

COLONIALISM WITHOUT COLONIES?

A BRONZE AGE CASE STUDY FROM AKROTIRI, THERA

ABSTRACT

Using ceramic evidence from Bronze Age Akrotiri on Thera, the authors explore the idea that regional cultural interactions of a “colonialist” character can take place without the occurrence of colonization *per se*. They assess the types and frequency of Cretan Middle Minoan IIIA imports from selected deposits at the site, the nature of local imitations of Cretan pottery, and the adoption of a characteristically Cretan technology, the potter’s wheel. By comparing processes of material, stylistic, and technological transfer, the authors seek to characterize Crete’s influence off-island and the responses of neighboring island communities, concluding that Cretan material culture is more a cause than an effect of Minoanization.

INTRODUCTION

The debate over the character of Crete’s influence across the southern Aegean in the Neopalatial period received considerable impetus with a series of papers published in the early 1980s.¹ Yet, while the evidence has continued to accumulate since, particularly with work on Kythera, Thera, Rhodes, and Kos, as well as on the coast of Asia Minor at Miletos and

1. E.g., Branigan 1981; Davis 1982, 1984; Schofield 1982; Hägg and Marinatos 1984; Wiener 1984.

We are grateful to the director of the Akrotiri Excavations, Christos Doumas, for permission to study and publish the material and for his overall support. The Institute for Aegean Prehistory funded both this study and work on other Middle Cycladic phases at Akrotiri. Our thanks go also to Vassilis Dimitropoulos and Panagiotis Vlachos, who conserved the pottery at Akrotiri; Andreas Kontonis for the

pottery drawings; Dimitris Sakatzis for photography; and Lucy Valassi for help with the translation of the catalogue and database entries. We were fortunate to have Angeliki Moschou working with us as a research assistant, helping to strew and record the very large quantities of pottery from the Middle Cycladic levels. Valuable stratigraphic information was retrieved from comprehensive excavation reports for pillar pits 66P and 67N compiled by Angeliki Moschou and Maria Tsoulakou, respectively. The following colleagues

gave freely of their time and knowledge in providing stimulating discussion: Cyprian Broodbank, Fragoula Georma, Colin Macdonald, and Nicoletta Momigliano. We thank too, for their detailed and insightful comments, Tracey Cullen, Todd Whitelaw, and an anonymous reviewer.

The following standard abbreviations are used below: EC = Early Cycladic, MC = Middle Cycladic, LC = Late Cycladic, MM = Middle Minoan, LM = Late Minoan, MBA = Middle Bronze Age.

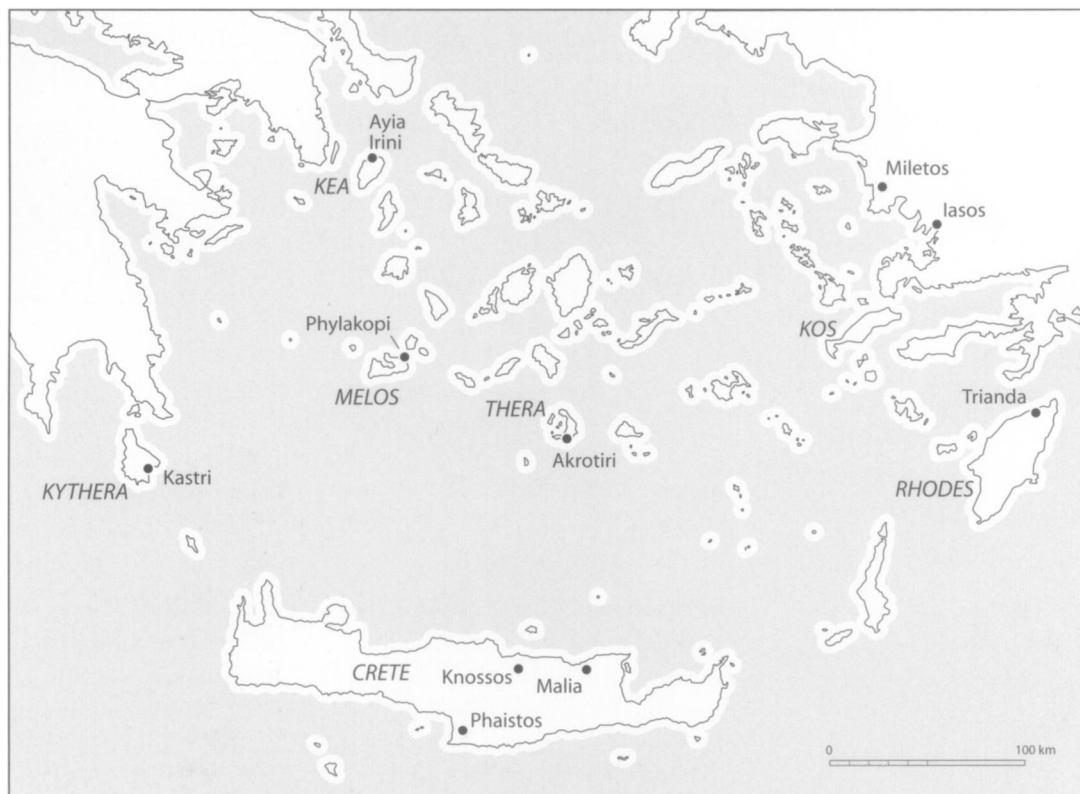


Figure 1. Map of the Aegean showing major sites mentioned in the text

Iasos (Fig. 1), interpretive work has failed to keep pace.² The standstill can perhaps be attributed to the polarized debate between those who believe in Minoan dominance achieved through colonization and those who see processes of emulation engaged in strategically by local communities. Cyprian Broodbank urges an exploration of new approaches in both data analysis and interrogative frameworks, arguing that recent advances made in material culture studies concerning the active social role of artifacts enable us to consider anew the rich Aegean evidence.³ These new insights, which postdate the early-1980s work on Minoanization, provide an opportunity to construct more sophisticated models of emulation, acculturation, learning, and cultural transmission in relation to material culture.

Chris Gosden, in his particularly germane contribution, has sought to tie these new approaches from material culture studies to an analysis of regional political dynamics; he not only differentiates between distinct forms of colonialism, but places artifacts center stage in the political process.⁴ Gosden argues that colonialism always involves material culture, an idea echoed in Broodbank's comment that Minoanization is largely about things.⁵ Material culture is sometimes powerful enough to have a hold over people's minds and bodies.⁶ Later in this article we will entertain an idea given little credence to date: that Minoan Crete was itself colonized, in some ways, through its off-island activities.

Not all items of material culture are created equal, but some objects have a greater capacity to take hold of people—a capacity that could be considered in some circumstances to be an aesthetic one. W. J. T. Mitchell takes this idea further, with the suggestion that imperialism and colonialism

2. Broodbank 2004.

3. Broodbank 2004, p. 58. Recent advances: Kopytoff 1986; Hoskins 1998; Gosden and Marshall 1999; Chapman 2000; Bonnot 2002; Fowler 2004; Knappett 2005.

4. Gosden 2004b.

5. Broodbank 2004, p. 59.

6. Although the analogy is not perfect, it is nonetheless worth considering that Britain was colonized through its contact with North America, as much as the American colonies were British creations.

TABLE 1. SIMPLIFIED CHRONOLOGICAL CHART FOR MBA CRETE AND THE CYCLADES

<i>Crete</i>	<i>Phylakopi (Melos)</i>	<i>Ayia Irini (Kea)</i>	<i>Akrotiri (Thera)</i>	<i>Absolute Chronology</i>
EM III	City I-ii/iii	gap		ca. 2200–2100 B.C.
MM IA			Phase A	ca. 2100–1950 B.C.
MM IB	City II-ii	Period IV		
MM II			Phase B	ca. 1850–1800 B.C.
MM IIB–IIIA	City II-iii	Period V	Phases C and D	ca. 1800–1750 B.C.
MM III				ca. 1750–1700 B.C.

require objects and objecthood.⁷ Mitchell believes that empire follows art, not the other way around, and extends the question beyond art to objecthood more generally, to discuss the various kinds of objects implicated in imperialism and colonialism: totems, fetishes, and idols. While we do not explore these categories here, we do adopt Mitchell's idea that they are the products of colonial discourse.⁸ From there we can go on to ask whether Cretan material culture introduced new fields of imagery into the Cycladic repertoire that were aesthetically enthralling, opening up a "colonialist space" for new kinds of practices and values.

Drawing on recent work, that of Gosden in particular, we can characterize Minoanization as a form of colonialism within a shared cultural milieu—in other words, colonialism without colonies.⁹ This, we think, may provide alternatives to the dichotomy between colonization and acculturation models. One problem in some of the Minoan literature, as in archaeology as a whole, has been a tendency to conflate the ideas of colonization and colonialism.¹⁰ Gosden's emphasis on artifacts—placing things, practices, and people at the forefront—is highly appropriate for the kind of study we think is needed to advance the debate.

Our methodology in this article entails a narrowing of focus. First, we consider pottery from one site, Akrotiri on Thera (Fig. 1), in a case-study approach that allows us to capture nuances in the data that might be lost in a broader synthesis. Second, we focus on the early stages of "Minoanization" through the Middle Bronze Age rather than on the mature stages (i.e., the early Late Bronze Age) with which most Aegean prehistorians are far more familiar. This allows us to view Minoanization as an emerging process, rather than a static phenomenon, and thus to offer new insights into its dynamics.

The pottery in question comes from two large deposits found in the recent excavation of the "pillar pits" ("φρέατα") for the new roof to cover the site (Fig. 2). Excavation of the deep soundings of pillar pits 66P and 67N revealed MC destruction deposits that substantially predate the LC I volcanic destruction levels and are assigned to phase C of the MC sequence, considered to be contemporary with MM IIIA in the Cretan ceramic sequence (Table 1).¹¹ While MM IIIA imports have previously been identified at the site,¹² their rarity and lack of stratigraphic context have severely limited their usefulness. The pillar pit deposits, however, on which we focus here, have produced large numbers of Cretan imports found in secure contexts, and they open the way to a new assessment of Crete's influence on neighboring island communities.¹³

7. Mitchell 2005, pp. 145–168.

8. Mitchell 2005, p. 146.

9. Gosden 2004b, pp. 41–81.

10. Van Dommelen 1997.

11. See also Knappett and Nikolakopoulou 2005; Nikolakopoulou, forthcoming; Nikolakopoulou et al., forthcoming.

12. Papagiannopoulou 1991.

13. We should note, however, that the final publication of the MC material from the pillar pits is currently in preparation.

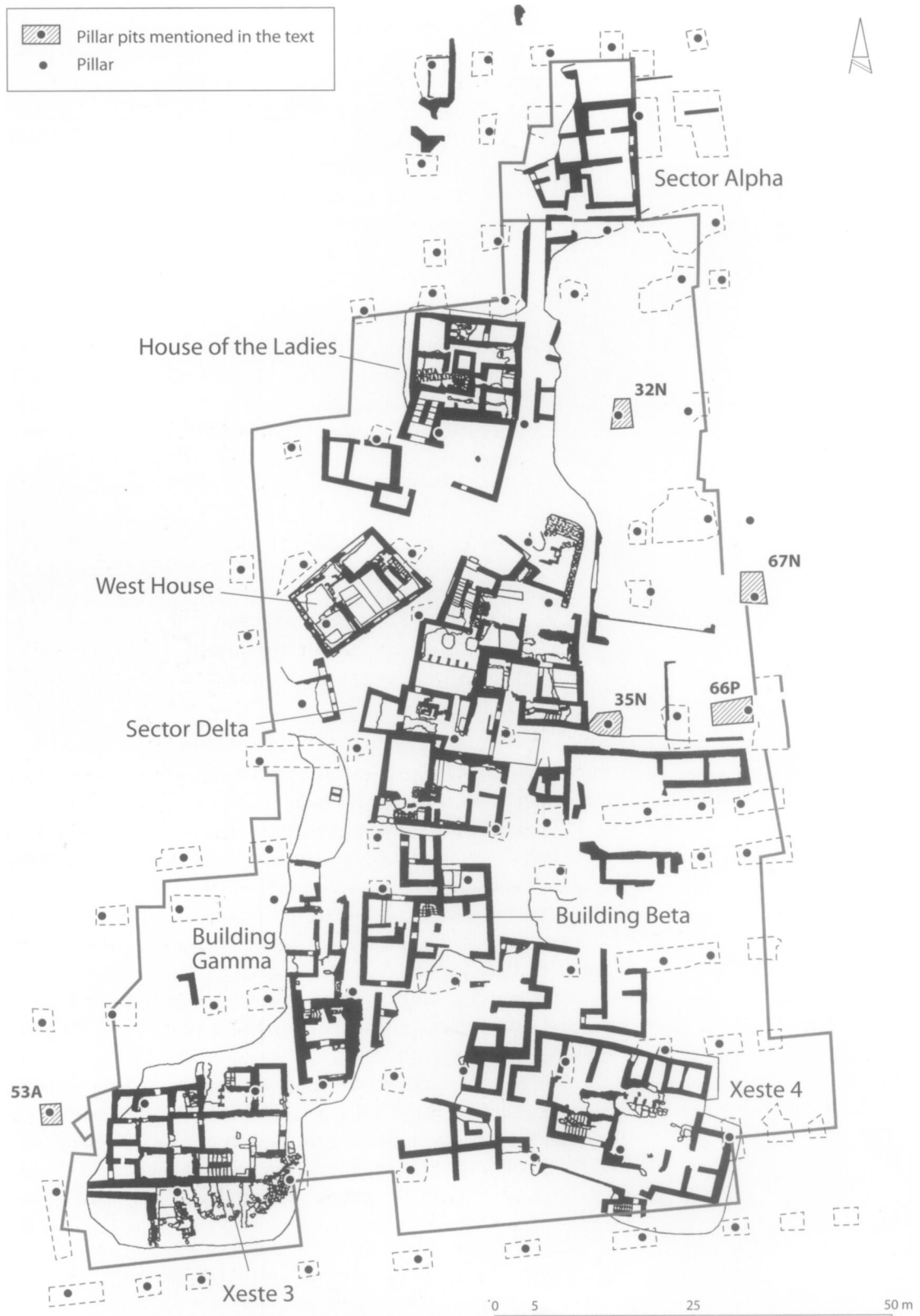


Figure 2. Site plan of Akrotiri.
Akrotiri Excavations Archive

THE CONTEXTS

It is not our purpose to describe here in detail the stratigraphic sequence and the habitation phases attested in the two pillar pits. We present only a brief outline of the sequence in order to contextualize the MM imports discussed in subsequent sections.

