



HOW LONG IS A CENTURY?

LATE MINOAN III B POTTERY. RELATIVE CHRONOLOGY AND REGIONAL DIFFERENCES

International workshop

organized by the Aegean Interdisciplinary Studies research group (UCL-INCAL-CEMA)

Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium, 24-25th October 2013

ABSTRACTS

Late Minoan III B pottery at Malia and Sissi: assessing local ceramic sequence, regional traditions and interaction networks

Charlotte Langohr

Both during the 1989-1993 campaigns in Quartier Nu at Malia and the more recent 2007-2011 excavations on the Kefali Hill at Sissi, large architectural complexes with extensive evidence for Late Minoan III B occupation were revealed. In both cases, primary deposits with a large number of restorable pots specifically date to this phase. Although the study of these assemblages is still ongoing, some impressions of the respective local ceramic sequences, the degree of common regional traditions and the involvement of both Malia and Sissi in interregional ceramic distribution networks can already be given. Architectural and stratigraphical data allow the recognition of at least two different stages within the LM III B occupation of both building complexes even if a typo-stylistic analysis of the respective pottery assemblages does not seem to indicate a contemporary sequence. Moreover, some rather remarkable similarities but also differences exist between the two repertoires which raise questions as

to the reconstruction of micro-regional consumption patterns, their nature and development. Finally, the identification of a number of finely decorated imported vessels from distant Cretan and Aegean regions adds evidence for interregional synchronisms and the development of new important nodes in the Aegean exchange network during the 13th c. BC.

The LM IIIB settlements at Khania

Birgitta Hallager

In the LM III period five superimposed settlements have been recorded in the Minoan town Kydonia in west Crete and two of these belong to the LM IIIB period. The uninterrupted ceramic sequences revealed clear typological (and a few technological) features that made it possible to securely define each of the five periods. As a result of the Greek-Swedish Excavations the ceramic material in the two superimposed LM IIIB settlements revealed that the period could be divided into two clearly definable periods: LM IIIB:1 and LM IIIB:2. The imports of ceramics from within and outside the island in the LM IIIB settlements at Khania as well as the exports of the Kydonian workshop to various sites in Crete, the Aegean, Cyprus, Sardinia and southern Italy is vital evidence of the fruitful exchange of goods that took place in this period. Evidence of the presence of resident foreigners in the LM IIIB town will be presented and statements about regionalism in the LM IIIB period will be scrutinized.

Knossos Little Palace North in a Knossian and Cretan context: the LM III stratigraphical, architectural, and ceramic sequence

Eleni Hatzaki

This paper presents the results of the Little Palace North Project (LPN), a two-season excavation aimed to provide a diachronic picture of urban activities in the core elite sector of urban Late Bronze Age Knossos.

The LM III stratigraphical, architectural, and ceramic sequence are presented in detail. The potential impact but at the same time the limitations of the LPN ceramic sequence are discussed within the framework of the overall Knossian LM III ceramic sequence as outlined in the *Knossos Pottery Handbook* (Hatzaki 2007).

The emerging picture from combining new and old excavation data suggests that the urban landscape of Knossos underwent a series of drastic changes in the Final Palatial and Postpalatial periods, perhaps not surprising for a settlement with a long and complex occupation sequence. These changes are contextualized within the cultural milieu of LM III Knossos and Crete in general, a period associated with major regional but also pan-island cultural transformations.

Late Minoan IIIB at Kommos : an abundance of deposits, a dearth of clear sub-phases, and probably a gradual desertion of the site

Jeremy Rutter

Excavations at Kommos between 1976 and 1995 produced copious amounts of LM IIIB ceramic evidence, including some stratified sequences where it was possible to identify LM IIIB material superimposed directly above LM IIIA2 remains. No more than a tiny scatter of LM IIIC pottery was ever exposed during these excavations, however, and much of this scanty LM IIIC material was recovered from units contaminated with significantly later historical debris.

At least 20 floor deposits and major fills dating from LM IIIB have been identified from all major areas of the site to have been excavated: a dozen or so from the Hilltop area (of which half come from the House of the Press) where the stratigraphy is highly compressed and erosion has been most severe; five from the Central Hillside, all but one from the House of the Snake Tube where a house shrine was identified by the excavators; and four from the Southern Area, evenly split between floor deposits from Building N (possibly an administrative building housing a harbormaster) and Building P (a ship-storage facility comprising six large, parallel, and separately accessed galleries or shipsheds). Thus from a functional point of view, a substantial number of altogether different contexts are represented at LM IIIB Kommos, from ordinary housing to a residential building in which cult ceremonies may have taken place, and from private structures to public buildings.

Contacts with other sites and regions within Crete appear to have been extensive, as were contacts outside the island with sources of Sardinian, Cypriot, and Mycenaean pottery. Pottery from these three culture zones was found in some quantity at the site; imports from Syria-Palestine, Egypt, and western Anatolia may also have continued during LM IIIB times, although at much reduced levels relative to what had arrived from those regions during LM IIIA1-2.

Aspects of the LM IIIB pottery recovered from Kommos that provide this material with a strong regional, and in some cases even a distinct local identity relative to contemporary assemblages elsewhere on the island will be summarized. Some attempts to discern temporal subdivisions within the Kommos LM IIIB material will be explored.

