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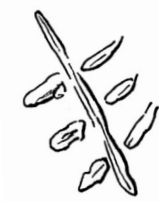
THE SANCTUARY
OF HERMES
AND APHRODITE
AT SYME
VIANNOU

V

ΣΗΜΕΙΑ ΚΕΡΑΜΕΩΝ



ATHENS 2014



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ΤΟΥ ΕΡΜΗ ΚΑΙ ΤΗΣ ΑΦΡΟΔΙΤΗΣ
ΣΤΗ ΣΥΜΗ ΒΙΑΝΝΟΥ

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Σημεία κεραμέων από τή Σύμη και άλλες θέσεις
στήν Κρήτη τής Έποχῆς τοῦ Χαλκοῦ



ΑΘΗΝΑΙ 2014

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THE SANCTUARY
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V

ΣΗΜΕΙΑ ΚΕΡΑΜΕΩΝ

Potters' marks from Syme and other sites
of Bronze Age Crete



ATHENS 2014

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Πανεπιστημίου 22, Ἀθήναι 10672
fax 210 3644996, τηλ. 210 3625531
secr@archetai.gr - www.archetai.gr

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Τη δαπάνη γιὰ τὴν ἐκδόση τοῦ τόμου
χορήγησε τὸ Ἴδρυμα Ψύχα.



Ἐκδοτικὴ καὶ καλλιτεχνικὴ ἐπιμέλεια: Λούση Μπρατζιώτη
Ἐπιμέλεια κειμένων: Μαρία Γαβρίλη

Στη Λένα μου

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ABBREVIATIONS

EM	Early Minoan	MC	Mochlos
FN	Final Neolithic	MFK	Myrtos Fournou Koriphi
MM	Middle Minoan	MK	Monastiraki-Katalimata
LM	Late Minoan	ML	Malia
EC	Early Cycladic	MN	Monastiraki
LH	Late Helladic		
LBA	Late Bronze Age	PH	Phaistos
		PK	Palaikastro
HM	Heraklion Archaeological Museum	PL	Platyvola
		PS	Pseira
D.	Diameter	PST	Psathi
H. pres.	Height preserved	PT	Petras
Max. dim.	Maximum dimension	SM	Syme
AR	Archanes	TL	Tylissos
CH	Chalinomouri	VR	Vrysinas
GR	Gournia	ZK	Zakros
HL	Halasmenos		
HP	Hagia Photia		
HT	Hagia Triada		
KM	Kommos		
KN	Knossos		
KR	Karphi		
KS	Kastelli-Chania		
KST	Kastellos		
KV	Kavousi-Vrondas		

INTRODUCTION

We consider as potters' marks ... those made on the pot before firing, when the pot was still in the hands of the potter, and therefore added most probably by the potter himself (hence the term), whatever their meaning and function.

Halepa-Bikaki 1984, 2.

The term pre-firing mark generally refers to an incised, impressed, stamped or painted mark on some part of a vessel, made during the course of manufacture and before the firing of the pot, which is why these marks are widely known as potters' marks.¹ As the term implies, it was the potter who was responsible for marking the vessel. This term is opposed to the more neutral term potmark, which describes the marks applied at any point during the manufacture, exchange, use, purposeful deposition and final discarding of a pot.² Whether the pre-firing mark symbolizes the potter and his/her work or something else, is a hotly debated issue.³

The study of pre-firing marks on pottery first began in the context of Egyptology. In 1891, W. Flinders Petrie noted 'strange signs' scratched on 'Aegean' pottery recovered at Kahun (Dynasty XII) and Gurob (Dynasty XVIII).⁴ Petrie thought they were an early form of writing, made by Aegean captives or traders who had adopted Egyptian hieroglyphs or masons' marks. Although the connection of inscribed potsherds to the Aegean was disputed by A. Evans,⁵ there is no doubt that Petrie's study was the first attempt to set the parameters for the publication and study of this material, as regards not only the mark itself but also the vessel and its context. The aim of Petrie's presentation was to clarify the origins of the alphabet.

In 1904, C. Edgar and A. Evans contributed a whole chapter on the numerous marked sherds from Phylakopi on Melos to the final publication of the settlement.⁶ The authors considered the marks to be signs identifying either the owner of the vessel or the potter. Evans also discussed the possibility of a link with the newly

1. For a definition see, Halepa-Bikaki 1984, 2; Gallorini 2009.

2. Hirschfeld 1999, 27.

3. Lindblom 2001, 17-21.

4. Petrie 1890, 42-44; Gallorini 2009; Aston

2009. For an introduction to the history of the study of potmarks, see Hirschfeld 1999, 1-20; Lindblom 2001, 13-16.

5. Evans 1909, 2.

6. Edgar 1904; Evans 1904.

discovered Cretan scripts.⁷ There were several published references to pre-firing marks found at Bronze Age sites over the following decades, demonstrating the widespread distribution of the marked vessels across Mainland Greece and the Aegean.⁸ Neolithic examples were also discovered at Tsangli and Orchomenos, testifying to the practice of incising marks on pots even at this early date.⁹

Systematic studies of pre-firing marks from prehistoric sites in Mainland Greece and the Aegean islands appeared in the 1970s. The first attempt to present and compare marks on a specific type of vessel was in a paper by J. Crouwel, who examined eight marks found on Grey Minyan pottery from five sites in Mainland Greece.¹⁰ H. Döhl then gave a detailed analysis of pre- and post-firing marks found on sherds from Tiryns.¹¹ Working on a larger number of pre-firing marks, he was able to distinguish between groups of similar marks, which he identified with a single system and even with ethnic groups. A milestone in the study of pre-firing marks in the Aegean was A. Halepa-Bikaki's publication of the marks from Hagia Irini, the first monograph to appear on the subject.¹² Halepa-Bikaki examined 205 marked sherds, comparing their shape, fabric and frequency of occurrence. Although she notes similarities between marks dated to specific periods and signs from linear scripts, she does not relate them to a writing system but rather places them in the broader context of the economic and social developments in the Aegean during the Bronze Age. The pre-firing marks from another Aegean island, Melos, were the focus of a study by A. Bailey.¹³ The material consists of approximately 276 marked sherds from Phylakopi, derived both from the early excavations and from C. Renfrew's investigations during the 1970s, and dating from the EC to the LH IIIC periods.

The most recent study of pre-firing marks from the Aegean area, and one of the fullest and most systematic, is that of the marked pottery produced at Aegina published by M. Lindblom.¹⁴ Lindblom examines the appearance of marks on specific wares and vessels, at different sites and times, in order to identify the features of the marking system. He also uses comparative ethnographic data to support his argument that the Aeginetan marks were made by potters working in close contact with each other, in the same workshops and following the same tradition. Lindblom's work shows how the detailed study of pre-firing marks can provide information on their function and socio-cultural context, even when their exact significance remains obscure.

In this brief overview of the state of research, N. Hirschfeld's work on potmarks in the eastern Mediterranean can hardly be ignored.¹⁵ Hirschfeld's main area of interest is post-firing marks, incised or painted, as evidence of the trade and distribution of the finished vessels. She provides a methodology for the identification

7. Evans 1904; 1909.

8. Lindblom 2001, 14.

9. Wace and Thompson 1912, 90; Kunze 1931, 29.

10. Crouwel 1973.

11. Döhl 1978; 1979.

12. Halepa-Bikaki 1984.

13. Bailey 1996; 2007.

14. Lindblom 2001.

15. Hirschfeld 1992; 1993; 1996; 1998; 1999; 2000; 2002; 2008; 2012.

of marking systems used in parallel, and a large searchable database of LBA marks, a valuable aid to scholars. In an important contribution to the study of potmarks, Hirschfeld argues that the identification of meaningful patterns in the use of both pre- and post-firing marks, particularly in the context of the vessels on which they appear, is the key to uncovering their function. Her contribution is a cornerstone in this field of study.

Scientific interest in pre-firing marks from Bronze Age Crete originated with A. Evans. In 1894, some years before his excavations at Knossos, Evans, discussing the primitive pictographs and pre-Phoenician script from Crete and the Peloponnese, recorded incised marks on vessels recovered in the area of Mirabello in East Crete.¹⁶ He viewed these marks as a 'quasi-alphabetic group of signs'. At this early stage Evans appears to confuse pictographic and linear script signs with pre-firing marks.¹⁷ Very few marked fragments of vessels came to light during Evans' excavations at Knossos, but the corpus of marks was to be further enriched in the next decades by the investigation of other Cretan prehistoric sites. In most cases, these are isolated examples or of limited numbers, which, with few exceptions, have not been systematically presented.

J.-P. Olivier and L. Godart's publication of the pre-firing marks from Malia, and M. Tsipopoulou's study of those found at Petras, Siteia are milestones in the study of marks applied to the vessel before its firing. The publication of the marks from Malia was the first systematic presentation and in-depth study of the subject in reference to Crete.¹⁸ Despite the obvious relationship of the marks to Hieroglyphic signs, Olivier and Godart argued that these are potters' marks first and foremost, probably used by potters as a means of organizing pottery production. The next in-depth presentation of such material was that of the pre-firing marks found at Petras by M. Tsipopoulou.¹⁹ The methodological approach applied by Tsipopoulou is exemplary, although, like the Olivier and Godart studies, it is lacking in details of potting technology. According to Tsipopoulou, the marks had more than one meaning and served different purposes connected to the production process, the use and contents of the vessel, the owner, and the area in which the marked vessel was placed. Last but not least is the study of pre-firing marks from the peak sanctuary of Vrysinas by M. Giokaridaki-Skandali.²⁰ The presentation of the sample is analytical, with particular emphasis on the identification of parallels not only from other Cretan sites but also from other areas of the prehistoric Aegean. Few meaningful patterns, however, have emerged that suggest a specific function for the marks.

An assemblage of partly preserved vessels and fragments of vessels bearing pre-firing marks, albeit not as numerous as those of Malia and Petras, has been discovered at the sanctuary of Hermes and Aphrodite at Syme Viannou (Tables 1 and 2).²¹ The group consists of 98 examples comprising 24 basic type groups of

16. Evans 1894; 1909, 9-13.

17. Evans 1909, 10-13.

18. Olivier and Godart 1978; Olivier 1996.

19. Tsipopoulou 1990; 1995; Tsipopoulou and Hallager 1996.

20. Giokaridaki-Skandali 2008.

21. For a preliminary publication of some of these marks see, Lebessi 1991, 314, figs 5-6; 1992, 228, pl. 103α-β; 1993, 229, pl. 142α.

incised and impressed marks. Most were found in secondary deposits, while only very few were associated with primary depositions. In so far as their date is concerned, the majority is assigned to the MM IB period, a few to MM IIB and even fewer to MM IIIB-LM IA. The study and publication of these marks is the primary aim of the present monograph. The contextual framework of each mark is discussed in Chapter I. Chapter II discusses the 'micro-context' of each mark, i.e. the vessel on which the mark is incised or impressed. The marks are discussed in Chapter III. Marks and the vessels on which they are incised or impressed are made by people, people lost in the oblivion of time. It is on these people that Chapter IV focuses, following and developing two venues: the study of the vessel and the evaluation of the way in which the mark was incised or impressed. Data are summarized in a series of tables and charts with the aim of making these data-heavy chapters more accessible to the reader.

The practice of pottery marking is amply attested at many other Bronze Age sites of Crete and also beyond the shores of the island. The examination of other mark groups is essential if we are to comprehend the dimensions attained by this practice. This is the second aim of the study extending beyond the limits of Syme: a discussion of the pre-firing marks published to date from Crete (Fig. 1; Table 3). The corpus of these marks is presented in Chapter V. Chapter VI offers an analysis of recorded pre-firing marks in terms of their form, 'micro-context', spatial and temporal associations, with particular emphasis on the identification of converging and diverging patterns in pottery marking between different sites and regions.

The study focuses exclusively on pre-firing marks from Crete. In contrast to other Aegean sites, the marks found at the prehistoric sites of the island have not yet been the subject of a synthetic study. Any formal similarities between Cretan pre-firing marks and those from the rest of the Mainland Greece and the Aegean do not necessarily imply similarities on the level of signification. Thus, the study of the Cretan marking system is a primary importance at this stage of the research. The examination of marks from Crete in parallel with those from other cultural milieus, and the overall evaluation of what the data discussed here have to add to our understanding of Aegean pre-firing marks, will form the subject of future research. Marks also appear on other media, such as loom-weights, stone vases, ivory/bone/faience inlays, metal objects, etc., with loom-weights being the most frequently marked of all.²² The practice of marking pots may share the same origins as that of marking other media. In the case of marks on loom-weights, interesting connections have been made with those applied on vessels.²³ As A. Halepa-Bikaki argues, however, the mark, whatever its function, is related to the object on which it appears. Thus the present study focuses exclusively on pre-firing marks on vessels, both because marks on other classes of object constitute a separate group, and because it has been impossible to expand into further venues of inquiry.

The concluding chapter discusses the possible meaning or meanings of pre-firing marks. The discussion draws on the results of the analytical approach ap-

22. e.g. Olivier and Godart 1978, 99-105; Evely 2000, 571, 641-650.

23. Poursat 2001; Tsipopoulou 1995; Burke 2006.

plied and on seminal contributions. Relevant studies based on data from other regions of the prehistoric and historically recorded world are approached with particular circumspection: the application of pre-firing marks on Cycladic vessels, for instance, may not arise from the same impulse as contemporary pre-firing marks from Crete. The main argument pervading the whole study is that the patterns indicating their function can be identified through careful analysis of the marks themselves, their placement on and application to vessels of different shapes and fabrics. The precise meanings of the marks, however, remain unknown; the material remains are not enough to identify their significance. I do not deceive myself that I will provide a final answer on the function and meaning of pre-firing marks; this contribution, however, is a solid basis for further discussion in expectation of new finds and studies.

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the term pre-firing mark refers to an incised, impressed, stamped or painted mark on some part of a vessel intentionally made during the course of manufacture and before the firing of the pot; in all likelihood the marks were applied by the potter him/herself. This definition excludes any mark, which was not deliberately made by the potter but was an accidental occurrence during the process of the manufacture. A problem, however, that arises here is which of the deliberate marks are to be considered significant. The marks hitherto considered to be pre-firing marks, or as potters' marks as they were widely known, are simple or complex linear patterns, in most cases similar to the signs of the Aegean scripts. Complex incised, painted or stamped marks that might be considered as decorative patterns were excluded from the category.²⁴ In fact, however, these differentiations are hard to make, and have been largely influenced by many pre-conceived ideas of what a pre-firing mark looks like, as well as by many aesthetic preconceptions. In older studies, and a few more recent ones, for instance, an incised line or a finger or fingernail impression on the legs of cooking pots or tripod discs and under the base of conical cups were not considered pre-firing marks. This is obviously a case of defining exactly what a pre-firing mark is for each researcher. As M. Tsipopoulou observes, this problem arises from the fact that signs on vessels were once viewed as magical symbols, as a sort of artisan's signature, or as linked to the scripts.²⁵ I would even go so far as to add that the attempt of pioneering scholars to connect the marks to the scripts has led to the impression that marks which are simple in form, such as an incised line or a fingernail impression, cannot not be classified as pre-firing marks. Linear incisions or thumb impressions, in particular, on the handles of large vessels or the legs of tripod vessels, are still believed to have been made in order to facilitate firing of these thick parts of the vessel and to avoid breakage during firing.²⁶ The assumed function of these marks during the firing process is not supported on empirical grounds, as many traditional potters, on being asked during the present's author ethnographic fieldwork, did not confirm it. Even assuming that incised lines and finger impressions are somehow related to the manufacturing process,

24. Zerner 2008.

25. Tsipopoulou 1995.

26. e.g. Floyd 2009, 50; Lindblom 2001, 99.

it is worth wondering why they do not appear on many vessels with thick appendages, whereas they do appear on others with fine ones. There are also cases where only one of the thick handles of vessel is marked, not all as one would expect.²⁷ One could also wonder why, if linear incisions and impressions aided the firing of such vessels, this technique was not more widespread, given how quickly technological innovations are propagated. Of the cooking pots and tripod trays, for instance, used in a settlement during the same period of time, only a few bear such incisions. The percentages of marked and unmarked vessels seem to vary from case to case. In other cases, too, the incisions only appear on the vessels of a specific settlement, while they are absent from those of a contemporary one. I believe that these intra and inter-site differences undermine the credibility of the view that incised lines and finger impressions on thick parts of a vessel are related to the firing process. It is obvious that some potters decide to mark their vessels in a certain way while others do not, and this is not related to manufacturing practices. For all these reasons, and following many scholars, simple linear incisions or finger impressions on thick parts of the vessel are considered pre-firing marks deliberately made by the potter.²⁸ Similarly, stamp imprints, isolated or impressed in a row, are here considered as pre-firing marks. These stamp imprints, especially if they were applied in complex arrangements, are usually thought as decorative patterns and were certainly used as such. That having been said, though, we cannot ignore the fact that their uniqueness means that these stamps are simultaneously identified with a single individual and productive event, since they set one potter's output apart from another's. In practice, it is often hard to determine whether a mark is not-decorative, and therefore perhaps a potter's mark, or decorative; some marks may have been both.

The question, however, of what may be considered as potters' mark is even more complex. In a wider sense, all traces of the mechanical habits of the potter's individual movements during the making and decorating of a pot could also be considered pre-firing marks, since every potter has a different *modus operandi*. The potter is thus not a blank, soulless factor in an economic process, but a person whose skill, knowledge and experience are indelibly imprinted on the vessel produced, a lasting testament to the potter's individuality. These differences mean that each potter can be treated as a separate subject: the now-faceless artisan can be provided with a historically substantial identity. And I believe it is important for future research into pre-firing marks to head in this direction too, at least in those cases where pottery permit such an approach.

27. cf. Tsipopoulou 1995.

28. e.g. Halepa-Bikaki 1984; Tsipopoulou

1990; 1995. See especially the arguments advanced by Papadopoulos 1994.

I

PRE-FIRING MARKS AND THEIR CONTEXT

Founded on a plateau on the southern slopes of Mt Dikte, between Omalos and the village of Kato Syme in Viannos Province, at an altitude of 1,130 m, the sanctuary of Hermes and Aphrodite was one of the most important cult sites in Crete (Fig. 1).¹ The site, protected from the strong north easterlies, is open to the southwest with an unimpeded view of the Libyan Sea. The densely wooded slopes of the mountain, with numerous caves and springs, the gorges and peaks shrouded in mist for much of the year, and especially the great spring to the east of the excavated area, still flowing abundantly even today, create an ideal setting that explains why this spot was chosen for the establishment of a cult place. The choice of a site so remote and isolated is surely linked to the need for greater contact with the primordial powers of mighty Nature. Although set in a remote location, the sanctuary was next to one of the few mountain passes on the route from the region of the Pediada, to the northwest, to the area of Ierapetra, to the southeast.² It is essentially a hub, which travellers must almost inevitably pass through in order to walk from the northwest to the south of the island.

Surface finds show that the sanctuary covered an area of approximately 17,000 sq.m, of which only 3,400 sq.m have been excavated (Fig. 2). The oldest building remains are dated to MM IA; these are small-scale structures with no clear evidence of links to cult. A small building, Building Y, was founded in the west part of the excavated area during MM IB. This building was abolished when the first monumental complex of the sanctuary, Building V, was founded during the same period. Building V must have been connected to the construction of stepped access-ways in the northwest part of the excavated area, which would have led to an area intended for cult activities. Following the destruction of Building V, probably by an earthquake, the ruins were cleared and a new building, Building U, was constructed very hastily with extensive use of material from Building V. Building U was severely affected by an earthquake and subsequent rockfalls within MM IIB. Two of its wings collapsed and were abandoned. The remaining part of the complex was repaired and a possibly partly open-air structure, named Ub, was inserted within a space of the ruined north wing of U that was cleared down to the foundation course of the walls. Building Ub was used during MM IIIA and subsequently destroyed at the end of the period. Most parts of Building U were gradually aban-

1. For an introduction to the site see Lebessi 1985b, 17-20; 2002, 3-5; Zarifis 2008, 41-78.

2. Zarifis 2008, 41-48.

done during the same period, when there was large-scale open-air remodelling, with the foundation of the monumental complex of the Sacred Enclosure: an enclosure with a central podium and a paved processional road. These configurations were preceded by another building in the west part of the excavation, Building W, which was probably used to provide housing during the construction of the Sacred Enclosure. The Sacred Enclosure is a unique example of cult architecture; both its size and its monumentality demonstrate the great importance of the sanctuary. In the southeast corner of the excavated area are preserved traces of a structure named Building T. New functional demands for a roofed area led to the construction of Building S in the southwest corner of the complex after the partial destruction of Sacred Enclosure at an advanced stage of LM IA, when T was also already been destroyed. The cultic activities, however, continued in the rest of the Sacred Enclosure.

During the Postpalatial period, there were small-scale additions (Building Q) and repairs to Building S, while the Sacred Enclosure to the north and east of it remained in limited use. By the Subminoan and Early Geometric periods, Buildings Q and S had been destroyed. Building L was founded in LM IIIC, while an altar, which was to form the cult core of the sanctuary, was constructed shortly afterwards. The Geometric and Early Archaic period is particularly important to the history of the sanctuary; with a new altar as the focus, the area was laid out in terraces on which cultic activities took place. The ruins, near the northeast corner of the Sacred Enclosure, of a small building dated after the 6th c. BCE, confirm that the monumental complex of the Neopalatial period was now no longer in use. A small temple named Building C-D was constructed in the northeast sector of the site during the Hellenistic period and used until the Roman period. A church was founded in the Early Christian period, thus confirming the continuous use of the site, according to the demands of the new religion, during this period, at the end of which the sanctuary was finally abandoned. Forgotten in the passing of the centuries, Syme came to light by chance in 1972, during the construction of the surfaced road from the village of Kato Syme to the Omalos Plateau in Viannos.

The long use of the sanctuary through the ages, from the beginning of the second millennium BCE to the Early Christian period, affords scholars the opportunity to investigate the development of religious concepts and cult rituals down the centuries, insofar, of course, as material remains can shed light on the innermost workings of the human soul. This constant use, however, also gives rise to a major difficulty: the successive building programmes, the deep foundations of many buildings on top of earlier structures and pre-existing cultic deposits, and the reuse of building materials, all make it futile to hope for an undisturbed stratigraphy. The undisturbed stratigraphic deposits found at many other sites are rare at Syme. The situation becomes yet more complex if we take into account that deposits were heavily disturbed by natural calamities such as earthquakes, landslides, rockfalls and erosion. The construction of the modern surfaced road to Omalos also caused significant damage to the archaeological deposits.

Thus the presentation of the sherds and partly preserved vessels with pre-firing marks entails an analytical, in-depth presentation of their context and the agents that shaped these contexts. This is necessary not only in order to ensure

their secure dating, but mainly, and most importantly, in order to draw meaningful contextual associations, which can possibly clarify the use and meaning of the marked vessels for those who frequented the site. For this reason, the presentation of the pre-firing marks is based not on dating or typology but on their find context (Chart 1). The discussion of the different contexts will follow the history of the sanctuary, so that the reader can gain the fullest possible picture of the site.

Following the detailed analysis of each context and the parameters that affecting the formation of the archaeological record, I present the catalogue of marks found in that context (Table 1); the description is kept as brief as possible and is focused exclusively on the essential information. Dimensions are given in centimetres. Given that no petrographic analysis was undertaken due to the fragmentary state of preservation of the data, I consider that fabric descriptions using general and, to a certain extent, subjective terms do not offer significant information on potting technologies. Such descriptions have therefore been omitted. Two dates are given: the first refers to the context (C-date) and results from the analysis of all the artefactual assemblages associated with the context itself. As regards the context dating, it should be noted that the dates in brackets, where they occur, refer to ceramic assemblages represented in low proportions, which cannot alter the basic chronological horizon of the stratum; they are, however, indicative of the disturbance of the stratum. The second date refers to the pot/sherd (P-date). This date is based on the formal attributes and potting technology on the one hand, and on the dating of the context on the other.

PRE-FIRING MARKS FROM THE DEPOSIT OF BUILDING Y

The first structures at Syme date to the MM IA period. These were probably part of a stepped access-way from the southwest area of the site to the spring in the northeast.³ The pottery from these structures is typical MM I, with no wheelthrown examples, which dates them more precisely to the MM IA phase. Marked vessels were not found in the deposits associated with these structures. A retaining wall and a room of a building, named Building Y, were found in the southwest area of the site (Fig. 3).⁴ There is no definite evidence that the building was used for cult purposes. The pottery found in the floor layers is dated to the MM IB period. It comprises mainly sherds of storage vessels, cooking pots and many cups. The room was filled in during MM IIB, when a terraced area was constructed, associated with Building U.⁵ In the floor deposit of the room was found a marked sherd (**SM 1**).

SM 1. (S 48/93, HM 31728). Pl. 1, Figs 17, 22. Amphora, body fragment. Max. dim. 5.7 cm. Incised mark of a rectangle on body. Mark partly preserved. Context: Trench Z 51, Stratum 19. C-date: MM IB. P-date: MM IB.

3. Lebessi 1993, 228, 230; Zarifis 2008, 79-80, pl. 39-43.

4. Lebessi 1993, 224; Zarifis 2008, 79, pl. 39-43.

5. Lebessi 1988, 253; 1989, 301; 1991, 308-310; 1992, 229; 1993, 221; 1995, 259-260; Zarifis 2008, 105-106.

PRE-FIRING MARKS FROM THE DEPOSITS OF BUILDING V

In the MM IB period, an extensive complex, Building V, was built in the central area of the site (Fig. 4).⁶ With a rectangular layout Building V may be divided into four wings, perhaps with a large central hypostyle hall. The architectural layout and the quality of construction, including extensive use of costly building materials, presuppose a considerable experience. The architectural remains of the structure and its deposits are badly disturbed due to the construction of Building U during MM IIB.

Layers with destruction deposits of V have been found in its southwest part, specifically in Trench Θ 53, where the imposing entrance once stood. The ceramic assemblages are dated to MM IB with a few MM IIB sherds, obviously intrusions during the disturbance of the layers in MM IIB, when Building U was founded on the ruins of Building V, but perhaps also during later periods. Five potsherds with pre-firing marks were found in relatively undisturbed layers of Building V (**SM 2-SM 6**).

SM 2. (S 39b/93, HM 31716). Pl. 1, Fig. 21. Jar, handle and body fragment. Max. dim. 6.7 cm. Horizontal handle of circular section. Incised mark of three evenly spaced lines transversed at a right angle by a longer fourth on handle. Context: Area south of wall Θ 532, Stratum 6. C-date: MM IB, (MM IIB, MM IIIA-MM IIIB). P-date: MM IB.

SM 3. (S 33/93, HM 31735). Pl. 1, Fig. 21. Cooking pot, body and handle fragment. Max. dim. 7.1 cm. Horizontal handle of circular section. Incised mark of three short oblique parallel lines on handle. Context: Area south of wall Θ 532, Stratum 7. C-date: MM IB, (MM IIB, MM IIIA-MM IIIB). P-date: MM IB.

SM 4. (S 17/93, HM 31734). Pl. 1, Figs 17, 21. Amphora, rim and handle fragment. Max. dim. 6.2 cm. Vertical handle of circular section. Dark brown paint: solidly painted. Incised mark of two lines crossed at an acute angle on handle. Context: Area south of wall Θ 532, Stratum 8. C-date: MM IB, (MM IIB, MM IIIA-MM IIIB). P-date: MM IB.

SM 5. (S 26/93, HM 31744). Pl. 1. Basin, body and handle fragments. Max. dim. 9 cm. Conical body profile and horizontal handle of circular section. Dark brown paint: solidly painted. Incised mark of a short vertical line on handle. Context: Area south of wall Θ 532, Stratum 8. C-date: MM IB, (MM IIB, MM IIIA-MM IIIB). P-date: MM IB.

SM 6. (S 18/93, HM 31736). Pl. 1, Fig. 21. Jar, handle fragment. Max. dim. 5.5 cm. Horizontal handle of circular section. Incised mark of a long oblique line on handle. Context: Area south of wall Θ 532, Stratum 8. C-date: MM IB, (MM IIB, MM IIIA-MM IIIB). P-date: MM IB.

Three sherds bearing pre-firing marks were found in disturbed layers of Building V in the area of Balks H/ Θ 53 and Θ 53/54 (**SM 7-SM 9**). The pottery is dated to MM IB, MM IIB, MM IIIA-IIIB and LM IA, with MM IB predominating. The marked sherds come from MM IB pots, based on both the potting technology and the marks themselves, which had also been found elsewhere in MM IB contexts (e.g. **SM 14, SM 17, SM 19**).

6. Lebessi 1977, 406; 1983, 364; 1985a, 283; 308; 1993, 213-215, 228; 1995, 251-253; 1996, 1987, 279-281, 1988, 246-249; 1990, 300-301, 305, 309, 311; Zarifis 2008, 81-100, pls 4-56.

SM 7. (S 20/93, HM 31730). Pl. 2. Pithos, handle fragment. Max. dim. 16.2 cm. Vertical handle of circular section. Traces of black paint. Incised mark of two/three evenly spaced lines transversed at a right angle by a longer third/fourth on handle. Mark partly preserved. Context: Balk H/Θ 53, Stratum 3. C-date: MM IB, MM IIB-LM IA. P-date: MM IB.

SM 8. (S 13/96, HM 31203). Pl. 2. Jar, handle fragment. Max. dim. 6.5 cm. Horizontal handle of circular section. Incised mark of three evenly spaced lines transversed at a right angle by a longer fourth on handle. Mark partly preserved. Context: Balk H/Θ 53, Stratum 5. C-date: MM IB-LM IA. P-date: MM IB.

SM 9. (S 22/93, HM 31712). Pl. 2, Fig. 16. Jar, handle fragment. Max. dim. 6.3 cm. Horizontal handle of circular section. Incised mark of two lines crossed at an acute angle. Context: Balk Θ 53/54, Stratum 2. C-date: MM IB, MM IIB-LM IA. P-date: MM IB.

PRE-FIRING MARKS FROM THE WEST SECTOR OF THE SITE-NORTH PART

Retaining walls and remains of steps delimit the junction of two paved access roads to the sanctuary in the northwest area of the site, specifically in Trenches B 45, B 46, Γ 45, Γ 46, Δ 45, Δ 46, E 45, and E 46 (Fig. 4).⁷ The solidity of these structures and the width of the stepped approach to Trench Γ 46, indicating a structure associated with an important building, the stratigraphy excluding any date later than the Protopalatial era, and the rich MM IB ceramic assemblages, are the elements linking these configurations to the monumental Building V.

The ceramic assemblages found in this area are particularly significant as they are the only assemblages from Syme to give us a comprehensive picture of the patterns of pottery production and consumption during MM IB, since most of the assemblages from Building V were irretrievably destroyed by the foundations of Building U. The assemblages include sherds –and some fully restorable examples– of cups typical of the period, with tumblers outnumbering any other type, amphorae and jugs, wide-mouthed jars and jugs, kantharoi with crinkly rim, jugs with biconical body and pulled-out spout, pithoid vessels, tubs, large bowls, basins, tripod basins and trays, lamps and many sherds of cooking pots. Many of the vessels, mainly cups and jugs, are the products of potting groups active in the Pediada.⁸ The presence of pottery used for drinking, pouring, serving, cooking and storage within and near the paved roads certainly raises questions, since the use of these architectural structures does not match the activities for which the vessels were intended. The assemblages are not primary but secondary depositions. This may also explain their high fragmentation. They seem to have come from some complex of the MM IB period, built in the northwest sector of the archaeological site, ending up deposited in the area of the paved roads following rockfalls and landslides. This proposition successfully explains the presence of MM IB pottery in the northwest sector of the excavated area and also further east, in the north

7. Lebessi 1991, 315-318; 1993, 225-228; 1997, 191-199; Zarifis 2008, 101.

8. Christakis 2013.

part of the Sacred Enclosure; nevertheless, it remains a hypothesis that can only be proven by further research. 17 sherds with pre-firing marks were found in these layers (**SM 10-SM 26**).

SM 10. (S 29/93, HM 31720). Pl. 2, Figs 19, 21. Cooking pot, part of body and handle. Max. dim. 8.7 cm. Horizontal handle of circular section. Traces of uneven fire. Incised mark of a short horizontal line on handle. Context: Trench G 45, Stratum 9. C-date: MM IB. P-date: MM IB.

SM 11. (S 34/93, HM 31743). Pl. 2. Pithoid jar, part of body and handle. Max. dim. 10.5 cm. Horizontal handle of circular section. Incised mark of two short vertical parallel lines on handle. Context: Trench G 45, Stratum 8. C-date: MM IB. P-date: MM IB.

SM 12. (S 24/93, HM 31719). Pl. 2. Basin, handle fragment. Max. dim. 6.2 cm. Horizontal handle of circular section. Incised mark of two long oblique parallel lines on handle. Mark partly preserved. Context: Trench Γ 46, Stratum 3. C-date: MM IB. P-date: MM IB.

SM 13. (S 44/93, HM 31721). Pl. 3, Fig. 19. Bowl, rim and body fragment. Max. dim. 5 cm. Conical profile, straight rim. Red paint: traces in the interior. Incised mark of three lines in the shape of a triangle in the interior close to the rim. Mark partly preserved. Context: Balk G 45/46, Stratum 3. C-date: MM IB. P-date: MM IB.

SM 14. (S 38/93, HM 31711). Pl. 3, Fig. 21. Jar, handle fragment. Max. dim. 4.5 cm. Horizontal handle of circular section. Traces of black paint. Incised mark of three evenly spaced lines transversed at a right angle by a longer fourth on handle. Mark partly preserved. Context: Balk G 45/46, Stratum 7. C-date: MM IB. P-date: MM IB.

SM 15. (S 28/93, HM 31732). Pl. 3. Jug, handle fragment. Max. dim. 2.6 cm. Vertical handle of circular section. Incised mark of a long vertical line on handle. Mark partly preserved. Context: Trench D 46, Stratum 3a. C-date: MM IB. P-date: MM IB.

SM 16. (S 46/93, HM 31737). Pl. 3. Basin, handle fragment. Max. dim. 5.6 cm. Horizontal handle of ellipsoid section. Incised mark of a long oblique line on handle. Context: Trench D 46, Stratum 4a. C-date: MM IB. P-date: MM IB.

SM 17. (S 41/93, HM 31718). Pl. 3, Figs 15, 21. Jar, body fragment and handle. Max. dim. 12.6 cm. Horizontal handle of circular section. Incised mark of three evenly spaced lines transversed at a right angle by a longer fourth on handle. Context: Trench Δ 45, Stratum 2. C-date: MM IB. P-date: MM IB.

SM 18. (S 47/93, HM 31738). Pl. 3. Cooking pot, handle fragment. Max. dim. 6 cm. Horizontal handle of circular section. Incised mark of four short oblique parallel lines on handle. Mark partly preserved. Context: Trench D 45, Stratum 2. C-date: MM IB. P-date: MM IB.

SM 19. (S 58/93, HM 31745). Pl. 4, Figs 14, 21. Jar, rim and body fragment and handle. Max. dim. 10.6 cm, D. rim 22.5cm. Horizontal handle of circular section. Incised mark of three evenly spaced lines transversed at a right angle by a longer fourth on handle. Context: Balk D/E 45, Stratum 3. C-date: MM IB. P-date: MM IB.

SM 20. (S 88/97, HM 32421). Pl. 4, Fig. 18. Bowl, rim fragment. Max. dim. 5.2 cm. Conical body profile, straight rim. Black paint: painted in interior and exterior. Incised mark of three evenly spaced lines transversed at a right angle by a longer fourth in the interior close to the rim. Mark partly preserved. Context: Balk E/Δ 45, Stratum 2. C-date: MM IB. P-date: MM IB.

SM 21. (S 87/97, HM 32420). Pl. 4, Fig. 18. Bowl, rim fragment. Max. dim. 5.2 cm.

Conical body profile, flaring rim. Dark brown paint: interior and exterior painted. Incised mark of four long vertical parallel lines in the interior, close to the rim. Mark partly preserved. Context: Balk Δ/E 45, Stratum 3. C-date: MM IB. P-date: MM IB.

SM 22. (S 76/97, HM 32089). Pl. 4. Jar, handle fragment. Max. dim. 4.5 cm. Horizontal handle of circular section. Brown paint: solidly coated. Incised mark of a short horizontal line on handle. Context: Balk E/Δ 46, Stratum 3. C-date: MM IB. P-date: MM IB.

SM 23. (S 78/97, HM 32088). Pl. 4. Amphora, handle fragment. Max. dim. 8 cm. Vertical handle of circular section. Incised mark of a short vertical line on handle. Context: Balks E 45/46 and Δ/E 45/46, Stratum 3. C-date: MM IB. P-date: MM IB.

SM 24. (S 43/93, HM 31726). Pl. 4. Cooking pot, handle fragment. Max. dim. 4.2 cm. Horizontal handle of circular section. Incised mark of a long oblique line on handle. Context: Northwest area of trench D 47, Stratum 2g. C-date: MM IB. P-date: MM IB.

SM 25. (S 64/97, HM 31747). Pl. 5, Fig. 21. Jug, handle fragment. Max. dim. 9.3 cm. Vertical handle of circular section. Incised mark of four short horizontal parallel lines on handle. Context: Trench E 45, Stratum 3. C-date: MM IB. P-date: MM IB.

SM 26. (S 77/97, HM 32087). Pl. 5, Fig. 14. Jar, rim, body and handle fragment. Max. dim. 7.8 cm. Convex body profile, straight rim, horizontal handle of circular section. Impressed mark of five circular dots on handle. Mark partly preserved. Context: Trench E 46, Stratum 2. C-date: MM IB. P-date: MM IB.

Three more sherds bearing pre-firing marks were found in the northernmost part of the northwest sector of the site, specifically Trench B 45 and Balk B 45/46 (**SM 27-*SM 29***). Unlike the marked sherds mentioned previously, however, these were found in heavily disturbed layers with MM IB, MM IIB, MM IIIA-MM IIIB and LM IA pottery, and even pottery from the 1st millennium. It is worth noting that the Early Christian church was founded in this area.⁹ Two marked sherds, **SM 27** and **SM 28**, are dated to the MM IB period by their potting technology, while the third one (**SM 29**) may be either MM IB or MM IIB in date.

SM 27. (S 55/97, HM 31746). Pl. 5, Fig. 19. Cooking pot, rim, body and handle fragment. Max. dim. 5.5 cm. Straight rim, convex body profile horizontal handle of circular section. Incised mark of short oblique parallel lines on handle. Mark partly preserved. Context: Trench B 45, Stratum 2. C-date: MM IB, MM IIB-LM IA. P-date: MM IB.

SM 28. (S 63/97, HM 31750). Pl. 5, Fig. 21. Cooking pot, handle fragment. Max. dim. 5.7 cm. Horizontal handle of circular section. Incised mark of three short oblique parallel lines on handle. Context: Balk B/G 45, Stratum 2. C-date: MM IB, MM IIB-LM IA. P-date: MM IB.

SM 29. (S 61/93, HM 31751). Pl. 5, Fig. 21. Jug, rim and handle fragment. Max. dim. 4 cm. Vertical handle of circular section. Incised mark of two lines crossed at an acute angle. Context: Balk B 45/46, Stratum 2. C-date: MM IB, MM IIIB, LM IA. P-date: MM IB or MM IIB.

⁹ Lebessi 1997, 192-195; Zarifis 2008, 263-265.

PRE-FIRING MARKS FROM THE WEST SECTOR OF THE SITE - CENTRAL PART

The deposits in the central part of the west sector of the site have produced another significant assemblage of sherds with pre-firing marks (Trenches Γ 49, Δ 49, Δ 50, E 50 and Balks Γ 48/49, Δ 48/49, Δ/E 49, Δ/E 48, Δ/E 49, Δ/E 50, E/Z 49, Z 50/51 and Z/H 50/51) (Fig. 5). This area was laid out on three levels and a building, named Building W, constructed, comprising at least four rooms, of which only one is preserved.¹⁰ The study of the pottery from the single surviving room dates its period of use to MM IIIA. In a relatively short time, Building W was demolished to allow the completion of the Sacred Enclosure complex.

As opposed to the strata in the north part of the west sector of the site, the strata here, particularly those located at low levels, have suffered more widespread disturbances: firstly during the construction of Building W, and secondly from the founding of part of the Processional Road, rockfalls, the cutting of the modern road to Omalos, and, in the case of Trench Δ 50, due to core sampling of the water table. Generally speaking, the stratigraphic sequence in the trenches found to contain sherds with marks is as follows. In most cases, the original surface layer was removed by bulldozers when the road to Omalos was cut in 1972. The layers under the surface contain mixed ceramic assemblages dated from MM IB to the LM IA period. MM IB pottery like that described above has been found in almost every trench, with the largest and least disturbed concentration in Trench Γ 49 and Balk Δ 48/49, and the smallest in Trench Δ 49. The accumulations of MM IB pottery increase as we move from the upper to the lower deposits, while those of MM IIIB-LM IA pottery are located mainly in the topmost layers. The greatest concentration of such pottery is observed in the area where the middle stepped part of the Processional Road was built (Trenches Δ 49, Δ 50 and E 50) (Fig. 8). Pottery of the MM IIB period is found mainly around Terraces α1, α2 and α3, an open-air area associated with Building U (Fig. 7; Trenches E 51 and Z 51). Pottery of the 1st millennium has been found in several places, albeit in limited amounts. In conclusion, there are three main chronological horizons: the oldest is that of the MM IB period, followed by the MM IIB and finally the MM IIIB-LM IA horizon. The 1st-millennium sherds are not linked to any form of activity in the area.

Although the sherds with pre-firing marks are associated with such a broad chronological horizon, most of them are dated to the MM IB period: the clay and surface treatment are typical of the period and the types of marks are found in the relatively securely dated MM IB contexts of the north part of the west sector of the site discussed above.

SM 30. (S 83/92, HM 32081). Pl. 5, Fig. 14. Jar, rim and body fragment and handle. Max. dim. 11.9 cm. Horizontal handle of circular section. Incised mark of three evenly spaced lines transversed at a right angle by a longer fourth on handle. Context: Trench Γ 49, Stratum 4. C-date: MM IB. P-date: MM IB.

¹⁰ Lebessi 1991, 315-318; Zarifis 2008, 177-180.

SM 31. (S 4/92, HM 31193). Pl. 6, Fig. 15. Jar, body fragment and handle. Max. dim. 11.7 cm. Horizontal handle of circular section. Incised mark of three evenly spaced lines transversed at a right angle by a longer fourth on handle. Context: Trench G 49, Stratum 4. C-date: MM IB. P-date: MM IB.

SM 32. (S 30/93, HM 31717). Pl. 6, Fig. 21. Cooking pot, part of body and handle. Max. dim. 6.7 cm. Horizontal handle of circular section. Incised mark of four short oblique parallel lines on handle. Context: Balk G 48/49, Stratum 4a. C-date: MM IB, (MM IIB-LM IA). P-date: MM IB.

SM 33. (S 32/93, HM 31724). Pl. 6. Cooking pot, handle fragment. Max. dim. 3.7 cm. Horizontal handle of circular section. Incised mark of three evenly spaced lines and very faint traces of a longer transversing these at a right angle on handle. Mark partly preserved. Context: Balk G 48/49, Stratum 5. C-date: MM IB, (MM IIB-LM IA). P-date: MM IB.

SM 34. (S 25/93, HM 31729). Pl. 6. Jar, handle fragment. Max. dim. 5.4 cm. Horizontal handle of circular section. Incised mark of a long line on handle. Context: Balk G 48/49, Stratum 5. C-date: MM IB, (MM IIB-LM IA). P-date: MM IB.

SM 35. (S 86/97, HM 32084). Pl. 6, Figs 18, 21. Bowl, seven sherds (of which two joining) of rim and body. Rim dim. 20 cm. Conical body profile, straight rim. Black paint: interior and exterior painted. Incised mark of three evenly spaced lines transversed at a right angle by a longer fourth in the interior close to the rim. Context: Balk Γ 48/49, Stratum 6. C-date: MM IB, (MM IIB-LM IA). P-date: MM IB.

SM 36. (S 37/93, HM 31739). Pl. 6, Fig. 21. One handle cup, handle fragment. Max. dim. 2 cm. Vertical strap handle. Incised mark of three evenly spaced lines transversed at a right angle by a longer fourth on handle. Mark partly preserved. Context: Balk G 48/49, Stratum 4. C-date: MM IB, (MM IIB-LM IA). P-date: MM IB.

SM 37. (S 3/92, HM 31192). Pl. 7. Jar, handle fragment. Max. dim. 4.5 cm. Horizontal handle of circular section. Incised mark of a short vertical line on handle. Context: Trench D 49, Stratum: unknown. C-date: MM IB, MM IIB-LM IA. P-date: MM IB.

SM 38. (S 42/93, HM 31731). Pl. 7, Figs 20, 21. Jar, body and handle fragment. Max. dim. 6.4 cm. Horizontal handle of circular section. Incised mark of three evenly spaced lines transversed at a right angle by a longer fourth on handle. Context: Trench D 50, Stratum 1. C-date: MM IB, MM IIB-LM IA. P-date: MM IB.

SM 39. (S 23/93, HM 31733). Pl. 7, Fig. 22. Pithos, body and handle fragment. Max. dim. 5.2 cm. Horizontal handle of circular section. Brown paint: painted. Incised mark of lozenge on handle. Context: Trench Δ 50, Stratum 1. C-date: MM IB, MM IIIA-LM IA, (Roman tiles). P-date: MM IB.

SM 40. (S 27/93, HM 31727). Pl. 7, Fig. 21. Basin, body and handle fragment. Max. dim. 7.7 cm. Horizontal handle of circular section. Black paint: interior and exterior painted. Incised mark of a short oblique line on handle. Context: Trench Δ 50, Stratum 1. C-date: MM IB, MM IIIA-LM IA, (Roman tiles). P-date: MM IB.

SM 41. (S 16/92, HM 31205). Pl. 7, Figs 17, 21. Jug, handle fragment. Max. dim. 4.1 cm. Vertical handle of circular section. Black paint: solidly painted. Incised mark of one long and one short line crossed at a right angle on handle. Context: Balk D 48/49, Stratum 3. C-date: MM IB, (MM IIIA-LM IA). P-date: MM IB.

SM 42. (S 7/92, HM 31196). Pl. 7. Jar, handle and body fragment. Max. dim. 6.4 cm. Horizontal handle of circular section. Incised mark of three evenly spaced lines transversed at a right angle by a longer fourth on handle. Context: Balk Δ 48/49, Level 3. C-date: MM IB, (MM IIB-LM IA). P-date: MM IB.

SM 43. (S 69/93, HM 31708). Pl. 8. Jar, handle fragment. Max. dim. 3.4 cm. Horizontal handle of circular section. Incised mark of a short vertical line on handle. Mark badly preserved. Context: Balk D/E 48, Stratum 1. C-date: MM IB, (MM IIB-LM IA). P-date: MM IB.

SM 44. (S 2/93, HM 31191). Pl. 8. Fig. 21. Jar, handle fragment. Max. dim. 7.8 cm. Horizontal handle of circular section. Incised mark of three evenly spaced lines transversed at a right angle by a longer fourth on handle. Mark partly preserved. Context: Balk D/E 48, Stratum 3. C-date: MM IB, (MM IIB-LM IA). P-date: MM IB.

SM 45. (S 93/03 32415). Pl. 8, Fig. 17. Amphora, body fragment. Max. dim. 3.4 cm. Incised mark of two lines crossed at an acute angle. Context: Balk D/E 49, Stratum γ . C-date: MM IB, MM IIB. P-date: MM IB or MM IIB.

SM 46. (S 9/92, HM 31198). Pl. 8, Fig. 22. Cooking pot, handle fragment. Max. dim. 4.4 cm. Horizontal handle of circular section. Impressed mark of three evenly spaced triangular dots on handle. Context: Balk D/E 48, Stratum 3. C-date: MM IB, MM IIB. P-date: MM IB.

SM 47. (S 19/93, HM 31725). Pl. 8, Figs 17, 21. Jug, rim and handle fragment. Max. dim. 8.5 cm. Vertical handle of circular section. Incised mark of one long and one short line crossed at a right angle on handle. Context: Balk D/E 50, Stratum 2. C-date: MM IB, MM IIB. P-date: MM IIB.

SM 48. (S 36/93, HM 31713). Pl. 8, Fig. 19, 21. Cooking pot, body and handle fragment. Max. dim. 4.8 cm. Vertical handle of circular section. Incised mark of two evenly spaced lines transversed at an acute angle by a longer third on handle. Context: Balk D/E 50, Stratum 3. C-date: MM IB, MM IIB, MM IIIA-LM IA, (LM III). P-date: MM IB or MM IIB.

SM 49. (S 39a/93, HM 31742). Pl. 9. Jar, handle fragment. Max. dim. 5.4 cm. Horizontal handle of circular section. Traces of black paint. Incised mark of three evenly spaced lines transversed at a right angle by a longer fourth on handle. Mark partly preserved. Context: Trench E 50, Stratum 1. C-date: MM IB, MM IIB-LM IA. P-date: MM IB.

SM 50. (S 6/92, HM 31195). Pl. 9, Fig. 19. Cooking pot, handle fragment. Max. dim. 6.1 cm. Horizontal handle of circular section. Black slip: solidly coated. Incised mark of four short vertical parallel lines on handle. Context: Trench E 50, Stratum 3. C-date: MM IB, MM IIB-LM IA. P-date: MM IB.

SM 51. (S 72/93, HM 31714). Pl. 9, Fig. 20. Basin, non joining fragments of base, and body, and handle. Max. dim. 8.7 cm. Horizontal handle of circular section. Black paint: interior and exterior painted. Incised mark of a short horizontal line on handle. Context: Trench E 50, Stratum 4. C-date: MM IB, MM IIB-LM IA. P-date: MM IB or MM IIB.

SM 52. (S 8/92, HM 31197). Pl. 9, Fig. 12. Pithos, rim and body fragment and handle. Max. dim. 11.8 cm. Slightly convex body profile, plain rim, horizontal handle of circular section. Incised mark of two short lines crossed at a right angle on handle. Context: Trench E 50, Stratum 9. C-date: MM IB, MM IIB-LM IA. P-date: MM IB or MM IIB.

SM 53. (S 15/91, HM 31204). Pl. 9, Fig. 15. Jar, body fragment and handle. Max. dim. 12.4 cm. Horizontal handle of circular section. Incised mark of three evenly spaced lines transversed at a right angle by a longer fourth on handle. Context: Balk E/Z 49, Stratum 2. C-date: MM IB, MM IIB, (MM IIIA-LM IA). P-date: MM IB.

SM 54. (S 14/91, HM 31201). Pl. 9, Figs 12, 22. Pithos, six rim and body fragments and three handle fragments. Max. dim. 9 cm. Convex body profile, plain rim slightly incurving, horizontal handles with circular section. Brown-reddish paint: interior and exterior painted. Incised mark of lozenge on handle. Context: Balk E/Z 49, Stratum 2. C-date: MM IB, MM IIB, (MM IIIA-LM IA). P-date: MM IB.

SM 55. (S 66/96, HM 31757). Pl. 10. Cooking pot, handle fragment. Max. dim. 2.4 cm. Horizontal handle with circular section. Incised mark of three short parallel oblique lines. Mark partly preserved. Context: Wall Z512 (consolidation of). C-date: MM IIIB. P-date: MM IB, MM IIB.

SM 56. (S 84/88, HM 32082). Pl. 10. Bowl, rim fragment. Max. dim. 6.1 cm. Conical body profile, flaring rim. Dark brown paint: interior and exterior painted. Incised mark of five long vertical parallel lines in the interior, close to the rim. Context: Balk Z 50/51, Stratum 2. C-date: MM IB, LM IA, 1st millennium. P-date: MM IB.

SM 57. (S 12/91, HM 31202). Pl. 10, Fig. 22. Jar, handle fragment. Max. dim. 6.4 cm. Horizontal handle of circular section. Impressed mark of five dots on handle. Mark partly preserved. Context: Balk Z/H 50/51, Stratum 8. C-date: MM IB, (MM IIIA-LM IA). P-date: MM IB.

PRE-FIRING MARKS FROM DEPOSITS IN BUILDING U

Building V was destroyed most probably by an earthquake. The ruins were thoroughly dismantled and a similar complex, Building U, was built within approximately the same boundaries (Fig. 6).¹¹ Building materials from the ruined V, including many architectural elements of serpentinite, were used for the construction of the new complex.¹² Covering an area of over 500 sq.m., flanked by outdoor terracing, with at least 15 main rooms, an internal access-way and finely plastered floors, U was certainly a striking structure, through less luxurious and imposing than Building V. Pottery found below the plastered floor of the initial phase of construction of Building U shows that the complex was not erected before the beginning of the MM IIB period.

A strong earthquake combined with rockfalls during MM IIB badly damaged U. The north wing was completely destroyed and never reused, while the west wing was probably destroyed as well.¹³ Some areas were hastily repaired and remodelled so that the building could function again, at least partially. In the northwest corner of the remodelled complex a small building, named Ub, was constructed that was used for open-air cult activities (Fig. 7). During the course of MM IIIA, Building Ub was abandoned as a cult area, while the central part of Building U fell out of use and the complex was restricted to the rooms of its southeast corner following successive interventions for the gradual, planned abolition of the rooms. Subsequently this part of the complex was also abolished and only the rooms of the southeast corner remained in use, up until MM IIIB.¹⁴ This gradual shrinking of U is due to the construction work on the Sacred Enclosure during the course of the MM IIIA period.

Eight sherds and two partly preserved vessels with pre-firing marks were discovered in Rooms 18, 2A and 2, in undisturbed layers of the initial phase of use of

11. Lebessi 1996, 305-311; Zarifis 2008, 103-151, 174-176.

12. Lebessi 1989, 298; 1991, 327; 1993, 221; 1996, 311-312; Zarifis 2008, 89-93.

13. Lebessi 1993, 215-216; 1996, 312-313;

Zarifis 2008, 151-171.

14. Zarifis 2008, 172-174. It is very likely however, that a small part of the complex remained in use until LM IA. The relevant pottery have not yet been studied fully yet.

the complex and dated to MM IIB (**SM 58-SM 67**). Another sherd was found in Room 21; contrary to the previous ones, discovered in primary depositions associated with specific contexts, this sherd was found in a heavily disturbed layer containing debris from Building U (**SM 68**).

Room 18

The space lies in the central part of the north wing and communicates with Room 20 to the west and Room 17 to the east. In its south wall is the only access from the central sector to the north wing of the building.¹⁵ The walls are preserved to a considerable height and were constructed, like most of the walls of the north wing, using building material from the older Building V. The plaster floor of the room is preserved in places. In the northeast corner were found two stone cists for storing querns and vessels. The ceiling was most probably raised to allow better lighting and ventilation via light-wells.¹⁶

Particular mention must be made of the neighbouring Room 17, as it aids in the fuller understanding of the activities that took place in that area of U. Room 17 lies between Room 18, to the west, and two small storerooms, Rooms 2A and 2, to the east. In the room were found two pithoi, an open-spouted jar and ten cups. The pottery also includes fragments of jugs and amphorae, pithoid vessels, basins and a large tray but no cooking pots. It is worth noting here that the two pithoi were not the only storage vessels placed in the room: a large number of pithoi remain still unexcavated, being located in the fill of the room, on which the Geometric altar was founded.¹⁷ The data suggest that this room served for storage and may be linked to the activities that took place in Room 18.

The stratigraphic sequence of the different layers in Room 18 is as follows. First there are depositions associated with the use of the Sacred Enclosure followed by a wide and deep layer containing debris from Buildings U and Ub.¹⁸ More precisely, in the area between the Podium and Building Q extend layers with debris of U and Ub, while between the Podium and the Altar are layers with debris of U. The pottery in these layers is dated MM IIB and MM IIIA. The layer of debris that extended between the Podium, the Altar and Building Q covered layers containing the floor deposits of Room 18. Pottery in these layers is dated to the MM IIB period without traces of intrusions. The marked sherd was found in Stratum 5 (**SM 58**).

SM 58. (S 5/92, HM 31194). Pl. 10, Figs 17, 21. Amphora, handle fragment. Max. dim. 6.4 cm. Vertical handle of circular section. Incised mark of two lines to form a T on handle. Context: Filling Q, Stratum 5. C-date: MM IIB. P-date: MM IIB.

Rooms 2A and 2

Rooms 2A and 2 lie at the east end of the north wing.¹⁹ They essentially comprise a single area of two storerooms divided by a partition wall running east to west.

15. Lebessi 1992, 219; 1993, 215; Zarifis 1991, 325; 1992, 327.
2008, 114-115.

16. Zarifis 2008, 114, 134, pl. 95.

17. Lebessi 1992, 219-223.

18. Lebessi 1973, 188-192; 1987, 274-277;

19. Lebessi 1975, 322-323; 1976, 400; 1992, 219; 1994, 244; 1995, 247-251; Zarifis 2008, 111-113.

These two rooms communicated, via a door in the northwest corner of Room 2A, with Room 17 and thence with the other rooms of U. The walls were well built and are preserved to a good height, reaching up to 2.50 m. The floor, which is preserved in places, was laid with plaster, while the walls were also coated in white plaster.

The sequence of the different layers within Rooms 2A and 2 is as follows. A wide and deep layer containing cultic remains covers the layers of debris resulting from the destruction of U in both spaces. Pottery in layers of debris extending into Room 2 is mostly MM IIB in date; there are also a few MM IB sherds, several MM IIIB examples and even a few dated to the 1st millennium.²⁰ The overall picture is indicative of the disturbance to these layers, a disturbance that was particularly intense during the founding of the Hellenistic-Roman Building C-D. The corresponding layers in the area of Room 2A, on the other hand, were subject to smaller-scale disturbance. The pottery found in them is MM IIB in date, with very few MM IB and MM IIIB sherds. There follow, in both rooms, strata containing their floor deposits. The pottery is dated to the MM IIB period with very few MM IB sherds.

Both spaces were used for the storage of vessels and staples. Eight pithoi, six placed along the south and two along the north side of the room, along with two smaller storage vessels, a jar with a pre-firing mark (**SM 62**), two plates, three lamps and a brazier were found in Room 2. A multitude of various cups were found with these vessels, usually in a very fragmentary state of preservation, together with parts of many cooking pots, basins, cooking trays, jars, tubs and other domestic vessels. The picture in Room 2A was different; no storage vessels were found there, but there were abundant sherds and partly preserved cups of various types, bowls, jugs, and amphorae. Room 2 was used therefore for the storage of staples while Room 2A for that of serving and pouring vessels.

Three marked sherds were found in the layers with the floor deposits of Room 2A (**SM 59-SM 61**).

SM 59. (S 62/95, HM 31753). Pl. 10. Basin, body and handle fragment. Max. dim. 6.5 cm. Horizontal handle of circular section. Incised mark of two long oblique parallel lines on handle. Mark partly preserved. Context: Building U, Room 2A, Stratum 24. C-date: (MM IB), MM IIB. P-date: MM IB.

SM 60. (S 95/95). Pl. 10. Cooking pot, handle fragment. Max. dim. 3.6 cm. Horizontal handle of circular section. Mark of a shallow finger impression. Context: Building U, Room 2A, Stratum 24a. C-date: MM IIB. P-date: MM IB or MM IIB.

SM 61. (S 56/95, HM 31754). Pl. 11, Fig. 20. Cooking pot, rim, body and handle fragment. Max. dim. 8.1 cm. Slightly convex body profile, straight rim, horizontal handle of circular section. Incised mark of two lines crossed at a right angle on handle. Context: Building U, Room 2A, Stratum 24a. C-date: (MM IB), MM IIB. P-date: MM IIB.

In the layers containing the debris of U in Room 2 were found four sherds with pre-firing marks (**SM 62-SM 65**) while two partly preserved vessels were discovered in the floor deposits (**SM 66-SM 67**).