PILLAR PIT 66P

The trench containing pillar pit 66P (Fig. 2), excavated in 2000–2001 under the supervision of Angeliki Moschou, measured 3.00×2.50 m and reached a depth of 12.50 m from the modern circulation level down to the ignimbrite bedrock, which was found at +16.76/+16.42 m above sea level (masl).

A rock-cut chamber found in the southeast side of the trench had been largely backfilled in antiquity with a deposit containing a large quantity of pottery of the early EC II phase. The remaining void up to the roof of the chamber was subsequently backfilled with a deposit containing pottery dating to the earliest MC period (phase A). A vertical shaft opened in the roof of the chamber and the surface of the bedrock above the chamber were filled during leveling operations for the construction of the superimposed MC building, of which one room was excavated. The dimensions of that room are ca. $2.50/2.36 \times 2.20$ m and the maximum height preserved is 1.90 m. A blocked entrance was found at the north side. The walls of the MC room were founded on earlier walls and on the ignimbrite bedrock. The deposit removed from the interior of the room consisted of two layers:

Levels 18–20: The lower layer, 1.00–1.26 m thick, was excavated down to the floor of the room, and consisted of brown earth with several stones of various sizes, organic remains, some clay loomweights, and a large quantity of sherds and vase fragments, from which several vases of late MC/MM IIIA (phase C in the Akrotiri MBA sequence) were restored. The general picture suggests that this is a destruction layer formed mainly by the original contents of the room.

Level 17: The upper layer, 0.43–0.92 m thick, backfilled the rest of the room up to the maximum preserved height of the west and the north walls. It consisted mainly of small stones and many stone tools, a large quantity of sherds, some clay loomweights, and a small amount of loose earth. The pottery is very worn and consists mainly of coarse ware. While the pottery is comparable to that of levels 18–20 in typological terms, it clearly belongs to a different fill deposit that testifies to a subsequent deposition or operation.

A two-storied LC I building, the roof of which was partly preserved, was constructed above the MC building, its walls founded on those of the MC edifice. The building was found full of thick layers of volcanic material (pumice and ash). The lower room must have functioned as a storage area. The floor of the upper room was preserved at the south and east side, while

the rest had collapsed during the volcanic destruction. The excavated rooms form part of a large building extending farther to the east. Sherds found in the building material date the construction of the building in early LC I, and the large number of LC I/LM IA vessels (ca. 66) indicates that the building was fully functional during LC I until the volcanic destruction.

PILLAR PIT 67N

Pillar pit 67N (Fig. 2) was excavated in 2000–2001 under the supervision of Maria Tsoulakou. The trench, measuring 2.60×4.00 m, reached a depth of 9.72 m from the modern circulation level down to the ignimbrite bedrock, which was found at +16.20 masl.

A rock-cut chamber found at the east area of the trench, extending to the northwest, was opened and used most probably during the EC period, but the excavators did not retrieve any information pertaining to its purpose. The chamber was backfilled during the early MC period; pottery from phase A was identified. Above the bedrock surface and the chamber fill, part of a two-storied building was excavated. Room 2, the lower room, was constructed in, and used throughout, the MC period, as indicated by the two floor levels and the door opening (H. 1.64, W. 0.64 m) in the west wall, which was apparently blocked while the room was still in use. The room measures 2.10×2.24 m. Despite the unusual height of the walls (4.00 m down to the floor level), there is no differentiation in building techniques or any other architectural features (e.g., support holes for timber) to suggest the existence of separate stories. There is an opening (window? H. 0.70, W. 0.90 m) in the south wall, which was found full of pumice, and a niche (H. 0.80, L. 0.55, D. 0.45 m) in the west wall devoid of movable finds. Successive layers were removed from inside the lower room as follows:

Levels 6–11: Pumice layer and layers of pumice pellets mixed with earth, stones, schist slab fragments, and pottery, including LC I vases probably fallen from the superimposed LC I building. Level 11 contains material both from the LC I stratum and the adjacent MC stratum, accidentally removed together during excavation.

Level 12: Earth, stones, and broken vases found on the floor of the room. It seems that this deposit was formed at the very end of the MC period, following a destruction that probably led to the abandonment of the lower room and the construction of the upper room. The lower room seems to have simply gone out of use, with no backfilling taking place, as is indicated by fallen objects from the upper room and pumice found in its area.

Levels 13–14: Floor of the room and floor construction layer; the pottery and vases found are late MC in date, not very different from the majority of the vessels found in the destruction deposit on the floor of the room.

Level 15: A flat surface of muddy soil, possibly indicating an earlier floor level of the lower room.

The upper room (room 1) is securely dated to LC I. Its walls were founded directly on the walls of the lower room. It measures approximately $2.50 \times 2.20/1.64$ m (the north border was not fully uncovered). A door opening(?) in the west wall (W. 0.50, p.H. 1.50 m) leads to another room to the west (area 3). A niche was found in the west wall, which contained LC I vessels. The room was found full of pumice, the removal of which revealed the destruction layer.

While the architectural history of the MC buildings uncovered in the two trenches is not discussed here in detail, it is important to note that the two ground-level rooms in pillar pits 66P and 67N were certainly inhabited contemporaneously during the late MC period. The pottery from the floor destruction levels belongs to phase C in the Akrotiri MC sequence.¹⁴ Different processes followed the destruction: backfilling in 66P and abandonment in 67N. It is possible that habitation in the 67N lower room continued slightly longer after the destruction that befell the MC room in 66P, as suggested by a comparative assessment of the pottery found in the floor destruction levels (levels 18–20 from 66P vs. level 12 from 67N). Levels 13–14 from 67N, the floor construction levels, are included in the discussion, as the pottery found therein is similar to that from the floor destruction level.

THE LOCAL POTTERY

The phase C pottery from 66P and 67N consists largely of local products, but among the imports, Cretan products predominate and are certainly the most accurately identified in terms of provenance, both by macroscopic and analytical observations. In pillar pit 66P, levels 18–20, there are 57 local vases and 20 Cretan, while at least one is of other provenance. In pillar pit 67N, levels 12–14, there are 131 local vases, 23 Cretan vases, and four of other provenance. The sample based on the numbers of restored vases from the phase C levels in the two pillar pits is not considered representative, as the evidence from the thousands of sherds retrieved suggests that the Cretan imports tend to fall in an estimated range of 10%–15%.

The local calcareous fabric is most commonly of a buff whitish/yellowish color that turns to light brown with firing, as is especially evident in vessels of bichrome or slipped and burnished wares. The smoothed or burnished surfaces commonly found on fine-ware vases are occasionally attested also on large jars and other coarse ware. Jill Hilditch is conducting a petrographic study of local and imported pottery, with a view to establishing provenance areas for unidentified imports and identifying ways to distinguish Thera from Melian fabrics.¹⁵

The local pottery comprises vessels of all functional categories, some of which are illustrated in Figure 3. The most common large storage vessels are pithoi, which can be ovoid, cylindrical, or ovoid with a spigot above the base, and undecorated or with dark-on-light or bichrome/polychrome decoration. There are specimens with pictorial compositions (griffins, felines) in bichrome/polychrome ware. Transport vessels include oval-mouth amphoras, usually with dark-on-light decoration of spirals, disks,

14. Nikolakopoulou et al., forthcoming.

15. Previous work on Thera, Melian, and other MC fabrics includes Kilikoglou 1988; Vaughan 1989; Kilikoglou et al. 1990.



Figure 3 (*opposite*). Examples of local MC pottery types at Akrotiri. Photos D. Sakatzis

and bands. There is a large variety of jugs and juglets (beak-spouted, with side spout or with a circular or funnel mouth), which usually appear with dark-on-light or bichrome decoration. Some of the most impressive pictorial themes are rendered on jugs in bichrome ware, such as pomegranates, birds, plant stems, and a unique composition of two men participating in an apparently ritual scene that involves serving and drinking.¹⁶

Among the drinking vessels, hemispherical cups with a plain rim constitute the large majority, while other types include S-profile cups (rare), straight-sided cups, handleless piriform cups, and paneled cups (usually decorated in dark-on-light with plant motifs). Cycladic cups are found mainly in slipped and burnished ware, while ledge-rim bowls are found in plain ware, or even in slipped and burnished ware. Conical cups/tumblers in plain ware are present. Large “bathtubs” and smaller basins with dark-on-light decoration on the interior surface most probably served for food preparation/mixing or other household activities. Tripod cooking pots, local and imported, are in use, alongside local globular one-handed cooking pots. Lamps of simple or more elaborate types, usually with a stick handle, are found in plain or slipped and burnished wares.

The differences between local and Cretan pottery in terms of wares, decorative styles, and manufacture are striking. Among the local wares, a typological similarity is evident in a limited number of accurate imitations or adaptations of Cretan types, such as the oval-mouth amphora, the circular- or funnel-mouth jug, the bridge-spouted jar, the tripod cooking pot, the straight-sided cup, and the ledge-rim bowl. The manufacture of the last two types reflects the introduction of the potter’s wheel, while the rest of the pottery continues the traditional handmade techniques. Dark-on-light matt-painted and bichrome are the most popular local decorative wares, in stark contrast to the predominantly light-on-dark and polychrome Cretan wares. While selected Cretan decorative styles and motifs are adopted in the Thera pottery, such as white dotting on a dark background and a fuzzy ripple/crescent motif in dark-on-light, the local pottery otherwise exhibits an overwhelming preference for the depiction of naturalistic and pictorial motifs on a buff ground. We will explore the implications of these distinctive decorative features after we present the Cretan imports in detail.

THE IMPORTED POTTERY

The phase C finds from pillar pits 66P and 67N include imported pottery from various locations, but we focus exclusively on the imports that can be identified as Cretan. They are presented below with a full catalogue, drawings, and photographs.

PILLAR PIT 66P

The Cretan imports in pillar pit 66P are mostly cups, with both hemispherical and straight-sided types represented. Of the nine hemispherical cups catalogued, all are dark slipped with white-on-dark or polychrome decoration, and all except 4 have deep metallicizing grooves at mid-body

16. Petrakos 2001, pp. 91, 93.

(Figs. 4, 5). Five of these have bands with white dots at the upper body (two of the five have a simple red band); two have wavy lines at the upper body; and one has discontinuous S-spirals. The combination of grooves and white dots is very characteristic of MM IIIA in north-central Crete,¹⁷ and the sparing use of polychrome decoration shows an element of continuity from MM IIB. Among the straight-sided cups (Figs. 6, 7), three of the four catalogued also combine white dots at the upper body with metallicizing grooves/ridges.¹⁸ None shows any sign of polychrome decoration. The fourth example has a beveled base and signs of a simple curvilinear motif, showing links with MM IIB. All of the above are evidently wheelmade, and are in a hard-fired, fine buff fabric that is reminiscent of Knossos and other sites in north-central Crete.

Among the pouring vessels, only one is securely identified as a Cretan import: a large ewer (16) with dark-on-light tortoiseshell ripple decoration (Figs. 8, 9). Interestingly, the ripple consists only of vertical stripes, without the “fuzzy” effect that is usually found in Cretan examples. For the shape, however, there is a good parallel from Anemospilia.¹⁹ Another Cretan import is a tall amphora (17), or perhaps bridge-spouted jar, with polychrome decoration (white dots at upper body, with simple red bands) and multiple grooves and ridges (Fig. 9). Although the decoration of one other pouring vessel—a very striking squat, bridge-spouted jug (15) with spirals and ripple decoration (Figs. 8, 9)—seems Minoan in inspiration, the fabric is certainly neither Cretan nor local. The fabric, a semifine, hard-fired red with a distinctive gray core, is reminiscent of fabrics seen in the southeast Aegean that are thought to be from Kos.²⁰ The results of Hilditch’s detailed petrographic analysis will shed light on the origin of this piece, but for now it appears to be a very rare example of an early “Minoanizing” product made on one island and exported to another.

One last import deserves mention: the sole example of an imported conical cup, 14 (Figs. 6, 7). It is of the low, shallow kind seen in north-central Crete no earlier than MM IIIA.²¹ Imported conical cups are rare because these simple, plain forms tend to be imitated locally—as, indeed, they are at Akrotiri, where wheelmade examples are found beginning in phase C.

CATALOGUE OF IMPORTS AND IMITATIONS (LEVELS 18–20)

1 Hemispherical cup (11040) Figs. 4, 5

H. 0.065, Diam. of rim 0.09, Diam. of base 0.04 m. Restored from 12 fragments, 60% complete. Globular body with everted rim, two deep grooves at mid-body, mimicking metal. Fine buff, hard-fired (central Cretan) fabric; wheelmade, traces of concentric striations under base. Lustrous black slip interior and exterior, with polychrome decoration: white dots irregularly placed at upper body above grooves (with occasional dot below), and red-orange band in upper groove only.

2 Hemispherical cup (11042) Figs. 4, 5

H. 0.066, Diam. of rim 0.105, Diam. of base 0.044 m. One large fragment, 50% complete, with one small nonjoining rim fragment. Globular body with everted rim, two deep grooves at mid-body, mimicking metal. Fine buff, hard-fired (central Cretan) fabric; some deformation of lower body, perhaps from firing, or

17. MacGillivray 1998, p. 143, no. 419, pl. 18.

18. Sakellarakis and Sakellarakis 1997, p. 417, fig. 383; MacGillivray 1998, p. 143, no. 423, pl. 81.

19. Sakellarakis and Sakellarakis 1997, p. 421, fig. 389.

20. Momigliano and Knappett, forthcoming.

21. Macdonald and Knappett, forthcoming.

mishandling of leather-hard vessel; wheelmade. Lustrous black slip interior and exterior, with polychrome decoration: white dots irregularly placed at upper body above grooves, and red-orange band in upper groove only.