Aghia Triada in LM IIIB: A ceremonial center of Late Minoan III Crete

Anna Lucia D'Agata

Mainly composed by monumental buildings of a non-residential nature, Aghia Triada constitutes a different kind of protourban site in the heterogeneous political landscape of Late Minoan III Crete.

It is the aim of this paper to discuss the many questions posed by the organizer of the workshop, making use of the large amount of archaeological evidence collected for the site in more than one-hundred years of research and excavations. In particular, the ceramic analysis will be finalized: to clarify pottery phases within the site; to show regional and extra-regional synchronisms; to reconstruct the ceramic system in vogue in south-central Crete and throw light on the interplays of social and economic nature incidental to the function of the pottery assemblages.

The “Armenoi workshop”: Local ceramic sequence and regional tradition from the LM III Cemetery at Armenoi Rethymnon

Fotini Nezeri

The study of the ceramic material of the Late Minoan III cemetery of Armenoi reveals the existence of a unique group of closely related vessels which has quite distinctive local characteristics. This paper aims to present the products of the regional “workshop” of Armenoi during the LM IIIA2 to LM IIIB phases and to explore its relation to other ceramic workshops in Crete.

Sherds of History: the LM III B pottery from the *Pediada Survey Project*. Elements for the distribution and the character of life in central Crete, during the 13th c. BC.

Constantinos Paschalidis, Nikos Panagiotakis & Marina Panagiotaki

The study of pottery often serves as an indirect indicator of life's terms, providing elements of social complexity as well as quotidian stories of anonymous people. This paper presents for the first time the innumerable sherds of LM III B date, collected from forty-five unexcavated sites at Pediada, central Crete. The pottery, discussed in stylistic terms and geographical contexts is put together on an imaginary land's network in order to suggest the distribution and character of life in Pediada, during *a century* or so.

Palaikastro Period XVI: the settlement and its ceramics in LM IIIB

Tim Cunningham

Palaikastro Period XVI is defined, somewhat arbitrarily, as coincident with LM IIIB and therefore lasts, strictly speaking, approximately one hundred years; but nowhere do we have a building or area that is continuously inhabited for this stretch of time. In fact, Period XVI begins with a hiatus of settlement, at least at the town site of Roussolakkos, which suffers a rapid to sudden abandonment at the end of the preceding period. The town in LM IIIB was thus of very different character than its LM IIIA2 predecessor. So, at Palaikastro we do not recognize Period XVI contexts by any local ceramic developments, since there does not seem to be any local ceramic production, but, where it occurs, by imported vessels, especially deep bowls, as yet unknown in earlier periods from the site. Although there is some stratigraphic evidence, the transient and ephemeral nature of the LM IIIB occupation as seen against and amidst the massive quantities of earlier material hinders these distinctions.

From the preceding Period XV at Palaikastro we have more material from more sites both in and outside of the main town at Roussolakkos than for any other period of comparable length. Cemeteries and habitation remains fill the coastal plain and it is a time of widespread settlement and exploitation of the surrounding countryside. Ceramically, this is the time of well-crafted and strikingly painted large vases (mainly piriform jars, amphoroid kraters, barrel-shaped pithoi and larnakes) that form part of a Far East Cretan koine linked with funerary practices and exported widely. Although the ceramic tradition carries on, it does not appear to do so on the coastal plains and low hills surrounding Palaikastro. We see there a very different pattern of settlement that seems to be pulling back from the maritime plains and that leaves far fewer archaeological traces of itself than either the preceding LM IIIA2/B early or even the subsequent 'refuge' site phenomenon of early LM IIIC.

In LM IIIB we see a minimum of contemporary artefacts, whether portable (e.g. pots) or intangible (e.g. indications of cultural behaviour) inhabiting a decayed and older environment. These occasional deposits of non-local ceramics reflect new habits amidst signs of scavenging and limited re-use.

Recent studies have shown that people often 'opt out' of the spiral of increasing social organisation, withdrawing physically from 'civilisation' to more remote hilltops and high valleys while choosing more self-sufficient and less visible subsistence regimes, and something like this seems to be happening at least here, at the far eastern end of Crete in the 13th Century.

Pottery from the Late Minoan III Cemetery at Myrsini Aspropolia

R. Angus K. Smith

This paper will examine the pottery of the Late Minoan III cemetery at Myrsini Aspropolia over the periods spanning the LM IIIA2 to LM IIIC phases. In particular, it will look at the pattern of local versus imported wares,

and it will compare this pattern to those witnessed at the cemetery and settlement of Mochlos from LM IIIA2 to LM IIIB. At issue will be an assessment of how local and imported wares change over these periods, and what that means not only to the economy of the region during LM III, but also to aspects of local identity as expressed through changes in mortuary customs.

Historical pointers from new evidence. The situation in central Crete during LM IIIB

Athanasia Kanta

Recent excavations have brought to light sites in the Aposelemis gorge in a location very difficult of access. One of these sites has been fully excavated. It is a small settlement midway up the sheer gorge cliff. A small community was living and being buried within this gorge. The site is not far from Knossos and Mallia, as well as from other well-known sites in the Pediada district. The pottery and other data give pointers to historical events in central Crete during LM III B.