20. MM IB sherds could have come from the collapsed walls of Building U.

SM 62. (S 96/76). Pl. 11. Cooking pot, handle fragment. Max. dim. 4 cm. Horizontal handle of circular section. Incised mark of three short vertical parallel lines on handle. Context: Building U, Room 2, Stratum 7. C-date: (MM IB), MM IIB, (MM IIIB), (1st millennium). P-date: MM IB or MM IIB.

SM 63. (S 100/76). Pl. 11. Pithos, rim and body fragment. Max. dim. 13.6 cm. Ovoid shape with wide mouth and without collar, everted rim. Black paint: trickle pattern. Incised mark of two lines intersected at an acute angle by a third. Mark partly preserved. Context: Building U, Room 2, Stratum 7. C-date: (MM IB), MM IIB, (MM IIIB), (1st millennium). P-date: MM IIB

SM 64. (S 99/76). Pl. 11, Figs 17, 21. Jug, rim, neck and handle fragment. Max. dim. 5 cm. Rim, collared neck and vertical handle of circular section. Incised mark of two lines in the shape of V. Context: Building U, Room 2, Stratum 8. C-date: MM IIB. P-date: MM IIB.

SM 65. (S 57/94, HM 31758). Pl. 11, Fig. 22. Cooking pot, handle fragment. Max. dim. 4.3 cm. Horizontal handle of circular section. Incised mark of two lines in the shape of V. Context: Building U, Room 2, Stratum 11. C-date: (MM IB), MM IIB, (MM IIIB), (1st millennium). P-date: MM IB or MM IIB.

SM 66. (S 74/94). Pl. 12, Fig. 11. Pithos, upper part. H. pres. 36 cm. D. of rim 34 cm. Ovoid shape with narrow mouth and high collar; rim everted; four vertical handles of circular section. Brown paint: exterior solidly coated. Incised mark of a short horizontal line on one handle. Context: Building U, Room 2, Stratum 12. C-date: (MM IB), MM IIB. P-date: MM IIB.

SM 67. (S 75/95, HM 31761). Pl. 12, Figs 14, 22. Jar, upper body part composed from 55 joining fragments. Piriform body profile, straight rim, wide mouth with no neck and convex shoulder, two horizontal coil handles. Brown-dark paint: exterior painted. Hand-made. Incised mark of double axe on the shoulder between the handles. Context: Building U, Room 2, Stratum 23. C-date: (MM IB), MM IIB. P-date: MM IIB.

Room 21

The sherd of a pithos with a pre-firing mark was found in the fill under the paving of the Processional Road, in Trench I 51, in the area of Room 21 (**SM 68**).²¹ This stratigraphic sequence is one of the most important of the site because it provides information on the architectural modifications of Building U – most of the layers of which it is comprised are associated with U – and the *terminus post quem* of the construction of the Processional Road. The deposition of the different layers is as follows. The debris of dismantled walls of Building U extends in the centre of the fill (Stratum 3). It was filled with remains from open-air cult practices that took place in Building Ub and debris from Building U. South of the pit extends Stratum 3a, in which the south wall of the Processional Road is founded, while east of and under the pit lies Stratum 4 with Stratum 4a directly below, both containing debris from the rebuilding phase of Building U. At the south end of the fill, adjoining Strata 3a, 4 and 4a, is Stratum 3β, in which, as in the overlying Stratum 3α, is set the south wall of the Processional Road. Strata 3β and 4α adjoin Stratum 5, formed during the destruction of the initial phase of Building U, as was the immediately underlying Stratum 6. The removal of Stratum 6 revealed the partially preserved plaster floor of Room 21. In the area where the floor does not survive, the upper part of the destruction layers of Building V was visible.

21. Lebessi 1997, 202-205.

The stratum of the marked sherd was not recorded, but it is likely that it was found in Strata 3, 3a or 4. Formal attributes and potting technology show that the pithos it came from is dated in the Protopalatial period; actually it should be identical to the pithoi placed in the north wing of Building U. Since most of the layers of the stratigraphic sequence are associated with that complex, it is reasonable to suppose that the pithos would originally have been placed in a room of the building, and parts of it would have been transferred, along with debris, to this fill during the construction of the Processional Road. In no case, therefore, can it be associated with a particular room of Building U.

SM 68. (S 67/97, HM 31748). Pl. 13, Fig. 11. Pithos, rim, body and handle fragment. Max. dim. 16.5, D. rim. 43 cm. Ovoid shape with narrow mouth and high collar, straight, rounded rim, thickened and flattened, one vertical handle of circular section preserved. Incised mark of the double axe on shoulder between the handles. Mark partly preserved. Context: Trench I 51. C-date: MM IIB-MM IIIA. P-date: MM IIB.

PRE-FIRING MARKS FROM THE TERRACED AREA WEST OF BUILDING U

Four retaining walls were built west of Building U, in the area of Trenches E 51, Z 51, Z 53 and H 53, in a stepped layout from north to south, forming the same number of terraces (Walls Z522, E512-Z515, E511 and Z534-Z533-H531a).²² It is worth noting that a test pit in one of the terraces showed that these constructions were founded on a layer of debris of a Protopalatial building or buildings.²³ The use of this area coincides with the initial phase of use of Building U. Part of these structures had been built on the ruins of Building Y, while part of the Sacred Enclosure was set on the ruins of the terraces during MM IIIA.

Six sherds with pre-firing marks were discovered in heavily disturbed layers extending into this area (Fig. 6). Two of these were found in Trenches E 51 and Z 51. The surface layer of both trenches had been disturbed by the cutting of the road to Omalos. There follow disturbed layers with pottery dated from the MM IIB to LM IA periods: MM IIIB and LM IA pottery predominates in the upper layers, with MM IIB in the lower, while there are also a few MM IB sherds; MM IB pottery presumably comes from Buildings Y and V. There are also many finds dated to the 1st millennium but only in the uppermost layers. The few LM IIIA sherds found in a lower layer, in Trench Z 51, are indicative of the disturbances to these depositions.

The high proportion of chalice sherds found in the layers with MM IIIB and LM IA pottery, as well as other remains of cultic activities, connects these deposits to the Sacred Enclosure. The discovery of these assemblages outside the Sacred Enclosure is not surprising, given the proximity of the terraces to that complex, the steep gradient, and the complex taphonomic processes. The layers in which MM IIB pottery predominates are associated with Building U. It is not certain,

22. Lebessi 1988, 253; 1989, 301; 1991, 308-310; 1992, 229; 1993, 221; 1995, 259-260; Zari-

fis 2008, 105-106.

23. Lebessi 1991, 308.

though, whether these assemblages are primary depositions, and therefore related to activities taking place in the terraced area, or secondary depositions, i.e. debris from various spaces of Building U – especially from the west and southwest parts of the complex – removed there, after the MM IIB destruction, during the re-construction of Building U or later during the construction of the Sacred Enclosure. The variety of pottery shapes recovered in these disturbed layers points to the latter scenario: the pottery comprises cooking and storage vessels as well as vessels for serving and pouring. Besides the pottery, building debris (stones, plaster, burnt wood) similar to that found in various spaces of Building U was also recovered. In conclusion, it is likely that the area west of Building U was used, after the destruction of the building at the end of MM IIB, as a rubbish dump.

The mark from Trench E 51 is incised on the handle of a conical pithos, found in a layer whose pottery is dated to the MM IIB and MM IIIB-LM IA periods, with a few MM IB sherds (**SM 69**). The time span and the formal and technological attributes of the pithos itself, datable from MM IIB to LM IA, do not allow a more precise date.

SM 69. (S 98/91). Pl. 13, Figs 13, 21. Pithos, rim and body fragment and handle. Max. dim. 13.5 cm. Conical shape, convex body profile, flat, squared and projecting rim, vertical handle with thick oval section. Incised horizontal and crisscrossed lines in the interior. Incised mark of two lines in a V-shape on handle. Context: Trench E 51, Stratum 4. C-date: (MM IB), MM IIB-LM IA. P-date: MM IIB-LM IA.

The sherd of an amphora was found in Trench Z51, in a layer formed from the debris of Building U (**SM 70**).²⁴ The pottery of the layer is dated MM IIB and MM IIIA-LM IA, with a preponderance of MM IIB. There are also a few MM IB sherds. The discovery of Neopalatial pottery in a lower layer is indicative of the disturbance to these depositions, something which is also obvious from the presence of three LM IIIA sherds in Stratum 10 immediately above. The sherd with the incised mark is dated MM IIB: fabric and surface treatment are typical in amphorae of this date while the mark of the double axe is chiefly found on vessels associated with Building U.

SM 70. (S 85/88, HM 32083). Pl. 13, Fig. 16. Amphora, four joining body fragments. Max. dim. 12.8 cm. Convex body profile. Incised mark of the double axe on body. Mark partly preserved. Context: Trench Z 51, Stratum 11. C-date: (MM IB), MM IIB-LM IA. P-date: MM IIB.

The marked handle of jar was found in Balk Z/E 51 (**SM 71**). The chronological horizon of the pottery associated with the find context is wide: it ranges from MM IIB to LM IA, with a few MM IB sherds, presumably from the destruction deposits of Building Y. The marked sherd is dated MM IB because the type of pre-firing mark occurs exclusively on jars found in MM IB contexts (e.g. **SM 2-SM 3**, **SM 14**, **SM 17**, **SM 19**).

24. Lebessi 1988, 253.

SM 71. (S 10/91, HM 31199). Pl. 13, Figs 16, 21. Jar, body and handle fragment. Max. dim. 7.3 cm. Horizontal handle of circular section. Incised mark of three evenly spaced lines transversed at a right angle by a longer fourth on handle. Context: Balk Z/E 51, Stratum 5. C-date: (MM IB), MM IIB-LM IA. P-date: MM IB.

Two sherds with pre-firing marks were excavated in Trench H51. The first (**SM 72**) was found during the clearing of wall ZH501, the west outer wall of Building U, and may have been built into the wall ZH501. The sherd, although found in a MM IIB context, is dated MM IB.

SM 72. (S 49/93, HM 31710). Pl. 13, Figs 17, 22. Tumbler, base fragment. D. base 3.4 cm. Flat base, conical body profile. Red paint: interior and exterior painted. Incised the sign 061 of the Hieroglyphic script below base. Context: Trench H 51, Wall ZH501. C-date: MM IIB. P-date: MM IB.

The second sherd (**SM 73**) was found in the fill spreading as far as the corner of retaining wall a1 and wall ZH 501, in Trench H51. The fill contained remains from Building U and the Sacred Enclosure dated to the MM IIB and the MM IIIB-LM IA periods respectively. Remains from the Sacred Enclosure are mainly recovered in the upper part of the fill together with MM IB pottery that presumably came from Buildings Y and V, as well as pottery of the 1st millennium. The overall picture points to the serious disturbance of the layers forming this fill that is also obvious from the discovery of 1st-millennium pottery in the lowest layers, together with MM IB pottery. The strata of the marked sherd contained pottery dated MM IB and MM IIB. The date of **SM 73**, though is uncertain; it could be equally well be of MM IB or of MM IIB date.

SM 73. (S 31/93, HM 31709). Pl. 14. Jar, body and handle fragment. Max. dim. 6 cm. Incised mark of two oblique parallel lines on body close to the handle. Mark partly preserved. Context: Trench H 51, Stratum 8. C-date: MM IB, MM IIB. P-date: MM IB or MM IIB.

The marked sherd of a pithos was found in the southern part of the terraced area, in Trench Z53 (**SM 74**). Its find context was disturbed containing pottery dated MM IIB and MM IIIB-LM IA and also MM IB and LM III pottery; Neopalatial pottery predominates. There were also votive offerings of the 1st millennium, Roman pottery and a denarius of Trajan.²⁵ The sherd is dated to the MM IIB period on the basis of its fabric and surface treatment, which are reminiscent of contemporary pithoi.

SM 74. (S 65/93, HM 31741). Pl. 14, Figs 13, 22. Pithos, two joining body fragments. Max. dim. 13.1 cm. Brown paint: traces in the exterior. Incised mark of the double axe on shoulder. Mark partly preserved. Context: Trench Z 53, Stratum 6. C-date: (MM IB, MM IIB), MM IIIB-LM IA. P-date: MM IIB.

25. Lebessi and Stefanakis 2004.

PRE-FIRING MARKS FROM DEPOSITS IN BUILDING Ub

Building Ub is a tripartite structure built in the northwest corner of U after the latter's destruction in MM IIB (Fig. 7).²⁶ The walls of the building were founded on the floor of U after the area was cleared and the remaining older walls pulled down. The easternmost compartment was open to the air and extensive traces of fires were found on its floor. It is not certain whether the other two spaces were roofed or not. Ub and the section of U still in use were the complexes serving the requirements of cult in the MM IIIA period. At some point during MM IIIA, Ub and part of Building U were abandoned, and on their ruins were founded part of the Sacred Enclosure and then, after its partial destruction, Building S.²⁷

Three marked sherds were excavated in the area of Ub, but were not associated with pottery used in this complex. The marked sherd of a basin was found in Trenches Θ 50 and 51, in a deposit containing building materials from the ruined Ub (**SM 75**). The sequence of the different layers in this area of the site is rather complex due to the intricate architectural palimpsest, with four different buildings constructed one on top of the other: the LM IIIC Building L, to start with the most recent, was built against the north wall of Building S, a complex founded on levels containing remains of cult from the Sacred Enclosure and on the walls of the Enclosure and the Processional Road that were built in that area of the site. The levels located below contained the ruins of Building Ub, which was set in turn within a destroyed part of Building U, which had succeeded Building V when the latter was destroyed at the end of MM IB.

The pottery from the find context of **SM 75** is dated MM IIIA, the main period of use of Building Ub. There are also MM IB sherds typical of vessels imported from the Pediada, as well as a few of MM IIB date. The sherd, however, is dated to MM IB; the fabric and surface treatment are typical of this period. The pottery from the upper layers, formed after the dismantling of Building Ub, is also dated in the MM IIB-MM IIIA horizon. Three MM IIIB sherds in one of these layers do not affect this dating, as they are intrusions from a layer containing the debris of the collapsed walls of the Sacred Enclosure and Building S.

SM 75. (S 59/95, HM 31752). Pl. 14. Jug, handle fragment. Max. dim. 2.4 cm. Vertical handle of circular section. Black paint: painted. Incised mark of three short oblique parallel lines on handle. Mark partly preserved. Context: Fill under S/L, Stratum 11. C-date: (MM IB), (MM IIB), MM IIIA. P-date: MM IB.

Another marked sherd was found in the layer between the foundation course of wall Θ502 of Building S and the upper preserved surface of wall Θ503 of Ub, in Trench Θ 50 (**SM 76**). The pottery is mostly dated to MM IIIA, along with MM IB and relatively few MM IIB sherds. I would suggest a MM IB date because the fabric and surface treatment were particularly common at Syme during that period.

26. Lebessi 1992, 225-226; 1993, 216-219; 1994, 241-242; 1995, 257-259; Zarifis 2008, 152-153, 155-171.

27. Lebessi 1976, 406; 1985a, 266, 269-271; 1988, 244; 2003, 92-94.

SM 76. (S 91/02, HM 32418). Pl. 14. Basin, body and handle fragment. Max. dim. 7.6 cm. Conical body profile and horizontal handle of circular section. Dark brown paint: solidly painted. Incised mark of two short vertical parallel lines on handle. Context: Fill deposit between walls $\Theta 502$ and $\Theta 503$. C-date: (MM IB), (MM IIB), MM IIIA. P-date: MM IB.

The sherd of a pithos with an incised mark of the double axe was found in the easternmost compartment of Ub, in the fill under the northeast corner of the later, LM IIIC Building Q (**SM 77**). The sequence of the different strata of this fill is as follows: layers with remains of cult activities associated with the Sacred Enclosure cover the layers containing the debris of Ub, which in turn overlies layers representing the main phase of use of Ub. Pottery from these strata is MM IIB and MM IIIA in date. The formal features of the pithos, as well as its fabric and surface treatment, are similar to those of the pithoi found in the storerooms of the north wing of Building U.

SM 77. (S 73/92, HM 31760). Pl. 14, Figs 11, 22. Pithos, upper body part. H. pres. 16.7 cm., D. rim 42 cm. Ovoid shape with narrow mouth and high collar, straight, rounded rim, thickened and flattened, two vertical handles of circular section preserved. Brown paint: rim and body exterior painted. Incised mark of double axe on the shoulder. Mark partly preserved. Context: Fill under Building Q, Stratum 3Γ. C-date: MM IIB-MM IIIA. P-date: MM IIB.

Another marked sherd was found in a layer resulting from the use of Building Ub (**SM 78**). The pottery of the find context is dated to MM IIIA, with quite a few MM IB and some MM IIIB and LM IA sherds, the last obviously intrusions from the layers above associated with the Sacred Enclosure. Intrusions also included MM IB sherds from strata related to Building V. The sherd is dated MM IB, since a similar example was found in a deposit of that date in the northwest sector of the site (**SM 57**).

SM 78. (S 97/92). Pl. 15, Fig. 22. Jar, handle fragment. Max. dim. 7.5 cm. Horizontal handle of circular section. Mark of five dots impressed on handle. Context: Fill under Building Q, Stratum 5A. C-date: (MM IB), MM IIIA, (MM IIIB, LM IA). P-date: MM IB.

PRE-FIRING MARKS FROM DEPOSITS IN THE AREA OF THE SACRED ENCLOSURE

A grandiose enclosure, with a central podium, and a paved processional road along the west and south sides of the complex that would have run between an unknown point and the entrance of the complex next to the spring, were built over the ruins of Buildings U and Ub (Fig. 8).²⁸ These architectural configurations mark a cut-off point in the history of the sanctuary, marking major changes in the cult. The Sacred

28. Lebessi and Muhly 1990; Zarifis 2008, 181-219.

Enclosure, as this new complex is known, remained in use in its initial form until the LM IA period, when it was partially destroyed by a strong earthquake, rockfalls or local subsidence. Functional needs following this destruction led to large-scale interventions to its southwest area of it, with the construction of Building S in LM IB.²⁹

Two sherds with pre-firing marks were found in the fill under the south wall of the middle paved leg of the Processional Road in Trench E 49. The fill was excavated during the course of consolidation work on the wall following the damage it sustained during the winter of 1992. The fill consists of nine layers, which mostly contained MM IIB pottery (a few vessels were found along with the sherds), although there were also some MM IB and MM IIIA sherds. The first sherd was found in Stratum στ (**SM 79**): the pottery is mainly MM IIB in date, with quite a few MM IB sherds. The dating of the sherd in question is problematic, as it may be either MM IB or MM IIB. A MM IB date seems more likely, because the mark is common during that period.

SM 79. (S 40a/93, HM 31722). Pl. 15, Figs 20, 21. Cooking pot, body fragment and handle. Max. dim. 7 cm. Horizontal handle of circular section. Incised mark of three evenly spaced lines transversed at a right angle by a longer fourth on handle. Mark partly preserved. Context: Trench E 49, Stratum στ. C-date: MM IB, MM IIB. P-date: MM IB.

The second sherd was found in the fill extending under the south wall of the drain of the Processional Road (Wall Δ/E491), in Balks Δ 49/50 and Δ-E 49/50.³⁰ The fill consists of five layers containing, beside pottery, building debris. The fill is dated to a period before the construction of the Processional Road. It is not certain, though, whether it was formed by the remains of older buildings once built on the spot, or whether it contained the debris of buildings removed in this area of the site to level the space between the solid retaining walls west and south of the Processional Road. The second hypothesis may be more likely: the deeper levels of the fill, rich in grey-green *lepida*, contained remains of burnt wood and plasters and coarse pottery while the levels above also contained stones. This stratigraphic sequence is not found in levels representing building destruction, undisturbed by subsequent interventions. Thus the fill supporting ΔE491 has probably been removed here from elsewhere. The pottery is dated MM IB and MM IIB, while few MM IIIA sherds were also found in the uppermost part of the fill. The high percentage of MM IB and MM IIB pottery associates the fill with Buildings V and U. The precise stratigraphic context of the marked sherd is not recorded. Formal attributes, fabric and surface treatment points to a date within the Protopalatial period, either in MM IB or in MM IIB.

SM 80. (S 94/03, HM 32416). Pl. 15, Fig. 19. Cooking pot, handle fragment. Max. dim. 5.8 cm. Horizontal handle of circular section. Mark of five short oblique parallel lines on handle. Mark partly preserved. Context: Fill south of Wall E491. C-date: MM IB, MM IIB, (MM IIIA). P-date: MM IB or MM IIB.

29. Lebessi 1976, 406; 1985, 266, 269-271; 1988, 244; 2003, 92-94.

30. Lebessi 2003, 90-94.

The sherd of a jar with a pre-firing mark (**SM 81**) was found in one of the layers extending between the podium and the Enclosure, in the southwest part of the complex that covered the ruins of Building Ub. These layers represent debris from Buildings U and Ub and the pottery they contained is dated to MM IIB, MM IIIA and MM IIIB, with a few MM IB sherds and some others of the LM IA period. Although MM IIIB and LM IA pottery is obviously intrusive from the overlying deposits of the Sacred Enclosure, deposits rich in votive offerings and remains of ceremonial feasts, the presence of MM IB pottery is quite intriguing. Perhaps the MM IB pottery comes from the MM IB layers in the northwest part of the site, been brought here due to either human action or natural causes. The sherd is dated to the MM IB period not only because the fabric and surface treatment are typical of the period, but also because the incised mark it bears is found exclusively on MM IB jars.

SM 81. (S 1/94, HM 31190). Pl. 15, Figs 16, 21. Jar, body and handle fragment. Max. dim. 7.7 cm. Horizontal handle of circular section. Incised mark of three evenly spaced lines transversed at a right angle by a longer fourth on handle. Context: Fill under Building Q, west part, Stratum 2. C-date: (MM IB), MM IIB-MM IIIB. P-date: MM IB.

Another marked sherd was found in the adjacent area of the Sacred Enclosure, between the enclosure and the podium (**SM 82**). The layers in this area contained deposits rich in votive offerings and remains of ritual meals.³¹ The deposits lay over the layers representing the abandonment of Building Ub and below the layer formed by the collapsed walls of Building S. The pottery from the cult deposits, mainly cups of various types and chalices, is dated to MM IIIB and LM IA, with a very few intrusive sherds of the LM IIIC period from Building L.

SM 82. (S 45/95, HM 32086). Pl. 15, Fig. 16. Vessel with rounded upper part and semi-opened mouth, rim and body fragment. Max. dim. 4 cm. Convex upper body profile, straight rim. Black paint: in the exterior faint traces. Incised mark of two lines meeting at an acute angle below the rim. Mark partly preserved. Context: Fill under S/L, Stratum 9. C-date: MM IIIB-LM IA, (LM IIIC/Sub-Minoan). P-date: MM IIIB-LM IA.

Two sherds with pre-firing marks were found in Trench A 50, in the southeast area of the Sacred Enclosure (**SM 83-SM 84**). The sequence of the depositions in this area is rather complex. A Protogeometric bench was built on the ruins of Room 1 of Building U.³² The walls of the room were not demolished but, on the contrary, were partly incorporated in the new structure: the sacred area was enclosed on the north and west by the ruined walls while the east end of the bench was set over the remains of the east wall. The bench was one of the focal points of cult in the Protogeometric period, the most important being the altar.³³ Dense layers containing votive offerings, remains of fires, and bones of sacrificed animals, extended

31. Lebessi 2002a, 109-114; Lebessi and Muhly 1990.

32. Lebessi 1976, 402-403; Zarifis 2008, 239.

33. Lebessi 1972, 194-196; 1983, 348, 360; Zarifis 2008, 237-240.

across the area of the bench. Pottery is mostly dated to MM IIIB and LM IA, with a low percentage dated to MM IIB, MM IIIA, LM III and Protogeometric periods. Votive offerings, though, are Protogeometric in date.³⁴

The first sherd (**SM 83**) was found in the uppermost part of this thick layer with the remains of cult activity. A precise date is not possible: it could range from MM IIB to LM IA. A date in MM IB or LM III is unlikely, as the fabric and surface treatment are not typical of those periods.

SM 83. (S 50/76, HM 31214). Pl. 15, Fig. 22. Amphora, handle fragment. Max. dim. 4.8 cm. Vertical handle of circular section. Incised mark of two lines in a V-shape on handle. Context: Balk Λ/M 50, Stratum 1. C-date: (MM IIB, MM IIIA), MM IIIB-LM IIIA, (1st millennium). P-date: MM IIB-LM IA.

The bench itself was founded on layers containing remains of cult activities associated with the Sacred Enclosure and building debris. The pottery in these layers is dated to MM IIIB, LM IA and LM IB. Limited amounts of MM IB, MM IIB, MM IIIA, and LM IIIA pottery have also been found, along with some dating from the 1st millennium. This varied chronological horizon is indicative of the disturbance of the deposits at this spot. The layers below contained the debris of Room 1 (Strata 4α, 4β, 5, 5α, 6), with pottery mainly dating to MM IIIA. In one of the layers containing animal bones and votive offerings was found part of a bowl with a pre-firing mark (**SM 84**). Formal attributes point to a date in the MM IB period. This is also confirmed by the fact that a sherd of an identical bowl bearing the same incised mark was found in a MM IB deposit in the northwest sector of the site (**SM 13**).

SM 84. (S 53/76, HM 21715a). Pl. 16, Fig. 19. Bowl, one third preserved. H. 7.4 cm., D. rim. 26.5 cm., D. base 12.3 cm. Conical body profile, flat base, straight rim. Black paint: interior and exterior painted. Incised mark of three lines in the shape of a triangle in the interior below the rim. Context: Balk Λ/M 50, Stratum 3a. C-date: (MM IB-MM IIIA), MM IIIB-LM IB, (LM IIIA-1st millennium). P-date: MM IB.

Sherds of vessels with pre-firing marks were recovered in the northwest half of the Sacred Enclosure: three sherds were found in Balk Θ 46/47, two in Balk H 47/48, and one in Balk Z/H 47. The northwest area of the complex was subject to remodelling: the northwest corner was destroyed by a rock fall; the area was then sequestered with a small retaining wall; the northeast wall of the Enclosure was supported by another retaining wall; and a semi-circular exedra was built in the northeast corner.³⁵

In a thick layer with deposits of votive offerings and remains of ritual meals extending in the northwest area of the Sacred Enclosure, in Balk Θ 46/47, the marked sherd of a pithos was found (**SM 85**). The pottery of this stratum, like that of the underlying strata, is MM IIIB and LM IA in date: there are many chalices,

34. Lebessi 1976, 403-404.

210, 212; 2000, 184-191; 2002a,114; 2002b;

35. Lebessi 1988, 259; 1991, 318-320; 1992,

Zarifis 2008, 202-204.

some with painted reed decoration, cups of various types, predominating over every other shape, cooking pots, jugs, and a few pithoid jars, to mention the most characteristic shapes.³⁶ A few MM IB sherds were also found, as in Strata 10 and 11, while in the upper part of the stratum sherds from one or more pithoi and a jug of the LM III period were recovered, as well as fragments of animal figurines.³⁷ The presence of MM IB sherds in pottery assemblages dated to MM IIIB and LM IA is indicative of their disturbance: the Protopalatial sherds come from the layers with the MM IB pottery extending across the northwest sector of the excavated area of the site (Trenches A-E 45-47), and would have rolled down during rain-storms. The pithos is dated MM IIB. It is worth mentioning here that fragments of similar pithoi were also found in other layers of the stratigraphic sequence extending in this area of the Sacred Enclosure.

SM 85. (S 90/00, HM 32419). Pl. 16, Fig. 11. Pithos, rim, collar and handle fragment. Max. dim. 15.8 cm. Ovoid shape with narrow mouth and high collar, everted rim, vertical handle of circular section. Incised mark of an arched line on the shoulder close to the handle. It is probably part of the double axe mark. Mark partly preserved. Context: Balk Ø 46/47, Stratum 9. C-date: MM IIIB-LM IA. P-date: MM IIB.

In a stratum overlying that of **SM 85** the marked sherd of a jar was found (**SM 86**). The stratum contained pottery mainly dated to the MM IIIB and LM IA periods, with some MM IB and LM III sherds as well as sherds of the 1st millennium.

SM 86. (S 92/00, HM 32417). Pl. 16, Fig. 21. Jar, handle fragment. Max. dim. 5 cm. Horizontal handle of circular section. Incised mark of two short vertical parallel lines on handle. Context: Trench Ø 46/47, Stratum 7. C-date: (MM IB), MM IIIB-LM IA, (LM III, 1st millennium). P-date: MM IB.

Another marked sherd was found in a stratum overlying the previous stratigraphic deposition (**SM 87**). It contained pottery dated to MM IIIB and LM IA with very few MM IB sherds as well as 1st-millennium tiles. Besides the pottery, stone vases, a libation table inscribed in Linear A, and objects of copper sheets were found. The marked sherd is dated to the MM IB period.

SM 87. (S 82/00, HM 32423). Pl. 16, Fig. 15. Cooking pot, body and handle fragment. Max. dim. 6.6 cm. Horizontal handle of circular section. Incised mark of three short oblique parallel lines on handle. Context: Trench Ø 46/47, Stratum 6. C-date: (MM IB), MM IIIB-LM IA, (1st millennium). P-date: MM IB.

In a disturbed layer covering deposits of votive offerings and remains of ritual meals, in the northwest corner of the Sacred Enclosure, in Trench Z/H 47, the handle of an amphora with a pre-firing mark was found (**SM 88**). The pottery in this layer, Stratum 5, is dated to MM IIIB and LM IA with a few MM IB sherds. The pottery from the strata lying below is also assigned to the same chronological hori-

36. Lebessi 2000, 188-189.

37. Lebessi 2000, 190.

zon. The marked sherd is dated to the MM IB period because of its fabric and surface treatment.

SM 88. (S 71/99, HM 31756). Pl. 16. Amphora, handle fragment. Max. dim. 4 cm. Vertical handle of circular section. Reddish paint: all painted. Incised mark of a short horizontal line on handle. Context: Balk Z/H 47, Stratum 5. C-date: (MM IB), MM IIIB-LM IA. P-date: MM IB.

Two cooking-pot handles with pre-firing marks were found in Balk H 47/48 in the northwest area of the Sacred Enclosure (**SM 89-SM 90**). The pottery is dated to MM IIIB and LM IA, with a few MM IB sherds. The date of **SM 89** is not entirely certain; a MM IB date seems probable. **SM 90**, on the contrary, is securely dated to MM IB on the basis of its fabric and surface treatment.

SM 89. (S 80/99, HM 32090). Pl. 16, Figs 15, 21. Jar, body and handle fragment. Max. dim. 7.9 cm. Horizontal handle of circular section. Incised mark of a long oblique line on handle. Context: Balk H 47/48, Stratum 7b. C-date: (MM IB), MM IIIB-LM IA. P-date: MM IB.

SM 90. (S 54/99, HM 31759). Pl. 17. Cooking pot, body and handle fragment. Max. dim. 7.7 cm. Horizontal handle of circular section. Incised mark of a short horizontal line on handle. Context: Balk H 47/48, Stratum 7. C-date: (MM IB), MM IIIB-LM IA. P-date: MM IB.

Four sherds with pre-firing marks were found, the first in Balk I/K 45-46, in the layer of stones probably fallen from the façade of the Sacred Enclosure (**SM 91**), and the other three in Trench K 46 (**SM 92**) and Balk I 46/47 (**SM 93-SM 94**), in a layer containing the remains of cult activities that took place in front of the semi-circular exedra, in the northeast corner of the Sacred Enclosure. The pottery in the layer of the fallen stones is dated MM IIIB-LM IA, with a few MM IB sherds. MM IB sherds were also found in the deposits above this layer and come from the north area of the site. The marked sherd is dated MM IB (**SM 91**). The pottery deposits associated with the other three marked sherds are MM IIIB-LM IA in date. Of these, **SM 92** and **SM 93** are dated to MM IIIB or LM IA, while **SM 94**, although found in a MM IIIB-LM IA context, is MM IB in date, as an identical mark has been found in a MM IB stratum (**SM 1**).

SM 91. (S 89/02, HM 32422). Pl. 17, Fig. 20. Cooking pot, rim and body fragment, and handle. Max. dim. 10.9 cm. Cylindrical body profile, rolled rim, and horizontal handle of circular section. Incised mark of two short vertical parallel lines on handle. Context: Balk I/K 45/46, Stratum 5. C-date: MM IIIB-LM IA. P-date: MM IB.

SM 92. (S 11/91, HM 31200). Pl. 17. Jar, body and handle fragment. Max. dim. 7.5 cm. Horizontal handle of circular section. Grey slip: exterior solidly coated. Incised mark of a long oblique line on handle. Context: Trench K 46, Stratum 6. C-date: MM IIIB-LM IA. P-date: MM IIIB-LM IA.

SM 93. (S 21/00, HM 31755). Pl. 17, Figs 17, 21. Stemmed cup, rim and upper part missing. H. pres. 7.1 cm, D. base 4 cm. Conical body profile, pronounced base. Brown paint: exterior painted. Wheel-made. Incised mark of two lines crossed at an acute angle

on body. Mark partly preserved. Context: Balk I 46/47, Stratum 8. C-date: MM IIIB-LM IA. P-date: MM IIIB-LM IA.

SM 94. (S 81/00, HM 32085a-b). Pl. 17, Fig. 17. Amphora, body fragments. Max. dim. 5 cm. Incised mark of a rectangle on body. Mark partly preserved. Context: Balk I 46/47, Strata 5a-6. C-date: MM IIIB-LM IA. P-date: MM IB.

PRE-FIRING MARK FROM BUILDING S

Building S was constructed in the southwest corner of the Sacred Enclosure, following the latter's partial destruction at the end of LM IA, and set deep into the solid substrate of the ruins of the enclosure and the Processional Road, and even the walls of Building U (Fig. 9).³⁸ The surviving architectural remains present the picture of a fairly large building, whose structure, however, is unclear and its functionality problematic. The cutting of the road to Omalos, cultivation and the steep incline of the ground have resulted in the serious disturbance of the depositions associated with it; important information on not only on its period of use but also on its function has vanished.³⁹

The sherd of a large pithos bearing a pre-firing mark was found in a room of Building S (**SM 95**). Deposits that would have represented the use of the room suffered irreparable damage during the cutting of the road to Omalos. The surviving layers contained pottery mostly dated to MM IIIB and LM IA, while there were also sherds dated to LM III and the 1st millennium. The chronological range of the pottery, the types of vessel and the other artefactual assemblages present a picture of disturbed layers, mostly containing the remains of cult activities associated with the Sacred Enclosure and remains, though these are relatively few, of the phase of use of Building S, as well as pottery of later periods.

In one of these disturbed deposits was found the sherd of the large pithos examined here. Was the pithos from which it comes placed in a space of Building S, which, incidentally, has been considered a storeroom, or in some other room of Building S? Although it is difficult to give a definite answer to this question, there are some indications connecting the pithos to Building S rather than to the Sacred Enclosure. The excavation has produced ample evidence for the function of the Enclosure: layers with remains of carbonized wood mixed with animal bones, pottery consisting of cups of various types, goblets, chalices, pouring and cooking vessels and very little storage ware (mostly large amphoras, small and medium-sized pithoi, and jars), and various other objects. This open-air space, therefore, was reserved for ceremonies involving the lighting of fires, the consumption of animals, drinking, and the deposition of offerings.⁴⁰ The use of a large pithos of significant storage capacity, low accessibility to the contents, high stability, low

38. Lebessi 1976, 406; 1977, 417; 1985, 266, 269-271; 1988, 244; 2003, 92-94; Zarifis 2008, 221-231.

39. The study of the pottery, actually a few

sherds, associated with this building has not been yet completed.

40. Lebessi and Muhly 1990.

transportability and moderate graspability somewhere in the Sacred Enclosure is improbable. This monumental complex is not designed for storage activities. The pithos discussed here was more likely placed in a roofed storeroom of S. Nevertheless, the possibility that the sherd came from somewhere else entirely cannot be ruled out.

SM 95. (S 52/77, HM 31216). Pl. 18, Figs 13, 22. Pithos, body fragment. Max. dim. 13.2 cm. Ovoid shape, rope decoration. Reddish paint: trickle ornament. Incised mark of a rectangle enclosing two crossing diagonal lines. Mark partly preserved. Context: Trench Ø 51, Stratum 2. C-date: MM IIIB-LM IA, LM III. P-date: LM IA or LM IB.

PRE-FIRING MARK FROM BUILDING T

The remains of five rooms of a structure named Building T are preserved, albeit in very poor condition, in the southeast sector of the site, in Trenches M52, M53, E52 and E53 (Fig. 9).⁴¹ The dating of the complex is problematic, as no well-stratified floor artefactual assemblages have been preserved, while the strata associated with it are heavily disturbed. The complex was built over the ruins of part of the east wing of Building U: the end of the MM IIIA period is therefore the terminus post quem for the founding of T. The large quantities of MM IIIA pottery found in the disturbed layers of T definitely come from the re-used Building U, while the MM IIB and MM IB ceramic assemblages come from deposits of the initial phase of use of U and the destruction layers of V respectively. The few sherds of MM IIIB and LM IA date may represent the period of use of Building T. The complex is thus probably associated with the Sacred Enclosure.⁴²

A marked sherd was found in a layer, which extends across the area between wall E530 of T and wall E531 of the earlier Building U.⁴³ The underlying layers here, contain the debris from the ruined U. The pottery from the stratum where the marked sherd was found is dated from MM IB to MM IIIA: it is worth noting a MM IIB pithos, largely preserved, like those from the North Wing of Building U. The few 1st-millennium pottery sherds and the tiles found in this layer have intruded from the uppermost layers. The sherd is dated to MM IIB: the fabric and surface treatment do not resemble those of MM IB and MM IIIA and similar pre-firing marks are found on MM IIB pottery from other sites.⁴⁴

SM 96. (S 60/97, HM 31749). Pl. 18, Fig. 21. Amphora, handle fragment. Max. dim. 7 cm. Vertical handle of circular section. Incised mark of a double T on handle. Context: Trench E 53/54, Stratum 2a. C-date: MM IB, MM IIB-LM IA (1st millennium). P-date: MM IIB.

41. Lebessi 1983, 360-362; 1997, 199-202; Zarifis 2008, 224-225.

42. Lebessi 1997, 201.

43. Lebessi 1997, 201, fig. 4.

44. **ML 141-ML 144.**

PRE-FIRING MARK FROM THE AREA OF THE ALTAR

By the Sub-Minoan and Protogeometric period, Building S, and probably the LM IIIC Building Q, had been destroyed. However, some of their walls remained visible and were partially used for the construction of Building L. Further east, in Trench K50, a low, solid wall formed the Protogeometric altar (Fig. 10).⁴⁵ The layers around the altar contain remains of sacrifices and offerings, dated from the LM IIIC to the Late Geometric period.⁴⁶ In one of the layers with cultic remains a sherd from the rim of a conical pithos with an incised sign in the Linear A script AB27 was found (**SM 97**). The sherd is dated MM IIIA-LM IB.

SM 97. (S 51/72, HM 31215). Pl. 18, Figs 12, 22. Pithos, rim fragment. Max. dim. 8.4 cm. Conical shape, thickened, rounded rim. Incised with the sign AB27 of the Linear A script on the rim. Context: Balk I/K 50. C-date: LM IIIB-Late Geometric. P-date: MM IIIA-LM IB.

UNSTRATIFIED

This is part of the handle of a cooking pot found during the 1992 excavation in the fill under Building Q (**SM 98**). The exact stratigraphic context of the sherd is unknown. The fill under Building Q is one of the most complex stratigraphical sequences of the site. Its excavation began when it became necessary to restore the northwest corner of the LM IIIC Building Q after it was damaged by a harsh winter.⁴⁷ The marked sherd comes either from a layer associated with Building Ub or from a disturbed layer of Building U. Its chronological context, therefore, lies between MM IIB and MM IIIA. A MM IIB date is more likely, as the handle is very strongly reminiscent of corresponding cooking pot handles of that period.

SM 98. (S 70/92, HM 31715). Pl. 18. Cooking pot, handle fragment. Max. dim. 4.4 cm. Horizontal handle of circular section. Incised two short oblique parallel lines. Mark partly preserved. Context: Fill under Building Q. C-date: MM IIB-MM IIIA. P-date: MM IIB.

45. Lebessi 1972, 194-196; 1983, 348, 360.

46. Lebessi 1972, 194, 198-199; Lebessi 1985;

2002b; Schürmann 1996; Muhly 2008.

47. Lebessi 1992, 225-227.

II

THE MARKED VESSELS

Although pre-firing marks are the main focus of interest in this study, it should not be forgotten that we first of all have to do with vessels. The vessel is the conveyor, the *raison d'être* of any mark, the primary object we might say: primary not so much regarding the temporal sequence –in the case of the pottery *chaîne opératoire* there is a general temporal parallelism– but in a multiple sense, as an entity, as concept and as meaning. The condition of existence of a vessel is the use, or uses, for which it was made. These uses determine its formal, decorative and technological features.¹ Nevertheless, a vessel is more than a mere tool: pots, and material culture in general, constitute a concept associated with complex ideological structures and social strategies.² The vessel is not produced by an indeterminate, unknown potter, nor is it intended for abstract beings or entities; it has a specific maker and specific recipients. It occupies a specific place in the network of production activities and that of relationships connected to the storage, processing and consumption of subsistence goods, or even other fields of socio-political organization. Stylistic variability and patterns of production, distribution and consumption of pottery are means of negotiating personal and social identity, thereby providing information on groups, boundaries and interaction.³

In traditional archaeological appraisals, symbolic connotations are accorded to fine ware, a trend clearly influenced by the 19th-century European Classicist aesthetic predilections and notions of eliteness that largely determined the study of Bronze Age Crete.⁴ Finely decorated ware has been widely exploited as material evidence for the investigation of concepts such as art and style. It should be stressed, however, that undecorated and coarse ware also contributes to the understanding of complex regional and intra-regional patterns of ceramic production and consumption, and thus to the investigation of economic, political and cultural parameters in a given social setting.⁵ Even undecorated utilitarian objects form an integral part of what is perceived and experienced as everyday life.⁶ Utilitarian objects occupy a prescribed position in the network of social activities through their incorporation in, rather than their removal from them, as is the case with works

1. Lesure 1998.

2. Miller 1994.

3. Pollock 1983; Yentsch 1991; Dietler and Herbich 1998.

4. Hamilakis 2006.

5. e.g. Day 1997; Christakis 2005; 2008.

6. Hodder 1982.

of art. Utilitarian pottery can convey symbolic meaning just as well as fine ware, a conviction that is particularly stressed in this study.

The vessel is the direct point of contact between the individual mark and its function, the only tangible and secure evidence of its original context at the time of production and use. This intrinsic relationship between the vessel and the mark has not been investigated in the studies of pre-firing marks from Cretan Bronze Age contexts to date. In most cases a 'literary' approach is adopted highlighting the mark itself. Presumably this is no accident, since the most influential contributions have been made by script specialists. However, the non-investigation of parameters connected to the formal and technological attributes of a vessel deprives us of a substantial array of evidence that can shed light on meaningful patterns in the employment of pre-firing marks. In actual fact, it deprives us of the possibility of understanding the most immediate context of the mark, which is none other than the vessel itself. It is this 'micro-context' that forms the focus of this chapter.

This direction of study faces a serious limitation: the high fragmentation of ceramic assemblages from the site. The life cycle of a vessel is rather complex: the production and its distribution to consumers is followed by its use and finally its destruction, which may be caused by use in and of itself, intentional breakage or the destruction of the wider contextual framework.⁷ The degree of fragmentation, in turn, is determined by the physical attributes of the vessel, frequency and kind of use: cooking pots, for instance, whether with incised marks or without, are preserved in fragmentary state, probably due to the thermal shocks they suffered from their use over a fire.⁸ The constant disturbance of archaeological deposits due to natural and cultural factors has undoubtedly contributed to further fragmentation. It is perhaps no coincidence that highly fragmentary and non-restorable vessels are particularly common in secondary depositions.

Generally speaking, of a total of 98 pre-firing marks only two examples are incised on partly preserved vessels, the state of which allows a full understanding of their formal and technological traits (**SM 66** and **SM 67**). Some other marks are incised on sizable sherds, allowing us to reconstruct part of the vessel from which they came and provide information, albeit partial, on potting technology. Most marks, however, are incised or impressed on sherds which, although the type of vessel from which they originally came is known, are nevertheless too small to recreate its overall formal and technological profile, while its functional performance characteristics can only be reconstructed indirectly. This fragmentation also prevents any comparison of the features of marked vessels with those of typologically similar vessels without marks, a comparison which would aid to in the investigation of meaningful patterns of process. The poor state of preservation also makes it also difficult to comprehend the motor habits and motor performances of the individual potter who manufactured the specific vessel. After all, objects are

7. Many issues concerning fragmentation of artefactual assemblages in prehistoric contexts are discussed in Chapman and

Gaydarska 2006.

8. cf. Barnard and Brogan 2003, 80.

the upshot of actions and choices of individual agents, agents occupying well defined positions in institutional contexts: political, ideological and economic.

The discussion that follows is focused exclusively on vessels with pre-firing marks and does not extend to an overall presentation of the pottery from the sanctuary. Information arising from the pottery study as a whole is, however, incorporated into discussion, in order to understand better the assemblage of marked vessels studied here. The full presentation of the pottery and the investigation into patterns of pottery production and consumption, as well as all the symbolic implications of the pottery for those who once frequented Syme, will form the subject of future studies.⁹

SHAPES

The vessels (actually fragments of vessels) discussed here are classified according to their shape: besides being the most straightforward classification tool, shape determines important functional properties, the consideration of which is relevant to the present approach. Eleven shapes are differentiated in the typology of pottery with pre-firing marks excavated on the site: pithos, jar, vessel with rounded upper body and semi-opened mouth, amphora, jug, tumbler, handled cup, stemmed cup, flaring bowl, cooking pot and basin (Chart 2). Formal and technological features are described, to the degree permitted by the state of preservation of the material examined here. As already said, due to the fragmentation of the material – in most cases these are tiny sherds – it proved impossible to carry out the petrographic analyses necessary for the reconstruction of the paste technology. Any observations on ceramic fabrics are based on the macroscopic study of data in collaboration with Dr. E. Nodarou (INSTAP East Crete). These observations, integrated with the results of a pilot petrographic analysis programme carried out by Dr. Nodarou, have shown that most of the marked pottery was produced in the region surrounding the site, with only a few imports from the Pediada area.¹⁰

1. *Pithos* (Figs 11-13; Pls 2, 9, 11-14, 16, 18)

Fourteen sherds with pre-firing marks and a partly preserved example have been found. The pithoi belong to at least five different types. Two sherds (**SM 68**, **SM 85**), fragments from the upper part of a pithos (**SM 77**), as well as a partly preserved example (**SM 66**), come from medium-sized ovoid/ovoid elongated specimens with narrow mouth and low collar.¹¹ On this type of pithos, one row of four vertical handles is placed below the rim (some sherds preserve the handle) and occasionally a second row is placed above the base or at the maximum diameter of the body.

9. Two monographs are in progress: the first discusses selected pottery assemblages within their contextual framework while the second focuses on pottery production and consumption.

10. The imports from the Pediada are: **SM 6**, **SM 12**, **SM 15**, **SM 21**, **SM 33**, **SM 36**, **SM 56**, **SM 59**, **SM 60**, **SM 72**, **SM 75**, **SM 85**, **SM 88**.

11. Christakis 2005, 9, Form 22, fig. 7.

The exterior of the body is wet-slipped or slipped and occasionally trickle decoration occurs. The capacity is usually between 90 and 100 litres. Regarding their functional performance characteristics, such pithoi are distinctive for their high accessibility, moderate stability and transportability, and high graspability, while the mouth was easy to cover and the contents could be removed by lifting. Such pithoi are ideal for long and short-term storage.

This type was produced in north-central, south-central, east-central and east Cretan sites during MM I. Its formal features are typical of the period, although it should be noted that many of these features are derived from the Prepalatial pithos potting tradition. At Syme, such pithoi appeared in MM IB: fragments have been found in many MM IB contexts, while very fragmentary data from MM IA contexts may indicate that the production of these containers began in that period. The type is also very popular during MM IIB: most pithoi used in the north wing of Building U belong to this shape, while fragments have also been recovered from most strata with MM IIB pottery. The use of such pithoi during MM IIB has not been attested, in so far as I know, in other parts of the island. The occurrence of this type at the site during MM IIB cannot safely be interpreted as the result of the re-use of old specimens. Although this practice is widely attested in prehistoric and historic periods,¹² the considerable assemblages of such pithoi in MM IIB contexts and the complex history of the site make such a scenario quite improbable. It seems more likely that these pithoi continued to be produced and used at Syme in MM IIB, while different types of pithos were in vogue at other sites.

SM 63 belongs to another type of ovoid pithos with wide mouth and no collar. The body of this pithos must have been more ovoid, with a rim directly joined to the body. Four vertical handles would have been placed below the rim and two or four others above the base. Pithoi with similar formal features are popular from the EM to the MM III period. Middle Minoan specimens usually have a thick, out-curving rim. The pithos from Syme is dated to MM IIB. Fragments of similar pithoi at the site were occasionally found in strata with MM IIB and MM IIIA-MM IIIB pottery, although this type is not as popular as the former. The functional performance characteristics of this pithos are similar to those of the examples discussed above.

Three sherds come from large ovoid specimens but their size makes them difficult to identify with a known type. **SM 7** is a handle fragment that, judging by its thickness, comes from a large ovoid specimen. The original pithos is dated to the MM IB period based on contextual arguments and the type of pre-firing mark. From a large ovoid elongated pithos comes body fragment **SM 95**, dated to either MM IIIB or LM IA-LM IB.¹³ Fragments of pithoi with similar formal and technological features to **SM 95** are common in the MM IIIB and LM IA-LM IB levels of the site. The pithoi from which these two sherds come must have had a significant storage capacity, low accessibility to the contents, high stability, low transporta-

12. Christakis 2005, 66-67.

13. The closest parallel is Form 6 of Christakis' classification (2005, 7, fig. 2), but the

state of preservation does not allow a more precise date.

bility, moderate graspability; the mouth is difficult to cover. **SM 74** comes from an ovoid pithos but is too small to provide any further information.

Four sherds with pre-firing marks belong to pithoi with a conical profile and the maximum diameter more or less at the rim. Sherd **SM 52** comes from a pithos with a conical body and convex upper sides. There would have been four vertical handles at the rim. Sherd **SM 54** comes from a pithos of similar shape with the handles horizontally placed below the rim. This type of pithos is usually found during the EM and MM IA-MM IB periods. The production of these pithoi, however, may continued into MM IIB period.

Particularly interesting is the case of sherd **SM 39**: the pithos handle is made of the same fabric as that of **SM 54**, it has the same surface treatment and is incised with the same pre-firing mark. Pithoi with similar formal features have been found in EM and MM I contexts. **SM 39** is dated to MM IB. This type is not often found at the sanctuary. The capacity of such pithoi usually ranges from 40 to 50 litres. These containers are distinctive for their high accessibility to the contents, low stability, high transportability and graspability. The mouth is difficult to cover and the content could be removed by lifting or pouring.

From a conical pithos with a slightly vertical upper body profile comes sherd **SM 69**. One of the two or four vertical/horizontal handles the pithos would originally have had is preserved. The interior of the sherd is incised with horizontal and crossed lines. The sherd comes from what is widely known as a 'beehive' pithos. The distinctive features of this type are the incised lines in the interior and the deep thumb impressions on the inside of the base. The profile is usually conical and the handles are often arranged in pairs horizontally below the rim.¹⁴ Whether these pithoi were actually used as beehives is debatable.¹⁵ Their capacity is 60 to 70 litres. These containers are distinctive for their high accessibility to the contents, low stability, high transportability and graspability. The mouth is difficult to cover and the content could be removed by lifting or pouring.

Pithoi of the so-called 'beehive' type (actually fragments or large sections) are quite common at the sanctuary: they have been found in contexts dated from the MM IIB to the LM IIIC periods. A few fragments are found in disturbed MM IB contexts but it is not entirely certain if such pithoi had been produced so early. The best-preserved example from the site is that from Building T.¹⁶ The pithos is found in a stratum with pottery dated mostly to the MM IIIA period, with some later intrusions dated to MM IIIB and LM III. It has a conical body profile and the usual incisions and impressions in the interior. The handles are not preserved. The formal features of **SM 69** are quite peculiar compared to the features of similar pithoi from the site: the profile of the very upper part of the body is slightly vertical, the rim is flat, squared and projecting, and the incisions differ in placement and execution from most other examples.

14. Christakis 2005, Form 109, 19, fig. 23.

2005, 68.

15. I have fully discussed some problems with this functional assignation in Christakis

16. Lebessi 1983, 365, pls 247β, γ.

The rim sherd **SM 97** comes from a pithos with a conical profile or a conical profile with vertical upper/middle sides, but is too small to provide more information about the original vessel from which it came.¹⁷ This type of pithos is relatively widespread at the site from MM IA to LM IB. Their functional characteristics are similar to those of the two pithoi discussed above. Handle **SM 11** must also come from a conical pithos with convex sides, but it is too small to provide further details.¹⁸

All the pithoi presented above are coil-built with minimal rotational aid, and none show signs of wheel-finishing: traces of this construction profile are clearly visible on some sherds discussed here, as well as on similar pithoi, without pre-firing marks that have been recovered at the site. They were made in a range of local fabrics. Pithoi are highly labour-intensive vessels; the construction of such sizeable vessels requires considerable skill and the collaboration of more than one potter.¹⁹ Of course, some pithoi are more labour-intensive than others, depending on their size and surface treatment. Thus the pithos from which sherd **SM 95** is derived, decorated with rope patterns (most probably horizontal wavy ropes), would have been more labour-intensive than the others. More labour was also invested in the pithos to which sherd **SM 96** belongs. It is difficult, given the fragmentary state of our assemblage, to evaluate standardization in the manufacturing process. It is likely, however, that pithoi **SM 68**, **SM 74**, **SM 77**, and **SM 85**, as well as many other similar examples found at the site, though lacking pre-firing marks, have been made to a standardized technological pattern: they present similar formal attributes, potting techniques and surface treatment and use of specific types of fabrics.

2. *Jar* (Figs 14-16; Pls 1-10, 13-17)

Jars in this study are taken to mean either tall piriform pots with a wide mouth, without a collar and with two horizontal handles on the upper body, or tall piriform pots with a wide mouth, low collar and two horizontal handleless alternating with two smaller vertical ones.²⁰ Both types may have a spout. This shape is represented by 28 marked sherds and a fragmentary vessel as well as by large assemblages of unmarked examples. Of these, 19 sherds come from pieces of handle, too small to reconstruct the particular features of each vessel (**SM 2**, **SM 6**, **SM 8-SM 9**, **SM 14**, **SM 22**, **SM 34**, **SM 37-SM 38**, **SM 42-SM 44**, **SM 49**, **SM 57**, **SM 71**, **SM 78**, **SM 81**, **SM 86**, **SM 92**). Five sherds come from the handle and body of the vessel, allowing us to reconstruct the outline of the vessel at shoulder height, where the handles are set (**SM 17**, **SM 31**, **SM 53**, **SM 73**, **SM 89**), while three sherds preserve a large piece of rim, body, and one of the two or three original handles (**SM 19**, **SM 26**, **SM 30**). In one case the upper body of the vessel is preserved (**SM 67**).

17. c.f. Forms 106, 112 and 114 in Christakis 2005, 19-20, figs 23-24.

18. The pithos may resemble Form 121, Christakis 2005, 21, fig. 26.

19. Christakis 2005, 3-5; Giannopoulou 2010, 49-141.

20. cf. Poursat and Knappett 2005, 54-55; Levi and Carinci 1988, 33-34.

The best-preserved example is **SM 67**. The lower part of the body, which is not preserved, would have been conical and narrow, while the upper becomes globular before curving in at the rim. It has two horizontal coil handles on the upper part. **SM 26** comes from a jar of the same shape, preserving part of the rim, body and handle of the original vessel. In this case, however, the mouth was narrower than that of the previous specimen and the upper part strongly curved. Two handle sherds, **SM 57** and **SM 78**, have the same formal and technological features as **SM 26**, are made of the same fabric, have the same surface treatment and bear the same type of pre-firing mark, surely no coincidence.

From a jar with a less curved upper body comes **SM 19**. The vessel from which **SM 30** derived is similar in shape, although it seems to have been slightly misshapen due to overfiring. Both vessels are made of the same fabric and have the mark of evenly spaced lines transversed at a right angle by a longer one incised on the handle. Although the two signs are very similar, they are incised differently, obviously indicating two different potters. Six handle sherds, **SM 2**, **SM 17**, **SM 38**, **SM 42**, **SM 53** and **SM 71** bear a mark similar to **SM 30**, albeit incised in a different way in each case, are made of the same fabric and have the same surface treatment. It is worth noting that **SM 38** has traces of overfiring similar to those of **SM 30**. The combination of all these similarities is certainly not coincidental and this group indicates significant conceptual associations. **SM 31** comes from a vessel with similar formal and technological attributes to those discussed above, but the pre-firing mark is incised differently. Jar handles **SM 8**, **SM 14**, **SM 44**, **SM 49**, **SM 53**, and **SM 81** are incised with different versions of the mark of evenly spaced lines transversed at a right angle by a longer one and made of different fabrics. The fragmentary data prevented reconstruction of the original vessels. The other handles **SM 6**, **SM 9**, **SM 22**, **SM 34**, **SM 37**, **SM 43**, **SM 73**, **SM 86**, **SM 89** and **SM 92** do not provide sufficient information. The different fabrics used and the pre-firing marks indicate that they are produced by different potting groups.

Jars were coil-built with or without rotational aid. The exterior, and in many instances even the interior, is wet-wiped to create a smooth surface. Most specimens are unslipped and unpainted. Examples externally coated with paint are also found, but this surface treatment is not common (cf. **SM 67**). The construction of such vessels requires moderate to low investment of labour, as construction and surface treatment are not highly time-consuming, although the time and energy required depend on the experience of the potters. The fact that they occur in a variety of fabrics and the differences in surface treatment indicate that they are produced in several potting settings. Standardization in the manufacturing process within workshop output is high, with low to moderate labour investment and skill.²¹ The functional performance characteristics of these vessels are high accessibility to the content, high transportability and graspability, and moderate stability. Their

21. The fragmentary state of preservation of jars with pre-firing marks means that it is not always possible to reconstruct their tech-

nological profile, thus suggestions are based on unmarked vessels.

capacity is about 7 to 32 litres.²² The content could be poured, especially when a spout is provided, or lifted. They are suitable for both short- and long-term storage and activities involving transfer and pouring.

Most of the sherds are dated, on the basis of their formal attributes, potting technology and contextual associations, to the MM IB period: they were found either in contexts where MM IB pottery is predominant (**SM 14**, **SM 17**, **SM 19**, **SM 22**, **SM 26**, **SM 30-31**) or in distributed contexts with pottery of various periods (**SM 2**, **SM 6-9**, **SM 34**, **SM 37-38**, **SM 42-44**, **SM 49**, **SM 53**, **SM 57**, **SM 71**, **SM 78**, **SM 81**, **SM 86**). The date of **SM 73** is uncertain: it could equally be MM IB or MM IIB. Jar **SM 67** is found in a somewhat disturbed MM IIB context; is dated to the MM IIB period. **SM 92** is dated MM IIIB-LM IA.

3. *Vessel with rounded upper body and semi-open mouth* (Fig. 16; Pl. 15)

SM 82 comes from the rim and body of a small vessel with a rounded upper body and semi-closed mouth. The exact shape cannot be determined. It was found in a context with pottery dated MM IIIB-LM IA and a few sherds of the LM IIIC/Subminoan period. A MM IIIB-LM IA date is more likely.