3 Hemispherical cup (11043) Figs. 4, 5

H. 0.087, Diam. of rim 0.140, Diam. of base 0.057 m. Restored from ca. 30 fragments, 80% complete. Globular body with everted rim, vertical strap handle rising a little above rim, and three deep grooves at mid-body, mimicking metal. Fine buff, hard-fired (central Cretan) fabric; wheelmade. Lustrous black slip, worn in places, with white-on-dark decoration: rows of white dots, relatively regular, around upper body, exterior only, and white bands in grooves.

4 Hemispherical cup (11046)

H. 0.056, Diam. of rim 0.089, Diam. of base 0.039 m. Repaired and restored from 10 fragments, 50% complete. Globular body with everted rim, thin walls. Fine buff (central Cretan) fabric; wheelmade, with concentric striations under base. Reddish brown slip interior and exterior, with white-on-dark decoration, but rather fugitive and hard to discern: a band at base, below rim, and at mid-body.

5 Hemispherical cup (11089) Figs. 4, 5

Diam. of rim 0.118 m. Rim fragment only. Globular body with everted rim, and two deep grooves at mid-body, mimicking metal. Fine orange-buff (central Cretan) fabric; wheelmade. Reddish brown slip interior and exterior, with polychrome decoration to exterior: white dots at upper body, irregularly scattered, with orange-red band in upper groove; white band to exterior rim.

6 Hemispherical cup (11090) Figs. 4, 5

H. 0.063, Diam. of rim ca. 0.110, Diam. of base 0.040 m. Profile, restored from six fragments, 30% complete. Globular body with everted rim, and two deep grooves at mid-body, mimicking metal. Fine orange-buff, hard-fired (central Cretan) fabric; wheelmade, with concentric striations under base. Reddish brown slip interior and exterior, with white-on-dark decoration on exterior: thick band at lower body, thin bands at rim and in grooves, and two wavy lines at upper body with evenly spaced horizontal dashes in between; thin white band at interior rim.

7 Hemispherical cup (11091) Figs. 4, 5

P.H. >0.070, Diam. of rim 0.130, Diam. of base 0.057 m. Rim, handle, and base preserved, but not profile (only rim fragment illustrated); nine fragments restored, 25% complete. Globular body with everted rim, vertical strap handle rising slightly above rim, lopsided; two deep grooves at mid-body, mimicking metal. Fine yellowish buff (central Cretan) fabric. Reddish brown slip, quite fugitive and flaking, with white-on-dark decoration: fugitive bands at rim, grooves, and base, with four wavy lines on upper body, and pairs of vertical dashes between some of the waves; five horizontal stripes across handle; white band on interior rim.

8 Hemispherical cup (11093) Figs. 4, 5

Diam. of rim 0.106 m. Small rim fragment only. Globular body with everted rim, one groove visible at mid-body (more may have once existed). Fine buff, hard-fired (central Cretan) fabric; wheelmade. Lustrous brown-black slip with polychrome decoration: red bands just below rim and in groove, with white bands in between, framing a zone of neatly painted white dots; interior rim has white band, and some white flecks on interior body.

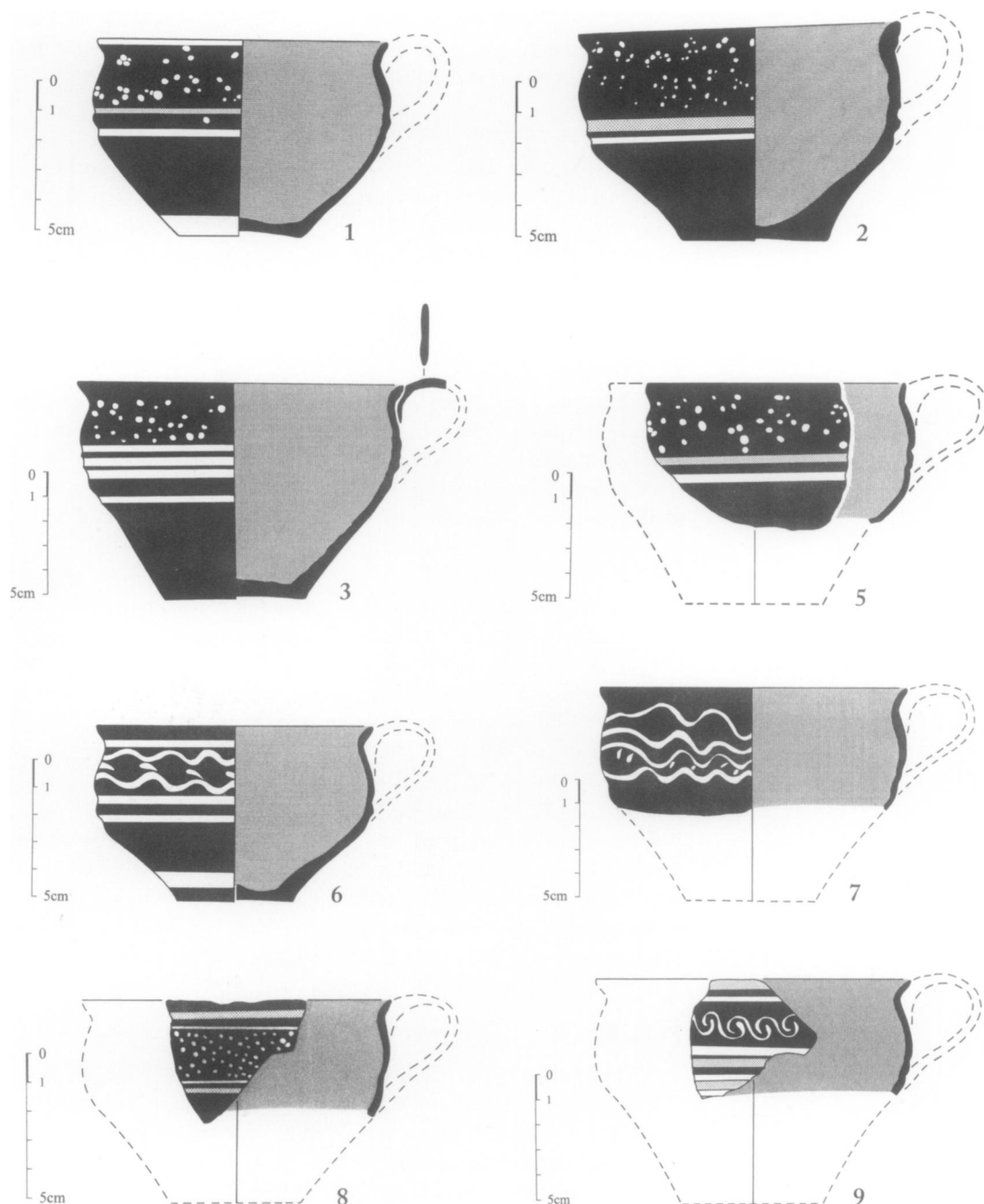


Figure 4. Hemispherical cups 1–3 and 5–9 from pillar pit 66P.

Drawings A. Kontonis

9 Hemispherical cup (11097)

Figs. 4, 5

Diam. of rim 0.125 m. Small rim fragment only. Globular body with everted rim, three deep grooves at mid-body. Fine buff, hard-fired (central Cretan) fabric; wheelmade. Lustrous brown-black slip, with polychrome decoration: alternating red and white bands at grooves, thick red band at rim with white band below, and at upper body a frieze of horizontal white S motifs, interlocking but unconnected.

10 Straight-sided cup (11041)

Figs. 6, 7

H. 0.069, Diam. of rim ca. 0.100, Diam. of base ca. 0.070 m. Restored from six fragments, 25% complete. Conical/slightly flaring profile, with one broad raised



Figure 5. Hemispherical cups 1–3 and 5–9 from pillar pit 66P. Scales as in Figure 4 unless otherwise indicated. Photos D. Sakatzis

ridge at mid-body, and beveled base. Fine buff (central Cretan) fabric; wheelmade. Lustrous black slip interior and exterior, with white-on-dark decoration: neat white dots at interior and exterior upper body, and broad white band at exterior covering ridge; traces of white paint under base.

11 Straight-sided cup (11092)

Figs. 6, 7

H. 0.068, Diam. of rim 0.106, Diam. of base 0.078 m. Restored and repaired, 60% complete. Straight profile and rim, vertical strap handle, barely rising above rim, not straight; two indistinct ridges at mid-body. Fine buff (central Cretan) fabric; wheelmade. Black slip interior and exterior, lustrous in places, with fugitive

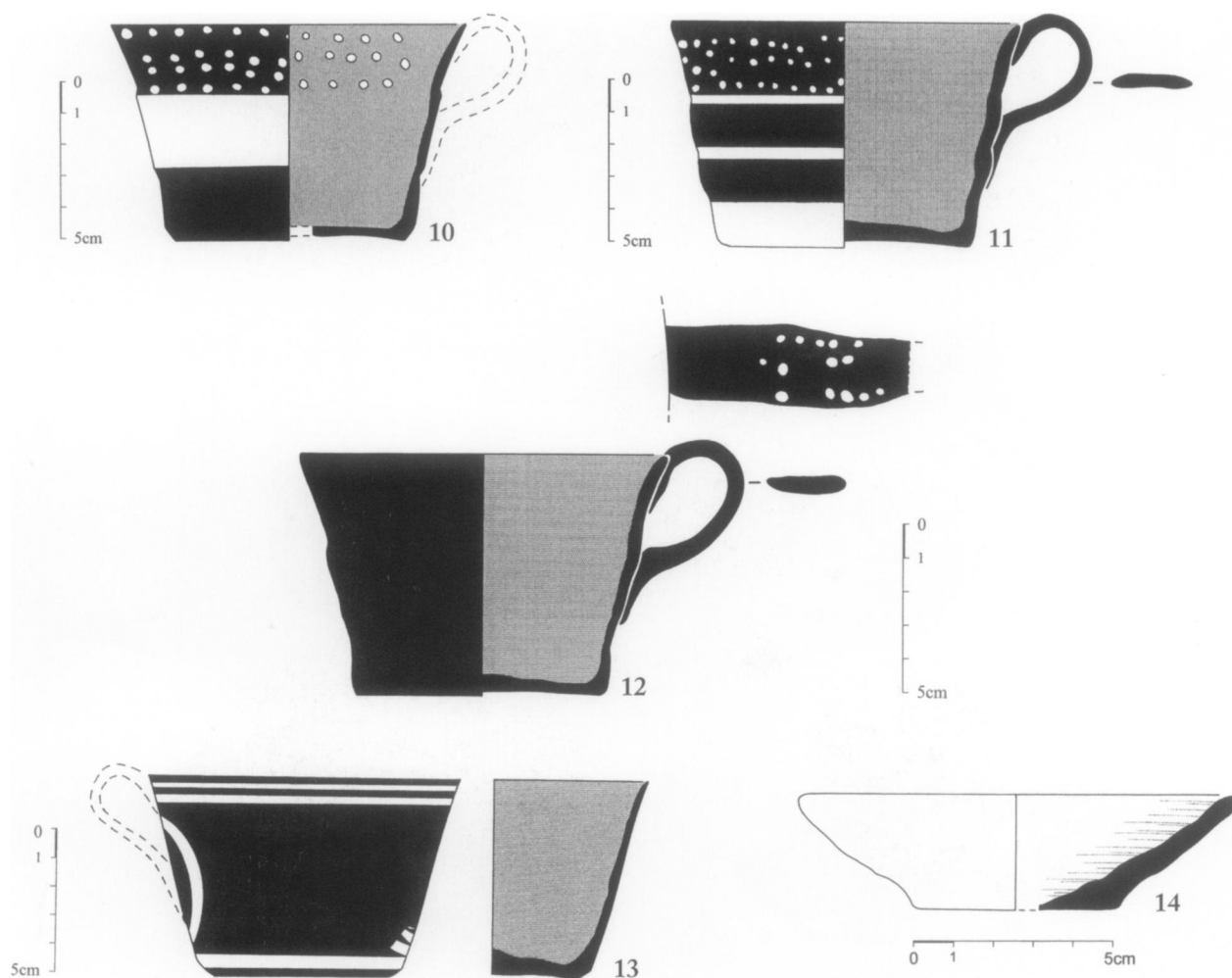


Figure 6. Straight-sided cups 10–13 and conical cup 14, from pillar pit 66P. Drawings A. Kontonis

white-on-dark decoration: regularly placed white dots at both exterior and interior rim, two horizontal white stripes at handle, bands in ridges and around base. Some wear at outer base edges, seemingly from use.

12 Straight-sided cup (11094)

Figs. 6, 7

H. 0.072, Diam. of rim ca. 0.110, Diam. of base 0.074 m. Restored and repaired, 60% complete. Straight profile and slightly flaring rim, vertical strap handle, two indistinct ridges at mid-body. Fine buff (central Cretan) fabric; wheelmade, with traces of concentric striations under base. Black slip interior and exterior, with white-on-dark decoration: dots (too fugitive to illustrate) on upper body exterior and possibly interior; dots on handle; fugitive band at exterior lower ridge.

13 Straight-sided cup (11095)

Figs. 6, 7

H. 0.069, Diam. of rim 0.100, Diam. of base 0.060 m. Restored and repaired, 40% complete. Straight/conical profile, beveled base, and root of handle preserved. Fine pink-brown buff, hard-fired (central Cretan) fabric; wheelmade, with traces of concentric striations at base. Lustrous brown slip, with white-on-dark decoration: two thin bands just below rim, one thick band at base, and large oval at mid-body seemingly encircling the handle; two white strokes near base.



Figure 7. Straight-sided cups 10–13 and conical cup 14, from pillar pit 66P.
Scales as in Figure 6. Photos D. Sakatzis

14 Conical cup (11096)

Figs. 6, 7

H. 0.029, Diam. of rim 0.110, Diam. of base 0.053 m. Restored from four fragments, 35% complete. Broad shallow type, with distinct rilling in interior. Semifine orange-buff fabric; medium firing. Cretan import; wheelmade, plain.

