27–28, VIII.30 (= SAKELLARAKIS 1992, no. 248), VIII.31 (= SAKELLARAKIS 1992, nos. 245–247), X.42. – CROUWEL 1991, no. D 1, fig. 3. – GÜNTNER *supra* p. 77 (the name piece of his “Tiryne Sphinx Painter”). For sphinxes in Aegean art, see DESSENNE 1957. – POURSAT 1977, 61–64. It may be noted that a fragment of a Close Style deep bowl from Mycenae may well show a mother goat standing over her young facing in the same direction; see CROUWEL 1991, 17 no. C 19, fig. 3.

²⁰ The two kraters with their different subject matter from Lefkandi may well be by the same painter, see CROUWEL 2006a, 246.

²¹ SAKELLARIOU 1966, 49–50. – POURSAT 1977. – DESSENNE 1957. Add two LH III B larnakes from Tanagra, SPYROPOULOS 1981, pl. 20β (Dendron, tomb 115). – IMMERWAHR 1990, 156–157, pl. 92 (Ledeza, tomb 51).

²² See e.g. men and women at Pylos, LANG 1969, pls. D; N (no. 50 H nws); 125–126 (nos. 43 H 6 and 44a H 6). See also the long-robed figures on Tanagra larnakes such as those mentioned *supra* n. 21.

²³ There is only one other Mycenaean vase painting with griffins, a LH III B ring-based krater from Enkomi, see VERMEULE – KARAGEORGHIS 1982, V.27.

There seems to be no obvious, meaningful relationship between the deer and the single sphinx opposite them on the Lefkandi alabastron. The sphinx with its ruffled hair has no close parallels among the many representations of this kind of fantastic creature in Aegean Bronze Age art, including the contemporary krater fragment with a parent and baby sphinx also from Lefkandi (see above).

The alabastron from Lefkandi with its juxtaposition of family groups is a good example for the practice of vase painters of LH III C Middle to use traditional motifs, such as chariot, deer, goat, bird, fish, griffin and sphinx, and to treat and combine these in such a way as to create a variety of whole new pictures of marked originality.

After the abundance, variety and quality of pictorial pottery of LH III C Middle there is a sharp decline in this and other elaborately decorated ceramics in the Aegean world. What pictorial pottery there is in LH III C Late, and its possible antecedents, should be a subject to be considered at another Workshop in Vienna!

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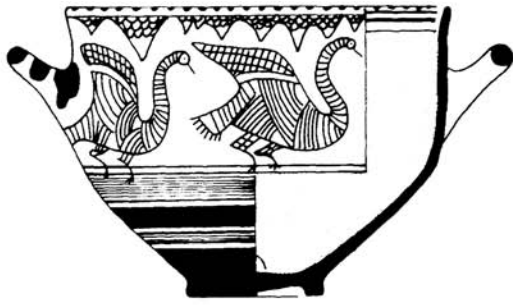


Fig. 1 Mycenae. Close Style deep bowl

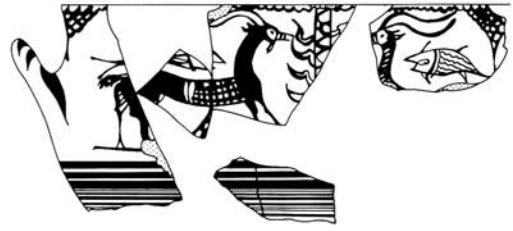


Fig. 2 Mycenae. "Goats and Fish Bowl"



Fig. 3 Mycenae. Close Style stirrup jar



Fig. 4 Mycenae. Detail of the "Warrior Krater"

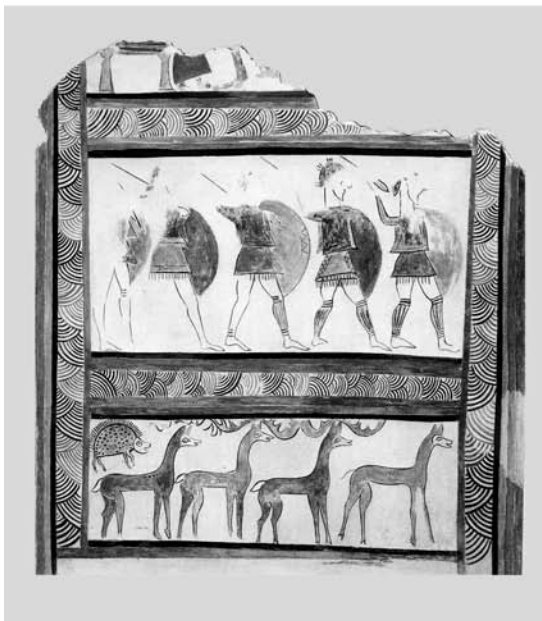


Fig. 5 Mycenae. Painted Stele



Fig. 6 Mycenae. "Horses and Birds Jar"