4. *Amphora* (Figs 16-17; Pls 1, 4, 8, 10, 13, 15-18)

Six handle sherds (**SM 4**, **SM 23**, **SM 58**, **SM 83**, **SM 88**, **SM 96**) and four body sherds (**SM 1**, **SM 45**, **SM 70**, **SM 94**) are classified as belonging to amphorae. The reconstruction of the formal attributes of the original vessels is not possible. The handles are attached at the rim and shoulder. Their surface treatment is quite simple: most are left plain and only one is covered with a reddish slip (**SM 88**). Fabric and surface treatment in this case follows the potting tradition of the Pediada. From the material dated to the Protopalatial period that has come to light to date, mostly sherds and some restorable examples, the following basic amphora types are found at Syme. In MM IB the most widespread was the oval-mouthed amphora, conical in the lower part of the body and globular in the upper part. It has a narrow closed neck and two vertical handles attached to the rim and shoulder.²³ Most are left plain and only a few examples are decorated with trickles. Belly-handled amphorae are also found but this shape seems rather rare.²⁴ Both types are handmade in a varied range of fabrics. **SM 23** most probably comes from an oval-mouthed amphora, while **SM 88** is too small to be identified with a specific type, although it is not from a belly-handled specimen. The common amphora form during MM IIB has a ovoid-conical body, oval mouth, distinct neck, and roll handles from rim to shoulder.²⁵ Sherds **SM 4**, **SM 58**, **SM 96** must come from such amphorae.

Differences in paste technology and in the types of pre-firing marks suggest production from several potting groups. **SM 1** and **SM 94** are the exception: they

22. These estimates are based on the fragmentary unmarked examples from the sanctuary and on data from similar vessels found elsewhere.

23. cf. Macdonald and Knappett 2007, 29,

fig. 3.11, pls 21, 32.

24. cf. Macdonald and Knappett 2007, 29, figs 3.11-12, pls 21, 32-33.

25. cf. Poursat and Knappett 2005, 40, type 2.

come from the body of two amphorae but are made of the same fabric, have the same surface treatment and are incised with the same pre-firing mark. Three sherds (**SM 1**, **SM 70**, **SM 94**) provide information on the manufacturing technology of the original vessels: they are coil-built with rotational aid. This technique is widespread, particularly with amphorae (actually large sherds) dated to MM IB. The technique was also widely used during the MM IIB period, while wheel-finished examples are rather rare. Although potters were familiar with wheel technology, it was not yet used for the manufacture of amphorae, a trend that was to change during MM III.

The dating of the marked sherds is not straightforward and is based mainly on the dating of the find context. **SM 1**, **SM 23**, **SM 88**, and **SM 94** are found in strata with MM IB pottery and dated to that period. **SM 4**, **SM 45**, **SM 58**, **SM 70** and **SM 96**, on the other hand, come from strata with MM IIB pottery. **SM 83** is found in a disturbed layer with pottery dated from MM IIB to the 1st millennium, making it exceptionally difficult to date. Fabric and surface treatment suggest a date from MM IIB to LM IB.

5. Jug (Fig. 17, Pls 3, 5, 7-8, 11, 14)

These are seven sherds from jug handles (**SM 15**, **SM 25**, **SM 29**, **SM 41**, **SM 47**, **SM 64**, **SM 75**). Two preserve a small part of the rim, while another includes part of the rim and neck. Reconstructing the shape of the jugs from which each sherd originates and forming a general idea of these vessels is difficult. Judging from the size of the handles, however, the original vessels, with one exception (**SM 64**), would have been sizeable. The surface treatment of the handles is simple: they are left plain, and only **SM 75** is coated with a reddish slip similar to that used in the area of the Pediada (especially at Kastelli). This vessel is an import from that region.

SM 15, **SM 25** and **SM 41** are found in a stratum with MM IB pottery. **SM 29** and **SM 75** are also dated MM IB, on the basis not of their context, which is disturbed, but of their fabric and surface treatment, which are typical of this period. **SM 64** is MM IIB in date, having been found in a stratum of this period. The dating of **SM 47** is problematic, as it was found in a layer with MM IB and MM IIB pottery, and its features do not lend themselves to a more precise chronological classification: it could be either MM IB or MM IIB.

6. Tumbler (Fig. 17; Pl. 13)

Typical features of tumblers used at the site are the conical shape, narrow flat base and straight or slightly flaring rim.²⁶ Their size varies from miniature versions to tall examples. They occur mainly in wheelmade versions with parallel or concentric striations at the base. The surface treatment is simple: in most cases the surface is well smoothed while there are also instances with minimal or no smoothing. Some are unslipped and others are covered all over with a deep-red, red, or brown slip. In slipped examples, the surface is polished and has an almost metallic sheen.

26. For tumblers see, Zois 1969, 21, 73-74; 1998, 68; Macdonald and Knappett 2007, 25. Levi and Carinci 1988, 179-181; MacGillivray

Their technological profile is identical to that of the tumblers produced in the Pediada, although tumblers with any form of painted decoration, like those found in the Pediada, are absent from Syme.²⁷

Tumblers are very common in the MM IB contexts of the site; actually MM IB is the main period of production and use of this shape.²⁸ Only one marked example (part of a base), however, has been found (**SM 72**). It was made using fine orange clay; the surface was coated all over with a deep red slip. Fabric and surface treatment are common in the region of the Pediada and seems to imitate the aesthetic effect of the Kastelli Ware, a ware with special symbolic connotations.²⁹ The vessel is a Pediada import.

7. *Handled cup* (Pl. 6)

SM 36 comes from the strap handle of a cup the exact type of which is unknown. Fabric and surface treatment indicates a point of origin in the Pediada area. In this region, such handles are typical of carinated cups.³⁰ Similar handles are also found on kantharoi.³¹ The sherd is found in a stratum of the MM IB period along with a few MM IIB-LM IA sherds; it is, however, datable to MM IB.

8. *Stemmed cup* (Fig. 17; Pl. 17)

Stemmed cups were excavated in very large numbers at the site and were found in deposits containing remains of cult activities. They constitute an essential part of eating/feasting ceremonies that took place at the sanctuary.³² The profile of the body is usually conical with a concave lower part, the base is flat, slightly projecting and the rim straight or slightly flaring.³³ Stamped cups are wheelmade using local clays. This shape, actually a very simple version of a chalice, occurs at Syme from MM IIB, but it was during the Neopalatial period that it would attain its widest distribution. Neopalatial examples have either a solidly painted exterior with monochrome paint or reed patterns in white-on-dark or dark-on-light style. Formal and technological features are highly standardized and point to production by local potting groups. Their functional performance characteristics are high accessibility to the contents, high transportability and graspability, and moderate stability.

Of the multitude of cups of this type, only one example with a pre-firing mark has been identified to date (**SM 93**). It is dated to the MM IIB-LM IA period. There

27. For tumblers from the Pediada region, see Rethemiotakis and Christakis 2004; 2011; Christakis 2013.

28. The main chronological horizon for the production of tumblers is the MM I period, Levi and Carinci 1988, 180-181; MacGillivray 1998, 68. However the type also occurred during MM IIA period, Macdonald and Knappett 2007, 25. The tumblers from Galatas and Kastelli, which are the closest parallels for those recovered at Syme, are dated to the MM IB period.

29. Rethemiotakis and Christakis 2004; 2011.

30. The cups are found in the Protopalatial complex built below the West Wing of the Galatas palace and dated MM IB. Rethemiotakis and Christakis 2004. The pottery from Kastelli is unpublished.

31. Rethemiotakis and Christakis 2004.

32. Lebessi and Muhly 1990; Archondaki 2012.

33. Archondaki 2012.

is no doubt that the marking of such vessels was by no means a common practice, something which is also evident from the total absence of pre-firing marks on the larger chalices.³⁴

9. Flaring bowl (Figs 18-19; Pls 3-4, 6, 10, 16)

Five sherds from the body and rim (**SM 13**, **SM 20-SM 21**, **SM 35**, **SM 56**) and a partly preserved vessel (**SM 84**) with pre-firing marks come from flaring bowls with conical body profile, flat base, either simple or slightly pronounced, and straight rim. Bowls are common in MM IB and MM IIB contexts. They are produced in a range of fabrics, both handmade and wheelmade: handmade versions are common in MM IB, although they are also present in MM IIB. The surface is usually smoothed, slipped or unslipped or covered with monochrome paint all over. Some examples are coated with a thick red slip that, depending on firing conditions, may vary from deep reddish to reddish-brown to black. The surface has an almost metallic sheen. This last surface treatment is particularly common in the Pediada area during MM IB and these are imports from that region. The manufacture of all these bowls is highly standardized, with low labour investment and low skill.

SM 21 and **SM 56**, as well as **SM 20** and **SM 35** are two groups of four different flaring bowls with identical formal attributes, fabric and forming technology, surface treatment and pre-firing marks. The other two sherds, **SM 13** and **SM 84**, come from flaring bowls with similar formal features and are both incised with exactly the same pre-firing mark, but their clay and surface treatment differ. Flaring bowls are vessels of high stability, accessibility to the content, transportability and graspability, the mouth is not easily covered and the content could be removed by lifting. They could be used for serving purposes and mixing.

Most of the sherds have been found in strata with MM IB pottery; this, taken together with their formal and technological attributes, places them beyond doubt in this period (**SM 13**, **SM 20-SM 21**). In other cases, the MM IB pottery was found with pottery of other periods ranging from MM IIB to the 1st millennium. The formal and technological features of the sherds and their similarities to those discovered in MM IB strata date them to the MM IB period (**SM 35**, **SM 56**, **SM 84**).

10. Cooking pot (Figs 19-20; Pls 1-3, 5-6, 8-11, 15-18)

Twenty-two sherds are classified as belonging to cooking pots. Most of them are parts of handles (**SM 3**, **SM 18**, **SM 24**, **SM 32-SM 33**, **SM 46**, **SM 48**, **SM 50**, **SM 55**, **SM 60**, **SM 62**, **SM 65**, **SM 80**, **SM 87**, **SM 98**). In addition to the handle, some sherds also preserve part of the body of the vessel (**SM 10**, **SM 27-SM 28**, **SM 61**, **SM 79**, **SM 90-SM 91**). It is impossible, given such a fragmentary body of evidence, to reconstruct the formal and technological attributes of the original vessels. Examples that preserve part of the body point to two basic types: the first would

34. Many thanks are due to Mrs Kaiti Archondaki for the discussion and information

provided on stemmed cups and chalices.

have had a slightly rounded body profile, while the other was straight-sided.³⁵ These two types are also represented in the large, though fragmentary, assemblage of unmarked cooking pots from the site. It is worth noting that although cooking pots are quite common at Syme, most are in a fragmentary state of preservation and only very few are partly restorable, as a result not only of the complex taphonomy of the site but also of the thermal stress to which they were subject during their use.

Cooking pots are made in a range of fabrics some of which are not local. Body fragments with forming traces suggest that the pots they came from are handmade with minimal rotational aid. Additional information, however, shows that the wheel is also used: wheelmade versions were popular during the Neopalatial period but also occurred during the Protopalatial period, although not in high proportions compared to the handmade ones. Most have their surface smoothed, while a fine texture slip has been applied in few cases. Of particular interest is the case of **SM 50** and **SM 60**: both have the same fabric and surface treatment, similar to that of pots produced in the region of the Pediada, but different pre-firing marks.

The dating of such fragmentary material is problematic. Some of the sherds were found in strata with MM IB pottery and are therefore dated to that period (**SM 10**, **SM 18**, **SM 24**). Others were found in strata with pottery of both MM IB and other periods: the MM IB date proposed here is based on the potting technology, which resembles that of the sherds found in MM IB layers (**SM 3**, **SM 27-SM 28**, **SM 32-SM 33**, **SM 46**, **SM 50**, **SM 87**, **SM 90-SM 91**, **SM 98**). The date of seven examples is uncertain: they may be either MM IB or MM IIB in date (**SM 48**, **SM 55**, **SM 60**, **SM 62**, **SM 65**, **SM 79**, **SM 80**). Finally one is MM IIB in date (**SM 61**).

11. Basin (Fig. 20; Pls 1-3, 7, 9-10, 14)

Basins are defined here as shallow conical or slightly cylindrical large open vessels. Under this heading are grouped seven handle and body sherds (**SM 5**, **SM 12**, **SM 16**, **SM 40**, **SM 51**, **SM 59**, **SM 76**). The bodies of the vessels from which they are derived are mostly conical in profile; one had a conical-convex profile. The rim usually follows the body profile and the base is flat. Two horizontal handles are placed below the rim. The walls are relatively thick and made of medium-coarse or coarse fabrics. Basins were coil-built with rotation. Their interior and exterior is well smoothed and in some cases covered with a red slip, fired a deep reddish to reddish-brown. This surface treatment is reminiscent of that of similar pottery produced in the Pediada.

Many fragments share a number of formal and technological traits. **SM 5**, **SM 12**, **SM 40**, **SM 51**, **SM 59** come from different pots with the same fabric, surface treatment and mark. Basins are vessels distinctive for their high stability, accessibility to the content, transportability and graspability; the mouth is not easily covered and the content could be removed by lifting and pouring. They could be

35. For the basic types of cooking pot in use during the Protopalatial period, see Be-

tancourt 1980; Levi and Carinci 1988, 29-32; Poursat and Knappett 2005, 55-58.

used for short-term storage of both solid and liquid commodities, and for activities involving soaking, mixing and pouring.

Basins of various shapes and sizes were found in most Bronze Age deposits of the site; however, they are frequent in strata dated to the Protopalatial period. **SM 12** is found in a stratum with MM IB pottery. **SM 59** is also dated to the same period: it was found in a layer of mostly MM IIB pottery with a few MM IB sherds, but its similarity to **SM 12** indicates a MM IB date. **SM 5**, **SM 40** and **SM 51** are found in strata with MM IB pottery and a few sherds dated to MM IIB, MM IIIA-MM IIIB, LM IA and the 1st millennium. The MM IB date proposed here is based on the potting technology.

III

THE MARKS: FORM, APPEARANCE AND POSITION

A mark type is defined here as a specific combination of elements, the smallest individual components of each mark, found in one or more examples.¹ These elements can be categorized, in the case of pre-firing marks attested at Syme, as linear incisions, impressed dots and angular and finger impressions.² Form and appearance are the basic parameters for the grouping of the various mark types attested at Syme. The position of the mark on the vessel is not considered to be of primary importance, since the same mark may have been made in different places; this makes position an unsafe classification criterion.³ The present approach do not underestimated the significance of mark position in drawing meaningful conclusions on patterns of process. I would suggest that the positioning is not the result of aesthetic preferences, manufacturing procedures or even coincidence; rather, the placement of the mark, combined with its size and contrast to the surface to which it is applied, determines the visibility of the mark and consequently the transmission of its semantic 'message'.⁴

No two marks are absolutely identical, although many are clearly intended to be the same; there are always variations in the execution of their elements (length, depth, width and irregularities) and their relationship to each other (angle and distance). Individual marks presenting only minor differences would presumably have been recognized as belonging to the same conceptual category. Very similar marks are typologically grouped together. This grouping inevitably obscures minor variations in appearance and execution of similar marks; it is these attributes that are stressed here, in the context of each typological unit, since this permits to approach the individual behind the lifeless objects. Several marks are only found once in the sanctuary. Is this single appearance due to the limited archaeological investigation, which could not identify other similar examples, or does it reflect patterns of process? This question cannot be answered on the basis of the evidence currently available.

Particular emphasis is placed on the search for meaningful correlations between mark types, shapes, and potting technology. Whatever the significance of

1. cf. Lindblom 2001, 46.

2. Pre-firing marks from other sites of the island are constructed using more varied elements but these will be discussed in Chapters V and VI.

3. For classification criteria that inspired the present work see Adams and Adams 1991.

4. cf. Hirschfeld 1999, 39-41; Lindblom 2001, 46.

the marks, they are assumed to be linked to the properties of the vessels themselves. In other words, different marks should correspond to different properties, such as manufacturing technique, ceramic classes, capacity, shapes and features. With the exception of M. Lindblom's detailed study, no definitive patterns have yet emerged from the published studies of pre-firing marks from other settlements in Crete and the Aegean.⁵ The adoption of such an approach is largely determined by the quantity and quality of the material examined; in the case of Syme the material has many limitations.

The pre-firing marks are divided into two groups. The first includes intact or partly preserved albeit identifiable marks. The second group includes all partly preserved marks which cannot be reconstructed and assigned to a specific type. As regards the naming of each mark type, simple and easily understood terms based on geometrical shapes, e.g. straight line, triangle, V-shaped mark and so on, are adopted here avoiding more subjective or descriptive names except in a very few cases.

IDENTIFIABLE MARKS

1-7. Long/short incised line/s (Figs 11, 15, 19-21; Pls 1-12, 14-18, 20, 21)

Under this heading are grouped marks consisting of a long or, more commonly, a short line incised vertically, horizontally or obliquely on the horizontal handles of cooking pots, jars, pithoid jars, and basins, and in a few cases on the vertical handles of pithoi and amphorae or close to the rim of bowls. In the case of handles, the incision or incisions are always cut on the lateral side, except in one case (**SM 34**) where the mark is incised on the upper side of the handle. The incised lines are found either isolated or most frequently in groups of two, three, four, or five parallel lines. The mark is immediately and easily seen in all cases. These marks are dated to the MM IB period.

1. One long line. The mark consists of a line 2 to 3.4 cm long. The incision is deep, thin and carefully executed. The ill-formed line on **SM 16** is due to the over-firing of the vessel. The mark mainly appears on the horizontal handles of cooking pots, jars, and basins. Dated to MM IB. **SM 6, SM 15-SM 16, SM 24, SM 34, SM 89, SM 92.**

2. Two long lines. The mark consists of two long parallel lines up to 3.8 cm long. The incisions are deep, thin and carefully executed. The mark is incised on the horizontal handles of two basins. Both vessels share similar morphological and technological features, while the marks are identical in appearance and execution. All these point to production by the same potting group. Dated to MM IB. **SM 12, SM 59.**

3. Four/five long lines. The mark consists of four or five parallel lines up to 2.7 cm long. The incisions are shallow and thin. The mark is incised close to the rim of bowls. Both vessels share similar morphological and technological features and were probably products of the same potting group. Dated to MM IB. **SM 21, SM 56.**

5. Lindblom 2001.

4. *One short line.* The mark consists of one short line, the length of which usually varies from 1.2 to 1.5 cm and only in two examples reaches 1.7 cm. The mark is usually incised on the horizontal handles of cooking pots, basins and jars, while in three examples it is incised on the vertical handle of an amphora and a pithos. Dated to MM IB. **SM 5, SM 10, SM 22, SM 23, SM 37, SM 40, SM 43, SM 51, SM 66, SM 88, SM 90.**

5. *Two short lines.* The mark consists of two short parallel lines, the length of which usually varies from 1.2 to 1.6 cm. The incisions are deep, thin and carefully executed. The mark is incised on the horizontal handles of cooking pots, basins and pithoid jars. Dated to MM IB. **SM 11, SM 76, SM 86, SM 91.**

6. *Three short lines.* The mark consists of three short parallel lines 0.8 to 1.3 cm long. The incisions are deep and fairly wide, except in the case of **SM 62** where it is shallow and thin. The mark is incised on the horizontal handles of cooking pots. **SM 3** and **SM 87** are identical in appearance and execution, but are incised on two cooking pots made of different fabric. It is also worth noting that **SM 91** is incised in the same way as the two above, but with two rather than three lines. Dated to MM IB. **SM 3, SM 28, SM 62, SM 87.**

7. *Four short lines.* The mark consists of four short parallel lines 0.7 to 1.2 cm long. The incisions are deep and thin. The mark is incised on the horizontal handles of cooking pots and on the vertical handle of an amphora. Dated to MM IB. **SM 25, SM 32, SM 50.**

A set of partly preserved marks is also assigned in this typological group. Two (**SM 27, SM 73, SM 98**), three (**SM 55, SM 75**), four (**SM 18**) or five (**SM 80**) incised, short parallel lines are preserved from the original mark. The incisions vary from thin and shallow to wide and deep. They are carefully executed except in the case of **SM 27**. The way in which **SM 98** has been made resembles that of **SM 80**, while **SM 18** is similar to **SM 50**. The marks are incised on the horizontal handles of cooking pots (**SM 18, SM 27, SM 55, SM 80, SM 98**) and of a jar (**SM 73**) and on the vertical handle of a jug (**SM 75**). The marks are immediately and easily seen in all cases. Dated to MM IB (**SM 18, SM 28, SM 75**), MM IIB (**SM 98**) and MM IB or MM IIB (**SM 55, SM 73, SM 80**).

8. *T-shaped incised lines* (Figs 17, 21; Pl. 10)

Two incised lines meeting at a right angle in a T-shaped mark. The incisions are deep and wide and carefully executed. The mark is incised on the lower section of the vertical handle of an amphora and is immediately and easily seen. Dated to MM IIB. **SM 58.**

9. *Double T-shaped incised lines* (Fig. 21; Pl. 18)

Two parallel horizontal lines are connected by a third. The incised lines are deep and wide and carefully executed. The mark is incised on the lower section of the vertical handle of an amphora and is immediately and easily seen. Dated to MM IIB. **SM 96.**

10-11. Crossed incised lines at a right (10) or an acute (11) angle (Figs 12, 16-17, 21; Pls 1-2, 5, 7-8, 11, 17)

The marks of this group consist of one long and one short incised line crossing at a right (**SM 41, SM 47, SM 52, SM 61**) or an acute (**SM 4, SM 9, SM 29, SM 45, SM 93**) angle. The length of the long line varies from 1.8 to 3.2 cm, while the short line is 1 to 2 cm long. The short line intersects the long one either at its centre or near one end. The incised lines are deep and wide except for **SM 4, SM 9, SM 45** and **SM 52** where the incision has been made with a sharp-edged tool. These marks are displayed on the vertical handles of jugs, amphorae, on the horizontal handles of cooking pots, on the handle of a pithos, and on the body of a stemmed cup. The marks of this group are immediately and easily seen. Five marks are dated to MM IB (**SM 4, SM 9, SM 41**), two to MM IIB (**SM 47, SM 61**) and one to MM IIIB-LM IA (**SM 93**). **SM 29, SM 45, SM 52** may be either MM IB or MM IIB in date.

Most marks present considerable variation in appearance and execution. This, combined with the variation in fabric, points to different mental templates and thus to different potting groups/potters. Only two marks, **SM 4** and **SM 9**, show considerable similarity of execution, although the mark itself is different: crossed incised lines at an acute angle in the shape of a long cross in the case of **SM 4**, and crossed incised lines at an acute angle in an X-shape in the case of **SM 9**. The difference in appearance between these marks is probably due to the shape of the handles they were incised on. Both marks were incised on vessels produced using the same potting technology. **SM 4, SM 9, SM 29, SM 41, SM 45, SM 47, SM 52, SM 61, SM 93**.

12. One horizontal and two obliquely incised lines (Figs 19, 21; Pl. 8)

Two evenly spaced lines are transversed by a longer third line at an acute angle. The incisions are thin and carelessly made. The mark is incised on the horizontal handle of a cooking pot and is immediately and easily seen. Dated to the MM IB or MM IIB periods. **SM 48**.

13. Evenly spaced lines transversed at a right angle by a longer one (Figs 14-16, 20-21; Pls 1-9, 13, 15, 19-20)

This is the most common pre-firing mark found at Syme. The marks of this group consist of three evenly spaced lines transversed at right angle by a longer fourth. The mark has been made in one of two ways: either the long line has been incised before the three short ones, or vice versa. The mark is mostly incised on the handles of jars; it is also found on the handle of a cooking pot, a pithos, and one-handled cup, as well as close to the rim of two bowls. In all cases, it is immediately and easily seen. These marks are dated to the MM IB period. Based on appearance and execution, they can be divided into 14 different types (*Types 13a-n*).

13a. The long line has been incised before the three short. The length of the long line is 1.8 cm and that of the short lines 0.4 cm. The incisions are deep, thin and carefully executed with a sharp tool. The mark is incised on the upper side of the handle of a jar close to the attachment. **SM 31**.

13b. The long line has been incised before the short ones. The length of the

long line is 2.7 cm and that of the short lines 1.5 cm. The incisions are deep, thin and carefully executed with a sharp tool. The mark is incised on the upper side of the handle of a jar close to the attachment. **SM 71.**

13c. The short lines have been incised before the long one. The length of the long line is 3 cm and that of the short lines 1.4 cm. The incisions are deep, wide and hastily executed with a wide-edged tool. The mark is incised on the upper side of the handle of a jar close to the attachment. **SM 2.**

13d. In this type, too, the short lines have been incised before the long one. The type occurs in two examples. In the first, **SM 38**, the length of the long line is 3 cm and that of the three short 1.8, 1.6 and 1.3 cm. This is one of the few examples of a mark in this group where the length of the short lines varies (cf. **SM 20**, **SM 35**, **SM 81**). In the second, **SM 42**, the length of the long line is 3 cm and that of the short lines 1.6, 1.4 and 1.3 cm. A particularity of the marks of this type is the fact that it was incised using two different instruments: a fine tool with a slightly squared-off end for the short lines, and a thicker one for the long line. The mark is incised on the upper side of the handle of a jar close to the attachment. **SM 38**, **SM 42.**

13e. The short lines have been incised before the long one. The length of the long line is 2.5 cm and that of the short lines 1.4 cm. The incisions are shallow, wide and hastily executed with a wide-edged tool. The mark is incised on the upper side of the handle of a jar close to the attachment. **SM 30.**

13f. This type of mark is similar to the previous one: the sequence and method of incision of the lines forming the mark are the same, as are its dimensions. However, the arrangement of the short lines in relation to the long one is not uniform as in *13e*. The mark is incised on the upper side of the handle of a jar close to the attachment. **SM 53.**

13g. The short lines have been made before the long one. The length of the long line is 2.6 cm and that of the short ones 1.1 cm. The incisions are deep, thin and carefully executed with a sharp tool. The mark is incised on the side and near the attachment of the horizontal handle of a jar. **SM 19.**

13h. The short lines have been made before the long one. The length of the long line is 2.4 cm and that of the short ones 1.4 cm. The incisions are deep, thin and carefully executed with a sharp tool. The mark is incised on the side and near the attachment of the horizontal handle of a jar. **SM 17.**

13i. The long line has been incised before the three short ones. The length of the long line is 2.6 cm and that of the short ones 1.6 cm. The incisions are deep, thin and carefully executed with a sharp tool, creating, through the displacement of the clay on either side, a 'plastic' effect. The mark is incised on the upper side of the handle close to the attachment. Two marks were found, almost identical in appearance, incised on jars that were made following the same potting technology. Both pots were the products of the same potting group. **SM 14**, **SM 49.**

Marks *13a-i* are similar in their basic formal characteristics, despite minor differences in execution and in the end result. They have also been incised on vessels of the same shape, made of the same fabric and with the same surface treatment. These vessels are products of a specific potting group whose members used the same potting technology and carved the same mark on the jar, although each person did so in a different way.

The following marks are different from those of the above group, presenting significant differences in formal attributes. The vessels also on which these marks are incised were also made following different potting technologies.

13j. The long line has been incised before the three short ones. The length of the long line is 3 cm and that of the short lines 1.5, 0.8 and 0.5 cm. The incisions are deep, wide and crudely executed. The mark appears on the side and near the attachment of the horizontal handle of a jar. **SM 81.**

13k. The long line has been incised before the three short ones. The length of the long line is 3.5 to 4 cm and that of the short ones 0.8 to 1.7 cm. The long line is shallow, unlike the deep short lines. The tool with which the short lines have been made is square in section, giving them a particular appearance. The mark is crudely executed. The mark appears on the side and near the attachment of the horizontal handle of a jar and on the handle of a large pithos. **SM 7, SM 44.**

13l. The short incisions have been made before the long one. The length of the long line is 3.1 cm and that of the short ones 1.1 cm. The incisions are deep and very crudely executed. The mark is found on the side and near the attachment of the horizontal handle of a cooking pot. **SM 79.**

13m. The short incisions have been made before the long one. The length of the long and short lines is 1.5 cm. The incisions are shallow, thin and hastily executed with a sharp-edged tool. It is incised on the upper part of the vertical handle of a cup. **SM 36.**

13n. The short incisions have been made before the long one. The length of the long line is 2.2 cm and that of the short ones 2.2 and 1.8 cm. The incisions are deep and executed with a wide-edged tool. The marks occur on the interior of two bowls, below the rim. Both vessels share similar formal and technological features and are probably products of the same potting group. Dated to MM IB. **SM 20, SM 35.**

This typological group also includes two partially preserved pre-firing marks. **SM 8** preserves parts of the three horizontal lines and the fourth long one which transverses the others at a right angle. The incisions are very thin and shallow. The mark occurs on the side of the horizontal handle of a jar. The potting technology is reminiscent of that of the jar on which **SM 71** has been incised. Marks **SM 8** and **SM 71** though are completely different. Dated to MM IB. The other mark, **SM 33**, is incised on the horizontal handle of a cooking pot. Three evenly spaced incised lines are preserved, with very faint traces of the longer fourth line. Dated to MM IB. Neither of these pre-firing marks bears any similarity in appearance and execution to those of the previous groups.

14. Two lines forming a V-shape (Figs 13, 17, 21, 22; Pls 11, 13, 15)

Two short incised lines meet at a V-shaped acute angle. The execution varies from case to case. The mark occurs on various shapes: amphora, cooking pot, jug and pithos. It is always incised on the handle and is immediately and easily seen in all cases. Dated to MM IIB (**SM 64**), MM IB or MM IIB (**SM 65**), MM IIB-LM IA (**SM 69, SM 83**) periods. **SM 64-SM 65, SM 69, SM 83.**

15. *Triangle* (Figs 19-22; Pls 3, 16, 20)

Three incised lines in the shape of a triangle. The length of the lines varies from 1.8 to 2.2 cm. The incisions are deep, wide, and carefully executed. The mark is displayed close to the rim of two bowls and is immediately and easily seen. Both vessels (in fact a partly preserved example and a rim sherd of another) have similar rims –and perhaps also other morphological features– similar surface treatment, and identical marks, but are made from different fabrics. The occurrence of a mark, identical in appearance and execution, on two similar pots certainly indicates mental associations. Dated to MM IB. **SM 13, SM 84.**

16. *Lozenge* (Figs 12, 22; Pls 7, 9, 20)

Four incised lines in the shape of a lozenge. The incisions are deep, wide, and carefully executed with a sharp-edged tool. The mark is incised on the lateral side of the horizontal handle of two pithoi and is immediately and easily seen. The marks differ in appearance and execution, but they occur on two pithoi of the same fabric and with the same surface treatment that are products of the same potting group. Dated to MM IB. **SM 39, SM 54.**

17. *Rectangle* (Figs 17, 22; Pls 1, 17, 20)

Four incised lines in the shape of a rectangle. The incisions are deep, wide, and carefully executed. The mark occurs on the body of two amphorae and is immediately and easily seen. Both marks are identical in appearance and execution, while the vessels share the same fabric and surface treatment and are the products of the same potting group. Dated to MM IB. **SM 1, SM 94.**

18. *Rectangle with an X* (Figs 13, 22; Pl. 18)

An incised rectangle, its corners connected by an incised X. The incisions are deep, wide, and carefully executed. The mark occurs on the body of a pithos. It is difficult to determine the visibility of the mark, as only a sherd of the original pithos is preserved. Considering that the pithos was a large specimen, the mark was not immediately visible, and in any case its visibility was dependent on the position of the pithos in the storeroom. Dated to LM IA or LM IB. **SM 95.**

19. *Double axe* (Figs 11, 13-14, 16, 22; Pls 12-14)

This is the only pictorial mark found at Syme. It occurs in two versions: the first, attested in two examples (**SM 67, SM 70**), is schematic, while the second is more naturalistic (**SM 68, SM 74, SM 77**). In **SM 67** all the lines forming the outline of the axe are straight, except for one which is slightly curved. The double axe is essentially formed of two triangles joined at the apex. **SM 70** has the same schematic outline; a small straight line has also been incised parallel to one blade. On neither of the marks is the handle of the double axe depicted. The incisions are deep, wide, and carefully executed. These two schematic versions are incised, the first on a jar, close to the rim and between the handles, and the second on the body of an amphora. The marks are immediately and easily seen. Both are dated to MM IIB.

The three other examples are incised on large pithoi which share similar morphological features. In this case there is a definite attempt to depict the double

axe in a less schematic manner, with a combination of straight and curved incised lines. In two cases the axe is depicted horizontally (**SM 74**, **SM 77**) while in the third it is vertical (**SM 68**). Each mark differs from the others, not only in shape but also in execution: in **SM 74** the incisions are deep, wide and carefully executed, while **SM 77** is more roughly made. **SM 68** is formed of particularly thin incisions. The appearance of the marks, combined with the different technological profile of the corresponding pithoi, indisputably indicates different potters. In all three cases, the mark has been made in the area between the handles of the upper row of handles. Although this part is certainly prominent, the visibility of the mark depends on the position of the vessel in the storeroom. This group of marks, too, is dated to MM IIB. **SM 67**, **SM 68**, **SM 70**, **SM 74**, **SM 77**.

20. Sign of Hieroglyphic script (Figs 17, 22; Pl. 13)

A sign similar to 061 syllabogram of Hieroglyphic script is incised below the base of a tumbler and not easily seen. The incisions are shallow and wide. Dated to MM IB. **SM 72**.

21. Linear A sign (Figs 12, 22; Pl. 18)

Linear A syllabogram AB27 incised on the upper surface of the rim of a conical pithos. The incision is very thin, shallow and carefully executed. This is the only mark from the site identifiable as a sign of the Linear A script. The visibility of the mark is limited; the incision is very fine and shallow and the mark can just be made out on the surface of the pithos. It should also be noted that the visibility of the mark would depend on the position of the pithos in the storeroom. Dated to MM IIIA-LM IB. **SM 97**.

22. Impressed dots (Figs 14, 22; Pls 5, 10, 15)

The mark consists of impressed dots on soft clay. Five dots are impressed on **SM 78** and **SM 57**, although the latter example is partly preserved. Two dots are impressed on the third example but the mark is not fully preserved (**SM 26**). It occurs on the upper part of the horizontal handle of jars, close to the attachment of the handle, and is immediately and easily seen. The marks are different in appearance and execution but were impressed on vessels of the same shape and fabric. Dated to MM IB. **SM 26**, **SM 57**, **SM 78**.

23. Angular impressions (Fig. 22; Pl. 8)

This mark is attested in one example. It has been impressed using a tool with an angled point. The impression is angular and wide. It occurs on the upper part of the horizontal handle of a cooking pot, close to the attachment, and is immediately and easily seen. Dated to MM IB. **SM 46**.

24. Finger impression (Pl. 10)

The mark consists of a single shallow oval impression, most probably made by the potters' finger. It is impressed on the side of the horizontal handle of a cooking pot, close to the attachment, and is immediately and easily seen. Dated to MM IB. **SM 60**.

UNIDENTIFIABLE MARKS

Arched incised line (Fig. 11; Pl. 16)

An arched incised line is the only preserved part of the original mark. The incision is deep, wide and well executed. It is very possibly the tip of a double axe vertically incised. The mark is applied in the space between the handles of the upper row of handles of a pithos. Although this part is certainly prominent, the visibility of the mark depends on the position of the vessel in the storeroom. The formal attributes of the pithos are similar to those of the pithoi incised with the mark of the double axe, discussed above (**SM 68, SM 74, SM 77**). Dated to MM IIB. **SM 85**.

Incised lines joining at an acute angle (Fig. 16; Pl. 15)

Part of two incised lines joining at an acute angle. The fragmentary preservation makes it unclear whether the original mark was V-shaped or triangular. The mark is incised close to the rim of the rounded upper body of a vessel with semi-closed mouth and is easily seen. Dated to MM IIIB-LM IA. **SM 82**.

Crossed incised lines (Fig. 12; Pl. 11)

A long line crossing, at an acute angle, another near its end is preserved from the original mark. The mark is incised below the rim of a pithos, near the handle. Although this part is certainly prominent, the visibility of the mark depends on the position of the vessel in the storeroom. Dated to MM IIB. **SM 63**.

PRE-FIRING MARKS AT SYME

A total of 98 sherds and partly preserved vessels with pre-firing marks were found at Syme during the excavations carried out 1972 to 2003 (Table 1). Compared to the large quantities of unmarked vessels found at the sanctuary, these 98 cases show that marking vessels was certainly not a widespread practice at Syme. A similar picture emerges when we compare the number of marked vessels of any specific period with the total number of unmarked vessels in use during that period. Only a very small number of the vessels used at the sanctuary bore pre-firing marks, a picture also found at other sites of Crete.

The marks are grouped, on the basis of their composition and appearance, in 24 basic typological units of which 21 comprise incised marks and three impressed (Table 2).⁶ Applied or painted marks are not found among the material collected. Marks are simple in their perception: they are individually built up of simple elements such as linear incisions and impressed dots, angular and finger impressions. Marks consisting of more than one category of element, made using different tools, are not found. A few vessels bear individual marks, such as a single linear incision or a finger impression. The rest comprise two or more of the same kind of element.

6. Table 2 does not include **SM 8, SM 18, SM 27, SM 33, SM 55, SM 73, SM 75, SM 80, SM 98** because, although they have been

assigned to a typological group, their original aspect is not entirely certain.

The most widespread types of mark are long/short straight incised lines, followed by marks of evenly spaced lines transversed at a right angle by a longer one, crossed incised lines at a right or an acute angle, double axe, V-shaped incised lines, impressed dots, lozenge, and rectangle (Table 2). Some marks occur only once: T-shaped incised lines, double T-shaped incised lines, one horizontal and two vertical incised lines, rectangle with an X, Hieroglyphic and Linear A script signs, angular and finger impressions. Of the marks formed of long/short incised lines, the commonest consist of short lines, especially a single short line. The group of marks of evenly spaced lines transversed at a right angle by a longer one is particularly interesting, as these are not often found on Crete.⁷ It is not certain how many marks were originally present on the same vessel, since the preserved part is too small. None of the marked sherds discussed here come from the same vessel.

Various tools are used to incise or impress the marks in each case, but it is difficult to ascertain the precise shape of these instruments. Some marks are made by a tool, possibly metal, with thin, sharp edges. The incisions are deep and thin to very thin (e.g. **SM 4**, **SM 36**, **SM 50**, **SM 56**, **SM 68**, **SM 97**). Many other marks have been made not with the point but with the long edge of the tool, which produced wide and deep incisions (e.g. **SM 3**, **SM 5**, **SM 11**, **SM 28**, **SM 33**, **SM 37**, **SM 55**, **SM 88**, **SM 91**). The edges were either angular (e.g. **SM 28**, **SM 40**, **SM 51**, **SM 61**, **SM 62**, **SM 87**) or rectangular in section (e.g. **SM 2**, **SM 7**, **SM 17**, **SM 30**, **SM 38**, **SM 44**). A thin, pointed tool, probably a stick, must have been used for the impressed dots (**SM 26**, **SM 57**, **SM 78**). For angular impressions, such as those on **SM 46**, a stick with an angled point was used, producing deep, angular and wide imprints. The smooth edges of the incisions show that the incisions/impressions were made while the clay was still soft and wet. Painted vessels had the paint applied after receiving the mark. It is not certain whether the person who made the vessel, and presumably incised the mark, was the same person who applied the paint. The application of painted decoration, especially elaborate decoration, requires different skills to those necessary to make a pot. A vast array of testimonies, especially in the historically recorded past, show that in many cases the maker and the painter of a vessel were two different people.⁸ In the case of the vessels examined here, the decoration is simple, so the potter may also have been the person who applied the monochrome paint. In most cases, the marks are very carefully incised in the wet clay – with a few exceptions such as **SM 10**, **SM 16**, **SM 19**, **SM 27**, **SM 29**, **SM 36**, **SM 44**, **SM 48**, **SM 65**, **SM 79** – and the overall effect betrays the potters' familiarity with marking. These would certainly not have been the only vessels marked by the potters.

Most marks are incised on wide-mouthed jars and cooking pots: 28 and 22 examples respectively have been recovered (Chart 2). Together they comprise 50% of all sherds and partly preserved vessels with pre-firing marks. There are 14 markings on pithoi and 10 on amphorae. Six marks occur on flaring bowls and seven on basins and jugs. Cups with marks are extremely rare: only a tumbler, a stemmed cup and one-handed cup are attested. Thus, the vessels marked are mostly those

7. For a full discussion see Chapter VI.

8. e.g. Beazley 1956; Cook 1960, 256-257.

used for storage and cooking, whereas vessels used for serving and drinking were not often marked. These occurrences depend in part on the available data, although, they may also reflect actual patterns of process, since similar trends have been identified at other Cretan sites (Table 4). The question, how far can the high frequency of marking storage and cooking vessels be taken as an indication of particular marking preferences or reflect intensity in the production patterns of these vessels, cannot be answered on the basis of the presently available information.

The correlation of mark types to the shapes on which they occur reveals some meaningful connections, although this pertains only to those that occur more than once. Singletons and unidentifiable marks cannot be considered in the discussion of the connections between mark and shape. The most widely attested mark types at Syme, namely marks of long/short incised line/s and evenly spaced lines transversed at a right angle by a longer one, occur on several shapes: the former on amphorae, basins, bowls, cooking pots, jars, jugs and pithoi, and the latter on jars, bowls, cups and pithoi. Of the marks formed by long/short incised line/s, groups of short incised lines are common. Basins were marked only with marks of long/short incised line/s, and so far there is no evidence for the use of another mark type on such shapes. Marks of long/short incised line/s also predominate on cooking pots: of 22 recovered examples, 15 bear marks of long/short lines while the rest are marked with finger and angular impressions, marks of three evenly spaced lines transversed at a right angle by a longer fourth, crossed lines at a right angle, and V-shaped incisions. Marks of long/short incised line/s are uncommon on pithoi.

Marks of evenly spaced lines transversed at a right angle by a longer one are linked particularly to jars: 14 of the 18 marks identified are found exclusively on this type of vessel. Other marks found on these vessels are those consisting of long/short incised lines, usually appearing as singletons and only once as a pair, as well as the double axe, lines crossed at an acute angle, and impressed dots.

Two other correlations concern the marks of the double axe and impressed dots. The double axe appears on five examples, three of which are incised on pithoi, one on an amphora and another on a jar. The mark of impressed dots appears exclusively on jars. These two marks, however, are represented by relatively few examples, so it cannot be determined whether these correlations are accidental or due to a conscious choice by the potter. The same doubt also applies in the case of the rectangle, triangle and lozenge marks which occur on two amphorae, two bowls and two pithoi respectively. The appearance of each mark on vessels with similar morphological, functional and technological characteristics is certainly not random; but with only two recorded examples of each mark, it is uncertain whether their occurrence on the respective shapes is accidental or not.

In general, marks may be made on any part of the vessel. At other Aegean and Cretan sites there is a preference for marking the body, handles and base. The rim, shoulders, interior and bottom are marked more rarely. On the vessels used at Syme, most of the marks are incised/impressed on the handle of the vessel, on its upper surface or the sides, and always near the attachment of the handle to the body, while in four cases the mark has been incised in roughly the middle of the

handle (e.g. **SM 34, SM 52, SM 88**). Marks are also incised on the body of a vessel, at approximately its greatest diameter, or else below the rim or between the upper handles (e.g. **SM 1, SM 63, SM 67, SM 70, SM 74, SM 95**). In open vessels the mark is placed in the interior, below the rim (e.g. **SM 13, SM 21, SM 56, SM 84**). There is only one case of a pre-firing mark being incised under the base of a vessel (**SM 72**). In most cases, the marks are immediately and easily seen. Obviously the visibility of the marks incised on pithoi, even if they are in a prominent spot, depends on the placement of the pithos in the storeroom. The only mark incised in a low-visibility location is that on the base of a tumbler (**SM 72**): the mark would only have been visible when the cup was placed upside-down, not when it was in use.

The major use of marked vessels in the sanctuary falls within the boundaries of the Protopalatial period. A considerable percentage, 66% of the total, was found in contexts dated MM IB and associated with Buildings Y, V and the building/s in the north part of the west area of the site (Table 1, Chart 1; **SM 1-SM 28, SM 30-SM 44, SM 46, SM 49-SM 50, SM 53-SM 54, SM 56-SM 57, SM 59, SM 71-SM 72, SM 75-SM 76, SM 78-SM 79, SM 81, SM 84, SM 86, SM 88-SM 91, SM 94**). Some other marked sherds, 15% of the total, are MM IIB and the vessels they come from were used in Building U (Table 1, Chart 1; **SM 47, SM 58, SM 61, SM 63-SM 64, SM 66-SM 68, SM 70, SM 74, SM 77, SM 85, SM 96, SM 98**). A few examples, 3% of the total, are dated to the MM IIIB or LM IA periods and were associated with the Sacred Enclosure (Table 1, Chart 1; **SM 82, SM 92, SM 93**). **SM 97** is MM IIIA to LM IB in date, while **SM 95** is placed in LM IA or LM IB. Finally, the exact date of 14 pre-firing marks is uncertain for two reasons: the find context is heavily disturbed, and the morphological and technological attributes of the vessels/sherds are insufficient for a precise dating. **SM 29, SM 45, SM 48, SM 51-SM 52, SM 55, SM 60, SM 62, SM 65, SM 73, SM 80** may be dated to MM IB or MM IIB, while **SM 69** and **SM 83** may equally be assigned to MM IIB, MM IIIA, MM IIIB and LM IA.

These quantitative differentiations in the temporal distribution of the sherds/vessels with pre-firing marks certainly testify to significant, to a certain degree, causes of process. I emphasize 'to a certain degree' because there are many factors affecting the qualitative and quantitative availability of the relevant data. Despite these reservations, the present data suggest that MM IB was the period during which the practice of marking vessels was most widespread among potting groups distributing their output to the sanctuary. The MM IB pre-firing marks stand out not only for their quantity but, above all, for their variety: marks of long/short incised line/s, evenly spaced lines transversed at a right angle by a longer one, triangles, lozenges, rectangles, crossed lines at an acute angle, angular impressions and impressed dots are so far attested. A pre-firing mark inspired by a sign of Hieroglyphic script is also attested; the vessel is a Pediada import. It is uncertain whether the mark of crossed incised lines at a right angle appeared as early as MM IB, because the two sherds with these marks may be either MM IB or MM IIB in date.

During the course of MM IB, the fact that mark types are found in varying frequencies may indicate that different potting groups produced different numbers of vessels according to their scale of operation. Many mark types are singletons,

while others are attested more than once. These variations are presumably due to the number of workers and man-hours invested in production by each potting group, although these cannot be measured in the cases examined here.⁹ While some craftsmen may have been full-time potters, many of the people involved in pottery production would probably have engaged in other occupations as well.

During the MM IIB period, marks of crossed incised lines at a right angle seem to be more widespread, while T-shaped incised and double T incised lines appear for the first time. Marks formed of long/short incised line/s continue into this period. The commonest mark during MM IIB is the double axe, found in five different versions. The practice of marking vessels is reduced dramatically in the Neopalatial period, as evidenced by the small number of sherds with pre-firing marks. The marks are not noted for their originality, with the exception of the rectangle with an X, which first appears in LM IA or LM IB. A Linear A syllabogram is used to mark a pot for the first time in the Neopalatial period.

The temporal picture described above corresponds to that found at other Bronze Age sites of the island: the practice of marking vessels chiefly characterizes the pottery production of the Protopalatial period, and, in the case of Syme, its first phase, MM IB.¹⁰ The MM IB assemblage from Syme is one of the earliest and certainly most significant in Crete. The Protopalatial period, particularly MM IB, was an important time for the sanctuary. That was when the first monumental structure, Building V, was constructed. Its construction required great expertise and a high investment of labor. The presence of pottery imported from the Pediada among the MM IB pottery groups testifies to the special relationships between the local centres of the region and the sanctuary.¹¹ Of particular interest is the fact that certain examples of Pediada pottery bore pre-firing marks, indicating the area in which specific potting groups were active. It is, however, paradoxical that no vessels with pre-firing marks have been published from the local sites excavated so far.¹² The use of vessels with pre-firing marks continued into MM IIB, when the second Protopalatial building, U, was founded. The MM IIB pre-firing marks are represented in lower percentages than those of MM IB. Pre-firing marks were dramatically reduced during Neopalatial period, a reduction also seen at other Cretan centres. The impressive number of marked vessels discovered at Petras is surely the exception to the rule.¹³

9. For the calculation of the annual production of a potter see, Whitelaw 2001.

10. See discussion in Chapter VI.

11. Christakis 2013.

12. A few pre-firing marks were found in

the MM IB contexts at Kastelli Pediada but are still unpublished; Dr. G. Rethemiotakis pers. comm. Pre-firing marks are totally absent on MM IB pottery from Galatas.

13. Tsipopoulou 1990; 1995.

IV

FROM PRE-FIRING MARKS TO MAKERS

Complex and structured typological analyses, extensive catalogues rich in parallels and bibliographic references, analytical descriptions and detailed measurements, contextual associations and chronological observations, drawings and photographs, all this immense effort to provide as detailed a documentation and presentation as possible of the material culture of the past, often make us forget something essential: that behind the inanimate objects we study are hidden people, people who made and used them, people who loved and were attached to them, and even people who forgot and discarded them. It is these people whom we are called upon to understand through the biographical palimpsests of objects; any approach that stops at the objects themselves is necessarily limited.¹

The correlation of pre-firing marks with the potters who once made the vessels and applied the mark is a relatively unexplored avenue of inquiry in the context of the prehistoric Aegean. Most studies have focussed on the analysis of the mark itself and its possible function and meaning, almost completely ignoring its relationship to the vessel's maker. Two studies, however, adopted methodological approaches which, applied in combination to the study of an assemblage of marks, might be of assistance in this avenue of inquiry. In their study of the pre-firing marks from Quartier Mu at Malia, J.-P. Olivier and L. Godart emphasise the analysis and discussion of the marks and restrict themselves to a few general observations about the vessels on which these are incised.² Issues of potting technology and how it is connected to specific types of mark are hardly touched upon. However, the study does present an important innovation: marks of the same type are submitted to graphological analysis for the first time. This leads to the identification of six different potters, each of whom has incised the same mark twice (in one case possibly three times) on different vessels.³ These marks thus cease to be abstract and impersonal; they now function in archaeological logos as objectifications of the people who produced them. Unfortunately the discussion is not taken further, into a study of potting technology, which would help us form a full picture of the way in which these potters participated in pottery production and distribution. This is probably because the fragmentary state of the data examined.

1. Archaeological efforts to 'people' the past go back a long way. For a critical presentation of the various approaches to the individual in the theoretical archaeological literature, see

Fowler 2004; Brück 2006.

2. Olivier and Godart 1978, 42-57.

3. Olivier and Godart 1978, 56-57.

A major landmark is M. Lindblom's study of Aeginetan pre-firing marks, in which the exploration of marks in the context of ceramic production is attempted for the first time. The mark types are related to the potting profile of their vessels. In the chapter characteristically entitled 'From marks to makers', Lindblom discusses the way in which potters participated in the production and distribution of their products. He suggests that marked Aeginetan pots were produced by task or production units the members of which used the same mark type for convenience and only abandoned it with changed social and/or economic affiliation.⁴ In spite of the in-depth presentation and study of the marks in each typological group and their correlation with the technological profile of their vessels, however, the marks are not submitted to graphological analysis. Such an analysis would identify writing idiosyncrasies which could determine the individuality of the potters active in the context of each group.

In this chapter, I attempt to approach the people who made and the marked vessels found at Syme by following and developing the two avenues of research mentioned above. It is taken as given that, since the mark was applied on the soft clay before the vessel was fired, it was made by someone closely connected to the production process, the potter. Now, why the potter felt the need to incise a mark on the pot is something we can only hypothesise about; these hypotheses will be discussed elsewhere.⁵ The possibilities offered by such a body of data – a few sherds with isolated marks – are limited, but this is no reason to neglect an important facet of the material.

A METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

The question that now arises is, how might one could be recognise how potters participate in the production of vessels with incised or impressed marks? What are the methodological tools which could make the mute remains of the past speak about their creators? The vessels, or rather sherds, from Syme are very different from Attic vases, where the potter's individuality is very clearly and deliberately stated.⁶ 'Unsigned' works, however, are no less capable of conveying their creators' individuality. These potters, albeit nameless, still form part of a specific historical and cultural context which they are not only influenced by but also help to shape.

Attempts to detect individual variability in the material culture of the past, and to identify specific artifacts in an archaeological context as having been made by specific individuals, are chiefly based on the identification of the individual's unconscious, mechanical motor-performance habits, that is, all those movements which result not from training or learning but from unconscious inclination.⁷ The

4. Lindblom 2001, 121-133.

5. See Chapter VII.

6. e.g. Beazley 1956; Cook 1960, 256-257; Korre-Zographou 1995, 77-84.

7. See the various contributions in the land-

mark volume *The Individual in Prehistory* edited by J. N. Hill and J. Gunn (Hill and Gunn 1977); see also Whittaker 1987; Thomas *et al.* 2009.

fact that these motor habits are subconscious rather than learnt means that they can be used to identify the work of a single person. It may be difficult, however, to demonstrate definitively that a given set of motor-performance habits, a given microstyle, relates only to a single individual rather than to a very small interaction group.⁸ C.L. Readman suggested that rather than determine the products of specific individuals, it would be more effective to define groups based on the similarity in the microstyle of objects produced by each, indicating the strength of member interaction.⁹ The most widely varying objects come from the 'largest interaction group' (little contact), whereas the most similar objects are derived from one of the 'smallest interaction groups' (intense contact).

There are two possible approaches for detecting possible interaction groups among the material from Syme: the first is to evaluate the handwriting much as graphology does, and the second is to study the morphological and technological attributes of the marked vessels. The importance of handwriting in identifying the individual is obvious; it is axiomatic that every person's writing style includes certain characteristic movements unique to that person. The physiological mechanism producing the written movement is directly influenced by the central nervous system.¹⁰ Thus each stroke corresponds to the type and momentary modifications of the individual's nervous system. A person's 'ego' also shines through their writing, most clearly when they are making a conscious effort (e.g. at the beginning of a word/letter) and less so when their hand is carried along by the momentum gained (e.g. at the end of a word/letter). In other words, writing varies depending on personality and mood.

The handwriting of a person of sufficient writing maturity collects, at a certain point in his or her life, a number of general characteristics which give it a specific form. This only applies to a given period in the person's life, since writing may change in different phases of it, meaning that the composition of the group of general characteristics will vary too. Some characteristics change easily while others strongly resist alteration. In any case, the general characteristics of our handwriting can never change completely, even when we deliberately alter it. The dominant characteristics are linked to well-defined parameters, and it is these parameters that graphologists examine in order to analyse and evaluate handwriting.¹¹

In the case of the incised/impressed marks at Syme, and indeed from other Cretan sites, a graphological approach like that applied to texts is self-evidently difficult if not impossible to implement. When examining a text, the graphologist has a wide variety of data at his/her disposal to aid in determining the writer's handwriting and personality, whereas in the case of a pre-firing mark, albeit a repeated one, there is only a single mark rather than several different ones made by the same potter. A single sign does not correspond to a single personality trait but varies from person to person.¹² As J. Crépieux-Jamin argues, although a graphic

8. Redman 1977; Cherry 1992.

9. Redman 1977.

10. Nezos 1986, 13-19.

11. Nezos 1986, 20-30; Seifer 2009, 48-56.

12. Nezos 1986, 31.

sign is the result of a physiological movement corresponding to psychological features, its value is relative, since the same movement in writing a sign may be produced by different causes in different people.¹³ Having taken these risks into account, it could not be ignored an important parameter: a text consists of sentences, sentences consist of words and words consist of signs. It is from the analysis of the single sign that the graphologist begins the study, moving on to more complex writing expressions. As E.L. Bennet remarks in his study of the tablets in Linear B script, to use an example from Bronze Age Greece, the first and most important criterion for the detection of scribes is provided by the forms of the signs.¹⁴ It is these isolated signs that are analysed here in an attempt to identify meaningful patterns of process between similar and repetitive pre-firing marks. And, to make the research question even more straightforward, I am seeking to understand if marks similar in appearance and execution were written by the same individual or by different ones. Obviously, the effort only goes so far as to identify the individual writing expressions contained in the chosen signs, stopping short of investigating the much more interesting parameter of the writer's personality, since this cannot be determined in the case of pre-firing marks.

In order to interpret the form and motions required to make a mark, each line must be examined separately, as all the component elements of the sign, their number, order, shape and relative position are analysed. This process is repeated for all similar signs in order to reveal similarities and differences, which will help determine individual graphic expressions. Additional information is provided by the execution, i.e. the shape of the tool, the incised line, the depth and angle of the incisions, and the relative order of carving the individual components forming a mark. The pressure exerted on the surface by the writing tool is particularly revealing, indicating features of the writer's personality such as originality, vitality and instinct, as well as their state of health.¹⁵ Each potter's handwriting should be relatively consistent and distinctive, although there will be some variation in personal style depending on the person's degree of experience, fatigue or concentration and the speed at which he/she is working.¹⁶ The size and roughness of the available surface for the incision of the mark may also increase variation considerably. Following this approach, I attempt to identify the handwriting characteristics of each potter, by comparing marks of the same type as equal members of a group. Each mark is examined as an individual expression which is juxtaposed to other marks, other individual expressions, rather than set in a general typological framework.

The study of handwriting in itself is not enough to identify an interaction group, since there is another, equally important parameter: the vessel on which the mark has been incised or impressed. The vessel is the context of the mark; no mark can be ever interpreted alone. All marks are invalid when taken out of their context. It is generally acknowledged that production of any vessel is a complex process which demands that the potter make specific choices, during all stages of

13. Crépieux-Jamin 1929.

14. Bennet 1958, 90.

15. Nezos 1986, 34.

16. cf. Palaima 1988, 21.

the *chaîne opératoire*.¹⁷ These choices are influenced by the potter's environment, the level of technological knowledge and, of course, the wider economic, social, political and ideological setting. Ethnographic research on potting technology has also shown how important are the potter's personal choices, conscious or unconscious, within the technological tradition being followed. On every vessel, however, are imprinted not only the potter's choices but also his or her motor-performance habits, i.e. the mechanical habits of the potter's individual movement during the making of a pot.

The differences observed in both the writing of the mark and the making of the pot are clearly due to the *modus operandi* of the potters' body. It is these differences that help us to approach each potter separately; that help us give a materialised, historically specific substance and identity to the anonymous, anonymous to us, potters. According to ethnographic studies, most people in small communities are able to recognise the work and individual expression of local artisans, as well as the tools used.¹⁸ Even in traditional styles such as Greek folk art, where innovation is not a requirement and may even be frowned upon, it is still possible to distinguish between the work of different artisans.¹⁹ Some of the potter's choices are undoubtedly dictated by the sociocultural framework in which he/she lived –after all each potter is required to satisfy the needs, real or imaginary, of the clientele– but other choices reflect his/her own individuality. The fact that we cannot find the potter's genetic code or refer to him or her by name does not render him or her either abstract or general. The potter can be given substance through the analysis of the material testimonies of his/her actions, through the vessels themselves that he/she made and marked.

It thus becomes apparent why pre-firing marks must be studied alongside the vessels on which they have been incised/impressed, if we are to determine how potters participate in the production of marked vessels. The potter's individual style is expressed in the way in which both mark and pot are made. Both parameters are of equal weight and value; one cannot be considered more or less important than the other. A potter, for instance, who makes cooking pots and marks them with the same sign, cannot use different production techniques or have different motor-performance habits. Whereas a potter's range of choices during the various production stages may seem wide, in practice, as ethnographic studies have demonstrated, he/she uses only a few alternatives, usually learnt from other potters. The adoption of different technological practices is only justified when the potter is required to make vessels of different functional types.

It should be made clear that, given the difficulties of identifying individual style with a 'creator', with a defined uniqueness, that in the present study, in cases where morphological and technological similarity is observed in finished products

17. These choices made during the lifetime of a vase concern the raw materials and their processing, the tools, the way in which it is made, the use, the distribution, the exchange networks, the disuse and, in some cases, its

reuse, e.g. van der Leeuw and Pritchard 1990, 240; Sillar and Tite 2000.