15 Bridge-spouted jug (9807)

Figs. 8, 9

H. 0.175, Diam. of rim 0.160, Diam. of base 0.180, max. Diam. ca. 0.270 m. Repaired and restored, 80% complete. Squat globular profile, wide base, thickened platform rim, very long bridge spout, and vertical roll handle attached below rim. Semifine pink-red fabric with gray core, very hard fired, some small white grits, and faintly micaceous (biotite)—probably a Koan fabric (sampled). Wheelmade, with two sets of concentric striations under base; width of base necessitated two looped string pulls to remove.

Thick buff slip on exterior (not under base), with dark-on-light decoration and added white: dark bands on rim, upper body, and base, with a thick band at mid-body; zones of tortoiseshell ripple at upper body and lower body; zone of connected spirals and festoons between at mid-body above dark band; dark band itself has added white spirals with added filled wavy motif, imitating a rocky landscape(?); rim top has four groups of three evenly spaced white dashes; spout has vertical dark stripes on either side with white piping; handle has four diagonal white dashes.



Figure 8. Bridge-spouted jug 15 and ewer 16, from pillar pit 66P.

Drawings A. Kontonis

16 Ewer (9814)

Figs. 8, 9

H. 0.435, Diam. rim of 0.180, Diam. of base 0.111, max. Diam. 0.320 m. Repaired and restored, 80% complete. Ovoid-conical profile, with flaring everted rim, square in section, broad flattened handle with central rib, from rim to shoulder; note lack of ridge at collar. Semicoarse buff with angular gray grits (north-central Cretan) fabric; coil-built body, with neck and collar perhaps wheelmade. Dark-on-light decoration of bands at collar, mid-body, and lower body with two large zones of "ripple" at upper and lower body—except that the vertical stripes are not at all fuzzy, as if unburnished, and thus not true ripple.

17 Closed vase: amphora? (11240)

Fig. 9

Repaired and restored. Large part of the base and lower body, up to mid-height (max. p.H. 0.280, Diam. of base 0.122 m), seven nonjoining body fragments, and a large part of the neck/shoulder with ridge on collar (max. p.H. 0.390 m). Piriform



Figure 9. Bridge-spouted jug 15, ewer 16, amphora(?) 17, and local hemispherical cup 18, from pillar pit 66P. Photos D. Sakatzis

profile, flat disk base, and three horizontal parallel raised ridges on the maximum body diameter. Orange-brown buff (central Cretan) fabric; coil-built. Black slip on exterior surface with worn polychrome decoration; collar ridge painted orange flanked by two white horizontal bands; white spots in the zone between the upper body ridge up to a pair of white and orange bands; white bands in between the body ridges; broad orange band and two thin white bands under lower body ridge; white arc motifs on the orange band; white band around the base.

18 Local imitation: hemispherical cup (10758)

Fig. 9

H. 0.060, Diam. of rim 0.109, Diam. of base 0.042 m (restored). Repaired and restored (strap handle and flat base restored). Globular body with everted rim. Buff fabric; handmade. Burnished surface and dark-on-light decoration. Red-brown slipped interior, band on rim/body joint, oblique strokes on rim exterior and "sponge effect" on body.

PILLAR PIT 67N

In pillar pit 67N we observe a broadly similar pattern, despite the differences in stratigraphic context. In this trench, it is important to distinguish carefully between levels 12 to 14. The lowest is the construction fill for the floor (level 14, with four imports, 19–22, and one imitation, 23; Figs. 10, 11). Above this comes the laying of the floor itself (level 13, with two imports, 24, 25; Fig. 12), and finally, the extensive destruction deposit on the floor (level 12, with 11 imports, 26–36, and four local imitations, 37–40; Figs. 13–19). The different events responsible for these distinct strata must have occurred very close together in time, however, as the imported pottery can all be assigned to the same phase, MM IIIA.

In the construction fill beneath the floor is a polychrome hemispherical cup (19) with a simple red band at mid-body and white dots above (Figs. 10, 11), very similar to those encountered in pillar pit 66P (see above). A straight-sided cup (20) with grooves/ridges and regular white dots at the upper body is also exactly like examples in pillar pit 66P, and all are strongly comparable to specimens from north-central Crete. A weakly carinated cup (21) covered with dark slip is unique in this material, but it has a good parallel from MM IIIA deposits at Knossos.²² The base of a pithos (22) in a coarse orange-buff fabric, with a deeply incised herringbone pattern at a ridge on the lower body, seems to be north-central Cretan, as do the rest of these vessels. Finally, one local imitation in this stratum is worthy of note: a small bridge-spouted jar (23) that mimics tortoiseshell ripple extremely accurately, albeit in a local bichrome technique (Figs. 10, 11).

Only two imports come from the laying of the floor proper, but both are very useful for dating purposes. One is a polychrome hemispherical cup (25) with white dots and red band (Fig. 12), very much like 19, mentioned above. Another small drinking vessel, albeit handleless, is a ledge-rim bowl (24) with tortoiseshell ripple (thick and widely spaced) in the interior, and thick dark bands on the exterior (Fig. 12). This is precisely paralleled in the *Anemospilia* assemblage,²³ which we would date to MM IIIA.

In the destruction deposit on the floor itself, we again see the combination of cups, pouring vessels, and larger storage shapes encountered in the construction fill beneath the floor. One hemispherical cup (26) found with thick dark bands on its upper and lower body and a thick reserved

22. Macdonald and Knappett, forthcoming.

23. Sakellarakis and Sakellarakis 1997, p. 417, figs. 383, 386.

buff zone between, at mid-body, is not especially common or diagnostic (Figs. 13, 14); neither is a straight-sided cup (27) with a beveled base and simple white bands and double-looped discontinuous S-spirals on the upper body. A one-handled stemmed cup (28), however, stands out, especially with its vertical strips of rough appliqué close to the rim (Figs. 13, 14). This vessel is very similar to an example from Anemospilia.²⁴

The pouring vessels in this destruction deposit exhibit some very interesting features. There are two imported bridge-spouted jars, one large and one small. The large one (29) has a lustrous black slip and white dots on the upper body above a number of deep grooves at mid-body (Figs. 13, 14). This decorative style is very similar to that seen in both hemispherical and straight-sided cups, and is suggestive of a set for pouring and drinking. A remarkable feature of this particular example is that it has two pairs of repair holes placed on either side of a long crack that stretches quite far around the body (Fig. 15); this feature indicates that this jar had some value and was worth mending, perhaps because it was a Cretan import. The second bridge-spouted jar is small (30) and has a different decorative style, a dark-on-light tortoiseshell ripple (Fig. 16). Again, as with the ledge-rim bowl from level 13, the ripple is quite thick and with wider spacing than tends to be seen in later phases.

Aside from the bridge-spouted jars, the pouring vessels also include jugs. Vessel 31 is a small jug with a narrow cylindrical neck and a poorly preserved rim; it may well have had a cutaway spout. Vessel 32 (Fig. 16) is a quite different kind of jug, much larger and with an ovoid body and a low, narrow neck; its seven incised horizontal lines at the upper body are faintly reminiscent of the “cruches trilobées” from Malia in MM IIB,²⁵ but the fabric of the vessel is not Maliote, and its form is otherwise quite different.

Four more vases from this level (33–36) cannot be classified as pouring vessels: an amphoriskos, a lentoid flask, an oval-mouth amphora, and a pithoid jar. The amphoriskos (33; Fig. 16) has white-on-dark decoration, but its most characteristic feature is its fabric: a semicoarse red very common at Malia in the MBA. The shape, too, resembles amphoriskoi from MM IIB levels at Quartier Mu, Malia.²⁶ The lentoid flask (34) is a truly remarkable piece, carrying a relief scene of a bull and a lion (see detailed catalogue description below, and Fig. 17). It is worth noting that a bull appears in relief on a jar of the same date from Anemospilia.²⁷ The oval-mouth amphora (35; Fig. 18) is of a shape, construction technique, and surface treatment commonly encountered in the late Protopalatial period on Crete: ovoid-conical, coil-built, and dark slipped. Furthermore, the vessel has what could be a seal impression on one of its handles, a feature that is seen occasionally in east Crete in MM IIB.²⁸ Finally, the pithoid jar (36; Fig. 18) displays white-on-dark patterns across much of the mid-body that bear some similarity to decorative motifs on storage jars from Anemospilia.²⁹

The local imitations found in the floor destruction deposit consist of pouring vessels: three ewers—two restorable with a circular mouth, 37 and 38, and one that has not been restored (39) but which is probably of the same type—and a bridge-spouted jar, 40 (Fig. 19). These vessels, while imitating the general shape of their Cretan prototypes, are decorated in dark-on-light with added white on a polished or semiburnished surface,

24. Sakellarakis and Sakellarakis 1991, p. 144, fig. 121; 1997, p. 417, fig. 383.

25. Poursat and Knappett 2005, p. 61, fig. 14.

26. Poursat and Knappett 2005.

27. Sakellarakis and Sakellarakis 1991, pp. 148–149, figs. 126, 127.

28. E.g., at Myrtos Pyrgos; see Cadogan 1978.

29. Sakellarakis and Sakellarakis 1991, p. 144, fig. 120.

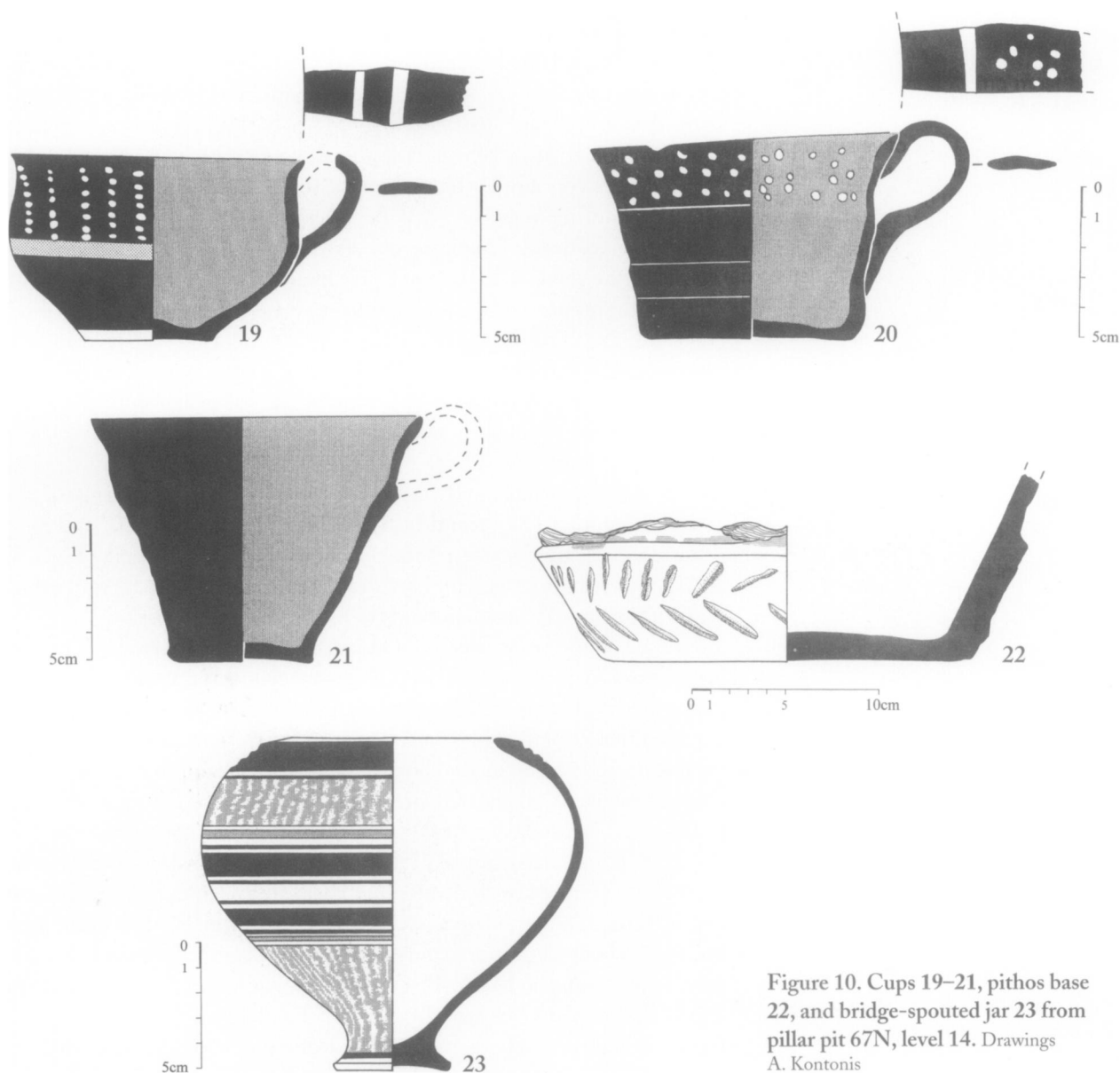


Figure 10. Cups 19–21, pithos base 22, and bridge-spouted jar 23 from pillar pit 67N, level 14. Drawings A. Kontonis

with motifs described as a “fuzzy ripple” or “sponge effect” (except for 37). A similar effect appears on the S-profile cup 18 from pillar pit 66P (Fig. 9, above).

It is not clear whether this is an early, unsuccessful, attempt to imitate ripple pattern, which is rare in any case on imported vases at this phase, or whether it is a favored local adaptation. The bridge-spouted jar 23 mentioned above, with its fine walls, well-defined ripple, and “metallicizing” grooves on the rim (Figs. 10, 11), probably qualifies as the closest imitation, but it remains a singleton. S-profile cups, straight-sided cups, and ledge-rim bowls are also imitated in the local production, either in plain ware or in red- or black-slipped and burnished. The painted specimens most probably indicate local preference, rather than imitation of dark-ground prototypes—as illustrated by red burnished ledge-rim bowls, apparently a unique Thera product.