Fig. 7 Lefkandi. Fragment of "Warrior and Horses Krater"

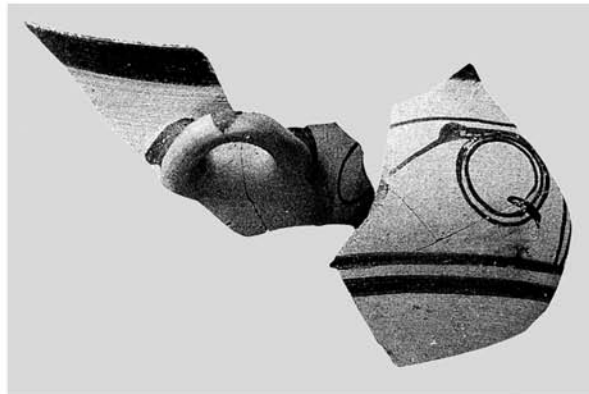


Fig. 8 Mycenae. Deep bowl fragments

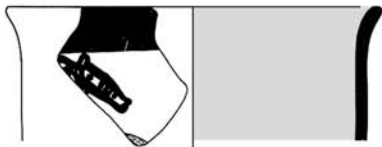


Fig. 9 Tiryns. Deep bowl (?) fragment. Horse's head

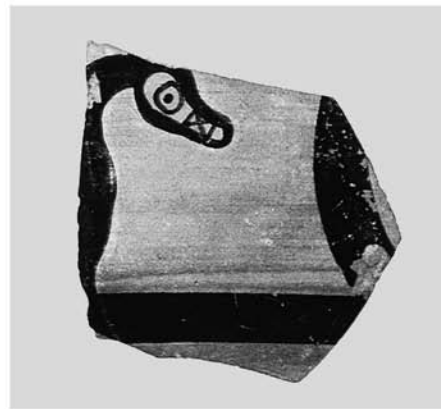


Fig. 10 Lefkandi. Deep bowl (?) fragment. Horse's head

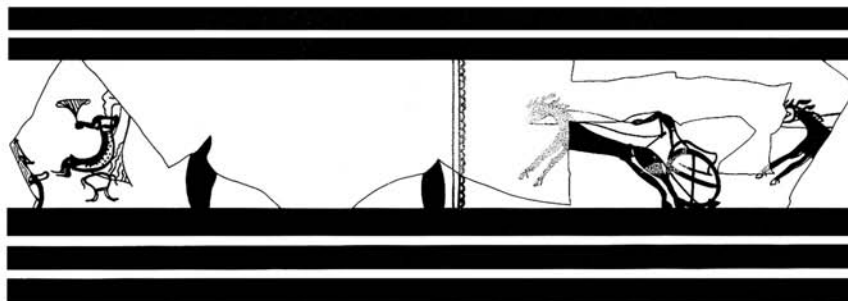


Fig. 11 Tiryns. Jar fragments



Fig. 12 Tiryns. Krater fragment

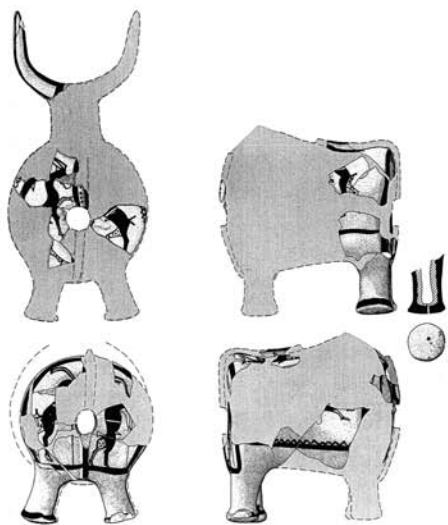


Fig. 13 Tiryns. Restored bull-figure



Fig. 14 Mycenae. Krater fragment



Fig. 15 Perati. Detail of stirrup jar



Fig. 16 Lefkandi. Krater fragment



Fig. 17 Lefkandi. Krater fragment

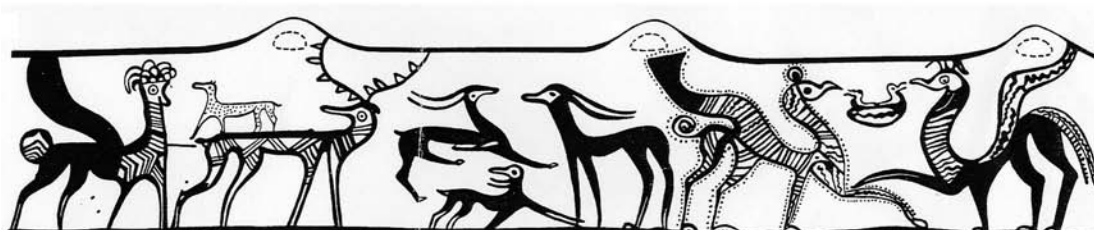


Fig. 18 Lefkandi. Detail of alabastron