18. Hardin 1977; Pryor and Carr 1995.

19. Vogiatzoglou-Sakellaropoulou 2009, 56-57.

of the same shape, I am referring not to a single potter but rather to an interaction group or a production unit/potting group. The use of the term ‘workshop’ –often applied where vessels are so similar that they must have been produced by a uniform set of processes– is avoided because usually it includes a spatial dimension, referring to a specific architectural context in which the production process took place. Direct evidence ‘on the ground’ for pottery workshops does not exist in the case of Syme. Such production units are very unlikely to have existed in the area of the sanctuary itself, since the cultic use of the site, together with the terrain and extreme climatic conditions prevalent for most of the year would have been unfavourable to potting activities. The installations of the potting groups responsible for producing a significant number of vessels used must be sought in the wider geographical setting of Syme. The Viannos area boasts an ideal ceramic environment for the development of pottery production, providing an abundance of all the necessary raw materials. It is no coincidence that Viannos was used as a base by itinerant potters’ groups in the historically recorded past.²⁰ In the small settlements that had arisen there in the Bronze Age –Viannos is unsuited to the development of large urban centres– there would certainly have been active potting groups supplying these and other, remoter settlements, as well as the sanctuary. Despite the natural obstacles and obvious difficulties of overland travel, Viannos was by no means isolated, as it formed the only communication route from the Mesara and the Pediada (and by extension north-central Crete) to the south coast and the Ierapetra area, via mountainous or semi-mountainous and small coastal pathways.

In some cases the similarities in the writing style between different marks of the same typological unit are so striking that it is tempting to assume the presence of a single potter (**SM 12** and **SM 59**, **SM 20** and **SM 35**, **SM 14** and **SM 49**, **SM 7** and **SM 44**). Moreover, the vessels on which the marks in question were incised, at least as far as we can tell from the parts preserved, have been made following the same potting technology. But even in these cases we cannot be absolutely certain that the marks of each group were incised by a single potter, and I prefer to consider them products of the same interaction group.

VESSELS, MARKS AND GROUPS OF INTERACTION

Having established the analytical parameters, the identification of patterns is not straightforward but dependent on the number and quality of available examples. Thus, although any discussion should ideally apply to mark types represented by many instances, most pre-firing marks from the site are singletons. This makes it impossible to identify small groups of interaction operating at Syme during the Protopalatial and Neopalatial periods. How far this occurrence is due to patterns of socio-economic behaviour adopted by those who frequented the sanctuary, or whether it has resulted from the formation processes of the record is a question that cannot be answered. One could investigate possible correlations within this

20. Psaropoulou 1996.

assemblage of singletons that might equate different types of mark, in a common chronological framework, with discrete groups of interaction, but an attempt at an analysis of this sort failed to identify meaningful patterns. The marks in question have been undoubtedly incised by distinct potters. This is attested by the variations in the form, appearance and execution of the marks themselves and also by the potting technology adopted to produce each vessel; the latter is only to be expected, since functionally different vessels usually require different technologies.

A close analytical approach is suitable when the same mark appears more than once, allowing meaningful comparisons. Seven such mark types have been identified in total, all dated to the MM IB period. These study cases comprise the mark of evenly spaced lines transversed by a longer line at a right angle, attested in 18 examples, and the marks of the lozenge, triangle, rectangle, two long parallel lines, five long parallel lines, and impressed dots, all attested in two examples each except for the last mark type, which is found in three examples (Table 2). The smallest constellations of stylistic consistency observed among these seven pre-firing mark types are called here Interaction Groups.

The most frequently attested pre-firing mark, which best lends itself to constructive discussion, is that of evenly spaced lines transversed at a right angle by a longer one. This mark is known from 18 examples, grouped, on the basis of form, appearance and execution, into 14 different types incised on jars, bowls and on a pithos (Types *13a-n*). Three of these types, namely *13j* (**SM 81**), *13l* (**SM 79**) and *13m* (**SM 36**), occur only once (Figs 16, 21; Pls 6, 15). Considering their marked differences in form, appearance, and execution, it is reasonable to suppose that they were made by three different potters who were not connected in any way. The marks were also incised on three different kinds of vessel made according to different potting technologies. The study of the other 11 types, namely *13a-i*, *13k*, and *13n*, suggests the presence of three groups of interaction.

Interaction Group I (Pl. 19)

Nine types of the mark consisting of evenly spaced lines transversed at a right angle by a longer one, namely *13a*, *13b*, *13c*, *13d*, *13e*, *13f*, *13g*, *13h*, *13i*, though different in style, share a similar basic form and appearance, completely different to those of other versions (namely *13j*, *13k*, *13l*, *13m*, *13n*). These marks occur on horizontal handles of jars. The dimensions of the marks in the typological group examined here are almost 'identical': the long line is 2.2 to 3 cm. long, while the three short lines, which are all of uniform length, are 1.2 to 1.4 cm. long, with a length of 1.4 cm. occurring in five out of the eight instances.

In the first type, *13a* (**SM 31**), the potter has rendered the mark by cutting the long incision first, followed by the evenly spaced short ones. However, the short incisions are not unbroken, as in most types belonging to this group; instead, we have two groups of three short incisions (0.7 cm.) cut under a long one, giving the impression of three single parallel lines transversed by a fourth one. Some of the short incisions are touching the long one while others are farther away from it. Also, the short incisions do not correspond exactly. The mark was cut using a sharp tool applied with pressure to the soft clay surface: the incisions are deep,

the short ones being deeper. The long incision is not completely straight and must have been cut slowly with an unsteady hand, betraying the potter's difficulty or inexperience in incising straight lines on the clay. The short lines have been cut using jerky, impulsive strokes, as can be seen from their depth and lack of correspondence between the incisions. Generally speaking, the mark has been made carelessly and hastily, but as there are no other similar marks incised by the same potter it is not certain if this is due to the potter's personal writing style or to some variation within it.

In the second type, *13b* (**SM 71**), the long incision has also been cut before the short ones; in this case, however, the short incisions are longer than those of the previous mark. The potter cut the lines into the soft clay with quick, hard strokes of a sharp tool: the long has been formed in a single stroke running from the attachment of the handle. The incisions are wide, deep and all of uniform depth, creating a 'plastic' effect. As opposed to the previous mark, here the long incision has a straight outline and the short ones are parallel to each other. The writing is firm, steady, fast, unvarying and strong.

In the third type, *13c* (**SM 2**), the evenly spaced short incisions have been cut before the long one, a significant difference from the two previous cases. The tool used by the potter was not sharp: the incisions are deep and wide creating a 'plastic' effect. The potter cut the three short incisions first, probably beginning with the one farthest from the attachment of the handle, and then drew the long one with a steady hand in a single stroke from the attachment of the handle to its end. The short incisions are cut slightly deeper than the long one, whose depth is uniform throughout its length. Their outline has been deformed at certain points due to the softness of the clay and the fact that the tool was blunt. The writing is firm, steady, fast and strong, indicating experience. The end result, however, is rather careless, perhaps indicating that the potter was in a hurry.

In the fourth type, *13d* (**SM 38**, **SM 42**), too, the evenly spaced short incisions were carved before the long one. This is one of the two examples of a mark in this typological group where the short incisions are of varying lengths: 1.8, 1.6, 1.4, and 1.3 cm. Another singular feature of this mark is that it was incised using two tools: a thin tool with a slightly squared-off end, and a thicker one for the longer line. The tool was pressed hard into the surface of the clay producing deep incisions, with more pressure applied at the beginning of each stroke. The short incisions have been cut first, starting from the part of the handle farthest from the attachment and applying the tool on the outer side of each, followed by the long incision, starting at the attachment. They have well-defined outline, although the short incisions are slightly misshapen where the long one was cut over them. The writing is firm, steady, fast and strong, a clear indication of the potter's experience. The short incisions of varying length probably indicate the potter's need to differentiate his/her mark from the basic type with short lines of equal length. No many marks by the same potter, though, have been found so it is not certain if this was a chance occurrence or a permanent feature of his/her writing.

The fifth type, *13e* (**SM 30**), presents the same order of incision as the fourth. The tool, with thin, angular edges, has been applied with light pressure to the soft

surface of the clay. The long incisions have been made, as in the other cases, in a single stroke running from the attachment of the handle. The incisions are wide, not very deep and all of uniform depth and their outline is well defined. The writing is firm and steady, and care is taken to keep the characteristics of the mark clear, particularly when making the long stroke. The potter is experienced and careful.

The next type, *13f* (**SM 53**), is quite similar to *13e*: the sequence and manner of carving the lines forming the mark is the same, as are the dimensions of the marks themselves. However, there are two basic differences. First, the arrangement of the short incisions in relation to the long one is not identical. Second, haste is apparent in the way the tool cut the surface of the clay, with the result that some parts of the short incisions are only just visible. These problems arose because the potter incised the mark very close to the attachment of the handle, so that he had only a small area to work on. Was he/she a different potter from the one who carved *13e*, using the same tool but lacking the experience of the first, or might both marks have been made by the same potter, with the differences due to variation within his/her writing style? The available data are not sufficient for answering this question.

In two types of the group, *13g* (**SM 19**) and *13h* (**SM 17**), the evenly spaced incisions have been incised before the long one. The tool used in both cases had very sharp edges but the end result varies, as the mechanical movement of each potter was different. In the case of *13g* (**SM 19**) the incisions are very thin and made with short, quick strokes. Little pressure was used for the short incisions, but the long line was pressed in deep. The long incision is not straight and the potter's hand seems not to have been completely steady when making it. The writing is fast and firm, although the end result is careless. On the contrary, in the case of Type *13h* (**SM 17**), a similar tool was applied to the soft surface in such a way that the end result is 'plastic'. The writing is firm, steady, fast and strong, all indications of experience. The potter carved the mark particularly carefully.

In the final type, *13i* (**SM 14**, **SM 49**), the potter incised the long incision first and the three short ones over it. This order is a unique feature of the mark of evenly spaced lines transversed at right angle by a longer one. The incisions were made using a tool with relatively wide edges: the incision is wider in **SM 49** than **SM 14**. The long incision was made in a single stroke running from the main body of the handle towards its attachment. The short lines were made with the long edge of the tool, so that they are wide and deep—deeper in **SM 14** than **SM 49**. The pressure was so great that the outline of the long incision is deformed. The writing is firm, steady, fast and strong, although the end result is not that 'careful', perhaps indicating that the potter was in a hurry. Both marks were cut on vessels of the same type, produced using the same potting technology. It is not certain whether the vessels were marked by two potters, or whether just one potter was involved and the minor differences in handwriting are due to variation in his/her personal style.

In the cases mentioned above, the potters have the same type of mark in mind but apply it to the soft clay differently, in a manner determined by their own idiosyncrasies and motor-performance habits. All marks, however, share the same micro-context; they have been incised on the upper part of horizontal handles of wide-mouthed jars, near the attachment. Moreover, all these vessels have similar

basic morphological features and were produced following the same potting technology: their forming technique, fabric and surface treatment are common, as is the technological profile. These diverse and complex patterns of correlations suggest the presence of a potting group, the potters of which followed the same potting tradition for the production of a certain type of vessel and marking their output with the same sign, a sign identical as regards the structure of its visual language, but made in each person's own, unique way. The products of this unit would not have been limited to the marked vessels examined here. Similar vessels, without pre-firing, are common at the sanctuary during MM IB. Many of those would have been made by the potters in question, who for some reason decided to mark only a few of them, and also by other potters who followed the same potting tradition but did not leave their 'signature' on the vessel. The use of readily available, local fabrics for the production of these jars, the large number of similar jars found in MM IB contexts of at the sanctuary, and the occurrence of this mark exclusively at Syme and not at other sites, indicate that these potting groups would have been active somewhere in the wider area of the site.

Interaction Group II (Pl. 20)

Type 13n of the mark of evenly spaced lines transversed at a right angle by a longer one is incised inside two flaring bowls, close to the rim (**SM 20**, **SM 35**). The vessels are different in shape: **SM 20** is smaller with a more conical body profile than **SM 35**, which is larger and shallower. The shape of the rim and the width of the walls are also different, with **SM 35** having thicker walls than **SM 20**. These differences aside, however, the two vessels were made with the same fabric, forming technique and have the same surface treatment. The marks themselves, although similar in many respects, present significant variations. In **SM 20** the horizontal incisions were made first, running left to right, followed by the vertical line running bottom to top. The tool used had wide edges and was pressed hard into the surface of the clay. The incisions are deep and wide, with a straight outline except for certain points where it wavers due to the unsteadiness of the potter's hand. In **SM 35**, too, the incisions forming the mark had been made in the same way, using a similar type of tool, but the mark is larger than that of **SM 20**. The potter finds it difficult to carve straight incisions, while the spaces between the three horizontal incisions are not regular like those of the previous mark. In both cases the writing is strong, fast and careless. The mark is roughly and hastily made, particularly in the case of **SM 35**, indicating that the potter was inexperienced and indifferent to the end result.

It is not certain whether these marks could be attributed to the same potter. The differences between them would seem to indicate two potters who incised the same mark into the wet clay, each in his own way. Yet there are also similarities. First, the outline of the horizontal incisions, when the potter's hand is unsteady, is the same in both cases: the end of the incisions angles either up or down. Second, their outline at the points where the potter is making an effort to draw straight, well-formed incisions is the same in both marks. It is likely that these differences were due to the subconscious motor habits of the potter and this may indicate a single potter. However, the data for a certain conclusion are insufficient.

Interaction Group III (Pl. 20)

The 13k was carved on the handle of a pithos (**SM 7**) and of a jar (**SM 44**). This is the only case so far attested at Syme where the same type of mark was applied on functionally dissimilar vessels. The micro-context is impossible to evaluate on the basis of such fragmentary evidence. Two different tools were used for the mark. The long line of the mark has been made using the point of a tool with a triangular section, applied with pressure to the soft clay surface. The line seems to have had a well-defined outline. It was drawn in a steady, continuous stroke, running from the main part of the handle to the attachment in **SM 44** and vice versa in **SM 7**. The lines are wide, deep and of uniform depth throughout their length. The short lines of the mark are irregularly spaced and have been made using a slightly curved tool with a square section, applied over the long one with greater pressure. The writing in both cases is firm, steady, fast and strong, indicating experience. The two marks are distinctly similar and it is tempting to suggest that both were made by the same potter. However, this cannot be argued with any certainty, as the state of preservation of one mark (**SM 44**) does not permit a full graphological analysis.

The types of pre-firing marks discussed below, although different from each other, share some common characteristics. With two exceptions, all these types are known in only two instances; due to chance. Each type has been applied on vessels with similar morphological, technological and functional characteristics. Finally, although the marks within each type resemble each other, they do present certain differences due to the subconscious motor-performances of the potters.

Interaction Group IV (Pl. 20)

This group comprises two sherds with the lozenge mark (**SM 39**, **SM 54**). The marks were incised using a tool with sharp, wide edges applied to the surface with pressure. The incisions in both marks are wide, of uniform depth and with a well-defined outline. The two marks are not identical, as the angles of the lozenge and the spaces between the lines differ at the point where they come together to form an angle. These differences indicate two writing styles and cannot be interpreted as a variation within of a potter's personal style. The writing in both cases is firm, steady, fast and strong.

Both marks were incised on the horizontal handles of two pithoi: part of the rim and body and a handle are preserved from the first, and only part of a handle from the second. Their formal differences indicate that the two handles are derived from different pithoi. The first pithos had a conical body and convex upper sides. It is difficult to reconstruct the original shape of the second from just a handle, but the fact that it is a horizontal handle makes it likely that this pithos was also conical. Both vessels were made using the same fabric and have the same surface treatment. The vessels, considering their similarities in paste technology, type of mark, and very probably also in formal attributes, came from the same potting group. Two potters, therefore, following the same potting tradition, incised their products with the same mark, but rendered it in their own idiosyncratic manner.

Interaction Group V (Pl. 20)

The triangle mark occurs at Syme in two instances (**SM 13**, **SM 84**). Both marks were incised on the interior of flaring bowls a little below the rim. The incisions were made using a wide-edged tool applied to the surface with pressure: they are wide, deep, of uniform depth and with a clear outline. The two marks are not the same: **SM 13** is larger than **SM 84**, the triangle is equilateral, all internal angles are the same, and the base of the triangle is parallel to the rim of the bowl. The mark is carefully cut overall. In contrast, in **SM 84** the sides are unequal and the angles different, making it a scalene triangle, that is also set aslant to the rim. The writing in both cases is firm, fast and strong. The two variants of the mark were made by two potters who understood the mark and transferred it to the clay in different ways. Despite their differences, the two marks, in so far as can be determined from the partial state of preservation of both vessels, were incised on vessels, similar in their formal attributes, but made of different fabrics and with different surface treatment.

Interaction Group VI (Pl. 20)

The mark of the rectangle occurs in two instances (**SM 1**, **SM 94**). Neither is fully preserved –**SM 94** is especially fragmentary– making their graphological comparison difficult. However, based on what survives of the two marks and what can be reconstructed, some conclusions can be drawn. **SM 1** was made using a tool with wide edges applied to the soft clay surface with uniform pressure. The incisions are wide and deep with clearly defined outlines, but the potter's hand was not very steady at some points. Mark **SM 94**, on the contrary, was made using a tool with sharper edges than the previous one, also applied with pressure to the surface of the vessel. The incisions are thin, deep and with a well-defined outline. The writing is firm, steady, fast and strong. Apart from the differences in the carving of the marks and the shapes of the lines, the marks themselves are also different. **SM 1** is larger than **SM 94**, while a small stroke is added at the end of the long line of the rectangle in **SM 94**. It is obvious from these details that, though typologically similar, these two signs have been made by different potters.

Despite their differences, both marks share a common parameter: each was incised on the body of an amphora, although the fragmentary state of preservation prevents us from reconstructing the overall shape of the vessels. Both vessels were made using the same fabric and share a common forming technology, surface treatment and technological profile, in so far as it is possible to tell. They were made by potters following the same potting tradition, incised with the same type of mark, but different as an expression of individuality.

Interaction Group VII (Pl. 20)

These are two handles from two different basins incised with a mark of two long parallel lines (**SM 12**, **SM 59**). The morphological characteristics of the vessels cannot be reconstructed on the basis of the handles alone, but both are made of the same fabric and the handles were given the same surface treatment. The mark in both cases has been made using a sharp-edged tool applied with pressure to the surface of the handle. The pressure is not uniform throughout the length of the line but increases in the middle. The incision is deep and wide with a well-defined

outline. The writing is firm, steady, fast and strong, producing a careful end result. Despite the similarities in the way the two marks were incised and the potting technology adopted in producing the two basins, we cannot be certain that the marks were written by the same potter.

Interaction Group VIII (Pl. 21)

These are two flaring bowls, identical in formal features –in so far as we can tell from the preserved sherds– fabric, surface treatment and potting technology (**SM 21**, **SM 56**). In addition, both vessels are incised with the same pre-firing mark: five long lines cut vertically close to the rim. Although typologically similar, the marks differ in appearance and execution. In the case of **SM 56** the lines were made by a thin-edged tool: the incisions are fine, slightly oblique, and shallow, as the tool has been applied to the surface of the vessel very lightly. They are ill-formed with an irregular outline, cut with relatively slow movements by an unsteady hand. The irregularities are also partly due to the fabric, which is rich in inclusions that prevented the tool from moving smoothly over the surface. In **SM 56** the tool used to make the incisions was sharp with wide edges, pressed hard into the surface of the vessel. The incisions are also ill-formed with an irregular outline –one incision is particularly roughly carved– due to the potter’s unsteady hand. The writing in both cases betrays inexperience and uncertainty, and the mark is carelessly and hastily cut. Both vessels are certainly the products of the same potting group.

Interaction Group IX (Pl. 21)

Three jar handles bear a group of impressed dots on their upper part, close to their attachment (**SM 26**, **SM 57**, **SM 78**). The size and outline of the dots show that they were impressed by different tools. The order of the impressions also differs. Two of the marks are made up of the same number of dots (**SM 57**, **SM 78**), while the third is only partially preserved (**SM 26**). It is particularly interesting that all three marks have been impressed on vessels of the same type, made of the same fabric and with the same surface treatment. These correlations, as in the previous cases, are surely no coincidence. It seems likely that the potters who made these vessels were following the same potting tradition.

MARKS AND MAKERS

The pre-firing marks from the sanctuary that appear more than once lend themselves to an approach that attempts to connect the marked vessel to its maker. Their graphological analysis indicates that the marks of each type, although similar in their visual vocabulary, had been incised/impressed by different potters. Only for marks **SM 14** and **SM 49** (*Interaction Group I:13i*), **SM 20** and **SM 35** (*Interaction Group II*), **SM 7** and **SM 44** (*Interaction Group III*), and **SM 12** and **SM 59** (*Interaction Group VII*) is there a hint that each pair may have been made by a single potter, but the evidence does not allow absolute certainty. The question that now arises is, how might one approach all these potters and outline, if only tentatively, the way in which they participated in the vessel production, marking and distri-

bution process? There are many limitations that make this attempt extremely difficult or even utopian. The most basic of these limitations is, as already mentioned, the small number of occurrences. Only one interaction group comprises ten different examples (*Interaction Group I*), while another has three (*Interaction Group IX*) and all the others two each. Nevertheless, it is tempting to try to look behind the broken vessels and make some suggestions.

The examination of the graphological profile of each mark in conjunction with the technological features of the vessel on which it is incised or impressed, has led to the identification of nine interaction groups whose potters are connected by significant links as regards both potting technology and/or choice of mark. In eight of these groups (*Interaction Groups I, II, IV-IX*), the potters produced vessels of the same shape, adopting the same potting technology and marking them with the same type of mark, which is applied in almost the same position on the vessel. The basic formal and technological attributes of the output did not vary. There would certainly have been minor variations due to the motor-performance habits of each of the potters active within each group, but in no case would they have had a major effect on the end result. The fragmentary state of the evidence makes it impossible to identify these minor variations.

Potting technology aside, the potters in each group used the same type of mark on part of their output, for they would not have produced only the marked vessels but many more similar pots. There are, indeed, many unmarked sherds and partially preserved vessels with formal and technological features identical to those of the marked sherds, suggesting that both marked and unmarked vessels were the output of the same work group operating within the temporal span of MM IB. The fact, however, that different potters, making similar pots using the same technique, also used the same mark, is surely significant. It has been widely argued that pre-firing marks are chiefly used to denote the output of individual potters.²¹ In these cases, however, the marks must refer not only to a specific potter but to a wider entity, perhaps a potting group/production unit. If a potter had wanted to differentiate his/her output from that of another artisan, he/she would obviously have adopted a different type of mark.

Yet despite their similarity, the marks present differences in the way in which they have been incised due, to a certain extent, to the handwriting of each potter. The potters could have adopted a specific incision method, leading to the greatest possible standardisation of the mark. They could, in other words, have controlled their writing motions in order to ensure the uniform execution of the mark symbolising the potting group to which they belonged. But this did not happen. On the contrary, each potter placed the same mark on the soft clay in his own particular, personal style.

The emphasis on personal writing expression is interpreted here as the result not only of graphic idiosyncrasies, but of the potter's need to express his/her individuality as clearly as possible on a group of vessels with uniform morphological and technological characteristics. The uniformity of these features in the pots of a

21. For a full discussion see Lindblom 2001, 19-21, 132-133.

given group helps the careful observer to identify the personal writing style of each potter more easily, where two or more vessels were used simultaneously. It seems, therefore, that the mark indicates a potting group on the one hand and the potters active within that group on the other. In this setting, the potter marks one of the many pots he/she makes with a specific symbol, but in such a way as to set it apart from the same symbol incised by his/her colleague.

This statement of individuality, however, presupposes the existence of the appropriate social context; in other words, it presupposes observers who will note the mark on the body of the vessel –in most of the cases examined here it is very easily seen– ‘read’ it, and finally identify it with a single person, a single potter. This is because, apart from the hidden meanings and symbolisms of the marks or even the vessels themselves, a basic characteristic is that in all the stages of their lifecycle they are involved in successive processes of ‘display’. When the potters make and mark the vessels, when the vessel is placed somewhere in the workshop, either on its own or as part of a group of similar vessels, when they send them to the sanctuary, when someone dedicates them or uses them in ritual activities, when they are used to meet functional requirements, and when, finally, they are disposed of, the marked vessels participate in an ongoing dialogue between the potter and his/her creation, between the potter and the user of the vessel, between the user and the vessel, and ultimately between the specific vessel and those that come before or after it. Potter and pot are constant points of reference in the development of this dialogue. This applies in those cases where the vessel is an integral part of the everyday life of the potter or the community to which he belongs. The vessel itself forms part of that community, and is therefore indicative of identities.

If the marked vessel was placed in the pottery workshop and the function of the mark was connected exclusively to the ceramic production process, it is reasonable to suppose that the mark could very easily be identified with its creator, since the people active in the potting group would easily be able to recognise and identify the marks. But what happens when the marked pots are used in a different context from that of the potter? Did the person who used a marked pot, for instance a vessel bearing the mark of three evenly spaced lines traversed by a longer fourth, know that this version of the mark had been made by such-and-such a potter, who was a member of such-and-such a community? And to take the question farther, could that user have connected the marked pot with its unmarked counterparts produced by the same potter? These questions cannot be answered. It can be only supposed the person who used a marked vessel would have been in a position to identify the mark as indicative of a work group active in a community near the sanctuary or even a more distant region, but it would surely have been harder to link the mark with a specific individual, a single creator. The connection of a specific version of the mark to a specific potter would only have been possible if the user had some sort of relationship with the community in which the potter was active, and if user and potter were contemporaries. Obviously, it could be argued that this contemporaneity of makers and users is highly unlikely. Each of the marked pots has followed its own course through time, which has not always left a trace on the archaeological material. It is difficult, for example, to say whether the jars with the mark of three short lines transversed at a right angle by a longer

one had a common timeline, whether they were all used from the beginning to the end of MM IB, or whether some of them replaced others.

In the case of *Interaction Group V*, the potters produced pots of the same shape, with similar morphological characteristics, using the same potting technology and marked with the same type of pre-firing mark. Although the marks are typologically similar, they were incised in different ways, indicating different potters. But what sets the potters of this group apart from all the others is that they used different fabrics to make pots that were similar in all other respects. It is generally accepted that a single difference in a technical feature, such as the fabric, makes it less probable that all the vessels were products of the same potting group. This does not apply in the previous cases, since all the potting technology parameters were the same. Here, the potting group may have changed the type of clay it used, but it is unclear why it would do this. It is also possible that there were two potting groups or potters supplying the same demand for vessels but using different fabrics. If this is indeed the case, then the mark obviously cannot indicate the potting group/production unit, since the potters in each group would have adopted different types of mark in order to differentiate their products. The first scenario is more likely, because the picture of similar vessels marked in the same way is reminiscent of the case of *Interaction Groups I, II, IV-IX*. It is not clear why these potters chose to use different fabrics, but it is reasonable to suppose that, with potting groups active over a considerable time span, in the case of *Interaction Group V*, during the 50 or 80 years of the MM IB period, differences would have arisen in one of the variants of potting technology.

The case of *Interaction Group VIII* is completely different from all the previous ones, because here the same type of mark—even the execution of the marks is similar—has been incised on functionally different pots. The marks, as noted, are very similar and it is tempting to speculate that they were made by a single potter using different potting technologies. However, the marks cannot be identified with one potter with absolute certainty. If, again, the vessels were made by different potters, these must have belonged to the same group, if it is accepted that the mark indicates a potting group. The different potting technologies adopted for the pots in question—a pithos and a jar—are predictable given that they are distinct types of vessel. The occurrence of an identical mark on different pots may suggest, in both cases, that the work group in question produced a wide range of functionally different vessels.

How, though, might the data discussed above be interpreted in terms of the organization of production? How were these groups of potters organized and what was the institutional setting in which the members of the interaction groups were active? There are two main types of pottery production in traditional societies: household production, based on family ties, with low standardisation and limited distribution within the household or village; and workshop production, based on organised labour, often in an urban context, with developed distribution channels in the wider area.²² The latter has formed a major focus of archaeological research and discussion, in which the most influential works have been those of C. Sinopoli and C.L. Costin,

22. Rice 1987, 180-191.

two approaches which have influenced the present study.²³ Sinopoli's approach distinguishes between administered, centralized and non-centralized modes of production. Administered production is directly regulated by powerful non-producing groups, or by an institution under the control of the political and/or religious elite. The artisans are specialists in a relationship of spatial and economic dependence on the controlling institution, required to produce elite goods that are used to acquire, expand, manipulate and express status and political dominance. This type of pottery features high standardisation, high skill, high labour investment and conscious elaboration. Centralized production, on the other hand, is characterized by high standardization, moderate to high skill, and low to minimal labour investment. Non-centralized production, while remaining specialized, is of smaller scale and found in more peripheral and economically underprivileged locations than either of the other two, with low to moderate standardization, moderate skill, and low to high labour investment.

The marked vessels in the groups examined here are jars (*Interaction Groups I, III, IX*), bowls (*Interaction Groups II, V, VIII*), basins (*Interaction Group VII*), amphorae (*Interaction Group VI*) and pithoi (*Interaction Groups III, IV*). The production of all these involves low to moderate investment of labour and low to moderate skill, except for the pithoi, which require moderate or high investment of labour –depending on each case– and considerable skill. The morphological characteristics, potting technology and fabric of these vessels are highly standardized. This technological profile, together with the fact that the vessels in question are mainly intended for ordinary use –in other words, this is not the fine ware mostly used in contexts of intense social interaction– precludes the possibility that these groups worked under the control of an institution. Pottery produced following an administrative mode has not been found in MM IB contexts of the site. It seems that the pottery discussed here was produced within a centralized mode of production, indicated by the fact that they feature standardised formal attributes, forming techniques and fabric technology and are manufactured with skill but low labour investment (all are plain and untreated). This combination of high standardization and low investment suggest that the potters were mainly concerned with efficiency and competitiveness. The artisans in each potting group may have been full-time potters, but it is reasonable to suppose that pottery-making was not the only task for many people involved in manufacture; they would also have engaged, at least seasonally, in agriculture and animal husbandry. To what extent the potters in these groups were members of the same family or wider kin group –possibilities borne out by ethnographic data– is not a question we can answer. It is worth noting that all this applies exclusively to the vessels with pre-firing marks and other similar, unmarked vessels, and is not representative of these shapes as a whole. The sanctuary is the end recipient of the ceramic output of many different production centres, each of which followed its own potting practices. Further discussion of this aspect, however, is beyond the scope of the present study.

23. van der Leeuw 1984; Peacock 1982; Brumfiel and Earl 1987; Costin 1991; Sinopoli 1988.

PRE-FIRING MARKS IN BRONZE AGE CRETE: A CORPUS

The present corpus comprises published pre-firing marks applied prior to firing on Cretan pottery dating from the FN to the LM IIIC period.¹ Only those marks that are published with full references and clear illustrations, whether drawings or photographs, are included.² Incomplete marks whose reconstruction is uncertain are included in the corpus but not in the discussion. Pre-firing marks on pottery imported into Crete, which belong to a different marking tradition, have been excluded entirely. These considerations set the limits of the present corpus, especially since not all known marks have been published and important ceramic assemblages have yet to be studied. The sites with pre-firing marks are presented here in order from the western to the eastern end of the island (Table 3). The discussion focuses only on the information essential for understanding the mark itself, its micro-context (i.e. the vessel), and the overall contextual and temporal framework. First hand examination of the marks themselves was not possible; the observations are based on the published data. For the purposes of this analysis, each mark included in the corpus is catalogued separately; each entry consists of the initials of the site followed by a number.

PLATYVOLA CAVE

The earliest marked vessel from Crete is published from the Platyvola cave and dated, according to the excavator, to the Final Neolithic period. It is a large belly-handled amphora with the mark of an equilateral triangle filled with eight impressions placed under the base (**PL 1**). There is no published information on the exact find context and the pottery associated with the vessel.

PL 1: Godart and Tzedakis 1992, 48-51, pls 43.2, 48.3.

PSATHI

Some marked vessels, mostly sherds, have been excavated at Psathi. The published information is too fragmentary to sustain an analysis of the data. Pre-firing marks are incised on large vessels but the type of vessel is not recorded. The marks consist

1. I have also included marks which, according to the excavators, are incised after firing (e.g. **KM 3**, **KM 7**, **KM 9**, **KM 11**, **KN 16**). It seems more likely that they were incised at the bone-dry stage before firing.

2. Although marks **GR 4-GR 5**, **PT 137**, **PK 12** are not illustrated they have been included in the corpus due to their importance with regard to the present discussion.

of short incised lines, single or in pairs, and lines crossed at an acute angle incised on various parts of the interior or exterior of the pot. The mark of two lines crossed at an acute angle that was incised in the interior of a bowl is the only example published from the site so far (**PST 1**). The pottery is dated in EM IIA-MM IA.³

PST 1: Mitilinaeou 1997-1998, 208, fig. 6.

KASTELLI-CHANIA

Few pre-firing marks were published from the LM III settlement at Kastelli-Chania. The marks of two lines crossed at a right angle was incised under the base of a cup (**KS 1**) and painted under the base of two other cups (**KS 2-KS 3**) and of a bowl (**KS 4**). A Y-shaped mark, in one case followed by a vertical stroke, is incised under the base of two bowls (**KS 5-KS 6**). Another mark, not included in the corpus because it is only partly preserved, consists of one vertical stroke and half of a pointed oval and is also painted on the base of a bowl.⁴ Other incised marks consist of one (**KS 7-KS 9**), two (**KS 10**), and three (**KS 11**) long line/s; two short vertical lines and one horizontal (**KS 12**); and twelve short vertical lines all incised on the legs of cooking pots (**KS 13**). Marks consisting of one finger impression were pressed on the leg of cooking pots (**KS 14-KS 19**).

The marks are dated to the LM IIIB (**KS 1-KS 6**, **KS 8-KS 12**, **KS 15-KS 19**) and LM IIIB/C (**KS 7**, **KS 13-KS 14**) periods. The low number of occurrences compared to the large quantity of unmarked pottery from the LM III deposits indicates that the marking of vessels was not a common practice at Kastelli: marked vessels fragments represent 0.093% of the published pottery. There is as yet no published information concerning pre-firing marks from contexts earlier than LM III; future publications will doubtless change the present picture.

KS 1: Hallager and Hallager 2003, 112, no. 74-P0258, pl. 112a:1; **KS 2:** Hallager and Hallager 2003, 104, no. 73-P0619, pl. 168f:30; **KS 3:** Hallager and Hallager 2003, 155, no. 70-P0845, pl. 128f:4; **KS 4:** Hallager and Hallager 2011, 145, no. 82-P0864, pl. 177e:18; **KS 5:** Hallager and Hallager 2003, 117, no. 70-P0490, pl. 113c:6; **KS 6:** Hallager and Hallager 2003, 184, no. 71-P0984, pl. 137b:8; **KS 7:** Hallager and Hallager 2000, 77, no. 70-P0350, pl. 69 c:4; **KS 8:** Hallager and Hallager 2011, 143, no. 82-P0780, pl. 176e:7; **KS 9:** Hallager and Hallager 2011, 146, no. 82-P0889, pl. 181b:6; **KS 10:** Hallager and Hallager 2003, 26, no. 71-P0869, pls 73, 90e; **KS 11:** Hallager and Hallager 2003, 93, no. 77-P0578/0597, pl. 106f:4; **KS 12:** Hallager and Hallager 2011, 41, no. 80-P0976, pl. 148a:9; **KS 13:** Hallager and Hallager 2000, 68, no. 80-P0231, pl. 67 b:3; **KS 14:** Hallager and Hallager 2000, 101, no. 80-P1133/1409, pl. 74 f:1; **KS 15:** Hallager and Hallager 2000, 85, no. 77-P1363, pl. 71d:5; **KS 16:** Hallager and Hallager 2003, 106, no. 77-P1457, pl. 111d:5; **KS 17:** Hallager and Hallager 2003, 121, no. 84-P0622, pl. 166e:4; **KS 18:** Hallager and Hallager 2003, 125, no. 80-P0661, pl. 117d:4; **KS 19:** Hallager and Hallager 2003, 163, no. 80-P0587, pl. 132b:5.

3. No information is provided concerning the precise date of the marked sherds. It should be noted that all the pottery is unstratified and difficult to date. Mitilinaeou

1997-1998; 2006.

4. Hallager and Hallager 2011, 192, 426, no. 71-P0915, fig. 99, pl. 190f:4.

VRYSINAS

An important assemblage of pre-firing marks was excavated by K. Davaras at the peak sanctuary of Vrysinas in 1972-1973 and has been studied by M. Giokaridaki-Skandali.⁵ The recent investigation of the site has produced many other examples.⁶ The discussion that follows is based on the assemblage excavated by Davaras. The marks so far reported from the site are: one long line incised vertically on the handle of amphorae (**VR 1-VR 2**) and horizontally under the base of a cup (**VR 3**); one short horizontal line incised on the handle of a jug (**VR 4**);⁷ two (**VR 5**) or three (**VR 6**) short lines vertically incised on the handles of amphorae; two short oblique lines below the rim (**VR 7**) and at the baseline (**VR 8**) of cups and on the body of an open vessel (**VR 9**); two (**VR 10**) or three (**VR 11**) superposed chevrons on the body of a large tray and the leg of a tripod pot respectively; one wavy line below the rim of a bowl (**VR 12**); and two lines crossing at an acute angle on the body of a conical cup (**VR 13**). One (**VR 14-VR 19**) or two (**VR 20**) short lines are also incised on the legs of cooking pots. Of particular interest are the marks consisting of very short incisions (cuts), which seem to have been particularly common in the area of Vrysinas. These are: one single, very small incision at the baseline of cups (**VR 21-VR 23**); double incisions on the rim of a bowl (**VR 24**), the baseline of a tray (**VR 25**) and the baseline (**VR 26**) and handle (**VR 27**) of cooking pots; and three incisions at the baseline of a jug (**VR 28**). These cuts are also combined with one vertical (**VR 29**) or two horizontal lines (**VR 30**) incised at the baseline of cups. Apart from the incised marks, vessels also bear impressed marks, of one (**VR 31**), two (**VR 32-VR 33**) and three (**VR 34**) dots pressed on the base of a jug, on the base of a cup and the handle of a brazier, and on the rim of an open vessel respectively. The mark of two dots on either side of an incised line is placed on the body of a cup (**VR 35**) and that of wavy incised line and three dots just below the line on a large vessel (**VR 36**).

Marked bowls and cups outnumber any other vessel shape; this is no coincidence, since this is the most frequent type of vessel found.⁸ About 57% of the marks recorded, are incised or impressed in areas of high visibility, while the remaining 43% are on less visible parts of the vessel.⁹ Most marks are dated to MM III, one to MM I-MM II (**VR 24**), and a few to the LM period (**VR 3**, **VR 23**, **VR 28**, **VR 36**).¹⁰ The marks from Vrysinas are an important assemblage, considering how few Cretan sites have provided such large groups of marks. Nonetheless, the

5. Giokaridaki-Skandali 2008. For the online version of this important study see <http://elocus.lib.uoc.gr>. I do not include in the corpus marks nos 5 (24.924), 29 (24.911), 30 (24.912), and 31 (24.913), because they seem to me to have resulted from the manufacturing process rather than being true pre-firing marks, and marks nos 39 (37.539), 40 (37.538) and 42 (2.916), because it is not certain whether they are pre-firing marks. Marks nos 9 (37.346), 11 (24.910) and 33 (37.740) are

also omitted as they are only partly preserved.

6. Iris Tzachili personal communication. The data are unpublished. For the recent investigation of the site see Papadopoulou and Tzachili 2010.

7. According to Giokaridaki-Skandali, the handle belongs to a cup.

8. Tzachili 2003; 2006; 2011, 124; Giokaridaki-Skandali 2008, 99.

9. Giokaridaki-Skandali 2008, 98-99.

10. Giokaridaki-Skandali 2008, 103.

marked vessels constituted only a tiny proportion of the vessels found at the site during the 1972-1973 excavation. Typically, only one sherd in 2,000 is marked.¹¹

VR 1: Giokaridaki-Skandali 2008, 48-49, no. 15; **VR 2:** Giokaridaki-Skandali 2008, 52, no. 17; **VR 3:** Giokaridaki-Skandali 2008, 74-75, no. 32; **VR 4:** Giokaridaki-Skandali 2008, 50-51, no. 16; **VR 5:** Giokaridaki-Skandali 2008, 43-45, no. 13; **VR 6:** Giokaridaki-Skandali 2008, 46-47, no. 14; **VR 7:** Giokaridaki-Skandali 2008, 20-21, no. 2; **VR 8:** Giokaridaki-Skandali 2008, 87, no. 41; **VR 9:** Giokaridaki-Skandali 2008, 42, no. 12; **VR 10:** Giokaridaki-Skandali 2008, 38-39, no. 10; **VR 11:** Giokaridaki-Skandali 2008, 79-80, no. 35; **VR 12:** Giokaridaki-Skandali 2008, 84, no. 38; **VR 13:** Giokaridaki-Skandali 2008, 22-25, no. 3; **VR 14:** Giokaridaki-Skandali 2008, 82-83, no. 37; **VR 15:** Giokaridaki-Skandali 2008, 90-91, no. 43; **VR 16:** Giokaridaki-Skandali 2008, 92-93, no. 44; **VR 17:** Giokaridaki-Skandali 2008, 94, no. 45; **VR 18:** Giokaridaki-Skandali 2008, 95, no. 46; **VR 19:** Giokaridaki-Skandali 2008, 96, no. 47; **VR 20:** Giokaridaki-Skandali 2008, 81, no. 36; **VR 21:** Giokaridaki-Skandali 2008, 56-57, no. 20; **VR 22:** Giokaridaki-Skandali 2008, 59, no. 22; **VR 23:** Giokaridaki-Skandali 2008, 58, no. 21; **VR 24:** Giokaridaki-Skandali 2008, 18-19, no. 1; **VR 25:** Giokaridaki-Skandali 2008, 63-64, no. 25; **VR 26:** Giokaridaki-Skandali 2008, 61-62, no. 24; **VR 27:** Giokaridaki-Skandali 2008, 53-54, no. 18; **VR 28:** Giokaridaki-Skandali 2008, 65-66, no. 26; **VR 29:** Giokaridaki-Skandali 2008, 69-70, no. 28; **VR 30:** Giokaridaki-Skandali 2008, 67-68, no. 27; **VR 31:** Giokaridaki-Skandali 2008, 60, no. 23; **VR 32:** Giokaridaki-Skandali 2008, 55, no. 19; **VR 33:** Giokaridaki-Skandali 2008, 77-78, no. 34; **VR 34:** Giokaridaki-Skandali 2008, 34-35, no. 8; **VR 35:** Giokaridaki-Skandali 2008, 32-33, no. 7; **VR 36:** Giokaridaki-Skandali 2008, 30-31, no. 6.

MONASTIRAKI

Five sherds with pre-firing marks, dated to MM IIB, have been recently published from Monastiraki in the Amari Valley. They were found in the Building of the Archive of Sealings and the surrounding area. One mark, consisting of two superposed chevrons, is incised on the handle of a small pithos, near the attachment of the handle (**MN 1**), while a similar mark is incised on the handle of an amphora (**MN 2**). A mark of three parallel short lines is incised on the handle of a closed vessel (**MN 3**), while one oblique short line is incised below the rim of a pithos, near the handle (**MN 4**). Nine parallel short lines are incised on the horizontal rim surface of a conical pithos (**MN 5**). In every case, the marks are incised on clearly visible parts of the vessels. Marked vessels represent a very low percentage in the pottery from the complex: approximately 4,165 vessels were found in the Building of the Archive of Sealings and the surrounding area, but only five, or 0.12% of the total, are marked.

MN 1: Kanta 2012, 112, fig. III.19; **MN 2:** Kanta 2012, 35, fig. II.23-24; **MN 3:** Kanta 2012, 39, fig. II.46-47; **MN 4:** Kanta 2012, 96, fig. II.277; **MN 5:** Kanta 2012, 88, fig. II. 238-239.

11. Giokaridaki-Skandali 2008, 15, 109.

KOMMOS

An assemblage of 35 pre-firing marks from Kommos has been published, 33 of which are included in the present corpus.¹² Marks are both incised and impressed. The incised marks consist of simple linear patterns: one long line vertically incised on the legs of cooking pots (**KM 1-KM 4**) and tripod trays (**KM 5-KM 7**); two vertical lines incised on the leg of a cooking pot (**KM 8**); five vertical lines also incised on the leg of a cooking pot (**KM 9**); two lines crossed at an acute angle incised under the base of conical cups (**KM 10-KM 11**) and on the rim of a cooking pot (**KM 12**); two lines crossed at a right angle incised on the handle of a large closed vessel (**KM 13**); a zigzag line on the rim of a cooking pot (**KM 14**); and two (**KM 15**), three (**KM 16**), four (**KM 17**) and six (**KM 18**) short oblique lines, incised the first on the handle of an amphora and the others on the rim of cooking pots. The vessel of **KM 15** is imported from Knossos. Another linear mark consisting of two lines with one end meeting at right angle incised under the base of a closed vessel was imported from an unknown Cretan site (**KM 19**). An incised mark on the handle of a stirrup jar copies Linear B syllabogram AB 46 (**KM 20**). The mark of two vertical short lines and another below the edge is incised on the leg of a cooking pot (**KM 21**). It has been suggested that some marks had been incised after firing (**KM 3**, **KM 7**, **KM 9**, **KM 11**). The marks in question, however, seem to be incised at the bone-dry stage before firing.

The impressed marks consist of finger and fingernail impressions or grooves. Four finger impressions occur on the upper part of the leg of a cooking pot (**KM 22**). Two fingernail marks are impressed on the handle of a pithoid jar (**KM 23**). Four perpendicular grooves are impressed on the rim of two cooking pots sharing similar formal and technological attributes (**KM 24-KM 25**). Grooves, their number ranging from four to two, pressed on the rim of cooking pots are also combined with one (**KM 26**) or two (**KM 27**) vertical or oblique lines or an M-shaped mark (**KM 28**) incised just below the rim.

Marks said to be impressed on potters' turntables or bats and transferred to the bottom of vases as they were being formed are also reported. The impressed patterns consist of a dentate circle on a basin (**KM 29**), a double axe within a circle on a lentoid jar (**KM 30**), concentric impressed and raised circles with a plastic linear design in the center on a jar (**KM 31**), a raised cross and a single preserved line also on a jar (**KM 32**), and a square inscribed in a circle with a diagonal cross on a pithoid jar (**KM 33**). Most marks from the site are incised or impressed mainly in high-visibility areas. Impressions from turntables are always displayed under the base and are visible only when the pot is upside down.

The contextual framework of these marks varies. Many marks were found in deposits associated with units of the Protopalatial settlement in the southern area of the site (**KM 12**, **KM 14**, **KM 16-KM 18**, **KM 22**, **KM 24-KM 27**, **KM 28-KM 30**,

12. The present discussion does not include two partly preserved marks (Bennet 1996, 316, no. 8; van de Moortel 2006, 308, no. Je/30). Marks incised or impressed on im-

ported pottery from Cyprus and the Near East are also excluded (Bennet 1996, 315-317, 320-321; Rutter 2006, 649-658).

KM 31-KM 33). Some others in units of the Neopalatial settlement (**KM 4-KM 9**, **KM 13**, **KM 19**, **KM 21**, **KM 23**). **KM 1** was found in the House of the Snake Tube and **KM 20** in the nearby area, **KM 2** in the area of Building P, **KM 3** in Building J, **KM 10-KM 11** in Building N and **KM 15** in Building X of the LM III settlement. Due to the fragmentary state of the data and the formation of the deposits where marked sherds of vessels were found, no meaningful contextual associations can be proposed.

The chronological horizon of these marked vessels ranges from MM I to LM III. Fabric and surface finish suggest a MM IB-MM IIB date for a considerable part of the assemblage (**KM 5**, **KM 12**, **KM 14**, **KM 16-KM 18**, **KM 22**, **KM 24-KM 27**, **KM 29**, **KM 31-KM 33**).¹³ Another example is dated to the MM IB-MM II period (**KM 28**), while three others are MM III in date (**KM 6**, **KM 23**, **KM 30**). **KM 19** is dated to MM III-LM IA and **KM 21** to MM III-LM I. **KM 4** and **KM 7-KM 9** are MM III/LM I in date. Marks **KM 13** and **KM 15** are dated to LM IIIA1 and LM IIIA1/2 respectively, **KM 20** to LM IIIA, while two marks are dated to the LM IIIB period (**KM 1-KM 3**, **KM 10-KM 11**). Marked sherds represent a very low percentage of their unmarked counterparts: for example, of the 29,695 sherds of vessels found in the Protopalatial deposits from the Southern Area of the site, only 14 examples, or 0.047% of the total, are marked.¹⁴

KM 1: Watrous 1992, 95, no. 1654, fig. 62, pl. 42; **KM 2**: Rutter 2006, 543, no. 59/16, pl. 3.68; **KM 3**: Watrous 1992, 78, no. 1346, fig. 50, pl. 32; **KM 4**: Betancourt 1990, 183, no. 1869, fig. 65, pl. 95; **KM 5**: Betancourt 1990, 150, no. 1079, fig. 46, pl. 58; **KM 6**: Betancourt 1990, 166, no. 1436, fig. 55, pl. 74; **KM 7**: Betancourt 1990, 183, no. 1865, fig. 65, pl. 94; **KM 8**: Betancourt 1990, 183, no. 1868, fig. 65, pl. 95; **KM 9**: Betancourt 1990, 183, no. 1870, fig. 65, pl. 95; **KM 10**: Bennet 1996, 316, no. 6, pls 4.46, 4.49; **KM 11**: Rutter 2006, 545, no. J60/7, pl. 3.70; **KM 12**: van de Moortel 2006, 300, no. Ja/48, pl. 3.17 A-B; **KM 13**: Bennet 1996, 317, no. 11, pls 4.46, 4.50; **KM 14**: van de Moortel 2006, 311, no. Jf/14, pl. 3.17 A-B; **KM 15**: Watrous 1992, 40, no. 702, fig. 30, pl. 16; **KM 16**: van de Moortel 2006, 300, no. Ja/54, pl. 3.17 A-B; **KM 17**: van de Moortel 2006, 311, no. Jf/13, pl. 3.17 A-B; **KM 18**: van de Moortel 2006, 300, no. Ja/53, pl. 3.17 A-B; **KM 19**: Rutter 2006, 403, no. 12/4, pl. 3.31; **KM 20**: Bennet 1996, 317, no. 12, pls 4.46, 4.50; **KM 21**: Rutter 2006, 401, no. 9b/10, pl. 3.30; **KM 22**: Rutter 2006, 356, no. L/18, pl. 3.15; **KM 23**: Bennet 1996, 315, no. 2, pls 4.46; **KM 24**: van de Moortel 2006, 300, no. Ja/51, pl. 3.17 A-B; **KM 25**: van de Moortel 2006, 300, no. Ja/52, pl. 3.17 A-B; **KM 26**: van de Moortel 2006, 300, no. Ja/49, pl. 3.17 A-B; **KM 27**: van de Moortel 2006, 300, no. Ja/50, pl. 3.17 A-B; **KM 28**: Bennet 1996, 314, no. 1, pls 4.46, 4.48; **KM 29**: van de Moortel 2006, 299, no. Ja/45, pl. 3.17 A-B; **KM 30**: Betancourt 1990, 170, no. 1549, pl. 79; **KM 31**: van de Moortel 2006, 299, no. Ja/46, pl. 3.17 A-B; **KM 32**: van de Moortel 2006, 299-300, no. Ja/47, pl. 3.17 A-B; **KM 33**: van de Moortel 2006, 308, no. Je/31, pl. 3.17 A-B.

13. It should be noted here that, in some cases, the dates given are not consistent: whereas a MM IB-MM IIB date is proposed in the catalogue, in the discussion it is stated that 'all were incompletely oxidized during

firing and may date to MM IB or MM IIA rather than later' (van de Moortel 2006, 345-347).

14. These estimates are based on information drawn from the Protopalatial deposits published by van de Moortel (2006).

HAGIA TRIADA

The only marked vessels so far published from Hagia Triada are some cooking pots, actually leg fragments, with the marks of one long line vertically incised (**HT 1**, **HT 3**, **HT 6**, **HT 9**); three short vertically incised lines (**HT 2**, **HT 4**); a line vertically incised and two others below the edge of the vertical one (**HT 5**, **HT 7**); and two vertically incised lines and another below their edge (**HT 8**). These fragments were found in a deposit dated to the MM IIIA period in the Complesso della Mazza della Breccia. It is uncertain whether the absence of other marked vessels is due to the fact that the pottery from the site has not yet been published in detail, or because the practice of marking was not widespread among the potters active there. It is worth noting, however, that none of the published LM I vessels from the central complex or the houses of the settlement bears pre-firing marks.

HT 1: Girella 2010, 182-183, pl. 67, no. 184; **HT 2:** Girella 2010, 182-183, pl. 87, no. 366; **HT 3:** Girella 2010, 182-183, pl. 87, no. 367; **HT 4:** Girella 2010, pl. 83, s.n.; **HT 5:** Girella 2010, pl. 83, s.n.; **HT 6:** Girella 2010, pl. 83, s.n.; **HT 7:** Girella 2010, pl. 83, s.n.; **HT 8:** Girella 2010, pl. 83, s.n.; **HT 9:** Girella 2010, pl. 83, s.n.

PHAISTOS

Only 20 pre-firing marks have been published from Phaistos.¹⁵ The marks consist of incised linear patterns such as one short line vertically incised on the leg of a cooking pot (**PH 1**); one horizontal line in the interior of a bowl (**PH 2**); five short lines on the rim of a pithos (**PH 3**); two lines crossed at an acute angle below the rim of a cooking pot (**PH 4**) and of a jar (or of a cooking pot) (**PH 5**); two lines crossed at a right angle incised on the lid of a pithos (**PH 6**); seven lines in a zigzag pattern on the body of an unidentified vessel (**PH 7**); two lines in a V-shape incised below the rim of jars (**PH 8-PH 9**) and of a pithoid jar (**PH 10**); three lines in the shape of a triangle incised on the rim of a cooking pot (**PH 11**) and on the handle of an unidentified vessel (**PH 12**); four lines, two vertical with the other two crossing between like a hour-glass below the rim of a cooking pot (**PH 13**); four incised lines in an E-shape incised on an unidentified vessel (**PH 14**); two parallel lines connected by two short ones at a right angle also incised on an unidentified vessel (**PH 15**); three lines in a Y-shape with a fourth one in the middle incised under the base of a cup (**PH 16**); two short incised lines on the rim of a cooking pot combined with two incisions crossed at an acute angle just below (**PH 17**); three incised lines

15. The pottery from Pernier's excavations has not been studied. The ceramic assemblages excavated by D. Levi have not also been presented in full. An additional difficulty is that only scanty information has been provided on the potsherds actually published to date: no data on formal and technological attributes are provided, while in some cases the marks are indistinct because of the poor quality of the photographs. Of the marked

sherds published in Levi 1976, pl. 227a-s, I have not included the following: c (F838a) because it is partly preserved; h (F838b) for the same reason, and also because there seem to be two incised marks, perhaps forming part of an inscription; and f (F 6000a) because the mark is repeated several times in a pattern looking more like a decorative motif than a pre-firing mark.

on the rim of a cooking pot combined with a hour-glass mark (**PH 18**) or with three lines in the shape of an N-shape (**PH 19**) just below; and finally the mark of three short oblique lines combined with two lines crossed at an acute angle next to the oblique ones incised close to the handles of an oven (**PH 20**). No impressed marks have been published to date. Except for the mark incised under the base of a cup, they are all highly visible. Most marked vessels were found in various MM IB-MM IIB contexts within the palace (**PH 4-PH 5, PH 11-PH 12, PH 15, PH 17, PH 20**) and the town (**PH 3, PH 6, PH 8-PH 9, PH 13-PH 14, PH 18-PH 19**). Three marks are found in a MM IIIA (**PH 1**) and LM IB (**PH 2, PH 10**) contexts in the area of Chalara. The context of **PH 7** and **PH 16** is unknown. On the basis of the small number of marks published to date and the impressively large volume of pottery that has come to light from the Protopalatial levels of Phaistos, it is reasonable to suppose that marked vessels represent a very low percentage of their unmarked counterparts.

PH 1: Girella 2010, 109-114, no. 20 A/40, pl. 39; **PH 2:** Palio 2001, 305, no. 334, fig. 48e; **PH 3:** Levi and Carinci 1988, 21, pl. 12d; **PH 4:** Levi 1976, 523, pl. 227q; **PH 5:** Fiandra 2000, 486, fig. 74; **PH 6:** Levi 1976, 587, pl. 227a; **PH 7:** Levi 1976, pl. 227g; **PH 8:** Levi 1976, 651, pl. 227r; **PH 9:** Levi 1976, 563, pl. 227s; **PH 10:** Palio 2001, 324, no. 623, fig. 41; **PH 11:** Levi 1976, 159, pl. 227p; **PH 12:** Pernier 1935, 417, fig. 245; **PH 13:** Levi 1976, 568, pl. 227k; **PH 14:** Levi 1976, 447, pl. 227i; **PH 15:** Levi 1976, pl. 227e; **PH 16:** Levi 1976, 58, pl. 227b; **PH 17:** Levi 1976, 478, pl. 227m; **PH 18:** Levi 1976, 563, pl. 227l; **PH 19:** Levi 1976, 651, pl. 227d; **PH 20:** Levi and Carinci 1988, 35-36, pl. 17a-b.

TYLISSOS

Three pre-firing marks are so far published. The first consist of four incised lines in an E-shape (**TL 1**) and the second of two lines crossed at an acute angle (**TL 2**) both incised under the base of cups. The third is a composite mark consisting of two parallel lines transversed by a longer third at a right angle incised twice under the base of a cup (**TL 3**). The marks are visible only when cups were placed upside down. The find context is unknown. On formal grounds, these cups could be dated to the MM I period.

TL 1: Hatzidakis 1921, 66, fig. 34, no. 15; **TL 2:** Hatzidakis 1921, 66, fig. 34, no. 14; **TL 3:** Hatzidakis 1921, 66, fig. 34, no. 8.

KNOSSOS

The assemblage of published marks from Knossos, just 19 recorded examples, cannot be considered representative since most of the pottery from the site has not yet been studied. The published marks fall into three categories: incised, painted, impressed and stamped. Incised marks consist of two lines crossed at an acute (**KN 1-KN 2**) or a right (**KN 3-KN 8**) angle placed on the clay disk of transport stirrup jars;¹⁶ triangles joined at the apices on the shoulder of an amphora (**KN 9**);

16. Mark **KN 8** is painted rather than incised like the others.

a rectangle enclosing two crossing diagonal lines also on the shoulder of three amphorae (**KN 10-KN 12**); two incised lines meeting at right angles in a T-shape (**KN 13**); one vertical incised line with a second horizontal one extending at a right angle from its centre to the right (**KN 14**); the double axe mark (**KN 15**); one vertical incised line with a horizontal one extending at an acute angle from its centre to the right, incised on the handle of a large stirrup jar (**KN 16**); and a spiral-like pattern incised on the rim of a pithos (**KN 17**).¹⁷ Mark **KN 16** is said to have been incised after firing but this is not certain.¹⁸

Impressed marks consist of finger impressions. One finger impression is usually pressed on the attachment of the upper handles on some LM IIIA pithoi and occasionally also on the attachment of the lower handles. This mark may not be limited to pithos handles, but it may also appear on other vessel types (e.g. cooking pots, tripod trays, basins), as parallels from other sites on the island indicate; however, more ceramic assemblages from Knossos need to be studied and published, particularly from the LM III period. The mark of five shallow finger impressions on the rim of a cooking pot combined with two lines crossed at an acute angle incised just below, near the rim, has also been published (**KN 18**), and is reminiscent of the composite marks incised or impressed on cooking pots at Kommos (**KM 25-KM 27**) and Phaistos (**PH 17-PH 19**).