Figure 11. Cups 19–21, pithos base 22, and bridge-spouted jar 23 from pillar pit 67N, level 14. Scales as in Figure 10. Photos D. Sakatzis

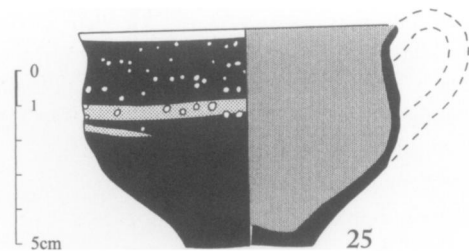
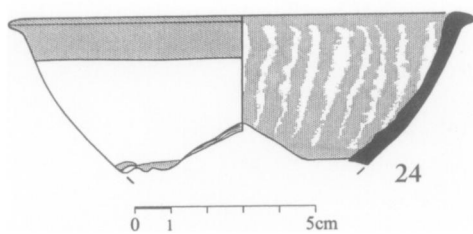


Figure 12. Ledge-rim bowl 24 and cup 25 from pillar pit 67N, level 13. Drawings A. Kontonis

CATALOGUE OF IMPORTS AND IMITATIONS

Construction fill beneath floor (level 14)

19 Hemispherical cup (9379)

Figs. 10, 11

H. 0.058, Diam. of rim 0.101, Diam. of base 0.042 m. Repaired and restored, 90% complete. Globular body with everted rim, vertical strap handle from the rim to the body. Fine buff (central Cretan) fabric; wheelmade. Black to dark brown slip interior and exterior, worn in places, with polychrome painted decoration: upper body covered with parallel columns of seven white painted dots each, with a red-orange band below at mid-body and a white band at the base; two horizontal white dashes on the handle.

20 Straight-sided cup (9392)

Figs. 10, 11

H. with handle 0.075, H. without handle 0.065, Diam. of rim 0.106, Diam. of base 0.072 m. Repaired and restored, 60% complete. Low with a conical body and slightly flaring rim, vertical strap handle that extends above the rim and reaches the lower part of the body. Fine buff fabric; wheelmade, with rilling and traces of concentric striations under base. Three ridges at lower and mid-body, mimicking metal. Red-brown slip interior and exterior. White-on-dark painted decoration of white dots at interior and exterior rim, in three irregular rows, also dots on upper half of handle; traces of white paint on the base. Slip is worn at base edges, perhaps from use.

21 Weakly carinated cup (9382)

Figs. 10, 11

H. 0.088, Diam. of rim 0.120, Diam. of base 0.051 m. Repaired and restored, 80% complete; surfaces worn in places. Conical body, flaring straight rim, weak carination at upper body; the root of a vertical strap handle is preserved. Fine buff, well-fired fabric; wheelmade, with pronounced rilling visible inside and out. Interior and exterior brown-purple slip.

22 Pithos (10139)

Figs. 10, 11

Max. p.H. 0.097, Diam. of base 0.200 m. Incomplete: only base preserved; some wear at exterior base, which has rounded edges. Coarse orange-buff fabric, a clean paste with large angular brown and dark gray inclusions, well fired (central Cretan); coil-built. Broad raised ridge at lower body, with deeply incised herringbone pattern without the central bone; above this ridge are traces of a dark-on-light band. It is possible that the base was cut and kept for a secondary use.

23 Local imitation: bridge-spouted jar (9402)

Figs. 10, 11

H. 0.135, max. Diam. of body 0.143, Diam. of base 0.046 m. Repaired and restored, part of upper body and rim missing. Flat incurving rim, ovoid profile, disk base. Light brown buff (local) fabric. Polished or semiburnished surface and paint. Dark-on-light decoration with added white. Rim black inside, white bands on the lip and exterior surface. Under the rim, three horizontal parallel ridges painted black. Two broad zones of red-brown ripple alternating with sets of black, red, and white bands.

Laying of floor (level 13)

24 Ledge-rim bowl (11358)

Fig. 12

Diam. of rim 0.120 m. Ten joining fragments of rim and body. Fine buff fabric; wheelmade. Dark-on-light bands on exterior body, tortoiseshell ripple on interior, with quite thick stripes; not burnished.

25 Hemispherical cup (9395) Fig. 12

H. 0.062, Diam. of rim 0.095, Diam. of base 0.035 m. Repaired and restored, 90% complete, handle missing. Globular body and everted rim. Fine buff, well-fired fabric. Lustrous black-brown slip, only lightly fugitive in places, with polychrome decoration of white dots at exterior rim and upper body, above a red band at mid-body, somewhat irregularly painted; some white dots overlie this red band; white band at interior/exterior rim.

*Destruction deposit on floor (level 12)*26 Hemispherical cup (9509) Figs. 13, 14

H. 0.091, Diam. of rim 0.115–0.128 (elliptical from handle attachment), Diam. of base 0.050 m. Repaired and restored, 98% complete. Semiglobular body and everted rim, vertical strap handle from the rim that extends above it to the middle of the body. Fine buff, hard-fired fabric; wheelmade. Brown lustrous slip on exterior, worn in places, with reserved clay band at mid-body; interior has dark band at rim and dense splashes below; upper part of handle on the exterior is slipped, but lower part coinciding with reserved band is left plain. Some trickle and splash on exterior reserved band.

27 Straight-sided cup (9396) Figs. 13, 14

H. with handle 0.080, H. without handle 0.074, Diam. of rim 0.105, Diam. of base 0.058 m. Repaired and restored, 90% complete. Slightly flaring profile, vertical strap handle reaching the lower part of the body. Fine buff (central Cretan) fabric. Interior and exterior red-brown slip, worn and flaked in places, with white-on-dark painted decoration of a broad horizontal zone with white painted running double spirals below the rim; three thin horizontal bands at the middle of the body and one at the base; two horizontal dashes on the handle. Slip under base is worn around edges, probably from use.

28 One-handled stemmed cup (9375) Figs. 13, 14

H. with plastic decoration 0.120, Diam. of rim 0.115, Diam. of base 0.052 m. Repaired and restored, 95% complete. Conical body, cylindrical stem with discoid base, straight rim, strap handle from the rim to the upper part of the body. Fine buff fabric; wheelmade, with concentric striations under base from removal from the potter's wheel. Painted and relief decoration: broad horizontal black band on the rim inside and out; upper part of handle painted black with trickled paint down to lower part of handle; three horizontal grooves on the lower body; two parallel strips of clay with a rough surface placed vertically on one side of the body from above the rim to the upper part of the body.

29 Bridge-spouted jar (9369) Figs. 13–15

H. to rim 0.203, H. with handles 0.242, L. of spout 0.075, Diam. of rim (int.) 0.138, Diam. of rim (ext.) 0.155, max. Diam. 0.250, Diam. of base 0.104 m. Repaired and restored, 95% complete; surface worn in places, especially under base (from use). Conical lower body and globular upper, to a strongly incurving rim, slightly thickened and flattened; two upturned horizontal rounded handles below rim, small conical lug opposite the spout, which is a bridge spout with vertical sides just below the rim and with an ovoid opening. Four deep grooves at the mid-body create a corrugated effect, mimicking metal. Fine buff, hard-fired fabric, clearly a north-central Cretan import. Wheelmade, with clear rilling marks at interior.

Exterior: lustrous black slip, worn in places, with white painted decoration consisting of bands on the rim, ridges at mid-body and lower body, with white



Figure 13. Cups 26–28 and bridge-spouted jar 29 from pillar pit 67N, level 12. Drawings A. Kontonis

spots over the upper body above the uppermost groove (including handles and spout). Interior: lustrous black slip inside rim, some having trickled in places, particularly through the spout; also traces of black slip splashed in interior. Two pairs of repair holes—one pair below the rim near the spout, the other ca. 7 cm directly below on the body—are placed on either side of a large crack that runs around the spout and across to other side of vessel. Traces of two other failed mending attempts are visible.

30 Bridge-spouted jar (9391)

Fig. 16

H. to rim 0.124, H. with handles 0.136, Diam. of rim 0.072, Diam. of base 0.051 m. Repaired and restored, 90% complete; surfaces worn in places, especially under base (from use). Piriform body, incurving straight-sided rim, two upturned horizontal handles with rectangular profile and a groove on the spine; a bridge spout. Fine pale buff (north-central Cretan) fabric; wheelmade. Dark-on-light decoration with added white: two zones of tortoiseshell ripple decoration, one at upper body and one at lower; dark bands at rim, upper and lower body, and one thick band across mid-body (the paint is flaky and has peeled off in places), which bears about five added white bands; base initially solidly painted dark brown, now worn; handles and spout with ripple decoration. Interior lower body seems quite worn, too, perhaps from contents.



Figure 14. Cups 26–28 and bridge-spouted jar 29 from pillar pit 67N, level 12. Scales as in Figure 13. Photos D. Sakatzis

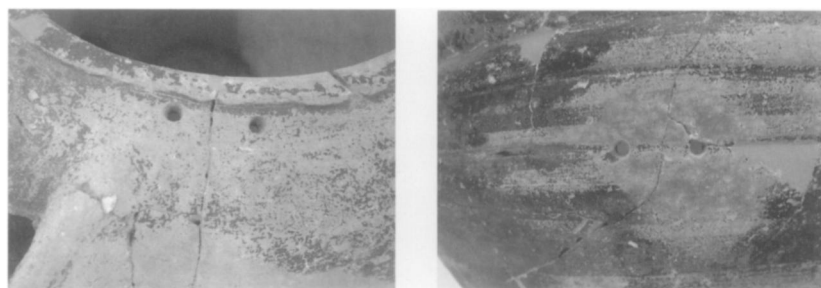


Figure 15. Details of bridge-spouted jar 29 showing repair holes. Photos D. Sakatzis

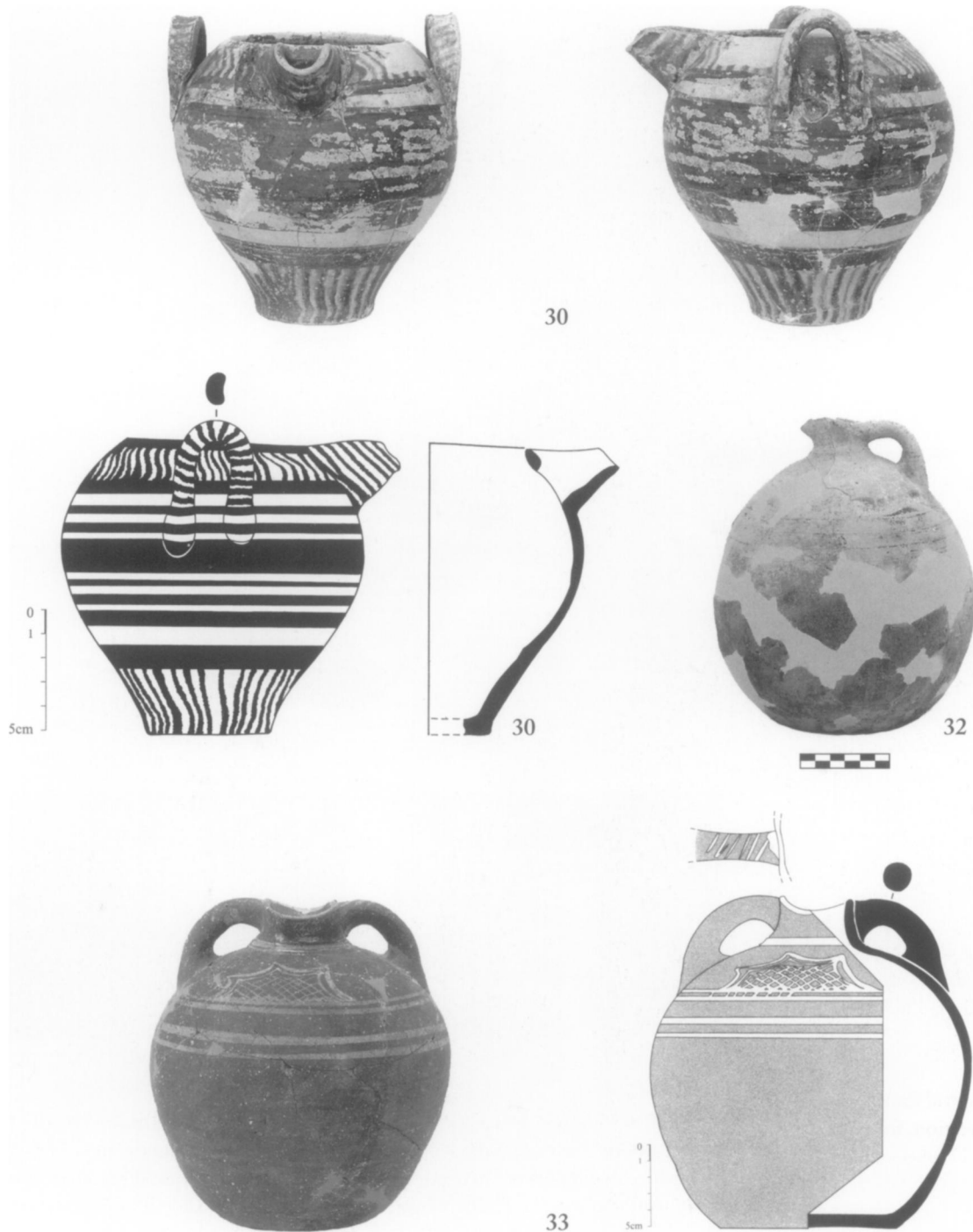
31 Juglet (9520)

P.H. 0.127, max. Diam. ca. 0.080, Diam. of base 0.032 m. Repaired but with an incomplete rim; surface eroded—perhaps originally with a cutaway spout? Small juglet with ovoid body and cylindrical neck. Fine buff fabric, pale gray at interior, rather soft and worn in places; wheelmade. The paint is flaky and worn. Lustrous black slip on exterior, largely peeled off, with signs of dark red and white paint; on the interior the paint has trickled down to the bottom of the vase. Unclear whether there was a handle.

32 Ovoid jug (10497)

Fig. 16

H. 0.234, max. p.L. of spout 0.048, max. p.W. of spout 0.039, max. Diam. of body 0.181, Diam. of base 0.100 m. Repaired and restored, 60% complete; surfaces worn. “Eyed” jug with an ovoid, pear-shaped body, with low maximum diameter; low neck and narrow spout, with a conical lug to either side of spout



(described as “eyes”); vertical rounded handle from the rim to the upper part of the body. Semicoarse gritty pale buff fabric, fired orange in the interior; coil-built, with relatively thin walls. Dark slip on exterior is very fugitive and difficult to discern, with some trickle in places. A set of about seven thin horizontal incised bands around upper to mid-body.

33 Amphoriskos (9378)

Fig. 16

H. 0.207, Diam. of rim 0.045×0.086 , max. Diam. ca. 0.190, Diam. of base 0.108 m. Repaired and restored, 95% complete. Small amphora with globular body,

Figure 16. Bridge-spouted jar 30, jug 32, and amphoriskos 33 from pillar pit 67N, level 12. Photos D. Sakatzis; drawings A. Kontonis

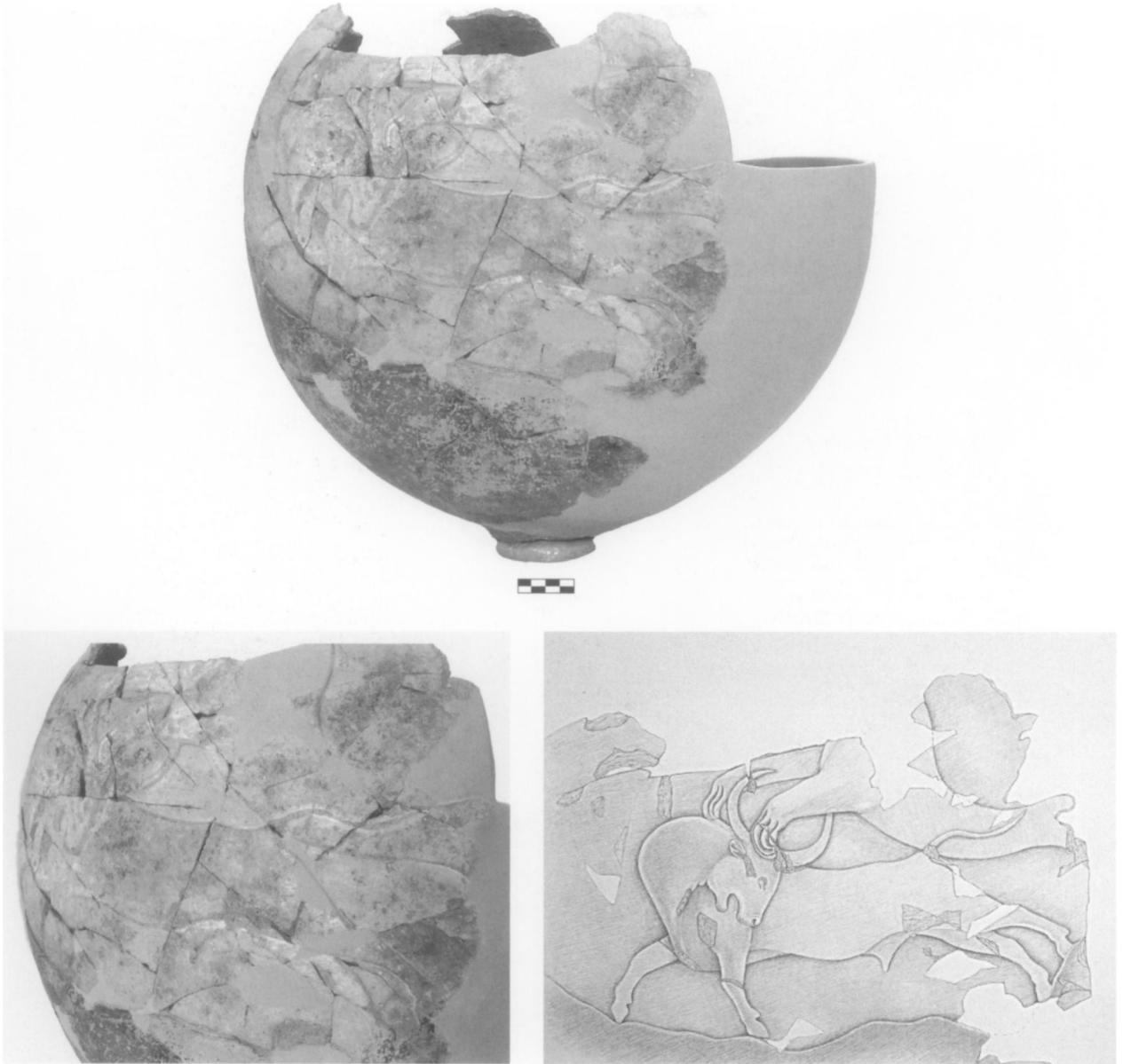


Figure 17. Lentoid flask 34, with details of decoration, from pillar pit 67N, level 12. Photos D. Sakatzis; drawing A. Kontonis

flat base, oval mouth, two vertically placed rounded handles just below the rim to the upper part of the shoulder. Semicoarse red fabric with quartz and phyllite inclusions, irregular color from firing, red to dark gray; an import from the area of Malia. Wheelmade. Smoothed surfaces, possibly with a self-slip; two shallow grooves around the collar probably traces from manufacture. White-on-dark decoration: thin white band at collar, on the rim inside and out, and two pairs of bands on the middle of the body; two opposed motifs on the shoulder zone painted white with four curved radiating sides with double lines, and a crisscross net pattern within this shape; five diagonal white dashes on one handle and six on the other.

34 Lentoid flask (9324)

Fig. 17

Max. Diam. 0.310 × 0.460 m. Repaired and partially restored, ca. 50% complete; body and part of the base. Lentoid body, with a ring base, separately applied. Semicoarse orange fabric, gray at interior, with gray-white schist inclusions; coil-built, with no signs of any mold seams to suggest it was made in two halves.

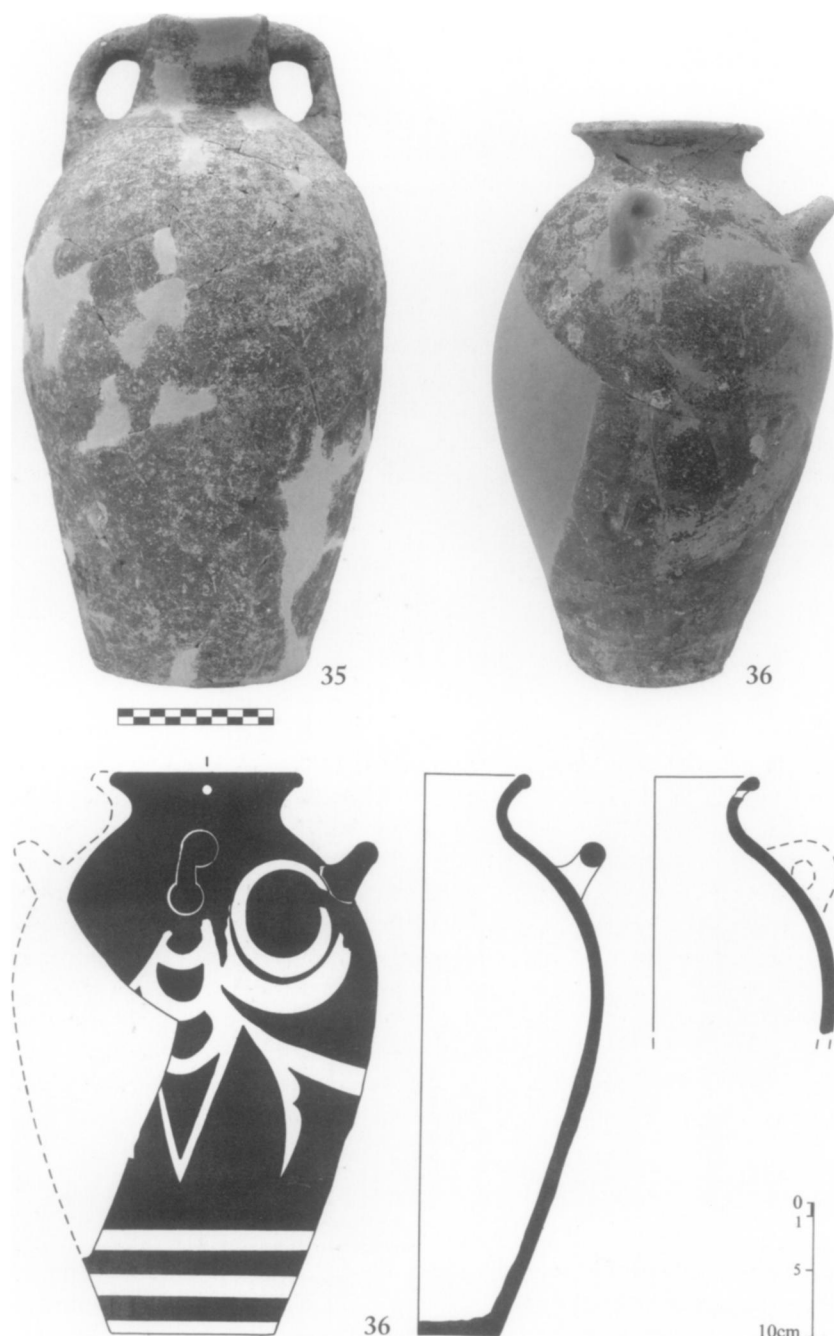


Figure 18. Amphora 35 and pithoid jar 36 from pillar pit 67N, level 12.
Photos D. Sakatzis; drawing A. Kontonis

Each side of the flask has a relief scene (actually inverse relief, as the clay seems to have been cut into), with the two sides connected continuously. There are fugitive traces of white paint on the relief scene. On one side is a fight between an enraged bull and a feline (lion?) on an undulating surface, perhaps representing a rocky landscape; the bull is wholly preserved, its body facing left, its head turned to the right, looking back and down. The bull's body and head are shown in profile, although the placement of the horns suggests an attempt at a three-quarters view. The bull is depicted in a "flying gallop," with feet on the rocky landscape. Attacking the bull from behind is a feline with only the front legs and part of its body preserved. It has caught hold of its victim's horns with

its front claws. The rocky landscape is depicted by a wavy relief band, which bears traces of red-brown paint that continues on the entire lower body below this band.

On the other side of the flask (not illustrated), we can make out a section of a pictorial scene in relief with part of an animal body. The undulating surface represented by the relief band continues around the vessel, connecting one scene to the other.

35 Oval-mouth amphora (9435) Fig. 18

H. 0.420, Diam. of rim 0.075×0.090 , max. Diam. 0.236, Diam. of base 0.142 m. Repaired and restored, 90% complete; surfaces worn in places. Ovoid-conical profile, two vertical ovoid handles from rim to shoulder. Semicoarse orange-buff fabric, with some quartz grits (though difficult to see with fabric now restored); coil-built. Brown-red slip on exterior surface with white-on-dark painted decoration of thick bands at base, lower and mid-body, and neck; possible motif at shoulder but hard to discern; interior slipped at rim and neck, with trickle inside body. Shallow circular depression on the upper part of the handle, probably a seal impression.³⁰ Two vertical parallel grooves near the base—either from manufacture or possible potter's mark. Some sherds found in level 11 above, suggesting that this vase may have fallen from a higher level within the destruction deposit.

36 Pithoid jar (9683) Fig. 18

H. 0.416, Diam. of rim 0.142, Diam. of base 0.120 m. Repaired but incomplete body and rim, 50% complete; surface worn in places. Small four-handled ovoid-conical form with a low neck and everted rim, horizontally placed raised circular handle on the shoulder and the root of a vertically placed handle, and two pierced holes (originally four, presumably) in the rim, one above each handle, presumably for securing lid. Semicoarse pinkish buff fabric, well fired, with small brown and gray inclusions (central Cretan); coil-built, with lumpy finger marks in interior. Exterior: black slip, with white-on-dark painted decoration of three bands at lower body, one at neck (fugitive), large spirals at upper body, and infilled curving triangular motif at mid-body (unclear). Interior: dark slip to rim and neck, rather messy, and traces of white-on-dark pendent festoons at interior rim. Underside of base was slipped, but now shows signs of wear, presumably from use.

37 Local imitation: ewer (9373) Fig. 19

H. 0.463, Diam. of rim (int.) 0.061, Diam. of base 0.124 m. Repaired and restored. Piriform profile, with flaring everted rim, square rim in section, thick handle of oval section, from rim to shoulder; ridge at collar. Whitish/grayish buff fabric. Unsmoothed exterior surface with thin whitish slip. Traces of dark-on-light decoration inside rim, light red-orange slip with brown trickle. Under the handle an incised potter's mark; brown trickle over the mark.

38 Local imitation: ewer (9389) Fig. 19

H. 0.275, Diam. of rim 0.073, max. Diam. of body 0.169, Diam. of base 0.086 m. Repaired and restored (handle missing). Funnel mouth, plain outturned rim. Piriform profile, disk base, vertical strap handle from rim to shoulder. Light brown fabric. Polished or semiburnished surface and paint, and dark-on-light decoration in red-brown with added white: brown bands on collar ridge and around the lower handle attachment, red band on interior rim surface, three zones with fuzzy brown "sponge" motif alternating with sets of white and brown bands with added white bands.

30. Cf. Myrtos Pyrgos period III; see Cadogan 1978.



39 Local imitation: ewer (9425)

Max. p.H. 0.210, max. Diam. of body 0.175, Diam. of base 0.072 m. Repaired and restored, rim and part of vertical band handle missing. Piriform profile, raised flat base. Buff fabric. Polished or semiburnished surface and paint, and dark-on-light decoration in red-brown with added white: broad brown band on collar and around the lower attachment of the handle, three zones with red-brown “fuzzy ripple” or “sponge” motif alternating with sets of red-brown and black bands with added white bands.