Stamp and seal imprints occur exclusively on pithoi: they are stamped on horizontal and wavy raised bands applied to the pithos and/or directly on the pithos itself.¹⁹ A broken seal has been stamped in the center of circular stamp impressions made on the raised bands of a medallion pithos (**KN 19**). Stamps are usually placed on the horizontal bands of large pithoi.²⁰ The stamps leave circle (**KN 20**), concentric circle (**KN 21**) and flower-like (**KN 22**) imprints in the soft clay surface of the raised band. Approximately 35 stamps have been found: each is different and in only three cases does it appear that three separate stamps were used to mark two pithoi each.²¹

All known marks are displayed on clearly visible parts of the vessel. In the case of the pithoi from the West Magazines, despite the fact that the marks had been impressed on clearly visible parts, visibility is limited due to the architectural setting and lighting conditions of the stores. The find context of the marked vases varies. Pithoi decorated with stamps were found in the West Magazines and in the Magazines of the Medallion pithoi of the palace and just three examples in the town. This contextual distribution is significant. Stamps are pressed on large, richly decorated pithoi, products of high investment in labor and skill. I have argued elsewhere that the placement of such pithoi in well-built palatial storerooms could be part of a planned 'stenographic setting for the display of the stored wealth itself'.²²

17. No information is given for marks **KN 13-KN 15**.

18. Hood and De Jong 1958-1959, 193.

19. Christakis 2005, 30-31, 37-38.

20. For a full discussion see Christakis 2005, 30-31, 37-38, pls 9d, 17-19, 28.

21. The presentation of the assemblage is part of the final publication of the pithoi and storerooms of the palace of Knossos, an ongoing project of the author. Here only a few typical examples will be discussed.

22. Christakis 2008, 123; Christakis 2011.

KN 9-KN 12 were found in the Vat Room Deposit situated under the entrance of the Room of the Stone Vats in the Central Palace Sanctuary area of the palace.²³ This deposit, dated MM IB, is of special importance: it yielded luxury items and whole pots, some in sets; the ritual or cultic character of the deposit cannot be excluded.²⁴ In the area of the Queen's Megaron and the adjacent Private Staircase, collapsed from the upper floor, were found the stirrup jars **KN 4** and **KN 6-KN 7**.²⁵ The provenance of **KN 1**, **KN 3-KN 4** and **KN 8** is unknown; according to Popham, they seem to come from the same area. This primary deposit is dated by Popham to LM IIIB, but P. Warren has convincingly re-dated the assemblage to LM IIIA2.

The rest of the marked vessels were excavated in the town: **KN 5** was found in Room H of the Unexplored Mansion and **KN 17** in Room M of the same complex, both dated LM II, while **KN 13-KN 15** in a large rubbish heap to the southeast of the site,²⁶ **KN 18** in Deposit C of the MM III House by the Acropolis and dated MM IIIB,²⁷ and finally **KN 16** in a domestic unit at Makritikhos dated to the LM IIIA2 period. **KN 19**, originally thought to be MM IIIB in date, is now dated to the LM I period.²⁸ **KN 20** and **KN 21** are LM I in date while **KN 22** is dated to the LM IIIA period.

Of particular interest is the exclusive occurrence of certain marks –exclusive on the basis of published data– on pots with similar formal and technological attributes and contextual associations. The case of the pithoi is discussed above. The mark of two lines crossed at a right or an acute angle is incised on the disc of the false neck of stirrup jars found in the Queen's Megaron. Despite their fragmentary state of preservation (only one of the six examples is entirely preserved), all share similar formal and technological attributes; they belong to Group B of the H.W. Haskell typological classification, have the same surface treatment and are made using the same paste technology.²⁹ The center of their production is somewhere in Central Crete, although not necessarily in the Knossos area itself. The mark is incised on the soft clay surface after the application of painted decoration (a spiral pattern). From a graphological point of view, the marks seem to have been written by the same individual. It is important to note that the mark the potter had in mind is that of the two lines crossed at right angles, a mark type also frequently painted on the disc of stirrup jars, but in his/her haste ended up crossing the lines at an acute angle.³⁰

A similar case is that of the mark of a rectangle enclosing two crossing diagonal lines. This mark has been incised on the body of three amphorae found in the Vat Room Deposit. Two other similar unmarked pots were found in the deposit.³¹ The

23. Momigliano 1991, 167-175; MacGillivray 1998, 34-35; 2007b, 107-108; Panagiotaki 1999, 8-70.

24. Panagiotaki 1999, 52.

25. Popham 1970, 26-30; Warren 1991; Hatzaki 2007b, 225.

26. There is no published information on the context of **KN 13-KN 15**.

27. For the date of Deposit C see Hatzaki

2007b, 155, 161.

28. Christakis 2005, 7-8; Christakis 2008, 46.

29. Haskell 2011, 19-21, 110; Day 2011, 46-47, 78; Jones and Day 2011, 79-85.

30. e.g. Popham 1970, pl. 28f for a stirrup jar found in the same context as those with the incised mark; Haskell *et al.* 2011, figs 3, 4, 9, 10, 17, pl. 6.

31. Panagiotaki 1999, 53, nos 3, 4.

vessels share basic formal attributes despite minor differences in the shape of the body, elongated in some examples and more globular in others, and the collared neck. All have the same surface treatment, paste and forming technology.³² Formal and technological attributes suggest production by potting groups active during the early Protopalatial period in the Pediada region. These potters produced quite a distinctive ware in many respects, which is exported to various Protopalatial sites of the island, including Knossos.³³

The graphological analysis of these three versions of the mark of a rectangle enclosing two crossing diagonal lines suggests that they are incised by different potters: the shape and sequence of the incised lines forming the mark is not the same and the overall aspect of the mark differs from case to case. It is interesting to note that this mark resembles a motif painted on a four-handled jar also found in the Vat Room Deposit.³⁴ Paste technology points to production in the area of the Pediada. The painted motif consists of a rectangle enclosing two crossing diagonal lines; two of the four triangles formed by the diagonal lines are filled with cross-hatched lines. The motif is placed below one of the handles of the jar, on the shoulder, flanked by two cross-hatched circles. Taken together, all these vessels constitute an additional testament to the connections between Knossos and the Pediada in MM IB.³⁵

KN 1: Popham 1970, pl. 28g:lower; Haskell *et al.* 2011, 140, KN21, pl. 6; **KN 2:** Popham 1970, pl. 12 d-e; Haskell *et al.* 2011, 140, KN05, pl. 5; **KN 3:** Popham 1970, pl. 28g:upper left; Haskell *et al.* 2011, 140, KN20, pl. 6; **KN 4:** Popham 1970, pl. 28g:upper right; **KN 5:** Popham 1984, 39-40, pl. 95a; **KN 6:** Haskell *et al.* 2011, 140, KN19, pl. 6; **KN 7:** Haskell *et al.* 2011, 140, KN22, pl. 7; **KN 8:** Popham 1970, pl. 28f; **KN 9:** Panagiotaki 1999, 53, no. 5a; **KN 10:** Panagiotaki 1999, 53, no. 1, fig. 1, pl. 1b; **KN 11:** Panagiotaki 1999, 53, no.2; **KN 12:** Panagiotaki 1999, 53, no. 5; **KN 13:** Evans 1921, 561; **KN 14:** Evans 1921, 561; **KN 15:** Evans 1921, 561; **KN 16:** Hood and de Jong 1958-1959, 193, no. 35, fig. 8; **KN 17:** Popham 1984, 59, M41, pl. 78a; **KN 18:** Catling *et al.* 1979, 39, V.165, fig. 26; **KN 19:** Evans 1921, 564, fig. 410; **KN 20:** Evans 1921, 563, fig. 409; **KN 21:** Evans 1935, 640-641, fig. 629; **KN 22:** Christakis 2005, 31, pl. 19c.

ARCHANES

Just four pre-firing marks are known from Archanes: the low number is due to the fact that most of the pottery has not yet been studied and published thoroughly.³⁶

32. This statement is based on the macroscopic study of the four specimens in the Heraklion Archaeological Museum and the Knossos Stratigraphical Museum. I did not have the opportunity to examine the vessel, or rather part of a vessel, in the Ashmolean Museum.

33. Rethemiotakis and Christakis 2004; 2011; Christakis 2013. For Pediada pottery imported to Knossos, see also Macdonald and Knappett 2007, 156.

34. Panagiotaki 1999, 57, no. 53, fig. 6.

35. Rethemiotakis and Christakis 2004; 2011.

36. I have not included in the corpus a mark, incised on the lid of a burial pithos, which, albeit reported in the publication, is not illustrated (Sakellarakis and Sapouna-Sakellarakaki 1997, 330-332). A complex mark has also been incised on the body of a pithos: it is not certain, however, whether it is a pre-firing mark or a design of unknown meaning and purpose (Lebessi 1970, 261, pls 360β, 361γ).

The marks are incised: they consist of two lines crossed at an acute angle (**AR 1-AR 2**) and the mark of a circle with a vertical line in the centre (**AR 3**). Linear A syllabogram AB04 is also incised on a lid (**AR 4**). Three of the marks are incised on larnakes: **AR 1** on the lid, **AR 2** on the body, on the inner part of the handle, and **AR 3** on the attachments of the handles. Finally, **AR 4** is placed on the upper side of a pithos lid. All the marks, except for **AR 2**, are incised on clearly visible parts of the vessel. Marks are also found on cups and pithoi, but no further information is provided.³⁷ The published marks are dated to the MM I (**AR 1-AR 3**) and MM III (**AR 4**) periods and were found in tombs (**AR 1-AR 3**) and a building of religious function (**AR 4**). The extremely fragmentary information from Archanes does not help define the use of pre-firing marks at this major center; future study of the pottery from the site may bring more examples to light.

AR 1: Panagiotopoulos 2002, 138, A5, pl. 63; Sakellarakis and Sapouna-Sakellarakis 1997, 331, fig. 294; **AR 2:** Panagiotopoulos 2002, 141, A 32, pl. 63; **AR 3:** Sakellarakis and Sapouna-Sakellarakis 1997, 333, fig. 294; **AR 4:** Sakellarakis and Sapouna-Sakellarakis 1997, 333, fig. 297.

MALIA

Malia has produced one of the most numerous, well-published and certainly the most varied assemblage of published pre-firing marks found at any site of Bronze Age Crete. About 383 marked vessels or fragments of vessels have been published to date 362 of which are included in the present discussion.³⁸ The largest assemblage is found at Quartier Mu and dated to MM IIB (**ML 1-ML 2, ML 4-ML 23, ML 25, ML 27-ML 30, ML 33-ML 39, ML 41-ML 51, ML 53, ML 55-ML 64, ML 66-ML 70, ML 72-ML 117, ML 120-ML 128, ML 130-ML 131, ML 134-ML 139, ML 141-ML 153, ML 155-ML 159, ML 161-ML 166, ML 169, ML 174-ML 177, ML 180-ML 188, ML 191-ML 215, ML 218-ML 223, ML 225, ML 227-ML 231, ML 234, ML 237-ML 276, ML 278-ML 303, ML 305-ML 311, ML 313-ML 314, ML 316-ML 348, ML 351-ML 365, ML 374-ML 380**). To the same period is dated a marked vessel found in a sanctuary of the Protopalatial town (**ML 349**). Many marked vessels/fragments are also found in trenches in the southwest area of the palace (**ML 3, ML 24, ML 26, ML 31-ML 32, ML 54, ML 65, ML 118-ML 119, ML 129, ML 132-ML 133, ML 140, ML 154, ML 160, ML 168, ML 172-ML 173, ML 178, ML 217, ML 224, ML 226, ML 232-ML 233, ML 235-ML 236, ML 277, ML 312, ML 366-ML 373**).

37. Sakellarakis and Sapouna-Sakellarakis 1997, 331.

38. Included in the corpus, but not in the discussion, are marks **ML 363-ML 372** from the trenches in the area southwest of the palace, **ML 373-ML 382** from Quartier Mu, and **ML 383** from the area of the Agora; they are partly preserved and could not be reconstructed with any certainty. Two marks on the base of conical cups published in Chapouthier 1930, 85, fig. 30 have not been included

in either the catalogue or the discussion because they are not pre-firing marks but attributable to the manufacturing process (Olivier 1975, 135). The complex mark incised on the body of a pithos found in the Crypte Hypostyle is also not included in the catalogue and the discussion because it is not entirely certain whether it is a pre-firing mark or a design of unknown meaning and purpose (Amouretti 1970, 46, no. K 60.67, pl. 26:3-4).

This assemblage was initially dated to the MM IB period and subsequently to MM IIB. A few are found in the area of the Agora (**ML 41**, **ML 170-ML 171**, **ML 190**, **ML 216**, **ML 382**) and one (**ML 189**) in the Crypte Hypostyle, all dated to MM IIB. Some isolated examples come from Maison Za (**ML 52**) and the Maison d'Hagia Varvara (**ML 179**), both dated to the LM IB period. A marked sherd dated to MM IIB is found in Maison E (**ML 71**) and two marked vessels, also MM II in date, were discovered in two burial contexts: the Maison des Morts (**ML 350**) and the Fosse aux Trompettes (**ML 315**). Just three marks were found in the palace, although no details are provided (**ML 40**, **ML 167**, **ML 304**).

The marks are incised and impressed. Incised marks are more popular, representing 88% of the total. They consist of one vertical line (in most cases long) incised on the handle of an amphora (**ML 1**), cups (**ML 2-ML 3**), a jug (**ML 4**) and of a cooking pot (**ML 5**), below the rim of a basin (**ML 6**), a collector (**ML 7**) and of side-spouted jars (**ML 8-ML 9**) as well as on fragments of unidentified vessels (**ML 10-ML 13**); one horizontal line incised below the rim of a collector (**ML 14**), and of side-spouted jars (**ML 15-ML 17**), on the handle of a cooking pot (**ML 18**), on the body of a stand (**ML 19**) and of a carinated cup (**ML 20**), and on fragments of unidentified vessels (**ML 21-ML 23**); one oblique NW-SE line incised on the handle of an amphora (**ML 24**), below the rim of a side-spouted jar (**ML 25**) and of a jar (**ML 26**), and on a fragment of an unidentified vessel (**ML 27**); one oblique SW-NE line incised below the rim of side-spouted jars (**ML 28-ML 30**), on the base of a closed vessel (**ML 31**), on the handle of a jug (**ML 32**), and on fragments of unidentified vessels (**ML 33-ML 34**); two short vertical lines incised on the handles of an amphora (**ML 35**) and of a jar (**ML 36**); three short vertical lines incised on the handle of a jar (**ML 37**) and on the horizontal (**ML 38**) and vertical (**ML 39**) handles of unidentified vessels; four short vertical lines incised in the interior of a bowl, below the rim (**ML 40**); five short vertical lines incised on the leg of a tripod basin (**ML 41**); at least eight vertical lines incised on the rim of a pithos combined with two lines forming an angle just below the rim (**ML 42**);³⁹ two horizontal lines incised on the body of a stand (**ML 43**), the handle of a cup (**ML 44**) and on fragments of unidentified vessels (**ML 45-ML 50**); three horizontal lines incised in the interior of a bowl (**ML 51**); two converging lines incised on the base of a jug (**ML 52**) and on the attachments of the handles of a Palace Style jar (**ML 53**); two short SW-NE oblique lines incised below the rim of side-spouted jars (**ML 54-ML 65**) and of a cooking pot (**ML 66**), on the rim of a pithos (**ML 67**), near the base of a bowl (**ML 68**), and of a basin (**ML 69**), close to the handle of a side-spouted jar (**ML 70**), on the shoulder of a jug (**ML 71**), and on fragments of unidentified vessels (**ML 72-ML 75**); two short NW-SE oblique lines incised below the rim of a basin (**ML 76**), on the handle of a cup (**ML 77**) and on fragments of unidentified vessels (**ML 78-ML 80**); three short SW-NE oblique lines incised on the base of the neck of a jar (**ML 81**); three short NW-SE oblique lines incised on the body of a water-pipe (**ML 82**); one vertical line with its lower end meeting a horizontal one to the

39. No description is given of this mark and the published photograph is unclear.

right incised below the rim of side-spouted jars (ML 83-ML 88), of a cooking pot (ML 89) and of a jug (ML 90), on the handle of amphorae (ML 91-ML 92) and of a basin (ML 93), near the handle of a side-spouted jar (ML 94), on the body of a closed vessel (ML 95) and of a jug (ML 96), and on fragments of unidentified vessels (ML 97-ML 102); one vertical line with its lower end meeting a horizontal one to the left incised below the rim of side-spouted jars (ML 103-ML 106), on the body of a collector (ML 107), on the handle of a cup (ML 108), on the body (ML 109) and neck (ML 110) of amphorae, and on fragments of unidentified vessels (ML 111-ML 113); one vertical line with its upper end meeting a horizontal one to the right incised on the handle of an amphora (ML 114) and of a cup (ML 115), and on fragments of unidentified vessels (ML 116-ML 118); one vertical line with its upper end meeting a horizontal one to the left incised below the rim of side-spouted jars (ML 119-ML 120), of a cooking pot (ML 121) and of a collector (ML 122), and on the body of a jug (ML 123); an acute angle incised on the handle of an amphora (ML 124), below the rim of side-spouted jars (ML 125-ML 126), under the base of a jug (ML 127), and on fragments of unidentified vessels (ML 128-ML 132); one obtuse angle incised below the rim of side-spouted jars (ML 133-ML 136), on the handle of a cup (ML 137) and on fragments of unidentified vessels (ML 138-ML 139); two chevrons incised under the base of an unidentified vessel (ML 140); two incised lines meeting at a right angle in a T-shape, incised below the rim of side-spouted jars (ML 141-ML 144); two lines crossed at a right angle incised below the rim of a side-spouted jar (ML 145) and of a jar (ML 146) and on the appliqué button attached below the rim of side-spouted jars (ML 147-ML 148); lines forming a cross with Γ -shaped ends incised on the handle of an amphora (ML 149); two lines crossed at an acute angle incised below the rim of a jug (ML 150) and of jars (ML 151-ML 152), on a lid (ML 153), in the interior of a bowl (ML 154), on the handle of a side-spouted jar (ML 155) and of an amphora (ML 156), under the base (ML 157) and on body (ML 158) of closed vessels, on the body of a cup (ML 159) and of an amphora (ML 160), and on fragments of unidentified vessels (ML 161-ML 164); two lines crossed at an acute angle with a vertical line meeting at the lowest right end incised below the rim of a side-spouted jar (ML 165); two lines crossed at an acute angle with a horizontal one meeting at the upper ends incised on the rim of a pithos (ML 166), below the rim of a jar (ML 167) and under the base (ML 168) and the body (ML 169) of closed vessels; four long lines forming the hour-glass mark incised on the handle of an unidentified vessel (ML 170); three lines in the shape of a triangle incised on fragments of unidentified vessels (ML 171-ML 172); three lines in the shape of a triangle with a vertical in the middle and another vertical at each end of the long side incised in the interior and below the rim of a bowl (ML 173), and on the fragment of an unidentified vessel (ML 174); four lines in the shape of a lozenge on the handle of a pithos (ML 175); triangles forming a pentacle on the lid of a pithos (ML 176) and a similar partly preserved mark on the fragment of an unidentified vessel (ML 177); two converging lines and one vertical in the middle incised on the handle of a jug (ML 178); two parallel short vertically lines connected by a third horizontal one and another vertical long line in the middle incised on the handle of an unidentified vessel (ML 179); crossed lines forming a star-like motif incised below the rim of side-spouted

jars (ML 180-ML 182) and of a cooking pot (ML 183); two parallel horizontal lines connected by two others at a right angle incised on the handle of a basin (ML 184); two long parallel lines connected by at least seven others at a right angle incised under the base of an amphora (ML 185); lines crossed in various directions incised on the exterior surface of a plate (ML 186); and a circle transversely by a horizontal line incised on the fragment of an unidentified vessel (ML 187).

Another category of incised pre-firing marks comprises syllabograms and logograms of the Hieroglyphic script. Of the 89 different types of marks identified at Malia, 19 copy hieroglyphic signs. The following syllabograms have been used as marks: 005 incised on the fragment of an unidentified vessel (ML 188); 006 incised below the rim of a side-spouted jar (ML 189), on the shoulder of a jug (ML 190), and on a fragment of an unidentified vessel (ML 191); 009 is incised below the rim of side-spouted jars (ML 192-ML 213), of a jar (ML 214) and of cooking pots (ML 215-ML 219), on a lid (ML 220), below the rim of a collector (ML 221) and of a cup (ML 222), below the rim and in the interior of bowls (ML 223-ML 226), on a plate (ML 227), on the handle of a cup (ML 228), on the body of jars (ML 229-ML 230), and on fragments of unidentified vessels (ML 232-ML 247); 011 incised below the rim of side-spouted jars (ML 248-ML 274) and jars (ML 275-ML 276), on the lid of pithoi (ML 277-ML 278), on the shoulder of a jug (ML 279), on the body of a tripod pot (ML 280) and on fragments of unidentified vessels (ML 281-ML 286); 025 incised below the rim of a side-spouted jar (ML 287) and on an unidentified vessel (ML 288); 028 incised below the rim of side-spouted jars (ML 289- ML 290) and in the interior of a large bowl (ML 291); 031 incised on the body of a jar (ML 292); 038 incised below the rim of side-spouted jars (ML 293-ML 296), on the body (ML 297) and below the rim (ML 298) of jars, and on the fragment of an unidentified vessel (ML 299); 042 incised under the base of a side-spouted jar (ML 300), on the lid of a pithos (ML 301), the handle of an amphora (ML 302), the body of an offering table (ML 303) and the handle of an unidentified vessel (ML 304). Sign 042 is also incised on the body of an amphora followed by numerals (ML 305); 050 is incised in the interior of bowls below the rim (ML 306-ML 307), on the body of an offering table (ML 308), on the handle of an amphora (ML 309), on the body of an closed vessel (ML 310), and on fragments of unidentified vessels (ML 311-ML 312); 068 is incised on the handle of a lamp (ML 313); 070 is incised below the rim of a side-spouted jar (ML 314) and on the fragment of an unidentified vessel (ML 315); and 092 is incised on the shoulder of a pithos between the handles (ML 316). Logograms *153 (ML 317) and *156 (ML 318) are also found incised on the body of two jugs.

Syllabograms of the Hieroglyphic script are also impressed, mostly under the base of vessels, occasionally below the rim, and in one case on the handle of a vessel. The following signs are attested: 005 impressed below the rim of side-spouted jars (ML 319-ML 324) and of a basin (ML 325), on the body of two stands (ML 326-ML 327),⁴⁰ on the handle of an amphora (ML 328), and on a fragment of an

40. In the relevant publication ML 326-ML 327 are defined as 'dévidoirs'.

unidentified vessel (**ML 329**). A stamp with 005 within a circle is impressed under the base of two unidentified vessels (**ML 330-ML 331**) while a stamp with the sign 005 and a branch-like motif, both within a circle, is impressed under the base of another unidentified vessel (**ML 332**). 011 is impressed under the base of side-spouted jars (**ML 333-ML 334**); 016 is impressed under the base of a pithos (**ML 335**); 025 is impressed under the base of a jar (**ML 336**) and of two amphoras (**ML 337-ML 338**). A stamp with the same sign placed within a circle is pressed under the base of a jar (**ML 339**) and within a circle with two opposed arched lines under the base of unidentified vessels (**ML 340-ML 342**). 041 placed within a circle is impressed under the base of a lamp (**ML 343**); 042 under the base of an unidentified vessel (**ML 344**) and of a tripod vessel (**ML 345**), while on an offering table the sign is placed within a circle also impressed under the base (**ML 346**); 065 is impressed under the base of a jar (**ML 347**); 070 placed within a circle is impressed under the base of an amphora (**ML 348**) and of a pithos (**ML 349**); and 072 placed within a circle is impressed under the base of an unidentified vessel (**ML 350**).

Stamps with the imprints of two concentric circles (**ML 351**), a circle with two chevrons (**ML 352**) and a circle with a short oblique line partly preserved (**ML 353**) are impressed under the base of unidentifiable vessels. The stamp of a circle is impressed under the base of a jar (**ML 354**) and the stamp of a circle with two arched lines is impressed under the base of two unidentifiable vessels (**ML 355-ML 356**). The imprint of an incomplete trapezium occurs under the base of a pithos (**ML 357**). A sign in the form of an M occurs in isolation under the base of an amphora (**ML 358**) and of an unidentified vessel (**ML 359**) and within a circle under the base of an amphora (**ML 360**) and of an unidentified vessel (**ML 361**). A different version of this sign occurs under the base of an amphora (**ML 362**).

The most common marks are those of vertical, horizontal and oblique line/s, followed by marks of two lines meeting at a right or an acute angle (Chart 4). These mark types are followed by sign 009 reported in 56 examples, and 011 known from 39 examples. All the other marks, with the exception of that of two lines crossed at an acute angle and the impressed version of sign 005, attested in 15 and 14 examples respectively, are represented by one to seven examples. It should be noted that 34 of the 89 pre-firing marks so far reported at Malia appear only once (38% of the total). The vessels marked are large and small pithoi,⁴¹ closed vessels, amphorae, side-spouted jars, jars, jugs, cooking pots, tripod vessels, basins, bowls, plates, cups, collectors, stands, offering tables, lids, and a waterpipe (Table 4; Chart 5).⁴² 103 marked fragments come from unidentified vessels. Of the above vessels, the most commonly marked are the side-spouted jars (referred to in the relevant publications as brocs or pots à bec): 120 completely or partly preserved vessels and fragments with incised or impressed marks were found. Almost all the marked vessels are made by local potting groups.⁴³

41. Under this heading are classified here pithoi and small storage jars (named in the relevant publications as 'jarre' or 'petites jarres').

42. For the formal and technological attributes of these vessels see Poursat and Knappett 2005.

43. Three of the marked vessels from Quartier Mu, **ML 14**, **ML 109** and **ML 122** were made of south coast fabric; Poursat and Knappett 2005, 184. The rest are locally made.

The marks are in most cases incised or impressed on clearly visible parts of the vessel – the rim, the handles, below the rim and close to the handle or on the body. The commonest location, especially in the case of the side-spouted jars, is below the rim while in most bowls the mark is placed in the interior of the vessel below the rim. Many marks are placed on handles, while all other locations are only represented by one to four examples each. Marks impressed or incised under the base are reported in few cases, indicating that this was not a common practice; these marks are visible only when the pot is upside-down. It should be noted that marks made by circular stamps are always impressed under the base.

Nearly all the marks attested at Malia appear on more than one type of vessel.⁴⁴ Sign 009 (main gantée), for instance, occurs on side-spouted jars, small pithoi, basins, bowls and on a cup, while 011 (bucrane) appears on a jug, on pithos lids, on side-spouted jars and plain jars. There are, however, some very significant occurrences. Sign 011 is used to mark 27 side-spouted jars, and 009 appear on 22 such vessels. The frequent use of these specific signs to mark these vessels suggests a special preference. Of great interest in this respect is the graphological approach adopted by J.-P. Olivier and L. Godart.⁴⁵ They noted that 011 had been incised on two lids of pithoi by the same potter (**ML 277-ML 278**). Five different potters are identified based on the graphological analysis of sign 009. The first marked a bowl (**ML 226**), a side-spouted jar (**ML 199**) and a basin (**ML 208**); the second a side-spouted jar (**ML 210**) and an unidentified vessel (**ML 237**); the third a side-spouted jar (**ML 205**) and a cooking pot (**ML 216**); the fourth, two bowls (**ML 223, ML 225**); and the fifth two side-spouted jars (**ML 195, ML 211**). This is one of the rare cases where we can see not only the lifeless vessels but also those who made them.

Another potting group marked the side-spouted jars it produced with the mark of two short SW-NE oblique lines: from a graphological point of view, the marks had been incised by different potters.⁴⁶ Another interesting case is that of sign 005 impressed below the rim of two cylindrical vessels (**ML 326-ML 327**), side-spouted jars (**ML 319-ML 324**) and basins (**ML 325**), on the handle of an amphora (**ML 328**) and on a fragment of an unidentified vessel (**ML 329**). Two different stamps have been identified: on the first, stamped on **ML 326-ML 327** and **ML 328**, the mark is rather schematic, in contrast to the stamp pressed on **ML 319-ML 325**, where the same sign is executed in more detail.⁴⁷ Side-spouted jars shared similar formal and technological attributes and were produced by the same workshop.⁴⁸

In so far as temporal distribution is concerned, all marks are dated to MM IIB except two examples dated to the LM IB period (**ML 53, ML 178**). Considering the extent of the Neopalatial town excavated so far, the rarity of marked vessels is not the result of taphonomic factors or research bias; rather, it reflects a local tendency to refrain from marking vessels during that period, in complete contrast to the practices of the Protopalatial period.

44. Singletons cannot, *ipso facto*, form the object of an analytical approach; cf. Poursat and Knappett 2005, 185.

45. Olivier and Godart 1978, 57; Poursat and Knappett 2005, 184.

46. This assessment is based on the published illustrations rather than first-hand examination of the fragments.

47. Olivier and Godart 1978, 44-45.

48. Olivier and Godart 1978, 45.

All the marks for which we have find context information were discovered in buildings located within the town: Buildings A and B and the various workshops of Quartier Mu, the Agora and the Crypte Hypostyle, in Prepalatial buildings south-east of the palace, Maisons Zα and E, the Maison d'Hagia Varvara, and two burial contexts. Three marked sherds were found in the palace. The limited data from that complex is probably due to research bias and the history of the palace: an analytical approach cannot be employed on the very limited data from the Protopalatial phase, while the ceramic assemblages of the palace during the LM IA and LM IB periods, if the palace still existed in LM IB, have been badly disturbed due to complex taphonomic factors.⁴⁹

The assemblage of pre-firing marks from Malia is the largest published to date from any Protopalatial site of the island. This indicates that the practice of pot-marking was particularly common at Malia compared to other contemporary settlements. At intra-settlement level, however, the picture is different, since unmarked vessels greatly outnumber marked ones: of the 1,346 entirely preserved vessels used at Quartier Mu 45 are marked, i.e. 3.3% of the total. The other 275 published marks are incised or impressed on fragments of vessels; this figure, however, could not be quantified as there is no information on the number of sherds found in the MM IIB deposits. It is very likely that the marked sherds found in these levels constitute only a very small percentage of the total.

ML 1: *EtCret* 23, 195, no. 289; **ML 2:** *EtCret* 23, 195, no. 288; **ML 3:** *EtCret* 20, 142, no. 68 P/H 517; **ML 4:** *EtCret* 23, 194, no. 287; **ML 5:** *EtCret* 32, 189, no. 381; **ML 6:** *EtCret* 23, 180, no. 246; **ML 7:** *EtCret* 23, 178, no. 242; **ML 8:** *EtCret* 23, 179, no. 243; **ML 9:** *EtCret* 23, 179, no. 245; **ML 10:** *EtCret* 23, 180, no. 247; **ML 11:** *EtCret* 23, 179, no. 244; **ML 12:** *EtCret* 23, 178, no. 241; **ML 13:** *EtCret* 23, 196, no. 291; **ML 14:** *EtCret* 23, 181, no. 250; **ML 15:** *EtCret* 32, 190, no.384; **ML 16:** *EtCret* 32, 190, no. 382; **ML 17:** *EtCret* 23, 181, no. 251; **ML 18:** *EtCret* 23, 194, no. 286; **ML 19:** *EtCret* 32, 190, no. 383; **ML 20:** *EtCret* 23, 181, no. 249; **ML 21:** *EtCret* 32, 192, no. 393; **ML 22:** *EtCret* 23, 182, no. 252; **ML 23:** *EtCret* 23, 195, no. 290; **ML 24:** *EtCret* 20, 146, no. 68 P/H 535; **ML 25:** *EtCret* 23, 193, no. 284; **ML 26:** *EtCret* 20, 145, no. 68 P/H 529; **ML 27:** *EtCret* 23, 193, no. 283; **ML 28:** *EtCret* 23, 193, no. 263; **ML 29:** *EtCret* 23, 185, no. 262; **ML 30:** *EtCret* 23, 183, no. 259; **ML 31:** *EtCret* 20, 138, no. 68 P/H 502; **ML 32:** *EtCret* 20, 138, no. 68 P/H 501; **ML 33:** *EtCret* 20, 184, no. 260; **ML 34:** *EtCret* 23, 185, no. 261; **ML 35:** *EtCret* 23, 197, no. 295; **ML 36:** *EtCret* 23, 197, no. 296; **ML 37:** *EtCret* 32, 193, no. 394; **ML 38:** *EtCret* 23, 198, no. 298; **ML 39:** *EtCret* 23, 198, no. 297; **ML 40:** *EtCret* 23, 180, no. 248; **ML 41:** van Effenterre 1980, 512, fig. 708; **ML 42:** van Effenterre 1969, pl. 73, Λ 310; **ML 43:** *EtCret* 32, 191, no. 386; **ML 44:** *EtCret* 23, 196, no. 292; **ML 45:** *EtCret* 32, 190, no. 385; **ML 46:** *EtCret* 23, 183, no. 257; **ML 47:** *EtCret* 23, 183, no. 256; **ML 48:** *EtCret* 23, 183, no. 255; **ML 49:** *EtCret* 23, 183, no. 254; **ML 50:** *EtCret* 23, 182, no. 253; **ML 51:** *EtCret* 23, 184, no. 258; **ML 52:** *EtCret* 23, 203, no. 312; **ML 53:** Demargne and de Santerre 1953, 82, no. 5, pl. 39; **ML 54:** *EtCret* 23, 188, no. 269; **ML 55:** *EtCret* 20, 143, no. 68 P/H 522; **ML 56:** *EtCret* 23, 188, no. 270; **ML 57:** *EtCret* 23, 188, no. 271; **ML 58:** *EtCret* 23, 190, no. 274; **ML 59:** *EtCret* 23, 192, no. 280; **ML 60:** *EtCret* 23, 187, no. 268; **ML 61:** *EtCret* 32, 191, no. 388; **ML 62:** *EtCret* 32, 191, no. 387; **ML 63:** *EtCret* 23, 189, no. 272; **ML 64:** *EtCret* 23, 190, no.

49. Pelon 2005; *contra* van de Moortel 2011.

275; **ML 65:** *EtCret* 23, 191, no. 276; **ML 66:** *EtCret* 23, 187, no. 266; **ML 67:** *EtCret* 23, 191, no. 389; **ML 68:** *EtCret* 23, 191-192, no. 278; **ML 69:** *EtCret* 23, 191, no. 277; **ML 70:** *EtCret* 23, 187, no. 267; **ML 71:** *EtCret* 23, 186, no. 265; **ML 72:** *EtCret* 23, 186, no. 264; **ML 73:** *EtCret* 23, 189, no. 273; **ML 74:** *EtCret* 23, 192, no. 279; **ML 75:** *EtCret* 23, 192-193, no. 281; **ML 76:** *EtCret* 23, 194, no. 285; **ML 77:** *EtCret* 23, 197, no. 294; **ML 78:** *EtCret* 32, 192, no. 390; **ML 79:** *EtCret* 32, 192, no. 391; **ML 80:** *EtCret* 23, 196, no. 293; **ML 81:** *EtCret* 23, 194, no. 282; **ML 82:** *EtCret* 32, 192, no. 392; **ML 83:** *EtCret* 23, 173-174, no. 226; **ML 84:** *EtCret* 23, 171, no. 222; **ML 85:** *EtCret* 23, 171, no. 221; **ML 86:** *EtCret* 23, 169-170, no. 218; **ML 87:** *EtCret* 23, 170, no. 219; **ML 88:** *EtCret* 23, 169, no. 217; **ML 89:** *EtCret* 23, 172, no. 225; **ML 90:** *EtCret* 23, 169, no. 216; **ML 91:** *EtCret* 23, 172, no. 224; **ML 92:** *EtCret* 23, 173, no. 228; **ML 93:** *EtCret* 32, 186, no. 367; **ML 94:** *EtCret* 23, 198, no. 215; **ML 95:** *EtCret* 32, 186, no. 366; **ML 96:** *EtCret* 23, 171-171, no. 220; **ML 97:** *EtCret* 32, 187, no. 371; **ML 98:** *EtCret* 23, 173, no. 227; **ML 99:** *EtCret* 23, 171-172, no. 223; **ML 100:** *EtCret* 32, 187, no. 370; **ML 101:** *EtCret* 32, 186, no. 369; **ML 102:** *EtCret* 32, 186, no. 368; **ML 103:** *EtCret* 23, 166, no. 208; **ML 104:** *EtCret* 32, 186, no. 365; **ML 105:** *EtCret* 32, 185, no. 364; **ML 106:** *EtCret* 23, 165, no. 206; **ML 107:** *EtCret* 23, 168, no. 214; **ML 108:** *EtCret* 23, 167, no. 212; **ML 109:** *EtCret* 23, 165-166, no. 207; **ML 110:** *EtCret* 23, 167, no. 210; **ML 111:** *EtCret* 23, 168, no. 213; **ML 112:** *EtCret* 23, 166, no. 209; **ML 113:** *EtCret* 23, 167, no. 211; **ML 114:** *EtCret* 23, 175, no. 232; **ML 115:** *EtCret* 23, 174-175, no. 231; **ML 116:** *EtCret* 23, 204, no. 315; **ML 117:** *EtCret* 20, 140, no. 68 P/H 509; **ML 118:** *EtCret* 20, 145, no. 68 P/H 530; **ML 119:** *EtCret* 32, 187, no. 372; **ML 120:** *EtCret* 23, 187, no. 373; **ML 121:** *EtCret* 23, 174-175, no. 230; **ML 122:** *EtCret* 23, 174, no. 229; **ML 123:** *EtCret* 32, 188, no. 374; **ML 124:** *EtCret* 32, 188, no. 375; **ML 125:** *EtCret* 23, 176-177, no. 237; **ML 126:** *EtCret* 23, 175-176, no. 234; **ML 127:** *EtCret* 23, 175, no. 233; **ML 128:** *EtCret* 20, 144, no. 68 P/H 526; **ML 129:** *EtCret* 23, 176, no. 236; **ML 130:** *EtCret* 23, 176, no. 235; **ML 131:** *EtCret* 20, 146, no. 68 P/H 537; **ML 132:** *EtCret* 20, 145, no. 68 P/H 528; **ML 133:** *EtCret* 32, 188, no. 376; **ML 134:** *EtCret* 32, 189, no. 378; **ML 135:** *EtCret* 32, 188, no. 377; **ML 136:** *EtCret* 23, 177-178, no. 240; **ML 137:** *EtCret* 23, 177, no. 238; **ML 138:** *EtCret* 20, 147, no. 68 P/H 538; **ML 139:** *EtCret* 23, 177, no. 239; **ML 140:** *EtCret* 23, 204, no. 314; **ML 141:** *EtCret* 23, 160-161, no. 192; **ML 142:** *EtCret* 23, 161, no. 193; **ML 143:** *EtCret* 32, 183, no. 356; **ML 144:** *EtCret* 32, 184, no. 357; **ML 145:** *EtCret* 23, 159, no. 188; **ML 146:** *EtCret* 23, 160, no. 191; **ML 147:** *EtCret* 23, 160, no. 190; **ML 148:** *EtCret* 23, 159, no. 189; **ML 149:** *EtCret* 32, 183, no. 355; **ML 150:** *EtCret* 23, 162, no. 196; **ML 151:** *EtCret* 23, 162, no. 197; **ML 152:** *EtCret* 20, 12, no. 68 P/H 520; **ML 153:** *EtCret* 23, 161-162, no. 195; **ML 154:** *EtCret* 23, 161, no. 194; **ML 155:** *EtCret* 32, 184, no. 358; **ML 156:** *EtCret* 32, 184, no. 360; **ML 157:** *EtCret* 32, 185, no. 361; **ML 158:** *EtCret* 20, 139, no. 68 P/H 503; **ML 159:** *EtCret* 32, 185, no. 362; **ML 160:** *EtCret* 32, 184, no. 359; **ML 161:** *EtCret* 23, 164, no. 201; **ML 162:** *EtCret* 23, 163, no. 200; **ML 163:** *EtCret* 23, 163, no. 199; **ML 164:** *EtCret* 23, 163, no. 198; **ML 165:** *EtCret* 32, 185, no. 363; **ML 166:** Chapouthier 1930, 85, fig. 31; **ML 167:** *EtCret* 20, 141, no. 68 P/H 514; **ML 168:** *EtCret* 23, 200, no. 303; **ML 169:** van Effenterre 1969, pl. 73, K Mag. 19; **ML 170:** van Effenterre 1969, pl. 73, A 275; **ML 171:** *EtCret* 20, 145, no. 68 P/H 531; **ML 172:** *EtCret* 20, 147, no. 68 P/H 538; **ML 173:** *EtCret* 23, 202, no. 310; **ML 174:** *EtCret* 23, 199, no. 302; **ML 175:** *EtCret* 32, 193, no. 395; **ML 176:** *EtCret* 23, 202, no. 308; **ML 177:** *EtCret* 20, 141, no. 68 P/H 516; **ML 178:** Pelon 1966, 575-576, figs 21, 22; **ML 179:** *EtCret* 23, 201, no. 307; **ML 180:** *EtCret* 23, 165, no. 205; **ML 181:** *EtCret* 23, 165, no. 204; **ML 182:** *EtCret* 23, 164, no. 202; **ML 183:** *EtCret* 23, 164, no. 203; **ML 184:** *EtCret* 20, 145, no. 68 P/H 527; **ML 185:** *EtCret* 23, 200, no. 304; **ML 186:** *EtCret* 23, 202, no. 309; **ML 187:** *EtCret* 23, 198, no. 299; **ML 188:** van Effenterre 1969, pl. 73, A 99; **ML 189:** *EtCret* 23, 121, no. 86; **ML 190:** *EtCret* 32, 179, no. 340; **ML 191:**

EtCret 23, 121, no. 85; **ML 192**: *EtCret* 32, 183, no. 354; **ML 193**: *EtCret* 23, 156, no. 179; **ML 194**: *EtCret* 23, 158, no. 185; **ML 195**: *EtCret* 23, 154, no. 175; **ML 196**: *EtCret* 23, 153-154, no. 174; **ML 197**: *EtCret* 23, 153, no. 172; **ML 198**: *EtCret* 23, 152-153, no. 171; **ML 199**: *EtCret* 23, 152, no. 170; **ML 200**: *EtCret* 23, 163, no. 167; **ML 201**: *EtCret* 23, 151, no. 166; **ML 202**: *EtCret* 23, 150, no. 164; **ML 203**: *EtCret* 23, 149, no. 161; **ML 204**: *EtCret* 23, 148-149, no. 160; **ML 205**: *EtCret* 23, 148, no. 158; **ML 206**: *EtCret* 23, 147, no. 155; **ML 207**: *EtCret* 23, 146, no. 154; **ML 208**: *EtCret* 23, 146, no. 153; **ML 209**: *EtCret* 23, 145, no. 149; **ML 210**: *EtCret* 23, 144, no. 147; **ML 211**: *EtCret* 23, 144, no. 146; **ML 212**: *EtCret* 23, 143, no. 144; **ML 213**: *EtCret* 23, 142, no. 142; **ML 214**: van Effenterre 1969, 140, C 2381; **ML 215**: *EtCret* 20, 142, no. 68 P/H 518; **ML 216**: *EtCret* 23, 153, no. 173; **ML 217**: *EtCret* 23, 147, no. 156; **ML 218**: *EtCret* 23, 144, no. 148; **ML 219**: *EtCret* 23, 143-144, no. 145; **ML 220**: *EtCret* 23, 157, no. 183; **ML 221**: *EtCret* 23, 155, no. 177; **ML 222**: *EtCret* 20, 144, no. 68 P/H 523; **ML 223**: *EtCret* 23, 155-156, no. 178; **ML 224**: *EtCret* 20, 140, no. 68 P/H 510; **ML 225**: *EtCret* 23, 154-155, no. 176; **ML 226**: *EtCret* 23, 142, no. 141; **ML 227**: *EtCret* 23, 141, no. 140; **ML 228**: *EtCret* 23, 157, no. 181; **ML 229**: *EtCret* 20, 143, no. 68 P/H 521+533; **ML 230**: *EtCret* 23, 149-150, no. 163; **ML 231**: *EtCret* 20, 146, no. 68 P/H 534; **ML 232**: *EtCret* 20, 146, no. 68 P/H 532; **ML 233**: *EtCret* 23, 159, no. 187; **ML 234**: *EtCret* 23, 158, no. 186; **ML 235**: *EtCret* 23, 158, no. 184; **ML 236**: *EtCret* 23, 157, no. 183; **ML 237**: *EtCret* 23, 156, no. 180; **ML 238**: *EtCret* 23, 152, no. 169; **ML 239**: *EtCret* 23, 157, no. 150; **ML 240**: *EtCret* 23, 157, no. 162; **ML 241**: *EtCret* 23, 148, no. 159; **ML 242**: *EtCret* 23, 146, no. 152; **ML 243**: *EtCret* 23, 145-146, no. 151; **ML 244**: *EtCret* 23, 145-145, no. 150; **ML 245**: *EtCret* 23, 143, no. 143; **ML 246**: *EtCret* 23, 147, no. 157; **ML 247**: *EtCret* 23, 151, no. 168; **ML 248**: *EtCret* 23, 131, no. 111; **ML 249**: *EtCret* 23, 130, no. 108; **ML 250**: *EtCret* 23, 129, no. 107; **ML 251**: *EtCret* 23, 132, no. 115; **ML 252**: *EtCret* 23, 130, no. 109; **ML 253**: *EtCret* 23, 131, no. 113; **ML 254**: *EtCret* 23, 129, no. 114; **ML 255**: *EtCret* 23, 133, no. 116; **ML 256**: *EtCret* 23, 128, no. 104; **ML 257**: *EtCret* 23, 138, no. 131; **ML 258**: *EtCret* 23, 138, no. 130; **ML 259**: *EtCret* 23, 137, no. 126; **ML 260**: *EtCret* 23, 134, no. 119; **ML 261**: *EtCret* 23, 135-136, no. 123; **ML 262**: *EtCret* 23, 135, no. 122; **ML 263**: *EtCret* 23, 135, no. 121; **ML 264**: *EtCret* 32, 180, no. 343; **ML 265**: *EtCret* 32, 180, no. 345; **ML 266**: *EtCret* 32, 180, no. 344; **ML 267**: *EtCret* 32, 180, no. 346; **ML 268**: *EtCret* 32, 181, no. 347; **ML 269**: *EtCret* 32, 181, no. 348; **ML 270**: *EtCret* 23, 181, no. 349; **ML 271**: *EtCret* 32, 182, no. 351; **ML 272**: *EtCret* 32, 181, no. 350; **ML 273**: *EtCret* 32, 180, no. 343; **ML 274**: Pelon 1970, 136-137, no. 267, pl. 26; **ML 275**: *EtCret* 23, 134, no. 118; **ML 276**: *EtCret* 23, 136, no. 124; **ML 277**: *EtCret* 23, 129, no. 106; **ML 278**: *EtCret* 23, 128-129, no. 105; **ML 279**: *EtCret* 23, 133, no. 117; **ML 280**: *EtCret* 23, 134, no. 128; **ML 281**: *EtCret* 23, 131, no. 112; **ML 282**: *EtCret* 23, 130, no. 110; **ML 283**: *EtCret* 23, 135, no. 129; **ML 284**: *EtCret* 23, 136, no. 125; **ML 285**: *EtCret* 23, 134, no. 120; **ML 286**: *EtCret* 23, 137, no. 127; **ML 287**: *EtCret* 23, 139, no. 134; **ML 288**: *EtCret* 23, 139, no. 133; **ML 289**: *EtCret* 23, 139-140, no. 135; **ML 290**: *EtCret* 23, 140, no. 136; **ML 291**: *EtCret* 32, 182-183, no. 353; **ML 292**: *EtCret* 32, 182, no. 352; **ML 293**: *EtCret* 23, 125-126, no. 97; **ML 294**: *EtCret* 23, 126, no. 98; **ML 295**: *EtCret* 23, 127, no. 100; **ML 296**: *EtCret* 23, 128, no. 103; **ML 297**: *EtCret* 23, 128, no. 99; **ML 298**: *EtCret* 23, 127-128, no. 102; **ML 299**: *EtCret* 23, 127, no. 101; **ML 300**: *EtCret* 23, 125, no. 96; **ML 301**: *EtCret* 23, 124, no. 94; **ML 302**: Chapouthier 1930, 85, fig. 29; **ML 303**: *EtCret* 23, 124, no. 93; **ML 304**: *EtCret* 23, 123, no. 95; **ML 305**: *EtCret* 32, 179, no. 342; **ML 306**: *EtCret* 23, 122-123, no. 89; **ML 307**: *EtCret* 32, 179, no. 341; **ML 308**: *EtCret* 23, 122, no. 87; **ML 309**: *EtCret* 23, 122, no. 88; **ML 310**: *EtCret* 20, 142, no. 68 P/H 519; **ML 311**: *EtCret* 23, 123, no. 90; **ML 312**: *EtCret* 23, 123, no. 91; **ML 313**: van Effenterre 1963, 85, no. 7798, pl. 12; **ML 314**: *EtCret* 23, 140, no. 137; **ML 315**: *EtCret* 23, 140-141, no. 138; **ML 316**: *EtCret* 23, 123-124, no. 92; **ML**

ML 317: *EtCret* 23, 138-139, no. 132; **ML 318:** *EtCret* 23, 141, no. 139; **ML 319:** *EtCret* 23, 118, no. 84a; **ML 320:** *EtCret* 23, 119, no. 84d; **ML 321:** *EtCret* 23, 119, no. 84e; **ML 322:** *EtCret* 23, 119-120, no. 84f; **ML 323:** *EtCret* 23, 120, no. 84g; **ML 324:** *EtCret* 23, 120, no. 84h; **ML 325:** *EtCret* 23, 118, no. 84c; **ML 326:** *EtCret* 23, 117, no. 82; **ML 327:** *EtCret* 23, 118-119, no. 83; **ML 328:** *EtCret* 32, 178-179, no. 339; **ML 329:** *EtCret* 23, 118, no. 84b; **ML 330:** *EtCret* 23, 112-113, no. 75; **ML 331:** *EtCret* 32, 177, no. 334; **ML 332:** *EtCret* 32, 177, no. 335; **ML 333:** *EtCret* 23, 108-109, no. 65a; **ML 334:** *EtCret* 23, 109, no. 65b; **ML 335:** *EtCret* 32, 177, no. 333; **ML 336:** *EtCret* 23, 106, no. 59; **ML 337:** *EtCret* 23, 106-107, no. 60; **ML 338:** *EtCret* 23, 107, no. 61; **ML 339:** *EtCret* 23, 107, no. 62; **ML 340:** *EtCret* 23, 106, no. 58; **ML 341:** *EtCret* 23, 108, no. 64; **ML 342:** *EtCret* 32, 176-177, no. 332; **ML 343:** *EtCret* 23, 112, no. 74; **ML 344:** *EtCret* 23, 111-112, no. 73; **ML 345:** Poursat 1966, 536, no. 5, fig. 22; **ML 346:** van Effenterre 1963, 95, no. 8516, pl. 11; **ML 347:** *EtCret* 32, 178, no. 337; **ML 348:** *EtCret* 23, 109, no. 66; **ML 349:** *EtCret* 23, 109-110, no. 67; **ML 350:** *EtCret* 23, 113, no. 76; **ML 351:** *EtCret* 23, 114, no. 78; **ML 352:** *EtCret* 32, 178, no. 336; **ML 353:** *EtCret* 23, 113-114, no. 77; **ML 354:** *EtCret* 23, 114, no. 79; **ML 355:** *EtCret* 23, 107-108, no. 63; **ML 356:** *EtCret* 23, 115, no. 80a; **ML 357:** *EtCret* 23, 116, no. 81bis; **ML 358:** *EtCret* 23, 110, no. 68; **ML 359:** *EtCret* 23, 110, no. 69; **ML 360:** *EtCret* 23, 110-111, no. 70; **ML 361:** *EtCret* 23, 111, no. 71; **ML 362:** *EtCret* 23, 111, no. 72; **ML 363:** *EtCret* 20, 139, no. 68 P/H 506; **ML 364:** *EtCret* 20, 140, no. 68 P/H 507; **ML 365:** *EtCret* 20, 140, no. 68 P/H 508; **ML 366:** *EtCret* 20, 140, no. 68 P/H 511; **ML 367:** *EtCret* 20, 141, no. 68 P/H 513; **ML 368:** *EtCret* 20, 141, no. 68 P/H 515; **ML 369:** *EtCret* 20, 144, no. 68 P/H 525; **ML 370:** *EtCret* 20, 144, no. 68 P/H 524; **ML 371:** *EtCret* 20, 145, no. 68 P/H 529; **ML 372:** *EtCret* 20, 146, no. 68 P/H 535; **ML 373:** *EtCret* 23, 116, no. 81; **ML 374:** *EtCret* 32 32, 192, no. 393; **ML 375:** *EtCret* 23, 199, no. 301; **ML 376:** *EtCret* 23, 203, no. 311; **ML 377:** *EtCret* 23, 203-204, no. 313; **ML 378:** *EtCret* 32 32, 189, no. 379; **ML 379:** *EtCret* 32, 189, no. 380; **ML 380:** *EtCret* 23, 199, no. 300; **ML 381:** *EtCret* 23, 200-201, no. 305; **ML 382:** *EtCret* 23, 201, no. 306; **ML 383:** van Effenterre 1969, pl. 73, C 5333.

SISSI

The handle of an amphora with a triangle-like mark was found in the area of the Kephala at Sissi.⁵⁰ The published information is inadequate and the illustration unclear.

KASTELLOS

Six pre-firing marks are published from a house at Kastellos in Lasithi. The pottery was originally dated to the MM III period.⁵¹ J.-C. Poursat and C. Knappett, however, have convincingly argued that it is MM IIB.⁵² Six wide-mouthed jars are incised with the sign 011 of the Hieroglyphic script (**KST 1-KST 6**).⁵³ The marks are similar but differ in execution: the width and depth of the incised lines varies from case to case and the sequence of the lines forming the triangle also differs. They are certainly made by different potters. All the marks are incised below the rim of and are easily visible. Only two pots are entirely preserved, both similar in

50. Driessen 2009, 27, fig. 1.8.

51. Pendlebury *et al.* 1937-1938.

52. Poursat and Knappett 2005, 195.

53. Sherds nos 7 and 8 on pl. IV do not bear

pre-firing marks as the excavator suggested. They are body fragments of tubs with criss-crossed incised lines in the interior (for the shape see Christakis 2005, 19, Form 109).

shape but with a different arrangement of handles: the first has two horizontal handles below the rim, while on the second the handles are vertically placed. Similar jars are widely used at Quartier Mu at Malia. Some were made locally using the typical red gritty fabric of the region, while a few were imported from southern Crete.⁵⁴ Pottery at both sites shares many similarities and it is quite tempting to infer a connection, perhaps a distribution of vessels from the same workshop.⁵⁵

KST 1: Pendlebury *et al.* 1937-1938, 35, pl. 4.5, no.5; **KST 2:** Pendlebury *et al.* 1937-1938, 35, pl. 4.5, no.3; **KST 3:** Pendlebury *et al.* 1937-1938, 35, pl. 4.5, no.6; **KST 4:** Pendlebury *et al.* 1937-1938, 35, fig. 15, no.1; **KST 5:** Pendlebury *et al.* 1937-1938, 35, fig. 15, no.2; **KST 6:** Pendlebury *et al.* 1937-1938, 35, pl. 4.5, no.4.

KARPHI

Pre-firing marks from the LM IIIC settlement of Karphi are both incised and impressed. Incised marks consist of three vertical short lines on the rim of a tripod vessel (**KR 1**); one vertical line on the leg of a cooking pot (**KR 2**); three vertical lines on the leg of cooking pots (**KR 3-KR 4**) and tripod trays (**KR 5-KR 6**); an oblique line on the lower body of a cooking pot (**KR 7**); and two lines crossed at a right angle incised on knobs applied to pithoi (**KR 8-KR 9**). Incised lines are also combined with finger impressions on the legs of cooking pots: two finger impressions occur on either side of a vertically incised line (**KR 10**) and one finger impression is combined with a pair of incised oblique lines on either side of the impression (**KR 11**). The mark of three shallow finger impressions on the rim of a tripod tray is combined with three incised lines on the leg (**KR 12**). Finger impressions are quite frequent; they are displayed on both attachments of the handles of basins (**KR 13-KR 14**), of a pithos (**KR 15**), a jar (**KR 16**) and a larnax (**KR 17**), on the lower attachment of the handles of a basin (**KR 18**), and on the legs of cooking pots (**KR 19-KR 22**). Finger impressions on the attachments of handles of a basin are combined with others close to the base (**KR 14**). One (**KR 23**) or two (**KR 24**) finger impressions occur on the rim of trays. Finger impressions are also displayed on the whole circumference of the rim; in these cases they could be considered a form of decoration and not pre-firing marks.⁵⁶

The published information does not allow us to draw conclusions on meaningful contextual associations. Marked vessels are found in all contextual frameworks of the LM IIIC settlement: ordinary domestic units, important houses, and sacred buildings. The vessels with pre-firing marks are represented in extremely low percentages: of the 1,394 published vessels/sherds only 25, or 1.8% of the total, bear pre-firing marks.

KR 1: Day 2011, 47, K1.17, fig. 3.3; **KR 2:** Day 2011, 112, K26.12, fig. 4.17; **KR 3:** Day 2011, 24, K140.3, fig. 2.9; **KR 4:** Day 2011, 72, K16-17.4, fig. 3.13; **KR 5:** Day 2011, 171, K79.7, fig. 6.1; **KR 6:** Day 2011, 204, K106.24, fig. 6.17; **KR 7:** Day 2011, 188, K110.21, fig. 6.10; **KR 8:** Day

54. See the jarre-broc vases in Poursat and Knappett 2005, 55, fig. 9.

55. Poursat and Knappett 2005, 195.

56. Day 2011, 317-318, fig. 9.29. Similar im-

pressions are also frequent on the upper surface of lids (e.g. Day 2011, figs 4.9, 4.24, 4.26, 5.4, 9.14).

2011, 144, K80.10, fig. 5.4; **KR 9**: Day 2011, 185, K110.18, fig. 6.10; **KR 10**: Day 2011, 84, K21.3, fig. 4.1; **KR 11**: Day 2011, 149, K68.14, fig. 5.7; **KR 12**: Day 2011, 171, K79.7, fig. 6.1; **KR 13**: Day 2011, 157, K85.12, fig. 5.11; **KR 14**: Day 2011, 11, K147.18, fig. 2.2; **KR 15**: Day 2011, 112, K26.14, fig. 4.18; **KR 16**: Day 2011, 93, K23.31, fig. 4.6; **KR 17**: Day 2011, 99, K29.17, fig. 4.9; **KR 18**: Day 2011, 29, K2.5, fig. 2.12; **KR 19**: Day 2011, 47, K1.22, fig. 3.3; **KR 20**: Day 2011, 93, K23.26, fig. 4.5; **KR 21**: Day 2011, 140, K61.15, fig. 5.2; **KR 22**: Day 2011, 202, K106.25, fig. 6.17; **KR 23**: Day 2011, 204, K106.23, fig. 6.17; **KR 24**: Day 2011, 176, K112.2, fig. 6.4.

MYRTOS FOURNOU KORIPHI

Two pre-firing marks were published from Myrtos Fournou Koriphi. The first, incised on the handle of quite an unusual vessel identified by the excavator as a spinning bowl, consists of nine almost equally spaced lines transversed at a right angle by a longer one (**MFK 1**). The second mark consists of two lines crossed at a right angle and is incised on the button-like appliqué of a jug (**MFK 2**).⁵⁷ Two incised marks on an amphora sherd, published as potters' marks or user's marks, have proven to be chance scratches.⁵⁸ It would appear that marking pots was an extremely rare practice at this EM settlement: from the 704 catalogued vessels only two, i.e. 0.3% of the total, bears pre-firing marks.