Fig. 19

Figure 19. Ewers 37–39 and bridge-spouted jar 40 from pillar pit 67N, level 12. Photos D. Sakatzis; drawings A. Kontonis

40 Local imitation: bridge-spouted jar (9424)

Fig. 19

H. 0.305, Diam. of rim 0.115, max. Diam. of body 0.263, Diam. of base 0.112 m. Repaired and restored, small parts missing. Disk base, conical lower body, and globular upper, to incurving rim, slightly thickened and flattened; two upturned horizontal rounded handles below rim; upturned bridge spout. Buff fabric with grayish core. Polished or semiburnished surface and paint, worn at places. Decoration in red-brown (probably from firing, not bichrome technique) and added white paint. Rim painted red. Six horizontal parallel red-brown broad bands from rim to base with added white bands define decorative zones. In the upper, from rim to thickest part of body, vertical parallel strokes. In the lower two, “fuzzy ripple” or “sponge” motif in red-brown paint. Red bands around the handle and the spout attachments. Brown with added white band on the lip of the spout and vertical parallel strokes on the vertical sides of the spout.

DISCUSSION

While the phase C pottery from the two pillar pits (66P and 67N) appears to be contemporary, a closer comparison of the two contexts is warranted. No polychrome Cretan ware was found in level 12, the floor destruction in pillar pit 67N, where some of the Cretan vases appear to have ancient traces of repair and use wear (e.g., 29, Fig. 15). Local vases with a ripple or fuzzy ripple motif occur in this level, while they are rare in 66P. On the other hand, a large quantity of polychrome Cretan pottery was retrieved from the floor destruction of pillar pit 66P, where no fragments of Cretan ripple dark-on-light decorated vases are attested (but note the Cretan ripple bowl 24 from 67N, level 13, the upper floor layer). The local pottery types also exhibit differences—for example, the limited number of ledge-rim bowls and the presence of a tall-rimmed tumbler in 67N.

These differences in imports and in local products may not be very significant in chronological terms, as the floor construction and destruction levels in pillar pit 67N are not widely spaced in time. As we mentioned above, it is possible, keeping in mind the different abandonment processes, that habitation in the MC room of pillar pit 67N lasted slightly longer than in that of 66P. A more solid chronology should emerge after the comparative examination of similar material from other MC pillar pit deposits. Below, we discuss the Cretan imports from both pillar pit deposits as a group, despite the presumed slight chronological differences in the two deposits, as our approach focuses on their significance in the broader spatiotemporal context within the late MC settlement at Akrotiri.

Primary floor deposits of late MC date with large numbers of vases in situ have been encountered only occasionally at the site, and as a result, very few MM Cretan vases have been restored from the sherd material from other pillar pits. Material comparable to the phase C pottery from pillar pits 66P and 67N comes from pillar pit 35N, in which a large cylindrical pithos decorated with griffins was found on the floor of a MC room.³¹ Imported Cretan material in the late MC context includes a straight-sided cup, 41, and fragments of polychrome hemispherical cups with grooves, a closed vessel with embossed circles, a small open cup with vertical “basket” handles at the rim and white-on-dark spots, and bridge-spouted jars

31. Petrakos 2002, pp. 77, 79; Kariotis 2003, pp. 426–428.



Figure 20. Cup 41 and sherds from pillar pit 35N. Photos D. Sakatzis; drawing A. Kontonis

(Fig. 20). Other restored MM vases include, from pillar pit 32N, an ostrich-egg rhyton (42) with polychrome decoration (Fig. 21), and from pillar pit 53A, a tall amphora, 43 (Fig. 22), combining polychrome decoration on the upper body with dark-on-light “featherwave” decoration on the lower body. Both come from secondary fill deposits.

PILLAR PIT 35N

41 Straight-sided cup (10817)

Fig. 20

H. 0.081, Diam. of rim 0.116, Diam. of base 0.077, Th. of rim 0.002, W. of handle 0.023, Th. of handle 0.005 m. Repaired and restored, 80% complete; surfaces worn in places. Quite large example with faintly flaring body and tooled bevel at base, vertical strap handle from the rim that extends above it and down to mid-body. Fine orange-buff fabric; wheelmade. Black-brown slip all over, fugitive in many places, with white-on-dark painted decoration: bands at mid-body and one at rim, and motif of double upturned semicircles with numerous radiating “petals” (cf. MacGillivray’s “Sunrise Style”). Probably MM IIB, but possibly MM IIIA.

PILLAR PIT 32N

42 Rhyton, ostrich-egg type (10697)

Fig. 21

Max. p.H. 0.172, max. Diam. 0.129, Diam. of hole at base 0.012 m. Repaired, but only 30% complete. Ovoid body with a rounded base, which forms a shallow depression toward the middle and has a hole at the center with slightly flaring cylindrical edges (illustrated upside down). Upper body not preserved, and it is not clear how it would have looked—an everted rim, perhaps. Fine pale buff (central Cretan) fabric; wheelmade, with pronounced rilling inside.

Lustrous black slip on exterior, fugitive on one half of vessel in particular, with polychrome decoration: large white retorted spirals at mid-body, with orange-red



Figure 21. Rhyton 42 from pillar pit 32N. Photo D. Sakatzis

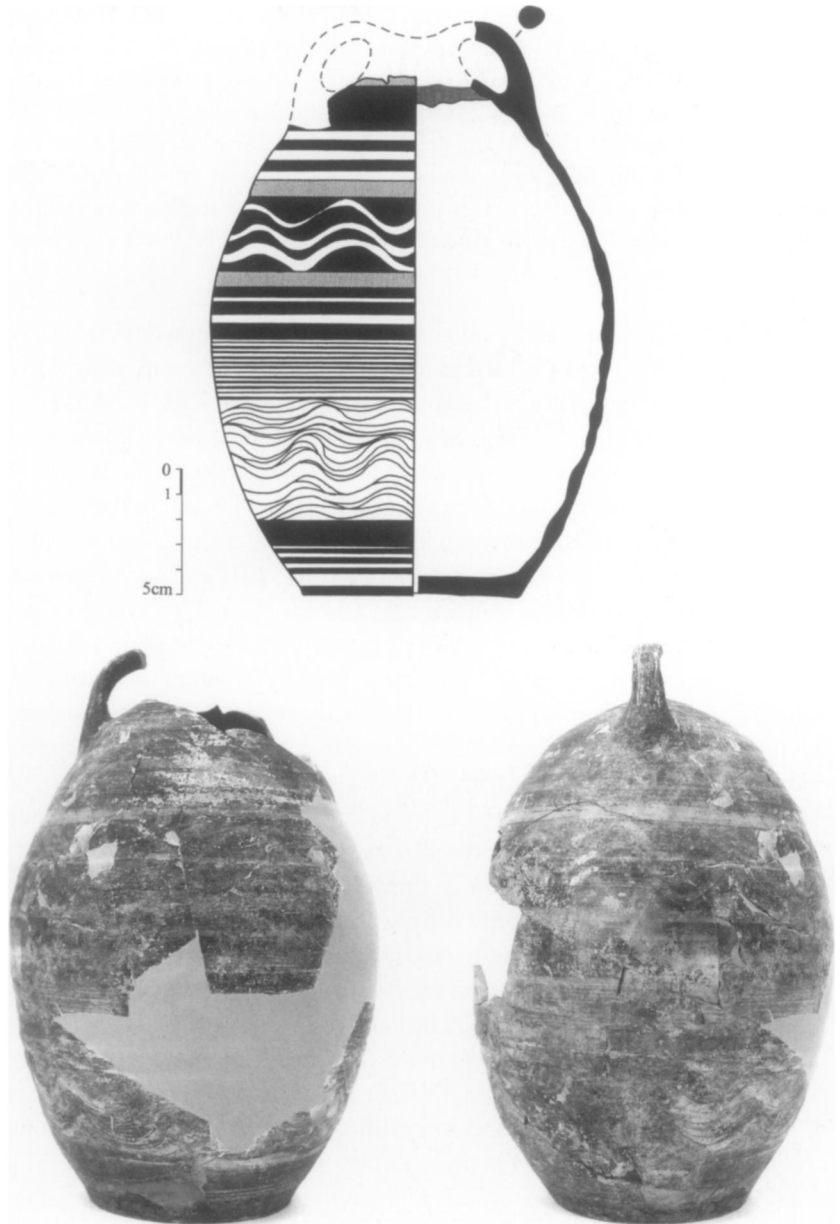


Figure 22. Amphora 43 from pillar pit 53A. Photos D. Sakatzis; drawing A. Kontonis

band above and below, with an additional red-orange band close to pierced base. Base is painted with a white disk, and there are two zones of white decoration at lower and upper body, each consisting of a frieze of diagonal curving dashes in between white bands. Most likely of MM IIIA date, judging by polychrome decoration and large retorted spiral; see Phaistos phase III for parallels.³²

PILLAR PIT 53A

43 Amphora (8514)

Fig. 22

P.H. 0.232, max. Diam. ca. 0.160, Diam. of base 0.085 m. Repaired, but a large section of the body, shoulder, mouth, and one handle is incomplete (ca. 60%); quite worn. Closed two-handled vase with ovoid body, a simple flat base, vertical ovoid handle on the shoulder missing its upper end, and a small part of the lower end of the second handle preserved on the opposite side. Fine orange-buff (central

32. Levi and Carinci 1988.

Cretan), well-fired fabric; wheelmade, with pronounced rilling inside, and diagonal torsion marks on the interior upper body from collaring process. Black-brown slip covers exterior surface with polychrome decoration: orange painted band at the junction of the neck and body, and three white parallel bands below the handle, which is solidly painted in black; an orange painted band on the upper part of the body and another almost at the middle, which define a zone containing a triple wavy white painted band. Traces of brushstrokes evident on the lower part of the body—what is called “featherwave” decoration on Crete (MM IIB–IIIA). Interior has black slip down to lower part of neck.

Although the contexts of pillar pits 66P and 67N may not be exactly contemporaneous, there are good grounds for assigning the imports to MM IIIA in central Cretan terms, thereby correlating phase C at Akrotiri with this Cretan phase. The best parallels for the pillar pit material come from Knossos and Anemospilia.³³ Yannis and Efi Sakellarakis have described their “Anemospilia phase” at Archanes as MM IIB–IIIA, but in the light of recent work at Malia, with the publication of the Quartier Mu material,³⁴ we can describe the phase more specifically as MM IIIA. There is general consensus that the abundant destruction levels from Quartier Mu are characteristic of MM IIB, as are those from Myrtos Pyrgos period III and from Phaistos.³⁵ The Quartier Mu pottery includes innumerable carinated cups, and not a single example of tortoiseshell ripple. These features alone strongly suggest that the Akrotiri material postdates MM IIB. Some features of the pillar pit pottery, however, such as the continued use of polychrome decoration, prevent us from dating the material much later than MM IIB; by MM IIIB, polychromy is almost completely absent.

The iconographical differences between the Cretan imports and local wares lead us to consider the broader sociocultural implications of the imports. With their frequent skeuomorphic referencing of metal and stone prototypes, the Cretan vases contrast strongly with the local pottery, with its emphasis on figurative scenes. The local vases of phase C depict human figures, griffins, birds, and pomegranates, as well as floral motifs. This suggests that the Cretan imports, with their links to valuable prestige items in metal and stone, drew upon a very different field of imagery. The one exception, the large flask 34 showing a lion and a bull in relief (Fig. 17), is a rarity among Cretan vases in its depiction of a figurative scene. These particular animals may have had strong Cretan associations, although we should note that felines are depicted already in the MC period, and a bull is painted on an heirloom bichrome pithos found in the West House at Akrotiri.³⁶ Much has been made of the possible association of bull scenes with Knossian hegemony, albeit in connection with LM IA.³⁷

While we are not ready to claim that the bull iconography of 34 indicates some kind of Knossian ideology asserting itself as early as MM IIIA, the question arises of which Cretan sites are involved in off-island relations. It is intriguing that many of these MM IIIA imports, though not all (i.e., the few from Malia), do seem to show strong connections with north-central Crete, and by implication Knossos. On Crete, the MM IIIA period does see some significant changes at the interregional level, with the emergence of pan-Cretan pottery styles (such as tortoiseshell ripple) replacing the pronounced regionalism of MM II. There are also intriguing

33. MacGillivray 1998; Macdonald and Knappett, forthcoming; Sakellarakis and Sakellarakis 1991, 1997.

34. Poursat and Knappett 2005.

35. Cadogan 1978; Levi and Carinci 1988.

36. Dumas 1999; Papagiannopoulou, forthcoming.

37. Hallager and Hallager 1995.

patterns in architecture; for example, the only Minoan hall at Palaikastro, a distinctively central Cretan type, appears to be built in MM IIIA.³⁸ Certain patterns do seem to have broken down at the end of MM IIB, for example, with the destructions at Phaistos, Malia, and Myrtos Pyrgos. It is not impossible that the Knossian hegemony, the very existence of which is hotly debated,³⁹ began to take shape in MM IIIA.⁴⁰

CONTEXT IN THE AKROTIRI COMMUNITY

We now need to place the rich finds from pillar pits 66P and 67N in their spatiotemporal context within the late MC settlement at Akrotiri. The number and range of the restored vases from pillar pits 66P and 67N is so impressive that it is tempting to attribute a special status or function to these late MC buildings. The state of preservation in this case, however, seems largely dependent on the vicissitudes of taphonomy. The material was retrieved from floor-destruction deposits excavated in the eastern area of the site (see Fig. 2), where the MC levels are best preserved; in other areas, the higher level of the bedrock does not permit the accumulation of debris from earlier phases.⁴¹ The lack of primary deposits with vases *in situ* may also be the result of cleaning operations during the continuous habitation of the site. In any case, it is not possible to make quantitative comparisons of the distribution of Cretan MM imports across the settlement; we can say, however, that the finds suggest a familiarity with imported commodities, as suggested by the sherd material in MC levels in other pillar pits (see catalogue entries above for pillar pits 35N, 32N, and 53A).

Despite these qualifications, the material from pillar pits 66P and 67N provides a unique opportunity to explore how the inhabitants of Akrotiri responded to novel forms of material culture and fashioned for themselves a distinct identity in the years leading up to the syncretism seen in LC I. We have noted elsewhere that the beginning of the Neopalatial period in MM IIIA on Crete marks a watershed, both in the quantity of Cretan imports to Akrotiri and in the adoption of certain Minoan practices, such as the use of the potter's wheel.⁴² The argument that has been tentatively advanced to explain these changes—namely, that they resulted from the strengthening of interregional networks and their transformation from exchange into affiliation networks—gains some force from the detailed evidence presented above.

In terms of functional types, most of the imports can be classified as fine-ware jugs and cups for pouring and drinking. Some of these may have been imported as matching sets (i.e., those with similar decorative styles), while others were almost certainly imported as singletons, especially those of peculiar shape or decoration, such as the rhyton 42 or the relief lentoid flask 34. In any case, the imports do not seem to fill any gaps in functional needs or accommodate special practices introduced into the community. A wide range of local jug types may have served for pouring rituals, as suggested not only by the vases retrieved, but also by the apparently ritual scene depicted on the bichrome jug from 67N.⁴³ Rhyta were not commonly used until the LC I period, when their use may not have been limited to rituals;

38. Driessen 1999; Knappett and Cunningham 2003.

39. Adams 2006.

40. There is intriguing evidence from Galatas, in north-central Crete, for an emergence of Knossian influence in the MM IIIA period: see Rethemiotakis 2002, pp. 56–57.

41. Nikolakopoulou et al., forthcoming.

42. Knappett and Nikolakopoulou 2005.

43. Petrakos 2001, pp. 91, 93; Boulotis 2005; Papagiannopoulou, forthcoming.

the LC I building most commonly considered to have a ritual function, Xeste 3, only contained six rhyta, but 33 nipped jugs were found, out of a total of 229 vessels.⁴⁴

In a late MC floor deposit from pillar pit 35N, a large cylindrical pithos decorated with griffins was found together with a large number of tall ribbed vases, which are commonly thought to have a specialized/ritual function, at least in LC I.⁴⁵ While we are alert to the dangers of projecting the religious connotations of the griffin and the ribbed vases back from the well-established LC I contexts to the less well known MC ritual activities, it is plausible to suggest that Cretan imports, even those of high quality, did not replace or even necessarily accompany local paraphernalia in ritual activities in late MC Akrotiri. There is no evidence for a specialized use of conical cups, limited numbers of which are found at this stage. Even the lentoid jug 34 with the lion-and-bull relief scene may have been imported for its peculiar shape and relief decoration, rather than for the value assigned to its iconography. It is only in LC I that the meaning of the bull becomes fully established at Akrotiri, as attested by iconography and the manufacture of bull rhyta. Nonetheless, Sinclair Hood has noted that relief bulls appear on some of the earliest figurative frescoes at Knossos, probably occurring as early as MM IIIA.⁴⁶

These arguments support the view that the value attached to imported Cretan vessels stemmed from their outstanding manufacturing techniques (skillful use of the wheel and relief decoration, both foreign to local practices) and possibly also for their exotic aesthetic effect. The imports may have enhanced the social status of their owners, but they did not necessarily exert a significant influence on local practices and tastes. This is particularly evident in the stark contrast between the brightly colored local pottery, with its pictorial decoration on buff background, and the sharp, metallicizing effect of dark-ground Cretan pottery with linear decoration. The predilection for a light background, though comparable to what we see on Melos, may have been deeply embedded in Thera artistic expression on a collective cognitive level as a manifestation of distinct local identity; it materialized at least as early as the early MC period in the pottery and was transferred via large-scale MC vase decoration to LC I wall paintings.⁴⁷ It is difficult to assess the impact of metallicizing vases on local taste, since we lack evidence for the production or the use of metal vessels in MC Akrotiri. The relative lack of metallicizing elements in the local pottery in this late stage of the MC period may suggest that such imports were prized because they filled a gap in the consumption of actual metal vases; but, again, we lack sufficient evidence to reconstruct the original situation.⁴⁸

Thus, both the mechanism by which Cretan imports were acquired and the patterns of their consumption in MC Akrotiri appear to be less straightforward than they are at the beginning of the LBA (which may, in turn, be less straightforward than has usually been assumed). The imports definitely stand out among the local vessels, both in terms of typology and decoration. The fact that they appear to have been imported in large part from north-central Crete may indicate a two-way interaction scheme within a context that transcends mere exchange. In this connection, we should mention the surprising abundance of Cycladic and other off-island

44. Papagiannopoulou 1995.

45. For the context, see Kariotis 2003, pp. 428–432, figs. 13–17.

46. Hood 2000.

47. Georma, forthcoming.

48. A similar situation, albeit from the LM I period, can be seen at the site of Kastri on Kythera, where numerous ceramic skeuomorphs of metal and stone originals are found in tombs. These ceramic versions are never found on Crete, where presumably the stone and metal originals were more readily available. See Bevan et al. 2002.

imports specifically in MM III levels within the palace at Knossos.⁴⁹ The relationship between Crete and the rest of the southern Aegean is more complex and subtle than the “colonizer-colonized” scenarios previously considered, and it is crucial to recognize that the material culture itself plays a central role in the colonializing grip that is exerted. We might speculate that Crete itself is colonized by its off-island contacts, in a kind of “reflux.”⁵⁰

We propose the following scenario for the relationship between Cretan and other island communities. When the more introverted Old Palace period ended, Knossos, and possibly other Cretan polities, opened up to off-island communities, and Akrotiri seized the opportunity to enhance local strategies and become more actively involved in south Aegean networks. The select items that were imported, possibly fine ware or curios for the inhabitants of MC Akrotiri, traveled within an affiliation network, which probably served not only to tighten links between the community and the rising power of the Cretan polities, but also to establish some kind of conspicuous consumption of exotica among the elite. The successful results, at least as far as the first aim is concerned, are evident in the dramatic expansion in the adoption and adaptation of Cretan models in LC I.

CONCLUSIONS

The phase C pottery from Akrotiri allows us a rare opportunity to examine the gradual emergence of Cretan influence before its fullest florescence in LC I. In phase C, the imports, while significant, tend to constitute a maximum of 10% of any given deposit. In LC I that figure rises to 15%, and more than half of these vessels are Cretan, according to Marisa Marthari.⁵¹ The major difference in the LC pottery (and other finds) lies not in the number of imports, which remains fairly constant, but in the degree of impact on local production: shapes, wares, and technology all attest to a strong Cretan influence.⁵² While we have not fully charted the development of Cretan influence through the intervening phases between phase C (MM IIIA) and LC I, the present picture points to a gradual increase in influence, rather than a fundamental shift in processes of colonialization. The evidence presented here does not seem to be consistent with the establishment of a Minoan colony, whether of community, settlement, or governed type.⁵³

During phase C, the local production and imitation of Cretan forms and styles are very limited and selective, and they are fully integrated within local traditions. The use of wheel technology points to a more intimate connection, as the requisite skills are difficult to acquire and often involve an apprenticeship. The wheel is used extremely sparingly, for only two types (plain ledge-rim bowls and plain straight-sided cups), which seems to indicate a tentative adoption of the new technique by a limited number of potters, in all likelihood with some direct input from Cretan artisans. It is unlikely that the range of wheelmade pottery produced on the island would have been so restricted if there was any significant colonizing presence there.

49. MacGillivray 1984; Knappett 2006.

50. For this term, see Broodbank 2004.

51. Marthari 1993, p. 43.

52. See, e.g., Doumas 1983; on the pottery, see Marthari 1985, 1987, 1993.

53. Branigan 1981.

We do not mean to suggest that Cretan imports did not offer the islanders new perspectives in terms of imagery, associations, and meanings. Indeed, the novel skeuomorphic connections made by some of these vessels may well have had a striking impact upon local inhabitants, particularly if the conspicuous consumption of valuable metal vessels was gaining broad regional currency as a means of displaying status (as in the Shaft Graves, for example). Drawing upon the perspective developed by Gosden,⁵⁴ one might argue that Akrotiri is gradually culturally “colonialized,” without postulating “colonists” *per se*. Gosden’s assertion that “colonialism is a particular grip that material culture gets on the bodies and minds of people, moving them across space and attaching them to new values”⁵⁵ is clearly relevant to the situation we have outlined in this article. It is the novel forms of Cretan material culture that act as colonists. Local Theran elites may have viewed imported Cretan artifacts as new forms of social and cultural capital to be used for their own ends.⁵⁶

Our approach thus places the objects at the heart of a cultural process, an object-led acculturation, rather than seeing them as mere ciphers for more significant social dynamics that stand behind them. This is not to say, however, that artifacts stand alone; drawing upon ideas of individual personhood, we can see that things and people take on meaning together through distributed networks of personhood.⁵⁷ Continuing in this vein, we might speculate about the various dimensions of meaning that the novel Cretan artifacts may have held for the inhabitants of Akrotiri. What might the use of Cretan imports of this kind, and their imitation or integration into local styles, have meant for different groups of users and producers? Is some form of identity expressed through such artifacts and their associated practices? For instance, the creation of new public spaces in the settlement at the end of the MC period might have resulted from the need for new areas to accommodate feasting activities and their concomitant conspicuous consumption, which are closely comparable to similar practices in Crete. Paraphernalia adopted for use in these activities might account for one aspect of group identity, at least in the LC I period.

If the Cretan imports contributed to the development and expression of identity, we must ask next whether gender played a role. Might the conspicuous consumption of imported metallicizing vessels, for example, have pointed to a new arena of competition, expressed through long-distance contacts and access to exotic luxury items—a domain that was perhaps associated with predominantly male activities? Did these artifacts constitute a particular field of imagery that was highly gendered?⁵⁸ We should consider the depiction of two males on the bichrome pot from phase C,⁵⁹ and, in the slightly later volcanic destruction level of LM IA, the Xeste 3 wall-painting scene that shows males of different ages in what may be an initiation scene,⁶⁰ in which metallic or metallicizing artifacts seem to play an integral role. If indeed there was an association between (Cretan) metallic artifacts and males, then there may have been only a limited subsection of the community that was in thrall to this set of Cretan practices. Also worth investigating is the introduction in phase C of the new technology of the potter’s wheel, which initially was specifically used to imitate certain Cretan forms. Across a range of ethnographic contexts, the potter’s wheel

54. Gosden 2004b.

55. Gosden 2004b, p. 3.

56. Gosden 2004b, p. 26.

57. Strathern 1988; Wagner 1991; LiPuma 1998; Fowler 2004.

58. Cf. Bryson 1990 on gender in still-life imagery; Treherne 1995 on male warrior imagery; Mitchell 2005 on empire and objecthood.

59. Boulotis 2005.

60. Dumas 2000.

has a strong association with male potters.⁶¹ While it would be simplistic to link local handmade pottery on Thera exclusively with female producers, it is nonetheless worth speculating whether the partial adoption of the wheel was gendered.

For purposes of comparison we may turn to other Cycladic islands and sites, such as Kea (Ayia Irini) and Melos (Phylakopi).⁶² At Ayia Irini, Kea period V appears to correspond with MM IIIA,⁶³ and does contain some Minoan imports, such as ridged straight-sided cups. The evidence is rather patchier, though, than that from Akrotiri phase C. It is even more difficult to establish such synchronisms at Phylakopi. The early excavators refer to the appearance of Cretan polychrome ware, which probably began to be imported in the early period of the Second Settlement, as an “important landmark in the history of the Second City.”⁶⁴ The ceramic material is described as “Kamares ware” or “polychrome ware,”⁶⁵ and hence ought to be earlier than the imports in Akrotiri phase C. The final levels of City II might provide parallels with Akrotiri phase C,⁶⁶ but the early publications on Phylakopi make no clear mention of Cretan imports in these levels. Hood’s recent publication of the MM pottery from the 1974–1977 Phylakopi excavations, however, does provide parallels of imported MM IIB and MM IIIA Cretan pottery at the site, coming principally from the areas of the megaron and the sanctuary.⁶⁷

Elsewhere in the Aegean, a rather different set of processes can be observed, as at Miletos, part of what one might call the “Eastern String.”⁶⁸ Here the patterns observed in the phase contemporary with MM I–II, i.e., Miletos III, do appear to be different from those at Akrotiri, with a fragment from a potter’s wheel—as well as a cooking pot and scuttles—indicating the early adoption of some Cretan technology.⁶⁹ The patterns at both Miletos and Akrotiri contrast strongly with those observed at Kythera, which would appear to be fully “Minoan” from the late Prepalatial period onward.⁷⁰

Taking all of these areas together, we might well ask whether there is something about the network of connections at the supra-regional level that makes the processes at Akrotiri, Miletos, and Kythera so different, or whether local factors in each area make the difference. Network modeling of these dynamics, to be presented in a separate paper,⁷¹ suggests that connections to the east and west of Crete, to the Dodecanese and Kythera respectively, are somehow more robust and resilient than connections to the north, given certain appropriate parameters. This might help explain the more “hybrid” nature of Akrotiri. Whatever the specifics, we should consider that such networks may have a decentered character, with effects occurring simultaneously throughout with no obvious core. Such a scenario has recently been argued both for the Greek colonizations of the 1st millennium B.C.,⁷² and for the Lapita phenomenon in Oceania.⁷³ An emphasis on interactions, as demonstrated in Mediterranean settings by the work of Braudel, Sherratt and Sherratt, Horden and Purcell, and Broodbank,⁷⁴ is absolutely fundamental, and holds much potential, particularly given recent advances in the modeling of network interactions.⁷⁵ In this article we hope to have shown the potential for placing material culture center stage in approaches to interregional interactions.

61. See, e.g., Balfet 1965.

62. These islands have previously been grouped together with Thera in the so-called Western String (see, e.g., Davis 1979; Schofield 1982), but this idea has recently come under some criticism (Berg 2006).

63. Davis 1986.

64. Atkinson et al. 1904, p. 259.

65. Atkinson et al. 1904, pp. 148–151, 259–261, pl. XXIV:10.

66. On the City II destruction date, see Whitelaw 2005, pp. 46–49.

67. Hood 2007, pp. 255, 260, figs. 6.21, 6.23, pls. 30–33.

68. Niemeier 2005, p. 10.

69. Niemeier 2005, p. 3.

70. Coldstream and Huxley 1972; Broodbank 1999; 2004.

71. Evans, Knappett, and Rivers, forthcoming.

72. Malkin 2004.

73. Gosden 2004a, p. 38.

74. Braudel 1972; Sherratt and Sherratt 1998; Horden and Purcell 2000; Broodbank 2004.

75. Evans, Knappett, and Rivers, forthcoming.

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