MFK 1: Warren 1972, 153, P 701, fig. 91; **MFK 2**: Warren 1972, 105, P 56, pl. 34D.

GOURNIA

Three pre-firing marks were published from Gournia. The first is a star-like mark incised on the shoulder of a jug found in House Ff (**GR 1**). The fragments of two pithoi with the mark of a lily, incised in the first example (**GR 2**) and in the relief technique in the second (**GR 3**) were also published. Two other marks are mentioned in Hawes-Boyd's notebooks. Both copy the Linear A syllabogram A304 and were incised on the handle of two amphorae of the 'Roman type', as H. Hawes-Boyd designated oval-mouthed amphorae (**GR 4-GR 5**). The vessels were placed together in a room of House Ec.

There is no detailed information for the find context of these marks. **GR 1** was found in a house that according to Hawes-Boyd 'dates from the beginning of our Town Period on the border line between Middle Minoan and Late Minoan times'.⁵⁹ In my opinion, the vessel is typical of the MM IIB period. **GR 2-GR 3** were found in the passage in the north-east corner of House Ec and are most likely of LM I date. **GR 4-GR 5** are also assigned to the same period.⁶⁰

This is the only information we have on marked vessels from the site. The overall picture is very fragmentary, especially if we consider that ceramic assemblages excavated by H. Hawes-Boyd have not been systematically studied. It cannot, however, be ignored that Hawes-Boyd was an exemplary excavator for her time, who recorded evidence she uncovered in extraordinary detail. The pottery indices

57. None of these marks has been defined as a pre-firing mark by the excavator.

58. Warren 1972, 110. P. Day and T. White-law personal communication.

59. Hawes-Boyd *et al.* 1907, 38.

60. The find context of both marks is unknown.

are extremely detailed and the excavator's comments show that she studied each vessel very carefully. So it could be argued that if there had been other vessels with pre-firing marks, she would have found them. If this is indeed the case, then we could conclude that the practice of marking pots was rare at Gournia in the LM IB period.

GR 1: Hawes-Boyd *et al.* 1907, 38, no. 22, pl. 6; **GR 2:** Hawes-Boyd *et al.* 1907, 37, no. 14, fig. 16; **GR 3:** Zervos 1956, pl. 770; **GR 4:** Hawes-Boyd Notebook III, 1; **GR 5:** Hawes-Boyd Notebook III, 1.

MOCHLOS

The pre-firing marks from Mochlos published to date are interesting not only for their quantity but especially for their variety. The marks are incised, stamped and impressed. Incised marks consist of one long line on the handle of amphorae (**MC 1-MC 6**); one short line on the handle of a pithos lid, at each attachment point (**MC 7**); three short lines on the handle of lids, at each attachment point (**MC 8-MC 9**); and two parallel, vertically incised lines with a third, horizontal line extending from the middle of the right line at a right angle, incised on the body of a jug (**MC 10**). Short lines are also incised on the rim of a tripod tray; due to its fragmentary state, it is not certain whether the incisions ran all the way round the rim or are incised on only one part.⁶¹ In the former case, the incisions would have formed a decorative pattern; in the latter they would be a pre-firing mark.

The correlation of some marks with their micro-context, i.e. the vessel they are incised, is particularly meaningful. **MC 1** and **MC 2** are incised on two amphorae with similar formal attributes, manufacture, surface treatment and fabric and must be products of the same potting group that was active during LM IB. **MC 3**, however, is incised on an amphora of similar form but different potting technology from that of the other two. Marks **MC 4-MC 6** are incised on three amphorae with similar basic formal features – at least in so far as one can tell from the preserved fragments – and similar surface treatment, clay technology and manufacture. They were products of a potting group active during LM IIIA that used the local clay resources of the region. Three short lines are incised at each attachment point of the handle of two lids similar in formal and technological attributes; **MC 8**, however, is dated to LM IB while **MC 9** is LM IIIA in date.

The stamped marks consist of rosettes and scallop shells. Rosettes are displayed on a pithos: one rosette is stamped on the upper surface of one handle, while two rosettes are stamped on the upper and lower surface of the other (**MC 11**). Scallop shells are also stamped at the low attachment of the upper row of handles of a pithos (**MC 12**). Impressed marks consist of thumb impressions. They are found at the low attachment of the handles of a pithos (**MC 13**) and on the legs of a cooking pot (**MC 14**).

An interesting group of marked vessel from the site are the 'Lily Jars', small pithoi with incised (**MC 15-MC 26**) or applied (**MC 27**) pictorial lilies placed diagonally on the upper shoulder of the pot, filling the space between the handles.⁶²

61. Barnard and Brogan 2003, 55, IB.268, fig. 12.

62. Brogan 2004.

The vessels are made using the same fabric and following similar manufacturing techniques. Two types of jars are distinguished by the shape of the rim and neck as well as two versions of lilies. Such pithoi are found at Mochlos, Chalinomouri, Gournia and Chrysokamino, and are most likely products of a local workshop that distributed its output to the Isthmus region. Another mark, resembling a branch or sheaf of wheat with two curved lines at its base, is incised on the shoulder between two handles of a small pithos (**MC 28**). The formal and technological attributes are similar to those of the pithoi with the incised lilies; in fact, this mark is reminiscent of a stylized lily.

The meaning of these incised marks is not entirely certain. In his exemplary study, T. Brogan proposes a variety of possible functions: decorative patterns, possible but less likely symbols of local administration, testimonies of a local religious event or practice, some kind of magical protection for the content of the jars, and finally potters' marks identifying the products of a local workshop.⁶³ The last hypothesis is supported by much of the evidence: the vessels share similar formal and technological attributes and are thus products of the same potting group, and bear the same motif, rendered in a different way in each example, pointing to different hands and thus potters. Nevertheless, the fact that the motif is very large and dominates the whole jar, indicating a decorative function, and the assumed religious significance of the lilies cannot be entirely discounted. The last two possibilities do not, however, exclude the use of these marks as potters' marks, a hypothesis also adopted here.

A partially preserved lily motif, though simpler than the motifs incised on the jars, occurs on the shoulder of a pithos (**MC 29**). Might it be the mark of a potter active in the 'Lily Workshop', who placed the workshop mark on a pithos with different formal attributes or might it be the symbol of protection of the vessel and its contents, if lilies actually had a religious connotation? Both hypotheses are equally plausible.

All marks from the site are placed on clearly visible parts of the vessels: handles and shoulder. The stamped rosettes on the lower handles of a pithos are probably less visible. It is not certain, however, if rosettes are also stamped on the upper handles of the pot; if this was the case, the marks would be easily seen. It is worth noting here that the impressions on the lower handles may have been made while the pithos was upside-down, as indicated by the flow of the trickle pattern.⁶⁴

Marked vessels were found in domestic units of the LM IB (**MC 1-MC 3, MC 8, MC 15-MC 29**) and LM IIIA (**MC 4-MC 7, MC 9, MC 11, MC 14**) settlement as well as in LM IB (**MC 12**) and LM IIIA (**MC 13**) burial contexts. **MC 10** was found in a burial context and dated to MM I. Marking of vessels was not frequently practiced among the potters of Mochlos: out of ca. 841 catalogued vessels published from LM IB contexts, only 19 examples, or 2.3% of the total, bear marks. In the ceramic assemblages published from LM III contexts, only seven vessels are found with pre-firing marks, representing 0.8% of the total.

63. Brogan 2004.

64. For trickle patterns made while the

pithoi were upside-down see Christakis 2005, 38-39.

MC 1: Barnard and Brogan 2003, 72, IB.388, fig. 32; **MC 2:** Barnard and Brogan 2003, 72, IB.389, fig. 32; **MC 3:** Barnard and Brogan 2003, 72, IB.383, fig. 32; **MC 4:** Smith 2010, 83, IIB.679; **MC 5:** Smith 2010, 83, IIB.682, fig. 46; **MC 6:** Smith 2010, 83, IIB.678, fig. 45, pl. 18; **MC 7:** Smith 2010, 105, IIB.808, fig. 71, pl. 28; **MC 8:** Barnard and Brogan 2003, 80, IB.474, fig. 46, pl. 24; **MC 9:** Smith 2010, 105, IIB.809, fig. 72, pl. 28; **MC 10:** Seager 1912, 39, III.m; **MC 11:** Smith 2010, 108, IIB.838, fig. 77; **MC 12:** Soles 2003, 139, fig. 79; **MC 13:** Soles *et al* 2011, 34, IIC26, fig. 17, pl. 15; **MC 14:** Smith 2010, 115, IIB 877, fig. 83, pl. 33; **MC 15:** Seager 1907, 298; Brogan 2004, 30, table 2.1; **MC 16:** Brogan 2004, 30, P4201, table 2.1; **MC 17:** Brogan 2004, 30, P832, table 2.1, fig. 2.4; **MC 18:** Brogan 2004, 30, P851, table 2.1; **MC 19:** Brogan 2004, 30, P3901, table 2.1; **MC 20:** Brogan 2004, 30, P2080, table 2.1; **MC 21:** Brogan 2004, 30, P3439, table 2.1, fig. 2.3; **MC 22:** Brogan 2004, 30, P4171, table 2.1; **MC 23:** Barnard and Brogan 2003, 72, IB.412, fig. 37; **MC 24:** Barnard and Brogan 2003, 75, IB.418, fig. 39, pl. 20; **MC 25:** Brogan 2004, 30, P511, table 2.1; **MC 26:** Barnard and Brogan 2003, 75, IB.420, fig. 40; **MC 27:** Brogan 2004, 30, P3163, table 2.1; **MC 28:** Barnard and Brogan 2003, 75, IB.417, fig. 39, pl. 20; **MC 29:** Smith 2010, 107, IIB.825, fig. 75, pl. 29.

CHALINOMOURI

Three small pithoi with the mark of lilies were found in the farmhouse at Chalinomouri and are products of the 'Lily Workshop'. Two of these marks are incised (**CH 1-CH 2**) and the third applied (**CH 3**). All date to the LM IB period.

CH 1: Brogan 2004, 30, P 475, table 2.1; **CH 2:** Brogan 2004, 30, P 2586, table 2.1; **CH 3:** Brogan 2004, 30, P 1243, table 2.1.

PSEIRA

A few pre-firing marks have been published from Pseira; it should be noted, however, that ceramic assemblages excavated in the early 20th century have not been studied. The marks are incised: they consist of one short line on the handle of a jug (**PS 1**), of a jar (**PS 2**)⁶⁵ and of a closed vessel (**PS 3**); one short line at each attachment point of the handle of a lid (**PS 4**); two short lines on the lower attachment of the handles of a Palace Style jar (**PS 5**); two V-shaped lines on the handle of a pithos (**PS 6**); and two lines crossed at a right angle incised on the base of a tumbler (**PS 7**). It is noteworthy that a mark similar to the last example was painted on the base of a tumbler.⁶⁶ A curved line, part of an incomplete mark, is incised on the body of a closed vessel (**PS 8**). All the marks, except **PS 7**, are incised on clearly visible parts of the vessel. The earliest mark so far reported is **PS 7**, dated to MM IIB. The rest are LM I, except **PS 4**, which is dated in MM III-LM I. Marked vessels are represented at very low percentages compared to unmarked ones in the recently excavated ceramic assemblages.

PS 1: Floyd 2009, 70, AF 191, fig. 12, pl. 15; **PS 2:** Floyd 2009, 50, AF 54, fig. 3; **PS 3:** Floyd 1999, 215, BY 34, fig. 44; **PS 4:** Banou 1995, 109, fig. 46; **PS 5:** Seager 1910, 33, fig. 14; **PS 6:** Floyd 1999, 212, BY 18, fig. 43; **PS 7:** Betancourt 1999, 151, BR 102, fig. 22, pl. 24; **PS 8:** Koehl 1999, 32, BC 18, fig. 4, pl. 5.

65. This mark has been considered to be an aid in the firing of the vessel, Floyd 2009, 50.

66. Floyd 2009, 50, AF 52.

MONASTIRAKI-KATALIMATA

Six pre-firing marks from the refuge site at Monastiraki-Katalimata have been published. They consist of one (**MK 1-MK 4**) or three (**MK 5-MK 6**) incised long line/s on the legs of tripod vessels (cooking pots and trays). The marks are incised on clearly visible parts of the vessels. They are dated to the MM II (**MK 1**), LM IIIB-early LM IIIC (**MK 2**) and LM IIIC (**MK 3-MK 6**) periods. Marked vessels are represented at a low percentage: out of 559 catalogued published vessels, dated from MM II to LM IIIC, only six are marked, i.e. 1% of the total.

MK 1: Nowicki 2008, 97, KP 145, fig. 41; **MK 2:** Nowicki 2008, 99, KP 200, fig. 44, pl. 34B; **MK 3:** Nowicki 2008, 101, KP 270, fig. 51, pl. 34B; **MK 4:** Nowicki 2008, 102, KP 296, fig. 53, pl. 34B; **MK 5:** Nowicki 2008, 95, KP 66, fig. 35; **MK 6:** Nowicki 2008, 96, KP 107, fig. 39.

HALASMENOS

The ceramic assemblages from the LM IIIC settlement of Halasmenos have not yet been published in full, so the discussion that follows is not completely representative. The pre-firing marks published so far are both incised and impressed. Incised marks consist of vertical lines on the leg of cooking pots (**HL 1-HL 2**); and two parallel incised lines transversed by a longer third at a right angle on the handle of a closed vessel (**HL 3**). Incised lines on the legs of cooking pots/trays are also combined with a finger impression on the leg (**HL 4**). Finger impressions were made on the legs of a cooking pot (**HL 5**), while on a tripod tray three shallow finger impressions on the rim are combined with three incised vertical lines on the leg (**HL 6**).

HL 1: Coulson and Tsipopoulou 1994, 79, fig. 14, no. 6; **HL 2:** Tsipopoulou 2004, fig. 8.7, no. 95-397; **HL 3:** Coulson and Tsipopoulou 1994, 78, fig. 13, no. 3; **HL 4:** Tsipopoulou 2004, fig. 8.7, no. 96-415; **HL 5:** Tsipopoulou 2004, fig. 8.7, no. 97-218; **HL 6:** Tsipopoulou 2004, fig. 8.7, no. 97-30.

KAVOUSI-VRONDAS

The incised pre-firing marks consist of one (**KV 1-KV 2**), two (**KV 3**) or three (**KV 4**) long lines on the legs of cooking pots and on the handle of a jug (**KV 5**);⁶⁷ two short lines on the attachments of the handles of a basin (**KV 6**); three lines in the shape of a triangle on the body of a strainer (**KV 7**); the double axe mark on the body of closed vessel (**KV 8**); and lines forming horns of consecration on the handle of a pithos (**KV 9**). A particularly interesting case is that of a large pithos decorated with horizontal bands of incised chevrons alternating with wavy ropes with vertical incisions. The third band from the bottom has two incised diamond motifs interposed in the row of chevrons (**KV 10**). Bearing in mind the pattern of incised motifs on pithos bands, and other cases in which there are discontinuities in the pattern of decoration of the bands, I believe that the diamond motifs, in addition to any decorative purpose, also indicate the potter.

67. For the mark of one incised line on the legs of cooking pots see also Mook and Coulson 1997, figs 17, 36.

The impressed marks consist of thumb impressions on the legs of cooking pots, at the point where the leg is attached to the body (**KV 11-KV 14**), on the attachment of the upper handles of a pithos (**KV 15**), and on the attachment of the handles of a basin (**KV 16**) and of a pithos (**KV 17**). Thumb impressions on the legs of a cooking pot are combined with incised lines on either side of the impression (**KV 18**).

The marked vessels are dated to the LM IIIC period. Two were found in Buildings A and B, the most important complexes of the settlement, the seat of the local leader (**KV 9, KV 15**).⁶⁸ The rest come from domestic units of the site. Vessels with pre-firing marks are represented in very low percentages compared to their unmarked counterparts: of the 692 published vessels from the buildings on the summit of the site, just 18 are marked (2.6% of the total).

KV 1: Day *et al.* 2009, 47, B4 P51, fig. 31; **KV 2:** Day *et al.* 2009, 143, J4 P28, fig. 98; **KV 3:** Day *et al.* 2009, 47, B4 P49, fig. 31; **KV 4:** Day *et al.* 2009, 152, K3 P17, fig. 104; **KV 5:** Day *et al.* 2009, 76, Q2 P6, fig. 53; **KV 6:** Day *et al.* 2009, 135, J2 P4, fig. 92; **KV 7:** Day *et al.* 2009, 115, CS P4, fig. 78; **KV 8:** Gesell 1990, 330, pl. 39b; **KV 9:** Day *et al.* 2009, 20, A1 P7, fig. 8; **KV 10:** Day *et al.* 2009, 38, B3 P20, fig. 24; **KV 11:** Day *et al.* 2009, 31, AE P43, fig. 18; **KV 12:** Day *et al.* 2009, 93, C5 P5, fig. 65; **KV 13:** Day *et al.* 2009, 152, K3 P14, fig. 103; **KV 14:** Day *et al.* 2009, 152, K3 P16, fig. 104; **KV 15:** Day *et al.* 2009, 38, B3 P20, fig. 24; **KV 16:** Day *et al.* 2009, 93, C5 P8, fig. 65; **KV 17:** Day *et al.* 2009, 107, D4 P4, fig. 74; **KV 18:** Day *et al.* 2009, 155, K4 P17, fig. 105.

PETRAS

Petras has produced the largest assemblage of pre-firing marks that has come to light so far: at least 452 marks are reported, 253 of which have been published.⁶⁹ It is worth noting that most of these marks have been culled from the pottery of just four excavation seasons (1986 and 1989-1991); their number is bound to increase dramatically in the on-going study of the rest of the pottery. The discussion that follows is based on the data published to date and may well have to be modified once the pre-firing marks from Petras are published in full.

The marks are incised and impressed. Incised marks consist of one long vertical line on the handle of an amphora (**PT 1-PT 4**), of a jug (**PT 5**), of a closed vessel (**PT 6**), and of pithoi (**PT 7-PT 10**), on the leg of tripod trays (**PT 11-PT 14**) and cooking pots (**PT 15-PT 19**), under the base of a conical cup (**PT 20**), on the body of an amphora (**PT 21**), of a closed vessel (**PT 22**) and of a jug (**PT 23**); one horizontal line incised on the handle of two pithoi (**PT 24-PT 25**) and under the base of another (**PT 26**) and on the handle of conical cups (**PT 27-PT 28**); one oblique/slightly oblique line on the handle of pithoi (**PT 29-PT 30**), amphorae (**PT 31-PT 34**) and closed vessels (**PT 35-PT 38**), on the body of bowls (**PT 39-PT 40**), of pithoi (**PT 41-PT 42**), of a basin (**PT 43**), and of a hemispherical cup (**PT 44**), under the base of conical (**PT 45-PT 62**), hemispherical (**PT 63**) and tripod (**PT 64**) cups, of cooking pots (**PT 65-PT 67**), and of a bowl (**PT 68**), below the rim of a pithos (**PT 69**) and of

68. For the function of these complexes and their importance see Day *et al.* 2009, 59-63.

69. The marks of one horizontal, two oblique and one vertical line incised on a grid (**PT**

247) and of an oblique line incised on a cup (**PT 251**) are included in the corpus but not the discussion because they are partly preserved.

an open vessel (PT 70) and on the lid of a pithos (PT 71); two oblique lines incised under the base of conical cups (PT 72-PT 77), on the body of a jug (PT 78), of a tripod tray (PT 79), of a basin (PT 80), of a closed vessel (PT 81) and of a cooking pot (PT 82), below the rim of a basin (PT 83), and on the leg of a tripod tray (PT 84); three short vertical lines incised on the rim of a pithos (PT 85) and on the handle of a hemispherical cup (PT 86); three horizontal lines incised under the base of a straight-sided cup (PT 87); three oblique lines incised under the base of a conical (PT 88), hemispherical (PT 89), and a straight-sided (PT 90) cup and on the handle of a pithos (PT 91); five oblique lines incised under the base of a carinated cup (PT 92); two lines meeting at an acute angle incised below the rim of bowls (PT 93-PT 94), under the base of conical cups (PT 95-PT 98) and of closed vessels (PT 99-PT 100), and on the handle of a pithos (PT 101) and of an amphora (PT 102); one vertical line with its upper end meeting a horizontal one to the right, incised under the base of hemispherical cups (PT 103-PT 104); two lines meeting at a right angle in a T-shape incised on the handle of a pithos (PT 105); two lines crossing at an acute angle incised on the handle of an amphora (PT 106), of an open vessel (PT 107), and of an unidentified vessel (PT 108), below the rim of a bowl (PT 109), under the base of a rhyton or stand (PT 110), of a pithos (PT 111) and of an unidentified vessel (PT 112); two lines crossed at a right angle incised on the body of a conical cup (PT 113); two lines crossed at an acute angle with a horizontal line meeting at the upper end, incised on the rim of a pithos (PT 114); a combination of straight lines in various directions incised on the handle of an amphora (PT 115) and of a pithos (PT 116), under the base of a closed vessel (PT 117) and of a lamp (PT 118), and on the upper side of a pithos lid (PT 119); and two parallel horizontal lines connected by at least three other short vertical lines at a right angle incised below the rim of an amphora (PT 252). Arched lines are incised in many examples: one line is incised under the base of conical cups (PT 120-PT 130), of an amphora (PT 131) and of bowls (PT 132-PT 133); two lines under the base of conical cups (PT 134-PT 135); three lines under the base of a conical cup (PT 136). Three lines in the shape of an N are incised on the fragment of an unidentified vessel (PT 137).

Certain signs coincide with syllabograms and logograms of the Hieroglyphic script: of the 35 different types of pre-firing marks identified, three copy Hieroglyphic signs, far fewer than those found at Malia. The signs are: 050 incised on the body of a jar, close to the attachment of the handle (PT 138); 037 incised on the upper body of pithoi (PT 139-PT 140) and in the interior of a bowl (PT 141); and 041 incised on the body of four conical cups (PT 142, PT 248-PT 250) and of another cup that is not included in the corpus, because published data are lacking.⁷⁰ Another mark, incised on the shoulder of a large pithos, is similar to syllabogram AB08 of Linear A (PT 253).

Fingernail marks are fairly common at Petras, occurring mostly on the base of conical cups. The most frequent arrangement is one fingernail mark under the

70. Tsipopoulou 1995. The sign lacks the usual tassels or fringes found in other textile signs.

base (PT 143-PT 201), followed by two marks (PT 202-PT 223), and while in two instances three marks are used (PT 224-PT 225). Fingernail marks also occur on other shapes: one mark is impressed under the base of straight-sided (PT 226) and hemispherical cups (PT 227), of tripod trays (PT 228-PT 229), on the body of closed vessels (PT 230-PT 231), below the rim of a bowl (PT 232), while two marks occur under the base of a bridge-spouted jar (PT 233), of a straight-sided cup (PT 234), and of a pithos (PT 235). One (PT 236), two (PT 237) and three (PT 238) impressions made using a tool are reported under the base of conical cups.

Some composite marks are also reported. A horizontal/oblique line is combined with one arched line in a mark incised under the base of conical cups (PT 239-PT 241), while under the base of another conical cup a fingernail impression is added to the same mark (PT 242). Fingernail impressions are combined with a semicircular (PT 243) or an oblique line (PT 244) under the base of two cups. The mark of two lines meeting at a right angle in a T-shape is combined with that of three oblique lines on the handle and below the handle attachment of a pithos (PT 245), while four oblique lines and a semicircular line are incised under the base of a tripod tray (PT 246).

The commonest incised mark is that of the single incised line: 23 vertical, 5 horizontal and 43 oblique lines (Chart 7). There follow the marks of one semicircular line (17 cases), two oblique lines (13 cases), two short lines meeting at an acute angle (10 cases), two lines crossing at an acute angle (7 cases), a combination of straight lines running in various directions, and three oblique lines reported in five and four instances respectively, while sign 037 is known from three examples and 041 from four examples. The other incised marks occur in one or two cases. Of the impressed marks, fingernail impressions occur in 93 examples, the commonest being the single impression (66 cases), followed by the double (25 cases) and triple impression (2 cases). Impressed dots occurs in three examples. Composite marks are rare (8 cases). The vessels usually marked are cups, pithoi, cooking pots, bowls, amphorae, jugs, basins and trays (Table 4; Chart 6). No mark is found exclusively on a single type of vessel. Fingernail impressions are very common on conical cups, while straight lines are frequently incised on closed vessels and the legs of tripod vessels. Most incised marks occur on clearly visible parts of the pot, on the handles and close to the attachment of the handle/s, on and below the rim, on the body and on the legs. In some open vessels the mark is incised in the interior of the pot. In several cases the mark is incised under the base, so that it is invisible when the pot is upright. Fingernail impressions are always made under the base and are not visible.

As regards the provenance of the vessels with pre-firing marks, most come from the two domestic units excavated so far, while very few were recovered within the palace (PT 90, PT 98, PT 111, PT 156, PT 170, PT 188, PT 189, PT 205, PT 217, PT 222-PT 223, PT 253).⁷¹ In so far as the dating is concerned, four examples are dated MM IB (PT 248-PT 250, PT 252),⁷² 34 examples are dated to the MM IIB period (PT 11,

71. Another incised sherd found in the palace has not been included in this discussion be-

cause it is only partly preserved (PT 247).

72. PT 251 is also MM IB.

PT 22, PT 25, PT 30-PT 31, PT 35, PT 37, PT 39, PT 42, PT 64, PT 66, PT 69-PT 71, PT 80-PT 81, PT 83, PT 91-PT 92, PT 99-PT 100, PT 107, PT 109-PT 110, PT 139, PT 149-PT 150, PT 190, PT 193, PT 203, PT 229, PT 230, PT 235, PT 239), one to LM III (**PT 112**) and the rest to the Neopalatial period. It should be noted that the excavated area of the Neopalatial settlement is larger than that of the Protopalatial period.⁷³

According to M. Tsipopoulou, the 1989 excavation produced 146 whole vessels and 30,854 sherds, among which are found 53 marked pots and 152 marked sherds, i.e. 36% and 0.5% respectively.⁷⁴ In 1990, 324 entire vessels and 33,636 sherds came to light, which included 13 marked vessels and 21 marked sherds, or 4% and 0.06% respectively. The evaluation of such statistical data in terms of marking frequencies presents methodological difficulties, as proposed percentages are based on two discrete bodies of evidence: whole restored vessels and sherds. The ratio of marked versus unmarked whole preserved vessels at Petras is very high, suggesting that marking was a common practice. This ratio, though, is based on the number of vessels that were either discovered intact or restored and not on the actual number of vessels that were used in the excavated contexts. From the sherd ratios, on the contrary, it appears that marking practices were not in fact as widespread as they seem. In view of the large number of marked vessels from Petras and the few discovered at other, sometimes larger, sites, it could be argued that marking was a common practice among the potters active at the site. On an inter-settlement level, however, only a low proportion of the vessels produced was marked.

PT 1: Tsipopoulou 1995, 966, no. 168; **PT 2:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 957, no. 56; **PT 3:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 961, no. 111; **PT 4:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 961, no. 101; **PT 5:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 958, no. 67; **PT 6:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 966, no. 176; **PT 7:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 961, no. 100; **PT 8:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 957, no. 57; **PT 9:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 958, no. 58; **PT 10:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 961, no. 110; **PT 11:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 968, no. 205; **PT 12:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 960, no. 86; **PT 13:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 960, no. 86; **PT 14:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 971, no. 243; **PT 15:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 970, no. 231; **PT 16:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 960, no. 96; **PT 17:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 960, no. 91; **PT 18:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 957, no. 54; **PT 19:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 966, no. 169; **PT 20:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 960, no. 98; **PT 21:** Tsipopoulou 1990, 98, no. 8; **PT 22:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 963, no. 131; **PT 23:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 958, no. 63; **PT 24:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 971, no. 238; **PT 25:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 968, no. 202; **PT 26:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 971, no. 237; **PT 27:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 969, no. 232; **PT 28:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 957, no. 46; **PT 29:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 967, no. 185; **PT 30:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 967, no. 188; **PT 31:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 967, no. 186; **PT 32:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 970, no. 227; **PT 33:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 963-964, no. 138; **PT 34:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 967, no. 180; **PT 35:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 967, no. 187; **PT 36:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 970, no. 223; **PT 37:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 968, no. 199; **PT 38:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 965, no. 163; **PT 39:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 967, no. 191; **PT 40:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 962, no. 113; **PT 41:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 966, no. 165; **PT 42:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 959, no. 74; **PT 43:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 967, no. 183; **PT 44:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 955, no. 20; **PT 45:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 971, no. 240; **PT 46:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 970, no. 221; **PT 47:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 970, no. 220; **PT 48:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 969, no. 219; **PT 50:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 964,

73. Tsipopoulou 1995.

74. The analysis is based on the data provided in Tsipopoulou 1995.

no. 139; **PT 51:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 963, no. 137; **PT 52:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 961, no. 107; **PT 53:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 955, no. 25; **PT 54:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 956, no. 30; **PT 55:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 956, no. 42; **PT 56:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 957, no. 50; **PT 57:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 959, no. 84; **PT 58:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 960, no. 87; **PT 59:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 962, no. 122; **PT 60:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 962, no. 121; **PT 61:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 963, no. 130; **PT 62:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 966, no. 179; **PT 63:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 969, no. 217; **PT 64:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 962, no. 119; **PT 65:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 959, no. 85; **PT 66:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 962, no. 114; **PT 67:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 964, no. 148; **PT 68:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 970, no. 222; **PT 69:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 968, no. 194; **PT 70:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 966, no. 177; **PT 71:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 963, no. 133; **PT 72:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 957, no. 45; **PT 73:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 962, no. 117; **PT 74:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 956, no. 29; **PT 75:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 956, no. 43; **PT 76:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 964, no. 142; **PT 77:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 971, no. 239; **PT 78:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 954, no. 5; **PT 79:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 965, no. 156; **PT 80:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 967, no. 190; **PT 81:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 963, no. 132; **PT 82:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 962, no. 125; **PT 83:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 968, no. 203; **PT 84:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 959, no. 75; **PT 85:** Tsipopoulou 1990, 98, no. 7; **PT 86:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 970, no. 224; **PT 87:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 960, no. 69; **PT 88:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 961, no. 112; **PT 89:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 969, no. 214; **PT 90:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 954, no. 4; **PT 91:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 968, no. 204; **PT 92:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 954, no. 10; **PT 93:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 958, no. 62; **PT 94:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 960, no. 66; **PT 95:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 965, no. 157; **PT 96:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 960, no. 94; **PT 97:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 960, no. 92; **PT 98:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 954, no. 11; **PT 99:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 967, no. 192; **PT 100:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 963, no. 134; **PT 101:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 966, no. 167; **PT 102:** Tsipopoulou and Hallager 2010, 58, no. P 49; **PT 103:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 957, no. 44; **PT 104:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 962, no. 118; **PT 105:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 962, no. 197; **PT 106:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 970, no. 225; **PT 107:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 968, no. 195; **PT 108:** Tsipopoulou 1990, 96, no. 4; **PT 109:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 968, no. 200; **PT 110:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 968, no. 198; **PT 111:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 966, no. 173; **PT 112:** Tsipopoulou 1990, 97, no. 6; **PT 113:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 956, no. 36; **PT 114:** Tsipopoulou 1990, 96, no. 5; **PT 115:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 957, no. 55; **PT 116:** Tsipopoulou 1990, 98, no. 9; **PT 117:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 966, no. 171; **PT 118:** Tsipopoulou 1990, 94, no. 1; **PT 119:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 958, no. 64; **PT 120:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 959, no. 79; **PT 121:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 962, no. 78; **PT 122:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 955, no. 24; **PT 123:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 963, no. 158; **PT 124:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 965, no. 154; **PT 125:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 971, no. 241; **PT 126:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 970, no. 230; **PT 127:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 970, no. 229; **PT 128:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 970, no. 228; **PT 129:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 967, no. 181; **PT 130:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 957, no. 47; **PT 131:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 960, no. 90; **PT 132:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 970, no. 234; **PT 133:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 970, no. 226; **PT 134:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 960, no. 89; **PT 135:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 955, no. 15; **PT 136:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 960, no. 97; **PT 137:** Bosanquet 1901-1902, 285; **PT 138:** Tsipopoulou 1990, 96, no. 3; **PT 139:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 954, no. 2; **PT 140:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 960, no. 97; **PT 141:** Tsipopoulou 1990, 95, no. 2; **PT 142:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 969, no. 215; **PT 143:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 954, no. 3; **PT 144:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 955, no. 12; **PT 145:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 955, no. 16; **PT 146:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 955, no. 17; **PT 147:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 955, no. 18; **PT 148:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 955, no. 19; **PT 149:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 955, no. 23; **PT 150:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 956, no. 27; **PT 151:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 956, no. 28; **PT 152:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 956, no. 31; **PT 153:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 956, no. 32; **PT 154:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 965, no. 35; **PT 155:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 956, no. 37; **PT 156:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 956, no. 39; **PT 157:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 956, no. 40; **PT 158:** Tsipopoulou 1995, 957, no. 48; **PT 159:** Tsipopoulou

1995, 956, no. 32; **PT 160**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 958, no. 60; **PT 161**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 958, no. 65; **PT 162**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 958, no. 68; **PT 163**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 958, no. 70; **PT 164**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 958, no. 71; **PT 165**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 959, no. 73; **PT 166**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 959, no. 76; **PT 167**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 959, no. 81; **PT 168**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 960, no. 93; **PT 169**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 690, no. 99; **PT 170**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 961, no. 104; **PT 171**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 961, no. 105; **PT 172**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 961, no. 109; **PT 173**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 966, no. 116; **PT 174**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 962, no. 124; **PT 176**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 963, no. 127; **PT 177**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 966, no. 128; **PT 178**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 963, no. 135; **PT 179**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 963, no. 136; **PT 180**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 964, no. 140; **PT 181**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 964, no. 143; **PT 182**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 964, no. 144; **PT 183**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 964, no. 147; **PT 184**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 964, no. 150; **PT 185**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 965, no. 152; **PT 186**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 965, no. 153; **PT 187**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 965, no. 155; **PT 188**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 961, no. 102; **PT 189**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 961, no. 103; **PT 190**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 962, no. 120; **PT 191**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 966, no. 170; **PT 192**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 966, no. 174; **PT 193**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 969, no. 210; **PT 194**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 969, no. 211; **PT 195**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 969, no. 212; **PT 196**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 969, no. 218; **PT 197**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 970, no. 233; **PT 198**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 967, no. 182; **PT 199**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 959, no. 83; **PT 200**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 959, no. 88; **PT 201**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 971, no. 236; **PT 202**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 955, no. 13; **PT 203**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 955, no. 21; **PT 204**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 955, no. 22; **PT 205**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 955, no. 33; **PT 206**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 956, no. 38; **PT 207**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 956, no. 41; **PT 208**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 958, no. 59; **PT 209**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 968, no. 61; **PT 210**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 958, no. 72; **PT 211**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 959, no. 77; **PT 212**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 959, no. 82; **PT 213**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 961, no. 106; **PT 214**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 962, no. 115; **PT 215**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 962, no. 123; **PT 216**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 965, no. 159; **PT 217**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 965, no. 161; **PT 218**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 965, no. 162; **PT 219**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 970, no. 235; **PT 220**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 968, no. 108; **PT 221**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 963, no. 129; **PT 222**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 966, no. 172; **PT 223**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 966, no. 175; **PT 224**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 955, no. 26; **PT 225**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 957, no. 52; **PT 226**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 964, no. 149; **PT 227**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 969, no. 216; **PT 228**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 954, no. 7; **PT 229**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 969, no. 213; **PT 230**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 968, no. 193; **PT 231**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 966, no. 178; **PT 232**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 967, no. 184; **PT 233**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 954, no. 8; **PT 234**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 966, no. 164; **PT 235**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 967, no. 189; **PT 236**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 964, no. 146; **PT 237**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 957, no. 51; **PT 238**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 968, no. 196; **PT 239**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 968, no. 201; **PT 240**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 959, no. 80; **PT 241**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 966, no. 166; **PT 242**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 964, no. 141; **PT 243**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 965, no. 160; **PT 244**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 964, no. 145; **PT 245**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 954, no. 6; **PT 246**: Tsipopoulou 1995, 954, no. 9; **PT 247**: Tsipopoulou 1990, 98, no. 10; **PT 248**: Haggis 2007, fig. 17h, L50; **PT 249**: Haggis 2007, fig. 17i, L215; **PT 250**: Tsipopoulou and Alberti 2011, 476, figs. 17, 18, P90/1271; **PT 251**: Haggis 2007, fig. 17j, L404; **PT 252**: Haggis 2007, fig. 20h, L421; **PT 253**: Hallager 2012, 270, P89/533, fig. 4.

HAGIA PHOTIA

Two sherds with pre-firing marks were found at Site 6 of the Hagia Photia survey. The site, located in the area of the EM cemetery, comprises one or more Neopalatial houses. The first mark, one long line, occurs on the vertical handle of a cooking pot and is dated to MM III/LM I (**HP 1**). The second mark is incised on the hori-

zontal handle of a cooking pot (or wide-mouthed jar) and consists of a short horizontal line and dated to the LM I period (**HP 2**).⁷⁵

HP 1: Tsipopoulou 1989, 76, no. 140, pl. 16; **HP 2:** Tsipopoulou 1989, pl. 15.

PALAIKASTRO

Just 17 pre-firing marks have been published from the excavations at Palaikastro, a small number if we take into account the plentiful and impressive ceramic assemblages that have come to light. Of approximately 679 vessels, for instance, from the two Late Minoan wells, only two are marked (**PK 1, PK 4**), i.e. 0.6% of the total while just two marked vessels are found in the area of Block M in a total of 974 catalogued vessels, i.e. 0.2% (**PK 6-PK 7**). The picture for the ceramic assemblages discovered during the first excavations, at the turn of the 20th century, is not clear as the material was never studied in depth. Just six sherds of vessels with pre-firing marks from these excavations have been published, an extremely small number, considering the extent of the town that was investigated at the time.

The published marks are incised and impressed. The incised marks are: one long line at the base of the handle of an amphora (**PK 1**) and on the legs of a cooking pot (**PK 2**); three short lines on the shoulder of a jug (**PK 3**) and at the lower handle attachments of a squat amphora (**PK 4**): this vase is considered to have been imported from elsewhere; three lines, one long and two short, one on either side, incised on the legs of a cooking pot (**PK 5**); two lines meeting at an acute angle incised on the shoulder of a jug (**PK 6**); three lines in the shape of a triangle on the leg of a cooking pot (**PK 7**) and on the body of a plate (**PK 8**); two lines crossed at a right angle on the body of a unidentifiable vessel (**PK 9**); a vertical line combined with a semicircle incised on the shoulder of a jug, close to the handle (**PK 10**); a double axe incised on the handle of a closed vessel (**PK 11**) and on a pithos (**PK 12**); a quadrangle incised on an unidentifiable vessel (**PK 13**);⁷⁶ and two parallel, vertically incised lines connected by a third, horizontal line incised on the body sherd of an unidentified vessel (**PK 14**).⁷⁷ A partly preserved mark consisting of incised lines forming two triangles on the rim of a cup was also reported (**PK 15**). Impressed marks are very few. They consist of thumb impressions on the leg of cooking pots (**PK 16**) and raised impressions occurring on the lower attachment of the handles of an amphora (**PK 17**). All the marks are displayed on clearly visible parts of the vessels.

Marked vessels were found in the domestic units of the MM IIA (**PK 6**), MM III A (**PK 10**), LM IA (**PK 1, PL 3**) and LM II (**PK 4**) town. **PK 2, PK 5, PK 16, and PK 17** were discovered in the LM IIIC settlement at Kastri. The date of **PK 7-PK 9, PK**

75. This sherd, no. 6262/3, is shown on pl. 15. In the catalogue, however, the description of no. 6262/3 refers to the leg of a cooking pot illustrated on fig. 13 rather than the sherd on pl. 15.

76. A similar mark is also reported, but is not illustrated (Hutchinson 1939-1940, 49).

77. I have not included the case of the round-mouthed amphora with the Linear A wine ideogram incised on one handle: it is not a pre-firing mark but appears to be connected to the contents of the vessel. Hatzaki 2007c, 49, no. 151.

PK 11–**PK 13**, **PK 15** is uncertain. **PK 7** and **PK 9** were found in χ 23 and, according to Hutchinson, seem to be MM if not earlier; the same vague date is also given in the case of **PK 8** found in χ 26. **PK 11** was found in House δ and it is probably LM I in date. To the same period could be dated **PK 15** found in House π 41. The find context of **PK 13** and **PK 14** is unknown. One mark, not included in this discussion, was found in a burial context.⁷⁸

PK 1: Hatzaki 2007c, 29, no. 62, fig. 3.16; **PK 2**: Sackett 1965, 298, P17, fig. 17; **PK 3**: MacGillivray *et al.* 1991, 135, fig. 11; **PK 4**: Hatzaki 2007c, 115, no. 470, fig. 4.15, pl. 26; **PK 5**: Sackett 1965, pl. 78d; **PK 6**: Knappett and Cunningham 2012, 117, no. 51, fig. 4.3; **PK 7**: Hutchinson 1939–1940, 49; **PK 8**: Hutchinson 1939–1940, 49; **PK 9**: Hutchinson 1939–1940, 49; **PK 10**: Knappett and Cunningham 2012, 153, no. 293, fig. 5.15; **PK 11**: Hutchinson 1939–1940, 49, fig. 43; Brice 1961, 16, II15.iv, pl. 24; **PK 12**: Tod 1920–1903, 340; Hutchinson 1939–1940, 49; **PK 13**: Hutchinson 1939–1940, 49, no. 40, fig. 43; Brice 1961, 16, II15.ii, pl. 24; **PK 14**: Brice 1961, 16, II15.iii, pl. 24; **PK 15**: Brice 1961, 16, II15.i, pl. 24; **PK 16**: Sackett 1965, 298, P20, fig. 17; **PK 17**: Sackett 1965, pl. 78d.

ZAKROS

One pre-firing mark found by Hogarth has been published from Zakros so far.⁷⁹ Its exact find spot is unknown but it is said to come from houses in the eastern spur.⁸⁰ The mark is similar to logogram *172 of the Hieroglyphic script and is incised below the handle of a cooking pot or wide-mouthed jar (**ZK 1**). There is no published information to date on pre-firing marks from N. Platon's excavations. This is due not to the absence of marks – highly unlikely given the plethora of pottery that has come to light in both the palace and the town – but to the fact that the in-depth study of the pottery has not been completed. Marks of one or two short lines incised on the lower attachment of Palace Style jars – Zakros was an important centre of production of such vessels⁸¹ – have been published, but not identified as pre-firing marks (**ZK 2**). One long line is also incised on the lower attachment of the upper handles of a large pithos decorated with double axes in relief (**ZK 3**).

ZK 1: Hogarth 1900–1901, 128, fig. 40, no. 2; **ZK 2**: Platon 1962, 160, pl. 156c; Saliaka 2008, 57, fig. 35; **ZK 3**: Platon and Platon 1991, 395, pl. 222a; Saliaka 2008, 56, fig. 34.

78. Tod 1902–1903, 340.

79. Another mark was also published but it is not entirely certain whether it is a pre-firing mark or part of an inscription (Hogarth 1900–1901, 128, fig. 40, no. 1). Note that incised or impressed marks on clay objects were

published by Hogarth (Hogarth 1900–1901, 126–127, figs 38–39).

80. The houses partially excavated by Hogarth, where the marked fragments probably came from, are Houses A–K.

81. Platon 2002; Christakis 2005, 76–77.

VI

PRE-FIRING MARKS IN BRONZE AGE CRETE: ANALYZING THE DATA

The corpus contains a total of 1,016 pre-firing marks. The marked vessels (completely or partly preserved vessels and fragments of vessels) are derived from 27 sites: in most cases these are few or even single examples and only in few sites have significant assemblages of marks been found (Fig. 1; Table 3). The marks are analyzed here in terms of their spatial, temporal and contextual distribution, association with specific shapes, marking location and marking frequency. Issues of potting technology, where this information is provided in the relevant publications, are also taken into consideration. A distinctive pattern in these analytical variables is considered here to define a marking tradition or a marking system.¹ Such a pattern may consist of a preference for certain signs, methods of application, preferred vessels and marking locations, certain ware types and, finally, certain contextual frameworks.² The consistency of such variables within a marking system may differ; the higher the number of consistent variables, the narrower the application of the marking system.

The sources of the available information on pre-firing marks are by no means homogeneous: marks derive from a wide range of archaeological sites with different excavation histories, published in a variety of ways. The material is therefore affected by several biases. First and foremost is the fact that the sample is incomplete. The marks included in the corpus are not all the marks that have actually been found: many important pottery assemblages have not yet been studied exhaustively and published, while in some cases marks are mentioned but not published. Also, the marks published are those that the researchers recognized as such. Many scholars in the past, for instance, did not consider lines vertically incised on the legs of cooking pots or on the handles of large vessels to be pre-firing marks, and the same is true of fingernails marks found below the base of conical cups. Another major drawback is that most marked vessels are not completely preserved; the corpus includes mostly small fragments of vessels while wholly preserved vessels are few. This fragmentary state of conservation makes the study of the formal and technological attributes of many examples difficult if not impossible. Contextual associations are also often not as straightforward as one would expect: only entirely preserved vessels can be directly linked with their contextual framework. It is worth

1. cf. Döhl 1978; Hirschfeld 1999, 26-27; Zerner 2008.

2. Hirschfeld 1999, 26.

noting, for example, that of the 320 vessels with pre-firing marks from Quartier Mu at Malia, only for 45 examples could meaningful associations be made.

In order to ensure that these biases do not affect the analysis unduly, the discussion focuses primarily on those marks that have been properly excavated, with full details of the find context, and published in a satisfactory manner. Cases which do not meet these criteria, however, are also included to permit typological comparisons. Of the groups of pre-firing marks, the ones that present the fewest biases and can provide a relatively representative picture for specific chronological periods each are those from Kastelli-Chania (LM IIIB-LM IIIC), Vrysinas (MM III-LM I), Monastiraki (MM IIB), Kommos (MM IIB), Phaistos (MM IIB), Malia (MM IIB and LM I), Karphi (LM IIIC), Syme (MM IB-LM IB), Mochlos (LM IB-LM IIIA), Monastiraki-Katalimata (MM II-LM III), Kavousi-Vrondas (LM IIIC), Petras (LM I) and Palaikastro (MM II-LM II).

The data are presented with the aid of tables of absolute counts and graphs. These tables are intended to stress possible contextual relationships and permit inter- and intrasite comparison. The data biases mentioned above, however, mean that a more complex quantitative analysis is generally unsound, with the exception of a few sites which provide more detailed quantitative contextual and chronological information. This analysis, therefore, focuses on long-term spatial and chronological patterns observed in pre-firing marks and marked vessels, with a discussion of the regional traditions of pottery production and use for which they provide evidence.

SPATIAL AND CONTEXTUAL DISTRIBUTION

Pre-firing marks have so far published from 28 sites: Platyvola cave, Psathi, Kastelli-Chania, Vrysinas, Monastiraki, Kommos, Hagia Triada, Phaistos, Tylissos, Knossos, Archanes, Malia, Sissi,³ Kastellos, Karphi, Syme, Myrtos Fournou Koriphi, Gournia, Mochlos, Chalinomouri, Pseira, Monastiraki-Katalimata, Halasmenos, Kavousi-Vrondas, Petras, Hagia Photia, Palaikastro, and Zakros (Table 3). This gives us a total of 11 sites in East Crete, six in East-Central Crete, six in Central Crete, two in West-Central Crete, and three in West Crete. The geographical distribution actually results from excavation histories and publication strategies. As a result of the uneven spatial distribution of data, we have more evidence from some regions of the island than others, making the investigation of regional and intra-regional patterns in marking practices difficult.

Most vessels or fragments of vessels with marks come from settlements, with some published occurrences from sanctuaries and very few from funerary contexts (Chart 8). Settlements ranges from villages to major urban centres and everything in between, at sites extending over 0.2 to 75 ha. The number of pre-firing marks published from each site depends on the duration and intensity of habitation as

3. The mark from Sissi is not included in the corpus.

well as on differences in the size of the excavated area, recovery protocols and publication strategies. These parameters alone, however, are not enough to determine the total number of marks: sites of the same size may yield many marked vessels, few or none at all. Most examples so far published have been found in ordinary domestic units, in units the inhabitants of which were engaged in specialized activities, and in elite contexts. The picture from the central buildings of the settlements is somewhat confused. The Protopalatial and Neopalatial levels at the palaces at Knossos, Phaistos and Malia are greatly disturbed due to their complex life histories; the data are either nonexistent or exceptionally fragmented. The pottery from the complexes at Galatas and Zakros has not yet been studied and published. There is no published evidence for the use of marked vessels at the central complexes at Gournia and Hagia Triada, while very few marked vessels are found at the palace of Petras. Published pre-firing marks are also absent from the central complexes of peripheral settlements. The emerging picture does not thus suggest an exclusive connection between marked vessels and contexts of political importance.

Understanding the contextual distribution of marked vessels found within settlements in terms of the use and meaning of pre-firing marks is a avenue of inquiry involving many methodological constraints. Because most sites are partly explored, the overall picture we gain is far from representative. It is difficult, for instance, to evaluate the important assemblages of pre-firing marks from Quartier Mu at Malia and House II.1 at Petras within their intra-site framework, since only a small part of the respective settlements of these units has so far been explored.

Marked vessels associated with burials have only been published from Archanes, Malia, Mochlos, and Palaikastro.⁴ There are only one or two examples in each case. Vessels with pre-firing marks are also rare in religious contexts: significant assemblages are published only from the peak sanctuary of Vrysinas and the sanctuary of Syme, with no published evidence from any other religious context.

The contextual distribution of published pre-firing marks may not be the result of research and publication biases. The rarity of marked vessels in burials, for instance, reflects actual depositional behavior, since most of these contexts, of which many, of different periods, have been excavated and published, have produced no marked vessels. The same applies to the religious contexts, although it should be noted that very few have been published in final form. If marked vessels had been found in such contexts, it is unlikely that they would not have been mentioned in preliminary publications, given that vessels and sherds with pre-firing marks are a type of recovered record which is usually published, due to their supposed correlation with the scripts. The cases of Vrysinas and Syme are the exception to the rule, an exception that is hard to understand on the basis of the data at our disposal. I would suggest that possible interpretations should be sought in local patterns of pottery production on the one hand, and in the particular meaning that marked vessels might have for those who frequented these sacred places on the other.

4. The fragment of a marked larnax from Karphi was found in a domestic context (**KR 17**).

CHRONOLOGICAL RANGE

Pre-firing marks range in date from the Final Neolithic period to the end of the Late Bronze Age (Table 3). The earliest mark is dated to the Final Neolithic period and was found in the Platyvola Cave. The marks from Myrtos Fournou Koriphi are dated EM IIB. The marks from Psathi are dated within a temporal spectrum of EM IIA to MM IA. The marks from Tylissos, three marks from Archanes and one mark from Mochlos are MM I in date; one mark from Vrysinas is dated MM I-MM II and another from Monastiraki-Katalimata to MM II; 15 marks from Phais-tos and 16 from Kommos are MM IB-MM IIB. The large group of pre-firing marks from Syme is MM IB in date and so are four marks from Knossos and five from Petras. One mark from Palaikastro is dated MM IIA. Of MM IIB date are the marks from Monastiraki, almost all marks from Malia, some marks from Syme, the marks from Kastellos, one mark from Gournia and another from Pseira, and 34 marks from Petras. Eleven marks from Syme may be either MM IB or MM IIB in date, and another two may be assigned to the MM IIB-LM IA period. MM III marks include most of the pre-firing marks excavated at Vrysinas, three from Kommos, one from Knossos and another from Archanes. Three marks from Palaikastro are dated MM. Four marks from Kommos and another two from Hagia Photia are dated to the MM III/LM I period, while two marks from Kommos and one from Pseira, are MM III-LM IA in date. To the LM I period are dated two marks from Knossos and three from Chalinomouri, most marks from Petras, one from Syme and six marks from Pseira; two marks from Palaikastro are LM IA and another three LM I, while two marks from Malia, four from Gournia, 20 from Mochlos and one from Zakros are LM IB. One mark from Syme is dated to MM III-LM I, while three marks from the same site are MM IIIB-LM IA. To the LM II period are assigned two marks from Knossos and one from Palaikastro, while the succeeding period, LM IIIA, has provided three marks from Kommos, eight from Knossos and eleven from Mochlos; 16 marks from Kastelli-Chania are LM IIIB in date; two marks from Kommos are assigned to the same period; one mark from Monastiraki-Katalimata is LM IIIB-early LM IIIC as well as three marks from Kastelli-Chania; the marks from Karphi, Kavousi-Vrondas and Halasmenos, three marks from Monastiraki-Katalimata and four marks from Palaikastro are LM IIIC. One mark from Petras is dated to LM III, while another from Vrysinas is dated to the LM period.

It is obvious from these dates, suggested in the relevant publications, that it is difficult to place a precise date on many marked vessels; for some examples there is simply not enough evidence to date them to one of the subdivisions of the basic chronological periods of the Cretan Bronze Age. This means that we cannot provide details of comparative patterns of process between sites, while short-term changes and developments in marking practices may go unnoticed. In the discussion below, therefore, reference is occasionally made to broad chronological phases such as the Prepalatial, Protopalatial and Neopalatial periods.

Despite the broad dates, some patterns of process emerge. Marks dated to the period before MM IB are relatively few, and consist of sporadic occurrences at the

sites in which they have been found. Considering the number of sites occupied all over the island and the numerous assemblages of pottery excavated and published, it could be argued that the marking of vessels was not a common practice among potters. During the Protopalatial period, and especially during MM IIB, there is a noticeably increased tendency to mark pots, at least in certain parts of Crete: the Amari, the southern Mesara, Syme, Malia and Petras. Sporadic examples dated MM I-MM II were also found in other sites. Both the quantity and variety of pre-firing marks increase impressively. The largest assemblage comes from Malia, followed by Syme and Petras. It would be extremely interesting if we could identify differences in the practice of marking not only between one phase of the Protopalatial period and the other, but also between the different regions of the island. Such fine temporal and spatial distinctions, however, cannot be sustained by the data. The only case in which a diachronic approach within the Protopalatial period might be applied, though not without methodological constraints, is that of Syme. One part of the assemblage is dated to MM IB and is associated with Buildings Y and V as well as with structures in the northwest part of the excavated area, while the other is dated to MM IIB and is associated with Building U. The MM IB marks stand out by their quantity and, above all, their variety. This is the oldest sizeable assemblage of pre-firing marks in Crete. The marks dated to the MM IIB period, on the contrary, are noticeably fewer and do not appear to have the formal variation of the MM IB marks. Bearing in mind that the ceramic assemblages of the MM IIB period are well represented in the archaeological record, this picture is surely not coincidental, but is probably due to changes in marking practices within the Protopalatial period. Thus, although the case of Syme clearly indicates an increase in the practice of marking vessels during the Protopalatial period, it also confirms diachronic changes within the span of this period.

Pre-firing marks are attested at many Neopalatial sites, more so than at Protopalatial ones. This cannot be taken as an indication of the spread of vessel marking from the Protopalatial to the Neopalatial period, which is much better represented in the excavation record. Besides, marked vessels are represented at low percentages in all Neopalatial contexts, while the marks themselves are quite simple in form. Very few marks have been found at major LM IB sites. Malia is a case in point, since marked vessels there were very common during the Protopalatial but very rare during the Neopalatial period: of the 382 published examples, 380 were dated MM IIB and just two LM I. The number of marked vessels similarly decreased dramatically between the Protopalatial and the Neopalatial period at Syme, Kommos and Phaistos, although in all these cases LM I deposits are disturbed. Marked vessels are absent from—or at least remain unpublished at—many other important Neopalatial sites. If marked vessels had been discovered, however, they would have become known. The testimonies, therefore, show that the marking of vessels was not a common practice among potters active in the various regions of the island during the Neopalatial period. The only exception is the case of Petras, where a large assemblage of pre-firing marks has come to light. Such a large number of marked vessels has not been discovered at any other Neopalatial site. The emphasis on the marking of vessels, compared to other Neopalatial sites, seems to be

rooted in the Protopalatial period, since many marked vessels were found in the Protopalatial deposits of the site. However, the adoption of a diachronic approach to the study of pre-firing marks presents several methodological limitations, as the excavated area of the Neopalatial settlement is larger than the Protopalatial.

Marking decreased dramatically during the LM II and LM III periods. Sites with published pre-firing marks are considerably fewer than those of the previous periods. Moreover, the marks are simple in their formal attributes: they mostly consist of thumb impressions and incised straight lines on the legs of tripod vessels. Changes in the marking system from one chronological phase to the other are hard to detect on the basis of the published evidence. Most marks are LM IIIC in date, while a few occurrences are LM IIIB, and even fewer are LM II. The data from Kastelli-Chania is particularly relevant for highlighting inter-site changes in marking of vessels within the span of LM III. Pre-firing marks are absent from the LM IIIA deposits, and marking of vessels seems not to be practiced among potters. The first marks are associated with the LM IIIB deposits of the site. According to Hallager, their presence during LM IIIB, a period when the Linear B script was used at the site, may not be coincidental.⁵ Marks, mostly simple incised and impressed patterns, are also present in LM IIIC levels.

MARKING FREQUENCIES

The sample of pre-firing marks is small: 1,016 published marks from 27 sites. The many qualitative and quantitative data biases render the true representational value of the sample hard to assess. Nevertheless, the high proportion of unmarked versus marked vessels that have been published from these sites seems to indicate that the marking of vessels was not widely practiced by potters. Examples from well-published contexts tend to bear out this generally low ratio of unmarked to marked pots. Marked vessels represent 0.093% of pottery found in the LM IIIB and LM IIIC deposits at Kastelli-Chania. One sherd in 2,000 is marked at Vrysinas, while marked vessels represent 0.12% and 0.047% of the pottery published from the Building of the Archive of Sealings at Monastiraki and the Protopalatial deposits of the Southern Area of Kommos respectively. Marked vessels represent 3.3% of the wholly preserved vessels at Quartier Mu. The ratio, however, must be drastically reduced when we compare unmarked to marked vessel fragments. At Karphi marked sherds constitute 1.8%, falling to only 0.3% in the case of Myrtos Fournou Koriphi. The percentage of unmarked to marked vessels is 2.3% at Mochlos during LM IB and 0.8% during LM III. Marked vessels represent 1% of the total at Monastiraki-Katalimata, 2.6% at Kavousi-Vrondas, and 0.6% and 0.2% of the pottery published from the Late Minoan Wells and Block M at Palaikastro respectively. The percentage of unmarked versus marked vessels in the pottery assemblages of the 1989 and 1990 excavation seasons at Petras is also low: 0.5% and 0.06% respectively. The percentages rise when restored vessels are compared, to 36% for 1989 and 4%

5. Hallager 2011, 426.

for 1990; however, these estimates are misleading, as they are due to complex taphonomies and restoration procedures.

The above estimates, albeit rough, nevertheless clearly indicate that the marking of vessels was not widespread among potting groups operating in the various centres of the island. The evidence from sites published with full contextual data does seem to suggest that the relatively small number of unmarked versus marked vessels is a general trend, rather than simply the result of excavation biases and incomplete publication. If this holds true, the relative rarity of marks on vessels must indicate certain modes of behavior linked to pottery production. The tendency to only mark a small part of the pottery output has also been noted in other cultural milieus, testifying to a trend which is not easy to decipher.⁶ The low marking ratios differ from case to case. Although these variations are to some degree due to research and publication strategies, in certain cases they appear to indicate the wider dissemination of marking practices in specific regions: about 1,143 pre-firing marks applied on Aeginetan vessels, for instance, were so far published, a very high number compared to 1,016 published pre-firing marks from Bronze Age Crete.

The estimated ratios of marked to unmarked vessels at contemporary sites also indicate that the former are found more frequently at certain sites. It could be argued that these differences are due to the excavation histories and publication strategies that differ from site to site, which is certainly true to a certain extent, but, at least in some cases, they may also reflect behavioral strategies and different marking traditions. A case in point is that of Phaistos and Malia in the Protopalatial period (MM IIB phase). Marked vessels from Phaistos are very few compared to those found at Malia, which has produced the largest assemblage of Protopalatial marks in Crete. This contrast is not due to data biases: the ceramic deposits from Protopalatial Phaistos are more numerous than those excavated at Malia, so it cannot be argued that they do not provide a representative selection. The practice of marking vessels was thus more common at Malia than Phaistos or many other Protopalatial centres. A possible exception may be Petras, where many fragments of vessels with pre-firing marks have been found. Bearing in mind that the important Protopalatial ceramic assemblages of the site have not yet been studied and published, and given the large number of pre-firing marks from Neopalatial levels, this site, too, may provide us with major assemblages of Protopalatial marks in future. The available data from Phaistos and Malia, therefore, point to the existence of two discrete marking traditions. The picture we get from the marking practices agrees with the evidence from the writing systems: the systems adopted by the central administrations at both sites show marked differences.⁷ Hieroglyphic script is widespread at Malia, and it may be no coincidence that many pre-firing marks are inspired by the signs of this script, while at Phaistos the use of Hieroglyphic is

6. In the context of the Aegean see Halepa-Bikaki 1984, Lindblom 2001, and Bailey 1996; 2007, for Hagia Irini, Aegina and Melos respectively. See also Hirschfeld 1999 for marking frequencies in the eastern Mediterranean,

Aston 2009 and Gallorini 2009 for marking frequencies on Egyptian pottery and Glatz 2012 for frequencies on pottery from Late Bronze Age Anatolia.

7. Karnava 2001, 218-226.

extremely limited compared to that of Linear A, which appears as early as MM IIA. Perhaps in future, with more data at our disposal, we will be able to form a fuller picture of other cases as well.

MARKED SHAPES

Pre-firing marks are incised, impressed, stamped, painted or applied on the following shapes: pithos, amphora, jar, side-spouted jar, Palace Style jar, lentoid jar, bridge-spouted jar, stirrup jar, jug, basin, bowl, cup, plate, cooking pot, cooking tray, tray, tripod tray, lid, strainer, spinning bowl, lamp, cylindrical vessel, oven, brazier, collector, stand, larnax and waterpipe. The fragmentary state of preservation of several other published examples does not permit their classification in one of the above shape-groups. In the relevant publications these examples were defined as open vessels, closed vessels, tripod pots, and unidentified vessels. In some cases, the excavators do not provide information on the vessel type (e.g. **KN 13-KN 15**). The discussion that follows is not concerned with these cases with the result that a fuller picture of all the marked shapes cannot be formed.⁸

These shapes do not seem to be marked with the same frequency (Table 4). For some, such as lentoid jar, bridge-spouted jar, oven, brazier, spinning bowl, stand, lamp, plate, and offering table, only one to three marked examples are known. The marked versions are not only represented by few examples but are also found at a maximum of two sites. The limited quantitative and spatial occurrence suggests that such vessels are isolated examples that do not reflect generalized marking trends. The same applies in the case of stirrup jars: the only marked examples are found at Knossos and Kommos.

The other shapes are represented by more than three examples each, found at many sites across the island. The number of marked examples of each shape differs from site to site, largely determined by the availability and the quality of published data. Nevertheless, keeping in mind the different sample sizes and the large proportion of vessels with pre-firing marks at each site, some patterns of process do emerge. Pithoi with pre-firing marks have so far been published from 15 sites. One to four examples are published from most contexts. Nine examples are published from Malia, 14 from Syme, 18 from Mochlos, and 23 from Petras. There is no obvious particular preference for marking pithoi, since at most sites with a sufficient body of data, marked examples are present in either the same or lower percentages than other marked shapes. At some sites, however, the increased number of marked pithoi may indicate a local trend. Pithoi are the type of vessel, after conical cups, marked most often at Petras. Many pithoi with pre-firing marks have also been found at Mochlos and especially at Knossos.⁹ However, these cases are difficult to evaluate due to the fragmentary evidence available.

Marked amphorae are found at 11 sites. Their number usually varies from one to two examples at each site. Four examples have been published from Vrysinas,

8. These cases were not included in Table 4.

9. Most of the pithoi with circle and con-

centric circle impressions were not included in the corpus.

five come from Knossos, ten from Syme and six from Mochlos, 14 from Petras and 23 from Malia. At all these sites, apart from Malia and Petras, there is no obvious particular preference for marking amphorae, since marked examples are present in either the same or lower percentages than other marked shapes. The picture is different at MM IIB Malia: amphorae are more numerous than other shapes, and, comparatively speaking, there is a trend among local potters to mark such vessels, a trend not observed in other areas. It must, however, be taken into account that the number of marked amphorae is considerably smaller than that of jars and side-spouted jars, two vessel shapes that are most often marked at Malia. Amphorae are also often marked at Petras, but no particular preference is evident.

Wide-mouthed jars are the type of vessel most often marked at Syme, where 28 examples have been found. 21 examples have been published from Malia: the proportion of these marked vessels is relatively high compared to the other vessels found at the settlement, but much lower than that of the side-spouted jars. At both Syme and Malia there is a clear preference for marking such pots during MM IB and MM IIB respectively. Similar vessels are also found at Kastellos but they are probably products of a Maliote potting group or groups.

Side-spouted jars are the type of vessel marked most often at Malia in the MM IIB period: 120 examples have been published to date. This assemblage is the largest group of marked vessels at the site. The data points to a local marking tradition not found in other parts of the island.

Palace Style jars are vessels the production and distribution of which follows strong regional trends.¹⁰ Vessels of this shape with simple pre-firing marks have so far been published from Malia, Pseira and Zakros. Marking the attachments of the upper handles of these vessels seems to be common in East Crete, although the overall picture is difficult to evaluate, as no major assemblages of such vessels have been published to date. However, it is worth noting that in Central Crete, where there are major production centres of such vessels, Palace Style jars do not bear incised marks on the handles like those from East Crete.

Jugs with pre-firing marks have so far been published from nine sites. One example each has been published from Myrtos Fournou Koriphi, Gournia, Pseira, Kavousi-Vrondas and Palaikastro; three each have been published from Vrysinas, Petras and Palaikastro, seven from Syme, and 14 from Malia. Compared to other marked vessels from these sites, jugs only represent a very low percentage of the total, indicating that they were not preferred for marking.

Basins are published from six sites: one example comes from Kommos, two from Kavousi-Vrondas and three each from Karpfi and Petras. Seven basins have been published from Malia and seven from Syme. Basins are represented in either the same or lower percentages than other vessels and there is no particular pattern in the marking of these vessels, which were not preferred for marking.

Bowls of various types have been published from seven sites: one from Psathi and Phaistos, two from Vrysinas, three from Kastelli-Chania, six from Syme, 10 from

10. Niemeier 1985; Platon 2002; Christakis 2005, 76-77.

Petras, and 12 from Malia. Most cases are difficult to evaluate due to the fragmentary data available. At Malia bowls are represented in relatively high percentages similar to those of cups, cooking pots and jugs, although lower than those of other vessels, and there does seem to be some preference for marking them.

Cooking pots with pre-firing marks have been found at sites across the island within a temporal framework encompassing the MM I to the LM III period. The published data shows that the trend for marking cooking pots is high during LM III (especially during the LM IIIB and LM IIIC phases). Cooking pots are the type of vessel most often marked at Kastelli-Chania during the LM IIIB and LM IIIC periods. Many marked examples are known from Vrysinas and dated to MM III; their number is remarkable compared to other shapes such as amphorae, jugs, bowls and trays.

There seems to be a trend for marking cooking pots in the Mesara region during the Protopalatial period: marks are placed on the rim or on and below the rim but not on handles as was the case at other Protopalatial sites, or on the legs of the vessels as was the case during the Neopalatial period and later. The published data come from Kommos and Phaistos, where cooking pots are the most numerous type of marked vessel. In the area of the Mesara it seems, at least in so far as the cooking pots from Kommos show, that there were several production units distributing their output to the centres of the western part of the plain.¹¹ This explains the great variation in fabrics, shape and surface treatments observed in the examples from Kommos. Few marked examples are found in the MM IIIA and MM III-LM I levels at Kommos, Phaistos, and Hagia Triada. The marks are simple in form. This picture may, however, change in the light of new data.

Marked cooking pots have not been published from sites of north-central Crete, except for a single example from Knossos (**KN 18**). It is worth noting that the whole placement of the mark on this vessel is strongly reminiscent of that of the marks on Protopalatial cooking pots from the Mesara. The absence of marked cooking pots from this area may be due to publication biases, although I believe that if such examples had been discovered during excavation, they would have become known. Pre-firing marks on cooking pots, for instance, are extremely rare at Neopalatial Galatas, where large assemblages of such vessels have been found. Perhaps the potters of north-central Crete did not tend to mark cooking pots. The validity of this suggestion, however, needs to be tested on the basis of a more solid body of data.

Of the assemblage of vessels from Quartier Mu at Malia, 11 marked cooking pots have been published. The marking frequency is more or less the same as that of jugs, bowls, cups, basins and pithoi, but lower than that of amphorae, jars and side-spouted jars. This contrasts with the situation at MM IB Syme, where cooking pots are the most frequently marked vessels after wide-mouthed jars. Nine marked cooking pots from Petras have been published, most of them dated to the Neopalatial period, the rest being Protopalatial. The quantitative and qualitative constraints of data from the site do not allow comparisons over time. It is worth noting, how-

11. van de Moortel 2006, 342-343.

ever, that Petras is one of the few sites from which so many Neopalatial marked cooking pots have been published. Most of the published Neopalatial cooking pots are unmarked, with the exception of one example from Mochlos. Many ceramic assemblages, however, have not yet been published. Even in the expectation of new data, it is unlikely that the tendency not to mark cooking pots during the Neopalatial period will not change dramatically. Marked cooking pots have been published from Karphi and Kavousi-Vrondas, in relatively high percentages compared to other vessels with pre-firing marks from these settlements. Examples are also published from Hagia Photia, Halasmenos and Palaikastro, but the data from these sites are not representative.

Cups of various types with pre-firing marks are found at ten sites. Cups, especially conical cups, are the type of vessel most frequently marked at Petras during the Neopalatial period. The large number of marked cups found at the site and the types of mark, many of which are attested only there, indicate a local marking practice that seems to have its roots in the Protopalatial period. Marked cups are also relatively popular at Vrysinas in the Neopalatial period. At Malia, cups are marked with the same frequency as jugs, bowls and cooking pots and there is no preference in the markings of such vessels. Few cups have been published from other sites: three examples each from Kastelli-Chania, Tylissos, and Syme, two from Kommos, and one each from Phaistos, Pseira, and Palaikastro. They are represented in either the same or, in most cases, lower percentages than other vessels published from these sites. The emerging picture is that the cup is not a vessel preferred for marking at most sites.

Marked trays and tripod trays have been found at a few sites: one example is known from Monastiraki-Katalimata, two examples from Vrysinas, five from Karphi, and nine from Petras. These vessels are represented in very low percentages compared to other marked vessels used at these sites, indicating that they are not shapes preferred for marking.

Lids are known from six sites: one each from Phaistos and Pseira, two each from Archanes and Petras, three from Mochlos, and six from Malia. These are all pithos lids; the exception is **AR 3**, which is incised on a larnax lid. Marked lids are represented by very few examples at each site and obviously not preferred for marking.

Vessels are mostly made using medium to coarse fabrics, except for cups made of finer fabrics. Local fabrics are used as a rule, although there are a few instances where marked pots found at a site have been imported from another area.¹² The surface treatment is usually simple: vessels are left plain or covered with slip and a few are monochrome. Complex surface treatments are rare. Only Palace Style jars and pithoi, especially those from Knossos, are decorated with elaborate painted and relief patterns respectively. No pre-firing marks have been found so far on

12. The observations on fabrics are based on the published data. Cases of imported vessels from one site to the other are **KM 11** (Knossos), **KM 19** (unknown), **KN 1-KN 8** (north-central Crete), **KN 10-KN 12** (Pediada),

ML 14, ML 109, ML 122 (South Coast), **SM 6, SM 12, SM 15, SM 21, SM 33, SM 36, SM 56, SM 59, SM 60, SM 72, SM 75, SM 85, SM 88** (Pediada), **KST 1-KST 6** (Malia).

fine ware. The absence of pre-firing marks from finely shaped and decorated vessels could be taken to mean that the potter was not interested in laying claim to the outcome of his/her work at the level of recognition of its artistic merit, just as he/she was not interested in laying claim to it at the level of a supposed competitive productivity. These views, indirectly put forward by certain researchers, are based on the conviction that only highly aesthetic pottery has value, whether actual or symbolic. Coarse ware could not be a point of reference for the potter, as it was not recognized as being of any artistic value.

The identification of the important with the aesthetically beautiful is clearly influenced by the aesthetic perceptions of the 18th and 19th centuries, that still colour some approaches to the study and publication of the archaeological record.¹³ It should be noted, however, that the negotiation of individual identities is carried out through the production process itself, whether the potters decorated their pots or not. The technology applied in the manufacture of a vessel, and any object in general, is not simply a body of explicitly formulated and objectively described knowledge. It is a prescribed set of movements guided by technical expertise that the individual artisan acquires and expresses through practice and experience, as part of a social process through which one's identity can be negotiated and defined.¹⁴ Following these lines of thought and taking into consideration that the production of coarse ware requires skill, technological knowledge and considerable investment of labor, we can understand why potters felt the need to mark such pottery. Of course, the question that arises is why they did not also mark fine pottery, especially given the use of this pottery as a symbolic medium of expression and negotiation of social identities within contexts of intense interaction.¹⁵ The answer may be connected to the patterns of production, distribution and consumption of fine ware that may be different from those of coarse ware. One might, for instance, hypothesize that fine ware was mostly produced in a strictly controlled setting. In such a context, the use of pre-firing marks in order to distinguish the output of one potter from that of another may have been unnecessary. Alongside any decorative purpose they may have served, many simple painted patterns may also have functioned as potters' marks, a trait observed in the pottery of other periods.¹⁶ More data, however, is needed on that direction.

MARKING POSITION

Most marks are located on highly visible parts of the vessel, with only very few examples positioned on less visible areas.¹⁷ Marks on body and handles are par-

13. For these aesthetic views and how they affected the reading of material culture, see Frank 2000.

14. Chapman 2000; Ingold 2000; Thomas *et al.* 2009.

15. e.g. Wobst 1977; Yentsch 1991; Dietler and Herbich 1998; Potter 2000.

16. For painted decorative patterns used as potters' marks see, Papadopoulou 1994; Kotsonas 2008, 60-65, 72-78.

17. The discussion does not include all entries of the corpus; cases where the exact shape of the vessel from which the marked sherd is derived is uncertain are omitted.

ticularly popular on pithoi, while some examples, mostly conical in shape, are also marked on or below the rim. Marks, mostly impressed, are located under the base. By far the most preferred marking place on amphorae is the handle. A few examples are marked on the body or under the base and one on the neck. Jars are marked below the rim, and a few on the body or under the base; three examples are marked on the handle and one on the base of the neck. Most side-spouted jars are marked below the rim; two examples are marked on the body close to the handles, one on the handle and three under the base. Palace Style jars are always marked on the handles, while transport stirrup jars bear marks on the clay disk and on the handle. Marks on jugs are placed mostly on the body, close to the shoulder, on the handle, below the rim, at the baseline, and under the base. Basins are marked on the handle, below the rim, on the body, at the baseline, and under the base, with one tripod basin being marked on the leg (**ML 41**). The most frequent placement of the mark on bowls is in the interior, close to the rim. Marks also occur below the rim, under the base and on the inner surface of the base. Cups are mostly marked under the base and occasionally at the baseline, on or below the rim, and on the body. Cups with a handle are mostly marked on it. Cooking pots are mainly marked on the legs or at the point of attachment of the leg to the body. Marks are also placed on or below the rim, on the body and at the baseline. Trays are marked on the rim, body and at the baseline, while tripod trays bear marks on legs, rim, body, and base. The mark on lids is placed on the upper side or on the handle.

On other vessel types, which are represented by only a few examples, marks are commonly placed on clearly visible parts of the vessel. The spinning bowl has the mark on the handle; the lamps on the handle and under the base; the collectors below the rim and on the body; the lentoid jar and the bridged-spouted jar under the base. The plates, the strainer, the two cylindrical vessels, the oven, the stands and the waterpipe are marked on the body, and the larnakes on the handle and body.

The data show that the placement of the mark on the handle is the most frequent, making up 25% of the cases (Chart 9). Marks placed on the body and the legs of tripod vessels constitute 20% and 18% of the total respectively. Marks on the rim, below the rim on the exterior of the vase, and below the rim in the interior of the vessel represent 5%, 8% and 4% of the total respectively. Vessels marked below the base represent 12% of the total, with examples marked at the baseline forming 2%. Marks placed on the neck of the vessel represent just 1% of the total. The nine marks on the clay disc of transport stirrup jars make up 2% of the estimates, while the remaining 3% represents marks on the upper side of lids. These estimates do not include two recorded cases: the 120 side-spouted jars from Malia marked below the rim, and the 156 cups from Petras marked under the base. Both cases reflect local marking practices, so their inclusion in these calculations would distort the overall picture, a picture reflecting more generalized patterns of process.

An attempt to detect regional trends in marking practices based on such a limited body of published information might be considered methodologically unsound. There are cases, however, where the potters of a specific site always seem to mark the same type of vessel on the same spot, but the validity of such practices

should be tested on the basis of more published information. At Petras there is a clear preference for marking pithoi on the handles and cups below the base. Potters active in the area of Vrysinas, contrary to those from Petras, preferred marking the cups at the baseline. The preferential marking location for bowls from Malia, Syme and Petras is below the rim, in the interior of the vessel. Cooking pots produced in the area of the Western Mesara during the Protopalatial period are always marked on or below the rim, a marking location so far attested in nine cases from Malia, also Protopalatial in date, and in one case from Knossos dated to the Neopalatial period. The overall picture from the Western Mesara, including the marks themselves, points to a local marking tradition. Amphorae at Malia are frequently marked on the handle rather than other parts of the vessel, while jugs are marked on the body.

In summary, the placement of the mark is neither determined by the drying or stacking process, nor is it coincidental. The potter selects the place in which he/she will incise or stamp the mark based on one principle: to ensure the visibility of the mark when the vessel is in use. Only then does the mark acquire substance, transmitting the message with which it is imbued to another potter or to the final recipient of the vessel. The only exceptions to this rule are the cases in which the mark has been placed below the base, since the mark would not have been visible when the vessel was upright.¹⁸ This issue becomes more complex if we consider that many of these marks, such as the imprints of the stamps below the bases of large vessels at Malia, were rather complex in their formal attributes and execution. There is no single viewpoint, however, from which marked vessels should be looked at, since they do not occupy a single point in space but different places depending on their function and use. Most vessels except storage jars are in constant motion when they are not kept in the cupboard. Marks on cups could be easily seen when the cups were raised for drinking or placed upside down on a table. Marks on large vessels, though, could only be seen when the vessel was empty and placed upside down in the storeroom.

TYPES OF PRE-FIRING MARKS

The typologies of pre-firing marks proposed so far are based on a single basic classification criterion: the appearance of the mark. In his presentation of pre-firing marks from the 1896-1899 Phylakopi excavations, A. Evans grouped the marks in four categories: geometrical marks, pictorial signs, signs of linear script, and numbers.¹⁹ A classification based on composition, appearance and execution technique was proposed by A. Halepa-Bikaki for the marks from Hagia Irini on Kea.²⁰ The marks are placed in seven groups: fingernail impressions, cut/dent marks, combinations of oval impressions, linear marks, pictorial, applied and impressed marks.

18. The discussion of visibility is based on the premise that the vessel is standing on its base.

19. Evans 1904.

20. Halepa-Bikaki 1984, 1-4.

The term 'pictorial' is used to mean any mark obviously intended as a drawing, including syllabograms in Linear A and B script, as opposed to a simple pattern of lines. Variations in each group are not, however, explored in detail. The classification established by Halepa-Bikaki was also followed by A. Bailey in the publication of the marks from Phylakopi recovered during the 1974-1977 excavations.²¹ The form and appearance of the mark also formed the basic parameter of the typological classification found at other prehistoric Aegean sites and presented in brief studies.

A different classification system was proposed by M. Lindblom for the pre-firing marks from Aegina.²² In addition to form and appearance, he based his typology on the position of the mark on the vessel. This position forms a basic classification parameter in his analytical catalogue: the marks are first grouped into those found below base and below baseline, at baseline, at and above baseline, at, above and below baseline, above and below baseline, above baseline, on shoulder and rim, on or below handle, and on lid. They are further divided depending on their shape, into linear incisions or impressions, cuts at the baseline, impressed dots/triangular wedges/irregular grooves, impressed shallow ovals or elongations, and applied clay pellets. The implement with which the marks were made is not taken into account. This typology is certainly a very thorough one, including many different parameters and successfully classified Aeginetan pre-firing marks. Its application, however, in different assemblages may lead to confusion, since the same pre-firing mark, with the same form, appearance and execution, may appear in two or even three typological groups depending on its location on the vessel.

As regards the pre-firing marks of Bronze Age Crete, the first systematic attempt at typological classification was that of J.-P. Olivier and L. Godart for marks on vessels excavated in Quartier Mu at Malia, the largest assemblage of pre-firing marks in Crete so far published.²³ In their study, pre-firing incised or impressed marks are grouped into three categories: relief impressions on the base, stamps, and potters' marks. The marks in each category are further subdivided on the basis of composition and appearance. This tripartite classification does raise questions, as the incised and impressed marks are applied, like potters' marks, during the making of the vessel, i.e. by the potter him/herself. Why should impressions not also be considered potters' marks?

The pre-firing marks from Petras have been grouped into three categories on the basis of form and appearance.²⁴ The first category comprises simple marks such as incised lines, fingernail impressions, curved lines and impressions. The second category contains linear signs or signs resembling ideograms or signs of Linear A. The last category includes complex marks imitating inscriptions. The variation within each group, however, has been little explored. In her study of pre-firing marks from Vrysinas, Maria Giokaridaki-Skandali classifies them on the basis of form, appearance and position of the mark on the vessel.²⁵ Thus the marks have been placed in the following categories: incisions on the base, handle and

21. Bailey 1996; 2007.

22. Lindblom 2001, 45-91.

23. Olivier and Godart 1978, 39-46; Olivier 1996.

24. Tsipopoulou 1990; 1995.

25. Giokaridaki-Skandali 2008, 15-16.

body, vertical incisions (right) on rim and leg, vertical incisions (left) on body, curved incisions, wavy incisions on base and rim, complex incisions on body, leg and base, impressions on rim, handle and base, incisions and impressions on body, and applied incised marks on body.

In the present typological analysis, the pre-firing marks are classified, like those found at Syme, on the basis of their form and appearance.²⁶ These are the parameters of the mark and of material culture in general which are instantly observable at the first level of visual reading. The position of the mark is not considered a safe classification criterion, not because the position is not important in itself –quite the opposite, since the location determines the visibility of the mark– but because there are cases, though admittedly not many, in which the same mark, which may have been incised or impressed on many vessels, may be located in a different position each time.

Marks are formed of linear incisions, stamped, impressed or painted patterns made with different media (stamps, seals, fingernails, fingers, sticks, shells, etc.) and even appliqué motifs in relief. These basic elements either occur in isolation or the same element is repeated to form the mark type. Some marks, actually very few, are formed by combining different basic elements; these are called composite marks. A mark type is defined here as a specific combination of elements found in one or more examples. Each type of mark may include either a single example or more than one. In the latter case, the marks are obviously similar to each other but not identical. The motor performance characteristics of each individual potter lead to variations in execution that mean no marks can ever be completely identical; there are minor differences even when the mark has been incised by the same hand. The exception to this rule are marks made using the same stamp but even in this case the marks are not entirely identical. Nevertheless, the classification does not take minor differences between individual marks of the same type into account, since they obviously belong to the same conceptual category.

Only entirely preserved marks, or partly preserved ones whose form is certain, are assigned to a typological entry.²⁷ The information on each type of mark, while kept as brief as possible, contains all the essential details, with the aim of presenting the spatial and temporal distribution of the mark, and the types of vessel on which the mark is incised, painted, stamped, impressed or applied. Supplementary data on each mark of a typological group are provided in the original publication, to which the reader must refer for a full presentation of the mark per se.²⁸ Each

26. For methodological principles applied in the classification of potter's marks, see Hirschfeld 1999, 21-43; Lindblom 2001, 45-47. See also the discussion on the classification of pre-firing marks from Syme in Chapter III.

27. Marks **KS 12**, **ML 42**, **PT 239-PT 244**, **PT 246**, and **PK 14** have been omitted, because, although the publication gives a detailed description, either the illustration provided is not clear or there are no illustrations at all.

KM 30 and **ML 353** are partly preserved.

28. Many of the marks presented here have already been published in detail, so it is unnecessary to repeat already published information. The present study is not intended to replace the original publications of the marks. I do not provide descriptions of marks that have not been properly published, since a first-hand study could not be carried out.

type is accompanied by a schematic, simplified drawing intended solely to present the basic formal attributes of each mark type, free of the minor differences between the individual examples comprising the typological unit. The drawing is inspired by the most representative mark of each type; the mark is drawn on scales of 1:2, 1:4 and 1:6.²⁹ Drawings of singletons are adaptations from the illustrations in the relevant publications.

The pre-firing marks are classified into ten groups mostly based on their form and, in some cases, their execution. Each type of mark is designated by a letter, followed by a number referring to the relevant illustration provided in Figs 23-27. The classification can be expanded to include new mark types if necessary. The first group includes all marks formed by long or short straight lines, vertically or horizontally incised on the vessel, isolated or in groups (**A**). The second group comprises cuts on various parts of the vessel (mostly on the baseline), isolated or associated with other types of mark (**B**). The third includes marks built up by a combination of straight lines forming simple or more complex mark types; some of these marks are composite, i.e. formed by the combination of two different marks (**C**). The fourth group comprises marks formed of circular, arched and wavy lines and spiral-like motifs (**D**), while in the fifth group are assembled the pictorial marks (**E**). All marks that are copies of or inspired by signs of Hieroglyphic, Linear A and Linear B scripts are placed in the sixth group (**F**). Finger impressions, simple or combined with other impressed or incised marks, are clustered in the seventh group (**G**), fingernail impressions in the eighth (**H**), and impressions made using various tools in the ninth group (**I**). Finally, the tenth group comprises marks produced by pressing stamps or seals into the soft clay surface (**J**).

The boundaries between mark groups are not always clear and some marks may be classified in more than one group. Stamp imprints, for instance, with linear motifs combined with signs of Hieroglyphic script have been placed in Group F rather than Group J, based on the rationale that it is more important for the reader to see all the marks inspired by script signs and how they are combined with other elements collected together in a single group. The mark of the double axe is another example. In the cases where this mark is associated with the corresponding signs of Hieroglyphic, Linear A and Linear B signs, it has been placed in Group F, while where the correlation is uncertain, it is in Group E.

A-GROUP: LONG AND SHORT STRAIGHT LINES

Mark types

A1 One long or short line vertically incised (Fig. 23). Attested on vessels at Kastelli-Chania (**KS 7-KS 9**), Vrysinas (**VR 1-VR 2**, **VR 14-VR 19**), Kommos (**KM 1-KM 7**) Hagia Triada (**HT 1**, **HT 3**, **HT 6**, **HT 9**), Phaistos (**PH 1**), Malia (**ML 1-ML 13**), Syme (**SM 5-SM 6**, **SM 10**, **SM 15-SM 16**, **SM 22-SM 24**, **SM 34**, **SM 37**, **SM 40**,

29. The marks of **A17-A19**, **C7**, **C9-C10**, **C15**, **C19**, **C23**, **C28**, **C39**, **C40**, **C44**, **C51**, **D2-D4**, **E4**, **F26**, **F32-F34**, **F37**, **J12** are not to scale

as their exact dimensions are unknown. The illustration is a rough drawing based on the data available.

SM 43, SM 51, SM 66, SM 88-SM 89, SM 90, SM 92), Karphi (**KR 2**), Mochlos (**MC 1-MC 7**), Pseira (**PS 1-PS 4**), Monastiraki-Katalimata (**MK 1-MK 4**), Kavousi-Vronda (**KV 1-KV 2**), Petras (**PT 1-PT 23**), Hagia Photia (**HP 1**), Palaikastro (**PK 1-PK 2**) and Zakros (**ZK 3**). Incised on amphorae (handle or body or base), jugs (handle or body), cooking pots (leg or handle), basins (handle or below the rim), a collector (below the rim), cups (handle or base), side-spouted jars (below the rim), tripod vessels (leg), tripod trays (leg), pithoi (handle), lids (upper side), closed vessels (body) and unidentified vessels. Date: MM IB; MM IIB; MM IIIA-MM IIIB; LM IA-LM IB; LM IIIB; LM IIIC.

A2 Two long or short lines vertically incised (Fig. 23). Attested on vessels at Kastelli-Chania (**KS 10**), Vrysinas (**VR 5, VR 20**), Kommos (**KM 8**), Malia (**ML 35-ML 36**), Syme (**SM 11-SM 12, SM 27, SM 59, SM 73, SM 76, SM 86, SM 91, SM 98**), Pseira (**PS 5**), and Kavousi-Vronda (**KV 3, KV 6**). Incised on cooking pots (leg or handle), amphorae (handle), a basin (handle), a Palace Style jar (handle), a pithoid jar (handle), and a jar (handle). Date: MM IB; MM IIB; LM IA-LM IB; LM IIIB; LM IIIC. Long lines are more popular during LM IIIB and LM IIIC.

A3 Three long or short lines vertically incised (Fig. 23). Attested on vessels at Kastelli-Chania (**KS 11**), Vrysinas (**VR 6**), Hagia Triada (**HT 2, HT 4**), Malia (**ML 37-ML 39**), Syme (**SM 3, SM 28, SM 55, SM 62, SM 75, SM 80, SM 87**), Karphi (**KR 1, KR 3- KR 6**), Mochlos (**MC 8-MC 9**), Monastiraki Katalimata (**MK 5-MK 6**), Halasmenos (**HL 1-HL 2**), Kavousi-Vronda (**KV 4-KV 5**), Petras (**PT 85-PT 86**) and Palaikastro (**PK 3-PK 4**). Incised on cooking pots (leg or handle), amphorae (handle), a basin (handle), a jar (handle), a cup (handle), and a pithos (rim), tripod vessels (rim), tripod trays (leg), lids (handle), jugs (handle or body) and unidentified vessels. Date: MM IB; MM IIB; MM IIIA-MM IIIB; LM IA-LM IB; LM II; LM IIIC.

A4 Four short lines vertically incised (Fig. 23). Attested on vessels at Malia (**ML 40**) and Syme (**SM 18, SM 21, SM 25, SM 32, SM 50, SM 56**). Incised on bowls (interior below the rim), amphorae (handle), cooking pots (handle). Date: MM IB; MM IIB.

A5 Five short lines vertically incised (Fig. 23). Attested on vessels at Kommos (**KM 9**) and Malia (**ML 41**). Incised on a cooking pot and a tripod basin (leg). Date: MM III-LM I.

A6 Nine short lines vertically incised (Fig. 23). Attested on a vessel at Monastiraki (**MN 5**). Incised on a pithos (rim). Date: MM IIB.

A7 Twelve short lines vertically incised (Fig. 23). Attested on a vessel at Kastelli-Chania (**KS 13**). Incised on a cooking pot (leg). Date: LM IIIC.

A8 One long or short line horizontally incised (Fig. 23). Attested on vessels at Vrysinas (**VR 3-VR 4**), Phaistos (**PH 2**), Malia (**ML 14-ML 23**), Petras (**PT 24-PT**

28) and Hagia Photia (**HP 2**). Incised on cooking pots (handles), cups (base or body), a jug (handle), collector (below the rim), bowl (interior), pithos (handle or base), stand (body), and collector (below the rim), side-spouted jars (below the rim) and unidentified vessels. Date: MM IIB; MM IIIA-MM IIIB; LM IA-LM IB.

A9 Two long or short lines horizontally incised (Fig. 23). Attested on vessels at Malia (**ML 43-ML 50**). Incised on a stand (body), a cup (handle) and unidentified vessels. Date: MM IIB.

A10 Three short lines horizontally incised (Fig. 23). Attested on vessels at Monastiraki (**MN 3**), Malia (**ML 51**) and Petras (**PT 87**). Incised on a closed vessel (handle), bowl (interior below the rim), and cup (base). Date: MM IIB; LM IA-LM IB.

A11 One oblique line (NW-SE or SW-NE) (Fig. 23). Attested on vessels at Monastiraki (**MN 4**), Malia (**ML 24-ML 34**), Karphi (**KR 7**), and Petras (**PT 29-PT 71**). Incised on pithoi (below the rim or handle), side-spouted jars (below the rim), jars (below the rim), cups (base), cooking pots (base), closed vessels (body), a basin (body), a bowl (base), a lid (upper side), an amphora (handle) and a jug (handle) and unidentified vessels. Date: MM IIB; LM IA-LM IB; LM IIIC.

A12 Two oblique lines (NW-SE or SW-NE) (Fig. 23). Attested on vessels at Vrysinas (**VR 7-VR 9**), Kommos (**KM 15**), Malia (**ML 54-ML 80**), Syme (**SM 12, SM 59**), and Petras (**PT 72-PT 84**). Incised on cups (below the rim or baseline or base or handle), jugs (body), basins (below the rim or body), tripod trays (leg or body), side-spouted jars (below the rim or body), a bowl (below the rim), jar (body), and a pithos (rim) and unidentified vessels. Date: MM IIB; MM IIIA-MM IIIB; LM IA-LM IB.

A13 Three oblique lines (NW-SE or SW-NE) (Fig. 23). Attested on vessels at Kommos (**KM 16**), Malia (**ML 81-ML 82**) and Petras (**PT 88-PT 91**). Incised on cooking pots (rim), cups (base), a jar (neck), waterpipe (body), and pithos (handle). Date: MM IIB; LM IA-LM IB.

A14 Four oblique lines (NW-SE or SW-NE) (Fig. 23). Attested on a vessel at Kommos (**KM 17**). Incised on a cooking pot (rim). Date: MM IIB.

A15 Five oblique lines (NW-SE or SW-NE) (Fig. 23). Attested on vessels at Phaistos (**PH 3**) and Petras (**PT 92**). Incised on a cup (base) and a pithos (rim). Date: MM IIB.

A16 Six oblique lines (NW-SE or SW-NE) (Fig. 23). Attested on a vessel at Kommos (**KM 18**). Incised on a cooking pot (rim). Date: MM IIB.

A17 Three vertical lines, one long and two short on either side (Fig. 23). Attested on a vessel at Palaikastro (**PK 5**). Incised on a cooking pot (leg). Date: LM IIIC.

A18 Two lines vertically incised and another below their edge (Fig. 23). Attested on vessels at Kommos (**KM 21**) and Hagia Triada (**HT 8**). Incised on cooking pots (leg). Date: MM IIIA; MM III-LM I.

A19 One line vertically incised and two others below its edge (Fig. 23). Attested on vessels at Hagia Triada (**HT 5, HT 7**). Incised on cooking pots (leg). Date: MM IIIA.

Commentary

Long and short straight lines are very common marks (Chart 10). They are found at most sites and dated from MM IB to LM IIIC. The mark of one line vertically incised is the most common mark in this group (**A1**). Long lines are mostly incised on the legs of cooking pots or tripod trays, especially from LM IIIA onwards. This arrangement, so typical during LM III (especially in LM IIIB and LM IIIC), is rare before that period; there are only a few published examples that date to the Protopalatial and Neopalatial periods. Marks of one to five short or long lines are frequently found at Syme during MM IB (**A1-A4**). They are incised on the handles of cooking pots, basins, jars, and amphorae and below the rim of bowls. At other sites where these marks have been found, they occur in low percentages. Marks of two lines vertically incised are less popular than those of three lines. The latter are frequently incised on cooking pots dated in LM IIIC. The marks of nine and twelve short vertical lines are singletons (**A6-A7**). Of particular interest are the marks of three short vertical lines found on the legs of cooking pots from Hagia Triada and Kommos, dated to MM IIIA and MM III-LM I respectively (**A18-A19**). These marks are not known from other Neopalatial sites and probably belong to the local marking repertoire, of the Mesara.

Marks of one or two oblique lines are common at Malia during MM IIB and Petras during LM I (**A11-A12**). Marks of four to six oblique incised lines, mostly singletons, occur on the rim of cooking pots produced in the area of the Mesara (**A14-A16**). This arrangement is absent from the other Protopalatial centres, where cooking pots are usually marked on handles or below the rim. Lines horizontally incised are found at few sites and do not seem to be as common as the other marks of Group A; most are found at Malia and Petras, with one or two occurrences at Vrysinas and Phaistos (**A8-A10**).

B-GROUP: CUTS

Mark types

B1 One very small cut (Fig. 23). Attested on vessels at Vrysinas (**VR 21-VR 23**). Incised on cups (baseline). Date: MM IIIA-MM IIIB.

B2 Two very small cuts (Fig. 23). Attested on vessels at Vrysinas (**VR 24-VR 27**). Incised on a bowl (rim), a tray (baseline) and cooking pots (handle or baseline). Date: MM IIIA-MM IIIB.

B3 Three very small cuts (Fig. 23). Attested on a vessel at Vrysinas (**VR 28**). Incised on a jug (baseline). Date: MM IIIA-MM IIIB.

B4 Composite mark of two very small cuts and one line vertically incised (Fig. 23). Attested on a vessel at Vrysinas (**VR 29**). Incised on a cup (baseline). Date: MM IIIA-MM IIIB.

B5 Composite mark of three very small cuts and two horizontally incised lines (Fig. 23). Attested on a vessel at Vrysinas (**VR 30**). Incised on a cup (baseline). Date: MM IIIA-MM IIIB.

Commentary

Small cuts have so far been published only from Vrysinas (**B1-B5**). This spatial distribution points to a local marking tradition active during MM III, since similar marks have not been published from other parts of the island. These marks occur mostly at the baseline of cups and occasionally on bowls, cooking pots and trays, in different locations in each case.

C-GROUP: SIMPLE AND COMPLEX MARKS COMPOSED OF STRAIGHT LINES

Mark types

C1 One vertical line with its upper end meeting a horizontal one to the right (Fig. 23). Attested on vessels at Malia (**ML 114-ML 118**) and Petras (**PT 103-PT 104**). Incised on cups (handle or base) and an amphora (handle) and unidentified vessels. Date: MM IIB; LM IA-LM IB.

C2 One vertical line with its upper end meeting a horizontal one to the left (Fig. 23). Attested on vessels at Malia (**ML 119-ML 123**).³⁰ Incised on side-spouted jars (below the rim), a cooking pot (below the rim), a collector (below the rim), and a jug (body). Date: MM IIB.

C3 One vertical line with its lower end meeting a horizontal one to the right (Fig. 23). Attested on vessels at Malia (**ML 83-ML 102**). Incised on amphorae (handle), jugs (below the rim or body), side-spouted jars (below the rim or body), a basin (handle), a cooking pot (below the rim) and a closed vessel (body) and unidentified vessels. Date: MM IIB.

C4 One vertical line with its lower end meeting a horizontal one to the left (Fig. 23). Attested on vessels at Malia (**ML 103-ML 113**).³¹ Incised on side-spouted jars (below the rim or body), amphorae (body or neck), a cup (handle) and a collector (body). Date: MM IIB.

C5 Two lines meeting at one end (Fig. 23). Attested on a vessel imported at Kommos (**KM 19**). Incised on a cup (base). Date: MM III-LM IA.

30. The vessel on which mark **ML 122** was applied, although found at Malia, was produced in the area of the South Coast.

31. The vessel on which mark **ML 109** was applied, although found at Malia, was produced in the area of the South Coast.

C6 Two incised lines meeting at a right angle in a T-shape (Fig. 23). Attested on vessels at Knossos (**KN 13**), Malia (**ML 141-ML 144**), Syme (**SM 58**), and Petras (**PT 105**). Incised on side-spouted jars (below the rim), an amphora (handle) and a pithos (handle). Date: MM IIB.

C7 Composite mark of two incised lines meeting at a right angle in a T-shape and three oblique lines (Fig. 23). Attested on a vessel at Petras (**PT 245**). Incised on a pithos (handle). Date: LM IA-LM IB.

C8 Double T-shaped mark (Fig. 23). Attested on a vessel at Syme (**SM 69**). Incised on an amphora (handle). Date: MM IIB.

C9 Two parallel vertically incised lines with a third, horizontal line extending from the middle of the right line at a right angle (Fig. 23). Attested on a vessel at Mochlos (**MC 10**). Incised on a jug (body). Date: MM IA-MM IB.

C10 One vertical incised line with a second horizontal line extending at a right angle from its centre to the right (Fig. 23). Attested on a vessel at Knossos (**KN 14**). Incised on an unknown vessel. Date: unknown.

C11 One vertical incised line with a second horizontal line extending at an acute angle from its centre to the right (Fig. 23). Attested on a vessel at Knossos (**KN 16**). Incised on a stirrup jar (handle). Date: LM IIIA.

C12 Two parallel vertically incised short lines connected by a third horizontal longer line (Fig. 23). Attested on a vessel at Palaikastro (**PK 14**). There is no information on this example.

C13 Two parallel vertically incised lines connected by a third horizontal one and another vertical line in the middle (Fig. 23). Attested on a vessel at Malia (**ML 179**). Incised on an unidentified vessel. Date: MM IIB.

C14 Two parallel horizontally incised lines transversed by a longer third at a right angle (Fig. 23). Attested on a vessel at Halasmenos (**HL 3**). Incised on a closed vessel (handle). Date: LM IIIC.

C15 Composite mark consisting of two marks of two parallel horizontally incised lines transversed by a longer third at a right angle (Fig. 23). Attested on a vessel at Tylissos (**TL 3**). Incised on a cup (base). Date: MM IA-MM IB.

C16 Evenly spaced lines transversed at a right angle by a longer one (Fig. 23). Attested on vessels at Syme (**SM 2, SM 7-SM 8, SM 14, SM 17, SM 19-SM 20, SM 30-SM 31, SM 33, SM 35-SM 36, SM 38, SM 42, SM 44, SM 49, SM 53, SM 71, SM 79, SM 81**). Incised mostly on jars (handle) and occasionally on cooking pots (handle), bowls (interior below the rim), a cup (handle) and a pithos (handle). Date: MM IB.

C17 Nine evenly spaced lines transversed at a right angle by a longer one (Fig. 23). Attested on a vessel at Myrtos Fournou Koriphi (**MFK 1**). Incised on a spinning bowl (handle). Date: EM IIB.

C18 Two evenly spaced lines transversed by a longer third at acute angles (Fig. 23). Attested on a vessel at Syme (**SM 48**). Incised on cooking pot (handle). Date: MM IB or MM IIB.

C19 Two parallel vertical lines connected by two short ones at a right angle (Fig. 23). Attested on a vessel at Phaistos (**PH 15**). Incised on an unidentified vessel. Date: MM IIB.

C20 Two parallel horizontal lines connected by two others at a right angle (Fig. 23). Attested on a vessel at Malia (**ML 184**). Incised on a basin (handle). Date: MM IIB.

C21 Two parallel horizontal lines connected by at least three others at a right angle (Fig. 23). Attested on a vessel at Petras (**PT 252**). Incised on an amphora (below the rim). Date: MM IB.

C22 Two long parallel lines connected by at least seven others at a right angle (Fig. 24). Attested on a vessel at Malia (**ML 185**). Incised on an amphora (base). Date: MM IIB.

C23 Four incised lines in an E-shape (Fig. 24). Attested on vessels at Phaistos (**PH 14**) and Tylissos (**TL 1**). Incised on an unidentified vessel and on a cup (base). Date: MM IA-MM IB; MM IIB.

C24 Two lines crossed at an acute angle (Fig. 24). Attested on vessels at Psathi (**PST 1**), Vrysinas (**VR 13**), Kommos (**KM 10-KM 12**), Phaistos (**PH 4-PH 5**), Tylissos (**TL 2**), Knossos (**KN 1-KN 2**), Archanes (**AR 1-AR 2**), Malia (**ML 150-ML 164**), Syme (**SM 4, SM 9, SM 29, SM 45, SM 93**) and Petras (**PT 106-PT 112**). Incised on bowls (interior below the rim), conical cups (body or base), cooking pots (below the rim or handle), amphorae (handle or body), stirrup jars (clay disc), jugs (below the rim or handle or body), jars (below rim), a side-spouted jar (handle), a lid (upper side), a larnax (body or lid), a closed vessel (body) and unidentified vessels. Date: EM IIA-MM IA; MM IB; MM IIB; MM IIIA-MM IIIB; LM IA-LM IB; LM IIIA; LM IIIB.

C25 Two lines crossed at an acute angle with a vertical line meeting at the lowest right end (Fig. 24). Attested on a vessel at Malia (**ML 165**). Incised on a side-spouted jar (below the rim). Date: MM IIB.

C26 Two lines crossed at an acute angle with a horizontal line meeting at the upper ends (Fig. 24). Attested on vessels at Malia (**ML 166-ML 169**) and Petras (**PT 114**). Incised on pithoi (rim), closed vessels (base or body) and a jar (below the rim). Date: MM IIB.

C27 Composite mark of three short oblique lines combined with two lines crossed at an acute angle (Fig. 24). Attested on a vessel at Phaistos (**PH 20**). Incised on an oven (body close to the handle). Date: MM IIB.

C28 Composite mark of two short lines incised on the rim combined with two lines crossed at an acute angle just below (Fig. 24). Attested on a vessel at Phaistos (**PH 17**). Incised on a cooking pot (rim and below the rim). Date: MM IIB.

C29 Two lines crossed at a right angle (Fig. 24). Attested on vessels at Kastelli-Chania (**KS 1-KS 4**), Kommos (**KM 13**), Phaistos (**PH 6**), Knossos (**KN 3-KN 8**), Malia (**ML 145-ML 148**), Syme (**SM 41, SM 47, SM 52, SM 61**), Karphi (**KR 8-KR 9**), Myrtos Fournou Koriphi (**MFK 2**), Pseira (**PS 7**), Petras (**PT 113**) and Palaikastro (**PK 9**). Incised (or painted) on cups (base or body), bowls (base), stirrup jars (clay disc), side-spouted jars (below the rim or on an appliqué button), amphorae (handle), pithoi (body on an appliqué knob), a jug (body on an appliqué disc or handle), a lid (upper side), a jar (below the rim) and unidentified vessels. Date: EM IIB; MM IB; MM IIB; LM IIIB; LM IIIC.

C30 Lines forming a cross with Γ -shaped ends (Fig. 24). Attested on a vessel at Malia (**ML 149**). Incised on an amphora (handle). Date: MM IIB.

C31 Two converging lines (Fig. 24). Attested on vessels at Malia (**ML 52-ML 53**). Incised on a jug (base) and a Palace Style jar (handle). Date: MM IIB; LM IB.

C32 Two converging lines and one vertical in the middle (Fig. 24). Attested on a vessel at Malia (**ML 178**). Incised on a jug (handle). Date: MM IIB.

C33 Two lines meeting at an acute angle (Fig. 24). Attested on vessels at Malia (**ML 124-ML 132**), Petras (**PT 93-PT 102**), and Palaikastro (**PK 6**). Incised on amphorae (handle), side-spouted jars (below the rim), jugs (base or body), cups (base), closed vessels (base), bowls (below the rim) and a pithos (handle) and unidentified vessels. Date: MM IIA; MM IIB; LM IA-LM IB.

C34 Two lines meeting at an obtuse angle (Fig. 24). Attested on vessels at Malia (**ML 133-ML 139**). Incised on side-spouted jars (below the rim), on unidentified vessels and a cup (handle). Date: MM IIB.

C35 Two lines in a V-shape (Fig. 24). Attested on vessels at Phaistos (**PH 8-PH 10**), Syme (**SM 64-SM 65, SM 69, SM 83**) and Pseira (**PS 6**). Incised on jars (below the rim), a pithos (handle), a pithoid jar (below the rim), an amphora (handle), a cooking pot (handle) and a jug (handle). Date: MM IB; MM IIB, LM IA-LM IB.

C36 Two chevrons (Fig. 24). Attested on a vessel at Malia (**ML 140**). Incised on an unidentified vessel. Date: MM IIB.

C37 Two superposed chevrons (Fig. 24). Attested on vessels at Vrysinas (**VR 10**) and Monastiraki (**MN 1-MN 2**). Incised on a tray (body), an amphora (handle) and a pithos (body close to the handle). Date: MM IIB; MM IIIA-MM IIIB.

C38 Three superposed chevrons (Fig. 24). Attested on a vessel at Vrysinas (**VR 11**). Incised on tripod pot (leg). Date: MM IIIA-MM IIIB.

C39 Three lines in the shape of an N (Fig. 24). Attested on a vessel at Petras (**PT 137**). Incised on an unidentified vessel. Date: LM IA-LM IB.

C40 Composite mark of three incised short lines on the rim combined with three incised lines in the shape of a N just below (Fig. 24). Attested on a vessel at Phaistos (**PH 19**). Incised on a cooking pot (rim and below the rim). Date: MM IIB.

C41 Zigzag incised line (Fig. 24). Attested on vessels at Kommos (**KM 14**) and Phaistos (**PH 7**). Incised on cooking pots (rim) and unidentified vessels. Date: MM IIB.

C42 Three lines in a Y-shape (Fig. 24). Attested on a vessel at Kastelli-Chania (**KS 5**). Incised on a bowl (base). Date: LM IIIB.

C43 Composite mark of three lines in a Y-shape combined with a vertical line (Fig. 24). Attested on a vessel at Kastelli-Chania (**KS 6**). Incised on a bowl (base). Date: LM IIIB.

C44 Three lines in a Y-shape with a fourth one in the middle (Fig. 24). Attested on a vessel at Phaistos (**PH 16**). Incised on cup (base). Date: MM IIB.

C45 Three lines in the shape of a triangle (Fig. 24). Attested on vessels at Phaistos (**PH 11-PH 12**), Malia (**ML 171-ML 172**), Syme (**SM 13, SM 84**), Kavousi-Vrondas (**KV 7**) and Palaikastro (**PK 7-PK 8**). Incised on cooking pots (rim or leg), bowls (interior below the rim), unidentified vessels, a strainer (body) and a plate (body). Date: MM IB; MM IIB; MM; LM IA-LM IB; LM IIIC.

C46 Three lines in the shape of a triangle with a vertical in the middle and another vertical short line at each end of the long side (Fig. 24). Attested on vessels at Malia (**ML 173-ML 174**). Incised on a bowl (interior below rim) and an unidentified vessel. Date: MM IIB.

C47 Triangles forming a pentacle (Fig. 24). Attested on vessels at Malia (**ML 176-ML 177**). Incised on a lid (upper side) and an unidentified vessel. Date: MM IIB.

C48 Four lines in the shape of a lozenge (Fig. 24). Attested on vessels at Malia (**ML 175**) and Syme (**SM 39, SM 54**). Incised on pithoi (handle). Date: MM IB; MM IIB.

C49 Incised lines forming two diamond-like motifs (Fig. 24). Attested on a vessel

at Kavousi-Vronda (**KV 10**). Incised on a pithos (body on a horizontal relief band). Date: LM IIIC.

C50 Four lines, two vertical or horizontal with the other two crossing between, like a hour-glass or triangles joined at the apices (Fig. 24). Attested on vessels at Phaiastos (**PH 13**), Knossos (**KN 9**) and Malia (**ML 170**). Incised on a cooking pot (below the rim), amphora (body), and an unidentified vessel. Date: MM IB, MM IIB.

C51 Composite mark consisting of three short vertical lines incised on the rim combined with four lines, two vertical with the other two crossing between, like a hour-glass or triangles joined at the apices, incised just below (Fig. 24). Attested on a vessel at Phaistos (**PH 18**). Incised on a cooking pot (rim and below the rim). Date: MM IIB.

C52 An incised quadrangle (Fig. 24). Attested on a vessel at Palaikastro (**PK 13**). Incised on an unidentified vessel. Date: unknown (Protopalatial or Neopalatial).

C53 An incised rectangle (Fig. 24). Attested on vessels at Syme (**SM 1**, **SM 94**). Incised on amphorae (body). Date: MM IB.

C54 An incised rectangle enclosing two crossing diagonal lines (Fig. 24). Attested on vessels at Knossos (**KN 10-KN 12**) and Syme (**SM 95**). Incised on amphorae (body) and a pithos (body). Date: MM IB; LM IA-LM IB.

C55 Crossed short lines forming a star-like motif (Fig. 24). Attested on vessels at Malia (**ML 180-ML 183**) and Gournia (**GR 1**). Incised on side-spouted jars (below the rim), a cooking pot (below the rim) and a jug (body). Date: MM IIB; MM IIA-MM IIB.

C56 Combination of straight lines at various directions (Fig. 24). Attested on vessels at Malia (**ML 186**) and Petras (**PT 115-PT 119**). Incised on a plate (body), amphorae (handle), a pithos (handle), a lid (upper side), a closed vessel (base) and a lamp (base). Date: MM IIB; LM IA-LM IB.

Commentary

Marks built up by a combination of straight lines forming simple or more complex mark types present the greatest formal variation from the marks of any other group.³² They are the most common marks attested at most of the sites (Chart 10). More than half of these are singletons. The largest group of singletons, comprising seven marks, comes from Malia (**C13**, **C20**, **C22**, **C25**, **C30**, **C32**, **C36**). One singleton is published from Vrysinas (**C38**), Tylissos (**C15**), Myrtos Fournou Koriphi (**C17**),

32. The mark in **ML 42** is not included in the discussion because the published image is not clear.

Mochlos (C9), Kavousi-Vrondas (C49), Halasmenos (C14), two are published from Kastelli-Chania (C42-C43), Knossos (C10-C11), Syme (C8, C18), Palaikastro (C12, C52) and three from Petras (C7, C21, C39). Only at Phaistos do singletons outnumber the others, but this picture is difficult to evaluate due to the limited number of marks published from the site (C19, C27-C28, C40, C44, C51). The singletons from Malia, considerably more numerous than those published from any other site, are not due to the large number of pre-firing marks published but seem to reflect the tendency of certain potters to adopt marks different to those that were widely used. At Petras, where a similarly large assemblage of pre-firing marks has come to light, although it is not contemporary with that from Malia, just three singletons were found. Singletons, in any case, represent a very small percentage of the marks used at each site: at Malia they represent 2% of the marks used, a percentage rising to 7% if we include the singletons from the other typological groups.

Other marks of Group C are common at one site and absent or extremely rare at another. The site with the most incised marks of this type is again Malia. Marks of a vertical line with its upper or lower end meeting a horizontal one to the right or left (C1-C4), two lines crossed at an acute angle with a horizontal line meeting at the upper ends (C26), two converging lines (C31), two lines meeting at an obtuse angle (C34), three lines in the shape of a triangle with a vertical in the middle and another vertical short line at each end of the long side (C46), two triangles forming a pentacle (C47), and finally crossed short lines forming a star-like motif (C55), are almost exclusively used at Malia. The only mark types found beyond Malia are C26 and C55: a version of the first type is incised on a vessel from Petras (PT 114) and of the second on a vessel from Gournia (GR1). The occurrence of these marks at Petras and Gournia is not accidental. Protopalatial pottery from both sites –that from Gournia is not well represented in the published record– share many features with that produced at Malia. Potting groups active at Gournia and Petras, and likely at other Eastern sites, may be influenced by potters working at Malia.³³ The mark of incised straight lines combined in various directions (C56) is common at Petras, while only one example occurs at Malia. The mark of evenly spaced lines transversed at a right angle by a longer one (C16), similar to the Linear A syllabogram AB04, is attested exclusively at Syme during MM IB.³⁴ C53, depicting an incised rectangle, is another mark found only at Syme (SM 1, SM 94). These marks are all the products of the local marking tradition that do not appear elsewhere.

Other types of mark are found at more than one site. These are widespread types common in different regional marking systems. The mark of two lines crossed at an acute angle (C24) presents the widest temporal and spatial distribution of all. It appears as early as EM IIA-MM IA and is used for the marking of vessels until LM IIIA. It has so far been reported from 11 sites. The mark of two

33. Knappett 1999; Haggis 2007; Tsiopoulou and Hallager 2011, 135-153.

34. It is worth noting here that marks of two horizontal lines transversed by a third at a right angle are reported from Tylissos (C14-

C15), Myrtos Fournou Koriphi (C17) and Halasmenos (C14), while a painted pattern similar to C16 is displayed on pottery and dated MM IB (Haggis 2007, 728, fig. 8f).

lines crossed at right angles (**C29**) also appears very early, from EM IIB, but is found at fewer sites than the preceding mark, which seems to have been more popular. This mark is frequently incised on button-like appliqué decorations on pithoi.³⁵ Each of the other marks appears at two to five sites and most are dated to the Protopalatial period (**C23**, **C33**, **C35**, **C37**, **C41**, **C45**, **C48**, **C50**, **C54**). Marks of superposed chevrons (**C37**, **C38**) are frequent at Vrysinas and Monastiraki, while the mark of an acute angle is common at Malia and Petras during MM IIB and LM I respectively. The mark of the lozenge (**C48**) is attested at Malia and Syme during MM IB and MM IIB respectively.

D-GROUP: MARKS OF CIRCULAR, ARCHED AND WAVY LINES

Mark types

D1 An incised circle transversed by a vertical or horizontal line in the centre (Fig. 24). Attested on vessels at Archanes (**AR 4**) and Malia (**ML 187**). Incised on a larnax (handle) and on an unidentified vessel (body). Date: MM IA-MM IB; MM IIB.

D2 One incised arched line (Fig. 25). Attested on vessels at Petras (**PT 120-PT 133**). Incised mostly on cup (base), bowls (base) and an amphora (base). Date: LM IA-LM IB.

D3 Two incised arched lines (Fig. 25). Attested on vessels at Petras (**PT 134-PT 135**). Incised on cups (base). Date: LM IA-LM IB.

D4 Three incised arched lines (Fig. 25). Attested on a vessel at Petras (**PT 136**). Incised on a cup (base). Date: LM IA-LM IB.

A single arched line is also combined with (i) a straight incised line (**PT 239-PT 241**); (ii) a straight incised line and a fingernail impression (**PT 242**); (iii) a fingernail impression (**PT 243**); (iv) and four oblique incised lines (**PT 246**). These marks are placed below the base of cups and dated LM IA-LM IB. Although they have been included in the corpus of pre-firing marks from Petras, they are omitted from the present typology because there are no illustrations in the relevant publication that would allow us to understand the mark and schematically illustrate it here.

D5 Composite mark of one vertical incised line combined with an incised semi-circle (Fig. 25). Attested on a vessel at Palaikastro (**PK 10**). Incised on a jug (body). Date: MM IIIA.

D6 A wavy line horizontally incised (Fig. 25). Attested on a vessel at Vrysinas (**VR 12**). Incised on a bowl (below rim). Date: MM IIIA-MM IIIB.

D7 Composite mark of a fingernail with an incised spiral-like mark (Fig. 25). Attested on a vessel at Knossos (**KN 17**). Incised on a pithos (rim). Date: LM II.

35. Christakis 2005, 35.

Commentary

The marks of this group are not common (Chart 10). Marks of arched incised lines, isolated, in groups, or combined with other incised or impressed marks, are found exclusively at Petras and undoubtedly belong to the local marking tradition (**D2-D4**). The mark types of one vertical incised line combined with an incised semicircle (**D5**), of a wavy line (**D6**) and of spiral-like pattern (**D7**) are singletons, while the marks of a circle with a straight line in the centre are attested at Archanes and Malia (**D1**).

E-GROUP: PICTORIAL MARKS*Mark types*

E1 Incised horns of consecration (Fig. 25). Attested on a vessel at Kavousi-Vrondas (**KV 9**). Incised on a pithos (handle). Date: LM IIIC.

E2 The double axe mark (Fig. 25). Attested on vessels at Knossos (**KN 15**), Syme (**SM 67-SM 68, SM 70, SM 74, SM 77**), Kavousi-Vronda (**KV 8**) and Palaikastro (**PK 11-PK 12**). Incised on pithoi (body), closed vessels (body or handle), a jar (body) and an unidentified vessel. Date: MM IIB; LM IA-LM IB; LM IIIC.

E3 Incised mark of a lily (Fig. 25). Attested on vessels at Gournia (**GR 2**), Mochlos (**MC 15-26, MC 28-29**), Chalinomouri (**CH 1-CH 2**) and other sites (unknown) of the Isthmus region.³⁶ Incised on small pithoi (upper body). Date: LM IB.

E4 Applied mark of a lily (Fig. 25). Attested on vessels at Gournia (**GR 3**), Mochlos (**MC 27**), Chalinomouri (**CH 3**) and Chrysokamino.³⁷ Incised on small pithoi (upper body). Date: LM IB.

Commentary

The mark of horns of consecration is a singleton (**E1**). The double axe mark is very common at Syme and is usually incised on pithoi (**E2**). Most versions are found at Syme while at all other sites the mark occurs only once. The same mark, inspired from the Hieroglyphic script, is also often seen at Malia, impressed under the base of vessels. The incised (**E3**) or applied (**E4**) lily type mark is exclusively used in the area of the Isthmus and certainly forms part of the local marking repertoire. All these marks have clear religious connotations and it is tempting to assume a religious function.³⁸ Any attempt, however, to understand the meaning of these marks is hampered by their infrequent occurrence.

F-GROUP: SIGNS OF HIEROGLYPHIC, LINEAR A AND B SCRIPTS*Mark types**Hieroglyphic Script*

F1 005 (Fig. 25). Attested on a vessel at Malia (**ML 188**). Incised on an unidentified vessel. Date: MM IIB.

36. Brogan 2004.

37. Brogan 2004.

38. For the religious function of pre-firing

marks, see Evans 1904; Persson 1937, 611; Vitelli 1977, 22; Panayotou 1986, 99.

F2 005 (Fig. 25). Attested on vessels at Malia (**ML 319-ML 329**). Impressed on side-spouted jars (below rim), stand (body), an amphora (handle), a basin (below the rim), and on a unidentified vessel. Date: MM IIB.

F3 Composite mark of 005 within a circle (Fig. 25). Attested on vessels at Malia (**ML 330-ML 331**). Stamped on unidentified vessels (base). Date: MM IIB.

F4 Composite mark of 005 and a branch-like motif, both within a circle (Fig. 25). Attested on a vessel at Malia (**ML 332**). Stamped on an unidentified vessel (base). Date: MM IIB.

F5 006 (Fig. 25). Attested on vessels at Malia (**ML 189-ML 191**). Incised on a side-spouted jar (below the rim), a jug (body) and on an unidentified vessel. Date: MM IIB.

F6 009 (Fig. 25). Attested on vessels at Malia (**ML 192-ML 247**). Incised on side-spouted jars (below the rim), jars (below the rim or body), cooking pots (below the rim), cups (below the rim or handle), bowls (interior below the rim), a plate (below the rim), a lid (upper side), a collector (below the rim), and on unidentified vessels. Date: MM IIB.

F7 011 (Fig. 25). Attested on vessels at Malia (**ML 248-ML 286**) and Kastellos (**KST 1-KST 6**). Incised on side-spouted jars (below rim), jars (below rim), lids (upper side), a jug (body), a tripod pot (body), and on unidentified vessels. Date: MM IIB.

F8 011 (Fig. 25). Attested on vessels at Malia (**ML 333-ML 334**). Impressed on side-spouted jars (below base). Date: MM IIB.

F9 016 (Fig. 25). Attested on vessels at Malia (**ML 335**). Impressed on a pithos (base). Date: MM IIB.

F10 025 (Fig. 25). Attested on vessels at Malia (**ML 287-ML 288**). Incised on a side-spouted jar (base) and on an unidentified vessel (body). Date: MM IIB.

F11 025 (Fig. 25). Attested on vessels at Malia (**ML 336-ML 338**). Impressed on a jar (base) and an amphorae (base). Date: MM IIB.

F12 Composite mark of 025 placed within a circle (Fig. 25). Attested on a vessel at Malia (**ML 339**). Impressed on a jar (base). Date: MM IIB.

F13 Composite mark of 025 placed within a circle with two opposed arched lines (Fig. 25). Attested on vessels at Malia (**ML 340-ML 342**). Stamped on unidentified vessels (base). Date: MM IIB.

F14 028 (Fig. 25). Attested on vessels at Malia (**ML 289-ML 291**). Incised on side-spouted jars (below the rim) and a bowl (interior below the rim). Date: MM IIB.

F15 031 (Fig. 25). Attested on a vessel at Malia (**ML 292**). Incised on a jar (body). Date: MM IIB.

F16 037 (Fig. 25). Attested on vessels at Petras (**PT 139-PT 141**). Incised on pithoi (body) and a bowl (interior). Date: MM IIB; LM IA-LM IB.

F17 038 (Fig. 25). Attested on vessels at Malia (**ML 293-ML 299**). Incised on side-spouted jars (below the rim), jars (below the rim or body) and on a unidentified vessel (body). Date: MM IIB.

F18 041 (Fig. 25). Attested on vessels at Petras (**PT 142, PT 248-PT 250**). Incised on cups (body). Date: MM IB; LM IB.

F19 Composite mark of 041 placed within concentric circles (Fig. 25). Attested on a vessel at Malia (**ML 343**). Stamped on a lamp (base). Date: MM IIB.

F20 042 (Fig. 25). Attested on vessels at Malia (**ML 300-ML 305**). Incised on a side-spouted jar (below the rim), a lid (upper side), an offering table (body), on an unidentified vessel and on amphorae (handle or body). Date: MM IIB.

F21 042 (Fig. 25). Attested on vessels at Malia (**ML 343-ML 345**). Stamped on a tripod vessel (base) and on an unidentified vessel (base). Date: MM IIB.

F22 Composite mark of 042 placed within a circle (Fig. 25). Attested on a vessel at Malia (**ML 346**). Stamped on an offering table (base).

F23 050 (Fig. 25). Attested on vessels at Malia (**ML 306-ML 312**) and Petras (**PT 138**). Incised on bowls (interior below the rim), jars (body), an offering table (base), an amphora (handle), a closed vessel (body), and on an unidentified vessel (body). Date: MM IIB.

F24 061 (Fig. 25). Attested on a vessel at Syme (**SM 72**). Incised on a tumbler (base). Date: MM IB.

F25 065 (Fig. 25). Attested on a vessel at Malia (**ML 347**). Impressed on a jar (base). Date: MM IIB.

F26 068 (Fig. 25). Attested on a vessel at Malia (**ML 313**). Incised on a lamp (handle). Date: MM IIB.

F27 070 (Fig. 25). Attested on vessels at Malia (**ML 314-ML 315**). Incised on a side-spouted jar (base) and on an unidentified vessel (body). Date: MM IIB.

F28 Composite mark of 070 placed within two concentric circles (Fig. 25). Attested on vessels at Malia (**ML 348-ML 349**). Stamped on an amphora (base) and a pithos (base). Date: MM IIB.

F29 Composite mark of 072 placed within a circle (Fig. 25). Attested on a vessel at Malia (**ML 350**). Stamped on an unidentified vessel (base). Date: MM IIB.

F30 092 (Fig. 25). Attested on a vessel at Malia (**ML 316**). Incised on a pithos (body). Date: MM IIB.

F31 *153 (Fig. 25). Attested on a vessel at Malia (**ML 317**). Incised on a jug (body). Date: MM IIB.

F32 *156 (Fig. 25). Attested on a vessel at Malia (**ML 318**). Incised on a jug (body). Date: MM IIB.

F33 *172 (Fig. 25). Attested on a vessel at Zakros (**ZK 1**). Incised on a cooking pot (or wide-mouthed jar). Date: unknown (probably LM I).

Linear A Script

F34 Mark similar to AB04 (Fig. 25). Attested on a vessel at Archanes (**AR 4**). Incised on a lid (upper side). Date: MM IIIA.

F35 AB08 (Fig. 25). Attested on a vessel at Petras (**PT 253**). Incised on a pithos (shoulder). Date: LM IB.

F36 AB27 (Fig. 26). Attested on a vessel at Syme (**SM 97**). Incised on a pithos (rim). Date: MM III-LM I.

F37 A304 (Fig. 26). Attested on vessels at Gournia (**GR 4-GR 5**). Incised on amphorae (handle). Date: LM IA-LM IB.

Linear B Script

F38 Mark similar to AB46 (Fig. 26). Attested on a vessel at Kommos (**KM 20**). Incised on a stirrup jar (handle). Date: LM IIIB.

Commentary

Marks borrowed from the repertoire of the Hieroglyphic, Linear A and Linear B signs occur at very few sites (Chart 10). Marks of the Hieroglyphic script are the most popular while Linear A and B examples are rare. The most important group of script-type marks was found at Malia: of the 89 different types marks used during MM IIB, 19 are copies of Hieroglyphic signs (Chart 4). From a paleographic point of view, the rendition of the marks is either similar to that of the sign, e.g.

009 (**F6**), 038 (**F17**) and 070 (**F27**), or much simplified and different from that of the mark, e.g. 011 (**F8**).³⁹

Apart from Malia, marks inspired from Hieroglyphic signs have been published from Kastellos, Syme and Petras. The vessels from Kastellos marked with **F7** are likely products of a Maliote potting group. Mark 061 (**F24**) is found at Syme, but the vessel on which it is incised is an import from the Pediada.⁴⁰ The mark of the double axe is also quite common at Syme. Whether the latter copies the Hieroglyphic sign 042 or depicts a double axe, is an open issue and it is because of this ambiguity that the marks from Syme are included in Group E. Due to their size and placement on the vessel, the marks from Syme seem to imitate actual objects rather than the script sign, although admittedly the opposite cannot be ruled out, since the Hieroglyphic sign is also inspired by actual double axes. Three other marks of this group have been found at Petras to date: 037 (**F16**), 041 (**F18**) and 050 (**F23**). 037 and 041 are rendered in a slightly different way to the signs. The first two are also found at Malia, while the third is only present at Petras. Sign 041 is frequently incised on loom-weights, many of which were found, like the marked conical cups, in House 2, whose inhabitants were engaged in textile production.⁴¹

The use of Hieroglyphic signs as pre-firing marks is attested at Syme –the vessel is imported from the Pediada region– and Petras as early as MM IB. This early occurrence does not mean that the practice of borrowing signs of the Hieroglyphic script for marking pots began in the Pediada or at Petras, since the absence of such marks from Malia, a site where the use of such signs presents the greatest variety and frequency, during MM IB can only be considered accidental. Hieroglyphic signs were still being used to mark vessels at Petras during the LM IA and LM IB periods.

Two arrow-shaped marks are found incised on the handles of two amphorae at Gournia (**GR 4-GR 5**). The arrow sign is common in both Hieroglyphic (050) and Linear A (A304).⁴² However, neither the vessels nor their marks are illustrated and no information is provided concerning the find context, so it is not certain which script the mark is copying. If, however, the vessels are dated to the Protopalatial period, this would be a further indication of the influence of the Maliote system of marking pots in the Gournia area, an influence extending to Petras, although at the latter site local traditions predominate. The *172 sign of the Hieroglyphic script has been attested on a vessel from Zakros, but this is an isolated case for which there is insufficient information.

39. It should be noted that 011 ('bucranium') is mainly known from Knossian documents. The only time the sign is attested at Malia it bears two curved horns that are not found on the pre-firing mark (Olivier 1996, 390, #72.a). The eyes of the 'bucranium', when used as a syllabogram of the Hieroglyphic script, are always rendered –the exception is a case from Petras (Tsipopoulou and Hallager 2010,

170, He 001)– as opposed to the bucranium as a pre-firing mark, where the eyes are omitted.

40. At Malia, 061 is incised on clay discs (Olivier and Godart 1978, 101, nos 48-49).

41. Tsipopoulou 1991; Burke 2006.

42. In the present classification the mark is placed in the group of Linear A signs, on the basis that the vessels from Gournia are more likely to be of LM I than of MM I-MM II date.

Hieroglyphic signs as pre-firing marks are not reported from any other Protopalatial centre of the island. Whether these ‘absences’ are meaningful or accidental we cannot tell at this point. One could argue, however, that, given the large quantities of Protopalatial pottery that have been published, if such pre-firing marks existed they would have been found. If this is indeed so, then obviously the use of Hieroglyphic signs as pre-firing marks is not a generalized phenomenon but follows regional marking trends. Even the use of the Hieroglyphic script is subject to regional variations from one centre to the other.⁴³

Few signs of Linear A and B script used as pre-firing marks are included in the corpus. Three signs of Linear A script (AB 04 (**F34**), AB 08 (**F35**), AB 27 (**F36**), A304 (**F37**)) and one of Linear B (AB 46 (**F38**)) have been published. There are, furthermore, other marks that closely resemble Hieroglyphic, Linear A and Linear B signs (e.g. **C8**, **C10-C11**, **C15**, **C24**, **C26**, **C29**). However, their connection with the corresponding script signs is problematic, which is why they have not been classified in Group F.

A point that emerges from the recorded data is that the systematic use of signs borrowed from the scripts is not a generalized practice; it does not reflect widely shared marking practices but is limited to specific areas. The common occurrence of such marks at Malia – common compared to other areas – is due to the local marking tradition in use during the Protopalatial period. No assemblages of such marks indicating a pattern of significance have been identified in the Neopalatial and Postpalatial eras. This picture remains the same even if we include those signs whose connection to script syllabograms and logograms has been considered uncertain here.

The question that obviously arises is, what do similarities between these pre-firing marks with the signs of scripts mean? From a chronological point of view, pre-firing marks appear before the emergence of writing systems. The marks of two lines crossed at a right or an acute angle, both signs present in scripts, occur at Myrtos Fournou Koriphi and Psathi respectively during the EM IIA-MM IA period. The body of Prepalatial marks, however, is too limited to ascertain whether the pre-firing marks that are similar to syllabograms or logograms are ‘borrowings’ or if the reverse is true. Another question is how far the signs that imitate syllabograms are borrowing not only the form but also the phonetic value of the corresponding script signs; it is possible that that are being used acrophonically. A. Karnava, discussing the case of pre-firing marks from Malia similar to Hieroglyphic script, observed that some of these marks are attested at the beginning of words but there are not enough examples to draw a conclusion from.⁴⁴

The view proposed by A. Evans, that pre-firing marks are stepping-stones for the emergence of script, is no longer accepted, nor are other similar suggestions by other scholars from other sites in Greece.⁴⁵ Many scholars in the years following Evans’s pioneering research noted the similarities of some pre-firing marks to the

43. Karnava 2000, 218-221, 238-246; Karnava, in press; Tsipopoulou and Hallager 2010, 155-177.

44. Unpublished paper given at the 9th

Cretological Congress (Elounda 1-6 October 2001).

45. Lindblom 2001, 16-19.

writing systems that emerged in Crete.⁴⁶ None of these researchers, however, attributed any linguistic value to the signs, while most connected them to the ceramic production process.⁴⁷ As A. Kober argued, many pre-firing marks that may resemble signs of scripts cannot be regarded as containing linguistic information.⁴⁸ The relationship of the pre-firing marks to syllabograms and logograms is limited to form alone. In places where the coexistence of different signification systems is a fact, interactions are only to be expected.

G-GROUP: FINGER IMPRESSIONS, SIMPLE OR COMBINED WITH OTHER IMPRESSED OR INCISED MARKS

Mark types

G1 One deep finger impression (Fig. 26). Attested on vessels at Kastelli-Chania (**KS 14-KS 19**), Karphi (**KR 13-KR 22**), Mochlos (**MC 13-MC 14**), Halasmenos (**HL 5**), Kavousi-Vrondas (**KV 11-KV 17**) and Palaikastro (**PK 15**). Impressed on cooking pots (leg), pithoi (handle), basins (handle), jars (handle), larnakes (handle), trays (leg). Date: LM IIIA; LM IIIB; LM IIIC.

G2 Four deep finger impressions (Fig. 26). Attested on vessels at Kommos (**KR 22**). Impressed on a cooking pot (leg). Date: MM IB-MM IIB.

G3 One shallow finger impression of oval profile (Fig. 26). Attested on vessels at Karphi (**KR 23**) and Syme (**SM 60**). Impressed on trays (rim) and a cooking pot (handle). Date: MM IB; LM IIIC.

G4 Two shallow finger impressions (Fig. 26). Attested on a vessel at Karphi (**KR 24**). Impressed on a tray (rim). Date: LM IIIC.

G5 Composite mark of one finger impression combined with two lines vertically incised on either side of the impression (Fig. 26). Attested on vessels at Halasmenos (**HL 4**) and Kavousi-Vrondas (**KV 18**). Incised on a cooking pot and a tripod vessel (leg). Date: LM IIIC.

G6 Composite mark of one finger impression combined with a pair of oblique lines incised on either side of the impression (Fig. 26). Attested on a vessel at Karphi (**KR 11**). Incised on a cooking pot (leg). Date: LM IIIC.

46. e.g. Olivier and Godart 1978, 35-37; Tsiopoulou 1990; Bennet 1996.

47. Rather vaguer is Y. and E. Sakellarakis's connection of pre-firing marks with scripts. In their synthetic presentation of the excavations at Archanes, pre-firing marks, most of which are identified with signs of Linear A script, are discussed in the chapter devoted to scripts. Many of these marks, incised on vessels assigned to the MM I period, are considered to be evidence for the use of Linear A at Archanes from that period on. The

researchers offer no explanation of the function of these incised signs. It appears, however, in their discussion of incised marks on larnakes, that they do not consider them to be potters' marks since, as they argue, no such incisions are found on the plethora of other ceramic products. It should be noted, of course, that the incisions on larnakes to which they refer (Sakellarakis and Sapouna-Sakellarakis 1997, 332) are also found on other types of vessel from other sites (**C24** and **D1**).

48. Kober 1948.

G7 Composite mark of two or three shallow finger impression combined with three lines vertically incised just below the impression (Fig. 26). Attested on vessels at Karphi (**KR 12**) and Halasmenos (**HL 6**). Incised on tripod trays (rim and leg). Date: LM IIIC.

G8 Composite mark of two finger impressions pressed on either side of an incised vertical line (Fig. 26). Attested on a vessel at Karphi (**KR 10**). Incised on a cooking pot (leg). Date: LM IIIC.

G9 Composite mark of five shallow finger impressions combined with two incised lines crossed at an acute angle just below them (Fig. 26). Attested on a vessel at Knossos (**KN 18**). Impressed and incised on a cooking pot (rim and below the rim). Date: MM IIIA.

G10 Four perpendicular grooves (Fig. 26). Attested on vessels at Kommos (**KM 24-KM 25**). Impressed on cooking pots (rim). Date: MM IIB.

G11 Composite mark of two perpendicular grooves combined with an incised M-shaped mark (Fig. 26). Attested on a vessel at Kommos (**KM 28**). Impressed and incised on a cooking pot (rim and below the rim). Date: MM IIB.

G12 Composite mark of three perpendicular grooves combined with two converging incised lines (Fig. 26). Attested on a vessel at Kommos (**KM 27**). Impressed and incised on a cooking pot (rim and below the rim). Date: MM IIB.

G13 Composite mark of four or five perpendicular grooves combined with one incised vertical line (Fig. 26). Attested on a vessel at Kommos (**KM 26**). Impressed and incised on a cooking pot (rim and below the rim). Date: MM IIB.

Commentary

Finger impressions, simple or combined with other impressed or incised marks, are not common (Chart 10). The impressions, also known in the relevant bibliography as dints or thumb impressions, are probably made by pressing the thumb or forefinger against the soft clay surface (**G1**). They are particularly common on cooking pots, where they are pressed on junction of the leg to the body. They also occur on the handles of pithoi, larnakes and basins, but not as frequently as on cooking pots. Such impressions are typical of the LM III period, especially during the LM IIIB and LM IIIC phases. They are rare before LM III and only occasionally found impressed on the handles of pithoi, basins and other coarse vessels and on the legs of tripod vessels (**G2**). Finger impressions are often combined with incised lines: these composite marks, typical of the LM IIIC period, occur on the legs of cooking pots and tripod trays (**G5-G8**). Marks of one or two finger impressions, made using the forefinger, occur on the rim of trays at Karphi (**G3-G4**), while at this site and at Halasmenos three impressions on the rim of tripod trays are combined with incised lines on the leg of the vessel (**G7**). All marks are of LM IIIC date.

Perpendicular grooves impressed on the rim of cooking pots, isolated or combined with linear marks incised just below, are found at Kommos (**G10-G13**). Similar marks, with the difference that they consist of incised short lines instead of grooves, occur at Phaistos (**C28, C40, C51**). The spatial distribution of all these types is confined to the area of the Mesara and, in all likelihood, they are products of potting groups that followed local traditions in the marking of vessels. The only similar mark type outside the Mesara comes from Knossos, although in the Knossian mark the grooves or incised lines of the Mesara examples are replaced by finger impressions (**G9**).

H-GROUP: FINGERNAIL MARKS

Mark types

H1 One fingernail mark (Fig. 26). Attested on vessels at Petras (**PT 143-PT 201, PT 226-PT 232**). Impressed on cups (base), tripod trays (base), closed vessels (base) and a bowl (below the rim). Date: MM IIB; LM IA-LM IB.

H2 Two fingernail marks (Fig. 26). Attested on vessels at Kommos (**KM 23**) and Petras (**PT 202-PT 223, PT 233-PT 235**). Impressed on cups (base), a pithos (base), a pithoid jar (handle), and a bridged-spouted jar (base). Date: MM IIB; LM IA-LM IB.

H3 Three fingernail marks (Fig. 26). Attested on vessels at Petras (**PT 224-PT 225**). Impressed on cups (base). Date: LM IA-LM IB.

Commentary

All fingernail marks occur at Petras except for a single example from Kommos. The most common mark is that of one fingernail impression (**H1**, 73% of the recorded examples) followed by two impressions (**H2**, 27% of the recorded cases). These marks are usually impressed on the base of cups, mostly conical cups. Fingernail marks are part of the local repertoire of pre-firing marks at Petras.

I-GROUP: IMPRESSED DOTS, OVAL AND ANGULAR IMPRESSIONS, SCALLOP SHELL IMPRESSIONS

Mark types

I1 One impressed dot (Fig. 26). Attested on vessels at Vrysinas (**VR 31**), Petras (**PT 236**) and Palaikastro (**PK 16**). Impressed on a jug (base), a conical cup (base) and an amphora (handle). Date: MM IIIA-MM IIIB; LM IA-LM IB; LM IIIC.

I2 Two impressed dots (Fig. 26). Attested on vessels at Vrysinas (**VR 32-VR 33**) and Petras (**PT 237**). Impressed on cups (base) and a brazier (handle). Date: MM IIIA-MM IIIB; LM IA-LM IB.

I3 Three impressed dots (Fig. 26). Attested on vessels at Vrysinas (**VR 34**) and Petras (**PT 238**). Impressed on an open vessel (rim) and a conical cup (base). Date: MM IIIA-MM IIIB; LM IA-LM IB.

I4 Group of impressed dots (Fig. 26). Attested on vessels at Syme (**SM 26**, **SM 57**, **SM 78**). Impressed on jars (handle). Date: MM IB.

I5 Composite mark of one incised oblique line combined with two impressed dots on either side (Fig. 26). Attested on a vessel at Vrysinas (**VR 35**). Impressed on a cup (body). Date: uncertain (probably MM IIIA-MM IIIB).

I6 Composite mark of one wavy line combined with three dots just below it (Fig. 26). Attested on a vessel at Vrysinas (**VR 36**). Impressed on a cup (body). Date: uncertain (probably LM).

I7 Angular impressions (Fig. 26). Attested on a vessel at Syme (**SM 46**). Impressed on a cooking pot (handle). Date: MM IB.

I8 Scallop shell impressions (Fig. 26). Attested on a vessel at Mochlos (**MC 12**). Impressed on a pithos (handle). Date: LM IB.

Commentary

Marks made by various tools producing dots, angular impressions and scallop shell impressions are rare (Chart 10). They were probably made with a stylus or a pointed stick. The outline of the imprint is determined by the thickness and cross-section of the tool. Dot impressions are made usually under the base of cups and are reported from Vrysinas and Petras (**I1-I3**). The frequency of such marks in these areas also points to two distinct marking traditions. The group of impressed dots made using a fine stick is a mark type so far attested only from Syme (**I4**). Angular impressions are also reported from Syme (**I7**). Neither of these two last mark types has been published from another site so far. Both marks are MM IB in date and belong to the local marking repertoire. The mark of a scallop shell impression is a singleton attested at Mochlos (**I8**).

J-GROUP: STAMPS AND SEAL IMPRESSIONS

Mark types

J1 Stamp with the mark of a circle (Fig. 26). Attested on a vessel at Malia (**ML 354**). Stamped on a jar (base). Date: MM IIB.

J2 Stamp with the mark of a circle with two chevrons inside it attached to the circumference of the circle (Fig. 26). Attested on a vessel at Malia (**ML 352**). Stamped on an unidentified vessel (base). Date: MM IIB.

J3 Stamp with the mark a circle and two antithetic arcade lines in the interior (Fig. 26). Attested on vessels at Malia (**ML 355-ML 356**). Stamped on unidentified vessels (base). Date: MM IIB.

J4 Stamp with the mark of a dentate circle (Fig. 26). Attested on a vessel at Kommos (**KM 29**). Stamped on a basin (base). Date: MM IIB.

- J5** Stamp with the mark of two concentric circles (Fig. 26). Attested on a vessel at Malia (**ML 351**). Stamped on an unidentified vessel (base). Date: MM IIB.
- J6** Stamp with the mark of a square inscribed within a circle with a diagonal cross (Fig. 26). Attested on a vessel at Kommos (**KM 33**). Stamped on a pithoid jar (base). Date: MM IIB.
- J7** Stamp with the mark of a double axe within a circle (Fig. 26).⁴⁹ Attested on a vessel at Kommos (**KM 30**). Stamped on a lentoid jar (base). Date: MM IIB.
- J8** Stamp with the mark of an incomplete trapezium (Fig. 26). Attested on a vessel at Malia (**ML 357**). Stamped on a pithos (base). Date: MM IIB.
- J9** Stamp with a M-like motif (Fig. 27). Attested on vessels at Malia (**ML 358-ML 359**). Stamped on an amphora (base) and on a unidentified vessel (base). Date: MM IIB.
- J10** Stamp with a M-like motif (Fig. 27). Attested on a vessel at Malia (**ML 362**). Stamped on an amphora (base). Date: MM IIB.
- J11** Stamp with a M-like motif within a circle (Fig. 27). Attested on vessels at Malia (**ML 360-ML 361**). Stamped on unidentified vessels (base). Date: MM IIB.
- J12** Three lines in the shape of a triangle filled with eight circular impressions (Fig. 27). Attested on a vessel at Platyvola cave (**PL 1**). Stamped on amphora (base). Date: FN.
- J13** Stamp with a rosette (Fig. 27). Attested on a vessel at Mochlos (**MC 11**). Stamped on a pithos (handle). Date: LM IIIA.
- J14** Stamp with a rosette (Fig. 27). Attested on a vessel at Knossos (**KN 22**). Stamped on a pithos (body on raised bands). Date: LM I.
- J15** Stamp with a circle (Fig. 27). Attested on a vessel at Knossos (**KN 20**). Stamped on a pithos (body on raised bands). Date: LM I.
- J16** Stamp with a concentric circles (Fig. 27). Attested on a vessel at Knossos (**KN 21**). Stamped on a pithos (body on raised bands, handles and rim). Date: LM I.
- J17** Imprint of a broken seal (Fig. 27). Attested at Knossos (**KN 19**). Stamped on a pithos (on raised bands). Date: LM I.

49. The mark is similar to **F22**. It is included, however, in Group J and not in Group F because pre-firing marks inspired from

Hieroglyphic script were not published from Phaistos.

Commentary

Mark types produced by pressing stamps or seals into the soft clay surface are very rare (Chart 10). An interesting assemblage of marks in Group J comprises those made by using large stamps, mostly circular in shape, with simple or complex patterns stamped below the base of the vessel (**J1-J11**).⁵⁰ The same medium is also used to produce composite marks combining linear motifs with signs of the Hieroglyphic script (**F3, F4, F12-F13, F19, F21-F22, F28-F29**). Most mark types of Group J, with three exceptions (**J3, J9, J11**), are all singletons, meaning that each imprint refers to a specific potter and event of production. These marks are not visible when the pot was upright, and given that these are large, heavy vessels, the marks would be rarely seen. Most marks come from Malia and are dated to the MM IIB period; there are a few from Kommos but these are MM IB-MM IIB in date.

A. van de Moortel suggested that the original pattern had been impressed into potters' turntables or bats and was transferred onto the bottoms of the vessels during their manufacture.⁵¹ Actual bats impressed with stamps producing similar marks are found at Phaistos.⁵² Levi and Carinci argued that the top of the bat where the vessel was formed had a smooth surface, whereas the face with the design was placed over the wheelhead.⁵³ This interpretation explains why, of the plethora of vessels found at Phaistos, not a single one bears such imprints on its base.

The issue of the production of such imprints was fully discussed by J.-P. Olivier and L. Godart regarding the impressed marks from Quartier Mu at Malia.⁵⁴ Having thoroughly studied many vessels with such imprints, they concluded that the impressed patterns were produced by stamps. These imprints also occurred on vessels that could not have been made with bats; the part of the base where the mark is impressed is slightly concave, something which cannot be explained if the vessel had been placed on a bat; in some cases the imprint is slightly shaky; and finally, on some vessels the imprint is not in the centre of the base but near its edge, or even partly outside the circumference, in which case only part of the design was stamped. The views of Olivier and Godart, views also confirmed by traditional potters, during my ethnographic fieldwork, have been adopted in the present study. These types of mark have been made by large stamps that left their imprint in the soft clay. Presumably the imprints of the Phaistos bats are produced in a similar way. The reasons for the placement of such large stamps with composite marks below the base of sizable vessels cannot be answered. The issue becomes more complex when we consider that the marks of some stamps have religious connotations; some marked vessels were actually found in religious or ritual contexts.

Stamps with the imprint of a rosette, isolated or in a row, are pressed on raised bands of pithoi (**J13, J14**). These stamps are common at Knossos, and some examples have left very elaborate and decorative imprints on the soft clay surface.⁵⁵

50. The cases of **KM 32** and **ML 353** are not included because they are partly preserved.

51. van de Moortel 2006, 346.

52. Levi 1976, pl. 228.

53. Levi and Carinci 1988, 280.

54. Olivier and Godart 1978, 43. Surprisingly, van de Moortel does not refer to this study nor to the Malia parallels when discussing the corresponding imprints from Kommos.

55. Christakis 2005, 31, pl. 19.

Other stamps have left circle (J15) or concentric circle (J16) imprints. Occasionally stamps are impressed on parts of the pithos, such as on the rim or below it, on the handles and the body, that do not contribute to its decoration but are meant to draw the observer's attention.⁵⁶ In other cases, the row of impressions by one stamp on a raised band may be interrupted by three to five impressions of a different stamp; this arrangement bears no relationship to the decoration, as it occurs only on a certain part of a single band, usually near the handles. Decorative patterns or pre-firing marks? All these stamps, except three examples, are unique, a uniqueness identified with a single individual and productive event. The potter, by using his/her own stamp in the decoration of the pithos, distinguished his/her work from that of other potters. The potters recognized the stamps, especially if they were active at the same time, which is likely in some cases. Thus, besides their decorative effect they are also potters' marks.

Seals are occasionally found impressed on vessels, mostly on containers used for storage purposes. They are pressed directly to the body of the vessel, on the rim or handles, or on raised ropes.⁵⁷ It is possible that seal imprints designate the owner of the vase who commissioned it and impressed his/her seal, a symbol of ownership of the pot. It may be no coincidence that seal impressions are commonly found on pithoi and other vessels used for storage purposes, vessels with strong economic connotations.⁵⁸ Equally, seal imprints could be related to the potter who stamped his/her seal, if his/her social position permitted the possession of such an item, on the vessel. In the case of such a scenario, seal imprints are makers' marks. Seal imprints may also be related to the central administration. The purpose of stamping seals directly on vessels is not certain. As O. Krzyszkowska puts it, 'The purpose of the stamping is obscure, inasmuch as it seems to occur too infrequently to reflect systematic control of ownership or production'.⁵⁹ Due to the ambiguous meaning of the seal imprints on vessels, it is not considered appropriate to include seal impressions in the present study.

The only exception is the case of the broken seal that has been pressed on the raised bands of a medallion pithos from the 'Royal Magazines' in the East Wing of the palace at Knossos (J17). Knossian medallion pithoi are a rather peculiar type of pithos: the high standardization in the formal and decorative features, construction techniques and fabric, as well as the limited contextual distribution, point to a local potting group (if not a specific potter) specializing in the production of such vessels.⁶⁰ The fact that the potter felt the need to press the broken seal onto a such a highly standardized vessel is of great significance: the seal imprints are not a decorative pattern but actual potters' marks. According to A. Evans, 'The potters' marks seal had no doubt broken in the course of signing a long series of similar store jars, but the fact that its type had consisted of a conventional façade of a building may well suggest a reference to the Palace itself. We may have here in

56. e.g. Christakis 2005, 37-38, pl. 18.

57. For seal impressions directly on vessels and other objects, see Krzyszkowska 2005, 46-56, 77-78, 99-101.

58. Christakis 2005, 37-38.

59. Krzyszkowska 2005, 99.

60. Christakis 2005, 7-9.

fact the *cachet* of a master-potter who executed his craft by official appointment'.⁶¹ It is also worth remembering that the pithos itself, as well as other similar specimens produced by the same potting group, if not the same potter, were placed in a context in which any notion of ownership is meaningless.

MARKING TRADITIONS IN BRONZE AGE CRETE

The comparative study of pre-firing marks from sites that have yielded evidence for such data has highlighted meaningful patterns related to combinations of mark types, ceramic classes, shapes, marking positions and frequencies. Some marking patterns are found at most sites discussed here. The high proportion of unmarked versus marked vessels, for instance, indicates that pot marking was not a widespread practice. Potters marked only a low portion of their output. Marking was restricted to plain and coarse or semi-coarse utilitarian vessels used for storage, transfer and cooking purposes, while marks on fine ware are unknown among the published data. The vessels found at each site, with few exceptions, are made of local fabrics, indicating that these were pots intended solely to cover local needs, rather than vessels distributed in a regional, intra-regional and long distant trade as containers of commodities or as merchandise. The most common mark types are those consisting of simple or more complex linear patterns, while impressed marks are not common as the incised ones; painted marks are almost unknown. Composite marks formed of two or even more elements are rare. Marks are located on highly visible parts of the vessel, with only very few examples positioned on less visible areas.

These patterns, although found at almost all the sites –which could lead one to hypothesize the existence of a common marking system extending across the island– present significant variability in their frequency from site to site. Furthermore, apart from these common trends, site-specific marking patterns have been identified in several cases. At many potting centres, for instance, vessels have been marked with site-specific mark types that are used alongside more widespread simple pre-firing marks (Table 5). Many of these marks are singletons, while others are attested on many examples of either the same or different shapes, always applied in the same position on each shape. The most characteristic examples of such marks are the cuts attested at Vrysinas (**B1-B5**), the mark of evenly spaced lines transversed at a right angle by a longer one attested at Syme (**C16**), marks of arched lines (**D2-D4**) and fingernails (**H1-H3**) attested at Petras, marks of incised and applied lilies attested in the area of the Isthmus (**E3-E4**), marks of perpendicular grooves either isolated or combined with linear marks, attested on cooking pots at Kommos (**G10-G13**), and similar marks with the perpendicular grooves replaced by incised lines, attested at Phaistos, also on cooking pots (**C28, C40, C51**). Of particular interest are the marks produced by stamps below the base of large vessels, particularly popular at Malia, and the stamp impressions on Knossian pithoi. Pre-firing marks inspired by signs of Cretan Hieroglyphic script are common at

61. Evans 1921, 565.

Malia and almost absent from the other Protopalatial centres, with the exception of Petras. Fingernail marks almost exclusively occur on pottery produced at Petras.

Differences have also been observed in the frequency with which pots are marked in a particular settlement. Although marked vessels are always represented in low percentages compared to unmarked ones, in some cases the data indicate, taking into account the quantitative and qualitative parameters of the record, that marking was more widespread at one site than another. Phaistos and Malia during the Protopalatial period are the most characteristic cases. As we have seen, marked pots are very rare in the abundant ceramic assemblages from Phaistos and very common in the corresponding assemblages from Malia. At Malia, certainly, the tendency of marking vessels was a very widespread practice, compared not only to Phaistos but also to all the other Protopalatial centres of the island except Petras. The similarities between certain marking trends in Malia and Petras match the similarities presented by the potting production of the two centres, perhaps an indication of the influence of the Maliote potting tradition in the Petras region. Marking vessels was very common at Petras in the LM I period, too, as opposed to other contemporary settlements where marked pots are rare. It is worth noting that marks are almost completely absent from Malia during the same period.

All this clearly shows that some of the potting groups active at various centres used a certain repertoire of marks and followed preset rules in marking their vessels. The differentiations in all these variables between one site and another point to the presence of different marking traditions operating at each of these sites. Thus, instead of a generalized, island-wide marking system, we can talk about a number of regional or even site-specific marking traditions. Quantitative and qualitative data constraints prevent us from either determining the basic features of these local marking systems or seeing possible interactions among them. For the moment, the picture remains hazy; the publication of new material from more sites and new studies may help us understand the organization of local vessel-marking systems and map the spatial extend of each tradition that existed within the framework of a large island such as Crete. The emerging regional marking traditions are completely consistent with the regionalism observed in patterns of pottery production, as well as in other expressions of material culture, among the different regions of the island.

Some potters adopted marks with a view to distinguishing their production not only at intra-communal level –as I will argue in the next chapter, I believe that this is the function of the pre-firing marks– but also at inter-regional level. The marks operate as a means of labeling a local identity. This labeling does not serve a practical purpose, since the marked vessels, with a very few isolated exceptions, were not distributed beyond the limits of their production centre, but springs from an inward need to highlight local identity. This is the need typical of many traditional societies which, although neighboring, differ in many cultural expressions, even dialect.⁶² This localism is, of course, one of the lasting characteristics of Cretan culture down the centuries.

62. Pangalos 1955-1975.

VII

THE FUNCTION AND MEANING OF CRETAN PRE-FIRING MARKS

The meaning of pre-firing marks on pottery has concerned many scholars ever since the pioneering years of Aegean archaeology.¹ The similarity between many of these marks and signs of the Aegean scripts originally led several researchers, mainly epigraphy experts, to connect the marks to Aegean pre-alphabetic signs and inscriptions. These attempts, however, proved unsuccessful, and other interpretative patterns were sought, inspired by ethnographic parallels and incorporating into the discussion information from scientific approaches to the study of pottery. In the majority of cases, pre-firing marks are related to potters and/or workshops. Other scholars argue that marks designate vessel volume and contents, the destination or ownership of the finished product, or that they are religious symbols or markers of a centralized strategy of control over pottery production. Other suggested functions, which are not widely accepted, connect pre-firing marks with ethnic groups, numerical systems, pottery quality and price. Pots were also supposedly marked to avoid spreading contamination by diseased owners, to aid blind users, or even to serve a time-factoring purpose in order to anticipate seasonal changes.² However different, most hypotheses share the assumption that pre-firing marks functioned in a variety of ways. In her discussion of marks from Hagia Irini, A. Halepa-Bikaki, for instance, argued that different types of marks were used to indicate the capacity and contents of vessels, their provenance and their intended destination.³ In this chapter, the issue of the function and meaning of pre-firing marks on Cretan Bronze Age pottery is examined on the basis of the data discussed in the previous chapters.

MEANING VERSUS DATA

Pre-firing marks were applied to the vessels during the manufacturing process and before their firing. This incontrovertible fact predisposes us to investigate the issue

1. The different views on the function and meaning of pre-firing marks have been discussed by various scholars. The discussion here will be limited to only the basic landmarks, since it seems pointless to cover such extensively treated ground yet again. For detailed overviews on the various theories see

Åström 1966, 189-192; Halepa-Bikaki 1984, 42; Papadopoulos 1994; Hirschfeld 1999, 1-13; and especially Lindblom 2001, 13-21. See also Aston 2009; Glatz 2012.

2. Vitelli 1977, 26, 28; Marschack 1972, 27.

3. Halepa-Bikaki 1984.

of the meaning or meanings of pre-firing marks among the following working hypotheses. The marks may refer to specific formal and functional characteristics of the vessel such as its shape, quality, volume or contents. Marks could also be related to the provenance and the distribution of the vessel. A third possibility is that a person unrelated to the manufacturing process asked the potter to make the mark for a different reason; for example, the buyer of the vessel may have wished to declare ownership, or the central administration may have decided to apply marks in order to control pottery production. The fourth explanation is that the potter used a private code to mark a stage in the production process, or to distinguish his/her own pots from those made by other potters in the same workshop. These interpretations of the marks' possible purposes are examined here with reference to the data from Bronze Age Crete.

Pre-firing marks and the volume and content scenario

It has been suggested that pre-firing marks may indicate the volume of a vessel or its content.⁴ Related to the volume hypothesis is the assignation of a numerical value to some simple pre-firing marks, such as vertical or horizontal incised lines or impressed dots, usually incised or impressed on the rim of the vessel or on the handle.⁵ If pre-firing marks indicated the volume or the content of a vessel, one would expect that vessels of similar formal and functional attributes would always be marked with the same mark in a given context. In none of the cases examined here can the mark be considered indicative of the volume and/or the content of the vessel, because the same mark was applied to vessels not only of different shapes and sizes, and thus of different volumes, but also of different functions. It is also highly unlikely that the marks designated the content of the vessels for another reason: the potter would have had to know in advance precisely what goods each vessel was to be used for, which would be practically impossible. Moreover, there is no evidence of vessels intended solely for the storage or transport of a single product –like the Hellenistic and Roman wine transport amphorae, for instance– which would have allowed the potter to know what type of product the vessel was to contain.

Pre-firing marks as indicators of vessel quality, provenance and destination

Another theory is that pre-firing marks indicate the origin, quality and destination of a vessel.⁶ If this were the case, we would expect a standardized, easily recognized marking system to be applied to a large number of vessels or batches of vessels from a particular potting or distribution centre. Pre-firing marks, however, occur on a very low percentage of pots compared to their unmarked counterparts. The

4. Persson 1937, 611; Valmin 1938, 396; Pendlebury *et al.* 1937-1938; Caskey 1955, 34; Pelon 1970, 137-138; Seidl 1972, 79; Vitelli 1977, 26-30; Halepa-Bikaki 1984, 9, 22; Panayotou 1986, 99; Roller 1987, 1, 60; Tsipopoulou 1991; van der Brink 1992, 274.

5. See the discussion in Papadopoulos 1994.

6. Caskey 1955, 34; Halepa-Bikaki 1984, 9, 92; Roller 1987, 1, 60; Nordquist 1987, 63; Tsipopoulou 1990, 104-106; Bailey 1996; 2007.

cases providing information on marking frequencies show that they do not exceed 3.3% of the total. Since by far the greater part of the output remains unmarked, the hypothesis that pre-firing marks are indicators of the origin and quality of the ceramic output cannot be valid. Furthermore, if pre-firing marks functioned in this manner, each potting centre would have used a very limited repertoire of marks, easily recognized by consumers on an inter- and intra-site level, and the potters would have marked all vessels, without exception, with those marks.⁷ Such a function might be argued for marks that only appear at specific production sites, on condition that they were used to mark a large number of vessels, whether of the same or of different shape. Although some pre-firing marks of this kind do occur at certain sites (Table 5), with the potters active there following the local marking tradition, they cannot be used as proof of such a scenario, since they are found on only a few vessels rather than the total ceramic output, or at least on a reasonable number of vessels, as one expects. Supporting data is also absent on an intra-site level. There are no examples of vessels that could have been imported to one site from another being marked with pre-firing signs exclusively attested at one of these sites. As said, the marked vessels found at each site are made of local fabrics indicating that the vessels covered local needs and were not distributed in the short and long-distance exchange. It may be noted here that few examples of marked vessels distributed from one site to another have been recorded; the marks, however, used in the marking of these vessels are singletons and cannot be considered an indication of the origin and quality of the corresponding vessels. The only case in which such a function can be argued for a pre-firing mark is that of the six wide-mouthed jars from Kastellos, probably imported from Malia (KST 1-KST 6). But this is an isolated case that cannot confirm an explanatory scenario on its own.

Pre-firing marks as markers of ownership

Marks considered to be an indication of ownership were usually incised on the vessel after it had been fired.⁸ The rationale is obvious: once the pot had been fired, any mark incised on it must have been made by someone who was not directly connected to the manufacturing process, most probably the owner. It has also been argued that pre-firing marks as markers of ownership were made by the potter at the future owner's request; in other words, these are specially commissioned, pre-ordered or reserved pots.⁹

If pre-firing marks denoted ownership, one would expect that a single type of mark would appear on several or all vessels used in a specific context. If, of course, the context was used by more than one person, there would also be more marks, but these would still be incised or impressed on many vessels. The quantity of marked

7. Recognizable and easily-applied marks intended to advertise quality products would most likely consist of standardized stamp or seal impressions or painted names indicating the potter, painter or workshop, as observed on *terra sigillata* and Greek vases, e.g. Beazley

1946; Kenrick 1990; Hartley and Dickinson 2008.

8. Petrie 1890, 43; Papadopoulos 1994.

9. For the scenario of pre-ordered vessels see Edgar 1904, 177-180; Papadopoulos 1994; Bailey 1996; 2007.

pots is an important factor in support of the ownership hypothesis. It is self-evident that if someone felt the need to state ownership of his/her possessions, he or she would not mark just a single vessel. The same mark would also be applied to other household items, although these may not be preserved in the archaeological record.¹⁰ Marking just one pot, or only a limited number of them, would be meaningless unless they were placed in a communal context. The study of marked pots in relation to their find context is a definitive factor in any investigation of the possible use of marks to signify ownership.

In the case of the marked pots recorded here, no sample or group of samples fulfils all the above conditions to confirm the use of pre-firing marks as markers of ownership.¹¹ There are some cases, however, in which meaningful patterns are apparent. Mark **F18** is incised on two conical cups and some loom-weights found in House 2 at Petras. Another mark, **F16**, is incised on two pithoi and a bowl also found in the same domestic unit. Did these artefacts belong to two different owners who ordered the potter to mark their vessels with an ownership mark? This question cannot be answered. Mark **F18** is a singleton, found nowhere else, at least according to the available data. The other mark, however, is also found on vessels from other contexts at Petras.¹² In conclusion, the meager and ambiguous data cannot provide support for the ownership scenario.

The state administration hypothesis

Another proposed hypothesis for the interpretation of pre-firing marks is that they may have been imposed on the potter by a representative of the state administration, for a variety of reasons related to the logistic/administrative aspects of pottery production.¹³ Specific marks may have been required in order to identify vessels provided by different workshops, to facilitate the book-keeping process, to keep track of individual potters and their output, to ensure that dependent potters were paid for their work by the central administration, or to differentiate between batches intended for separate state projects. One case in which potters' marks must be connected to the central administration's need to exercise control over ceramic production is that of the pre-firing marks applied to Aeginetan pottery. Aegina, during the Middle and Late Helladic periods, was an important potting centre, its output widely exported to the Aegean, Mainland Greece and even more distant regions.¹⁴ It is argued that potting production and distribution was under the control of the political élite at Kolonna, whose power rested partly on such control. According to M. Lindblom, the pre-firing marks applied to the vessels exported

10. For such a case see Bruyère 1953, 60.

11. The use of pre-firing marks as indicators of ownership has been proposed by Evans 1984; 1904; Persson 1937, 611; Kober 1948; Bruyère 1953; Seidl 1972, 79; Arnett 1973, 8; Winn 1981, 238, 253; Vermeule 1964, 41; Panayotou 1986, 99; Wiencke 1989, 507; Tsipopoulou 1990; 1995; van de Moortel 2006, 349.

12. According to Tsipopoulou, these two marks may indicate the area where the pots were placed or their content, Tsipopoulou 1991.

13. e.g. Helk 1990, 1; Lindblom 2001, 132-133; Gallorini 2009.

14. Lindblom 2001, 22-44, 100-120; Gauss and Kiriati 2011.

from Aegina functioned as identification tags of the potters and as a means of regulating economic obligations between the ruling élite and the dependent potters.¹⁵

In the context of Bronze Age Crete, it seems reasonable to suppose that, if pre-firing marks were imposed by the central administration in order to supervise and standardize pottery production, most vessels –or at least a considerable part of them– produced by controlled potting groups would be marked.¹⁶ The low numbers of marked vessels found at Cretan sites, even those that were the seats of important political groups, does not much this scenario, since one would expect a significant part of the ceramic output to have been marked. This factor aside, the pottery subjected to a marking process would have been that whose production and distribution were directly linked to the economic and ideological interests of ruling groups. The recorded data from Crete, however, show quite a different pattern. Pre-firing marks are applied to plain and untreated utilitarian vessels which, despite the labor and skill invested in their manufacture, are not what are generally defined as ‘politically charged commodities’, i.e. artifacts which, through their possession, distribution and display, uphold the ruling group’s claim to power and status.¹⁷ At Malia, for instance, where we have a wide range of marked vessels types, pre-firing marks are completely absent from fine tableware. It is worth noting that tableware at the site was produced following an administrative mode of production.¹⁸

Marked vessels have been found in settlements of various sizes and are not exclusively associated with administrative centres. In fact, very few marked vessels have been recovered in the central buildings of urban and peripheral settlements, although this is partly due to the limitations of the archaeological record. It is also worth bearing also in mind that the typological variety of marks found at each site does not match the scenario of a central control. If that were the case, one would expect the central administration to use a relatively limited number of marks, repeated on a large number of vessels.

For all these reasons, the state administration hypothesis is highly unlikely in the case of Bronze Age Crete.¹⁹ The practice of marking pottery before firing is attested in many potting traditions of societies with widely varying forms of socio-political organization.²⁰ Pre-firing marks are not necessarily linked to centralized states and types of government; they are also found in small Neolithic settlements; societies in the process of establishing more permanent forms of sociopolitical hierarchies; and archaic states and empires.

Pre-firing marks as potters’ marks

The scenario according to which pre-firing marks designate the work of an individual potter or group of potters is the most widely accepted explanation for the

15. Lindblom 2001, 132.

16. Testimonies from the historically recorded past show that where production was subject to external control the marking of each item was compulsory, e.g. Epstein 1991, 126.

17. For politically charged commodities and their contribution to socio-political com-

plexity, see Brumfiel and Earle 1987.

18. Knappet 1999.

19. This is also the case in other regions of the prehistoric world (e.g. Glatz 2012). For a different view, see Gallorini 2009.

20. Glatz 2012.

function and meaning of pre-firing marks among scholars working with material from the prehistoric Aegean, as well as among many others studying pre-firing marks from other cultural contexts.²¹ Why would a potter choose to mark his/her pots? Ethnographic analogies suggest that potters marked their pots in order to separate their own vessels from those of another potter sharing the same potting area, or to note a particular stage in the manufacturing process. The potter may have also marked the final vessel manufactured each day with a different sign, to keep the batches separate, particularly when placing them in the kiln for firing. Another hypothesis is that the first vessel of each batch was marked with a sort of 'workshop code' to indicate the type of slip or decoration to be applied to the whole group.²² Of these interpretations, most scholars agree with the first: potters marked their vessels with the aim of identifying their own output among many pots produced in a communal potting area.

Two ethnographic analogies are repeatedly cited to support the above scenario, the first from the Kamba potters in Kenya and the second from the Taricá potters in Peru.²³ Kamba potters incised marks on plain pottery before firing; this was not intended, as in the case of cattle brands and marks on arrows and beehives in the same society, to indicate ownership, but to distinguish the products of different women during production.²⁴ Peruvian potters also marked their vessels in order to distinguish their products when these were fired communally. Generally speaking, when a single family of potters manufactures vessels from start to finish, these vessels are not marked, since the family counts as a single economic unit. When a potting group consists of different potters who do not form a single economic unit, the vessels are often marked to distinguish each individual's output from the rest until they are sold or otherwise distributed. However, these marks are not considered significant, nor are they necessarily used consistently to indicate a specific potter or the specific quality of the vessel.

Might all the above apply in the case of Cretan pre-firing marks? If the pre-firing marks relate to the potter, we would expect a specific mark to be associated with vessels either of the same or of different shapes; each shape, however, would be manufactured according to similar potting technologies. The mark might be incised on all the vessels produced by the potter, or only on the first vessel of the given batch placed in the communal potting area. Ethnographic testimonies show that the potter might not always use a single, specific mark, but change it from time to time.²⁵ Potting groups in pre-industrial Greece, however, used the same mark.²⁶

21. Petrie 1890, 43; 1913, 28; Edgar 1904, 177-180; Firth 1912, 52; Persson 1937, 611; Valmin 1938, 396; Daniel 1941; Caskey 1955, 34; Vermeule 1964, 40; Åström 1966, 189-191; Frankel 1975, 38; Döhl 1978, 143-149; Tzavella-Evjen 1980, 96; Nordquist 1987, 63; Bennet 1994; 1995 Papadopoulos 1994; Bailey 1996; 2007; Hirschfeld 1999, 33-34; Lindblom 2001, 132-133; Ditze 2007, 279-280; Glatz 2012.

22. Ditze 2007, 279-280.

23. Lindblom 1920, 135, 538; Gill 1981; Donnan 1971. For a summary, see Barley 1994, 128; Lindblom 2001, 19-21. See also Rice 1987, 182-183.

24. Barley 1994, 128.

25. Donnan 1971.

26. e.g. Korre-Zografou 1995, 77-146.

There are many recorded cases among the material discussed here where the same mark was applied to vessels either of the same shape or of different shapes. Vessels of each shape share similar formal attributes, surface treatment, paste technology and forming techniques. The similarity of the potting profile indicates that they had been manufactured by the same group. Most examples come from Vryssinas, Malia, Syme and Petras, since the large number of marked vessels found at these sites allows meaningful associations to be made. Examples are also reported from Kommos, Hagia Triada, Knossos, Kastellos, Karphi, and Mochlos. The marks used in each case are either site-specific or common to more sites than one; in both cases the respective vessels were produced following the same potting tradition. Potters active in these centres followed local marking practices that differed from those of other areas.

The graphological analysis of some marks from Syme, Malia and Knossos is relevant in this respect. At Syme, specific marks are incised on vessels of the same shape manufactured using the same potting technology. The graphological analysis of the pre-firing marks, however, shows that each was incised by a different potter. The pre-firing mark, in these cases, refers to a potting group that had more than one member. A similar situation can be documented at Malia, where it has even proved possible to identify cases in which the same marks, incised or stamped on vessels of different shapes, were made by the same potter. The output of five potters has been identified. Marks on the disc of the false neck of stirrup jars at Knossos were applied by the same individual, while amphorae found in the Vat Room deposit were made and marked by members of the same potting group.

FUNCTION AND MEANING OF CRETAN PRE-FIRING MARKS

The only working hypothesis on the use and meaning of pre-firing marks that is confirmed by the archaeological evidence from various sites of Bronze Age Crete is the one correlating the marks to the potters who made the vessels. Following the most prevalent scenario, advanced by many scholars and supported by the ethnographic record, I would suggest that Cretan pre-firing marks designate the potter, who marked his/her output in order to identify it. Local potting groups used a certain repertoire of marks and followed preset rules in marking their vessels. Instead of a uniform marking system extending across Crete, all the indications point to the existence of distinct marking regional traditions, whose basic characteristics, however, it is not yet possible to determine.

Pre-firing marks are therefore conceived as mono-functional rather than multi-functional entities. It is argued that marks are connected exclusively to the potter and do not fulfill any other function or use. No other explanation is as consistently supported by the available evidence. Vessels of different sizes often feature the same mark types; conversely, vessels of similar capacity bear a variety of marks, excluding the possibility that the marks are indicators of capacity or weight. No marks can be identified as labeling specific agricultural goods, and their use is too inconsistent to be linked to the destination of the products they contained.

The mono-functional premise is at variance with views supporting the multi-functional aspects of pre-firing marks.²⁷ According to these views, potters' marks may have served different purposes depending on the function of the vessels on which they appeared, the location of the marks, the nature of the marks themselves, and the socio-economic setting in which the vessels were produced and used. Could pre-firing marks, however, serve a range of needs? Discussing this issue, Lindblom suggests that the multi-functional scenario is due to the fact that many explanatory efforts combine data from quite different temporal, geographic and socio-economic contexts.²⁸ Moreover, the inability to identify any significant patterns linking the properties of the vessels and the mark types has led to the hypothesis that all proposed functions and meanings can be valid in a given sample. The combination of data from different sites and even cultural milieus, particularly evident in the hunt for typological parallels for pre-firing marks, conceals a risk of generalizations that do not take into account the site-specific cultural settings and even the regional marking traditions that may have existed. The same pre-firing mark that may be found in different marking systems across the Aegean and Mainland Greece does not necessarily convey the same meaning.

But why would the potter want to identify the vessels he/she produced? The mark was made before the vessel was set aside to dry. This would enable the potter to identify his/her own pots among the rest, both at this stage and when batches by different potters were fired in the same kiln. This theory is borne out by ethnographic parallels, where simple marks are used to differentiate between vessels when unloading the kiln. The vessels could even be marked in cases when they were manufactured in a workshop exclusively used by the potters of a certain potting group. Pre-firing marks may have been used as an internal workshop code, to indicate the next step in the process for a particular batch of pots.²⁹ One could argue that the very minor differences observed between the marks used by the members of a potting group were hard to distinguish, especially if applied and 'read' by illiterate potters. However, ethnographic parallels show that potters were expert at spotting variations, not only in very similar marks but also in manufacturing details, and at identifying the work of a specific colleague.³⁰ It is also very probable that the mark used by the potters in a family group may have been a hereditary symbol passed down through the generations.³¹ A young Kamba potter for instance, will use her mother's mark until she marries and then designs her own mark.³²

In viewing pottery production in purely economic terms, therefore, potters' marks may be linked first and foremost to the primary economic unit, the household, or to a wider group the members of which were bound by economic

27. Halepa-Bikaki 1984; Bailey 1996; Papadopoulos 1994. See also Wood 1990, 45-47; Budka 2009.

28. Lindblom 2001, 17-19.

29. Ditze 2007, 279-280.

30. Donnan 1971; Hardin 1977; Pryor and Carr 1995.

31. Medieval European masons' marks, for example, were sometimes used by the same family for up to 300 years. See Vries, de, 2009.

32. In this area the potters are all women. See Gill 1981, 60.

interests.³³ Marks were used to safeguard the economic interests of the group in cases where the rightful owner of a vessel or a group of vessels was challenged. The manufacture of a vessel, however, is the outcome of a series of complex processes ultimately identified with the potter him/herself; a potter who is not seen here as a link in a chain of economic processes, but as an individual seeking to project his/her knowledge, skills and experience onto one of the most permanent forms of expression: a vessel.

THE MARKED POT AND THE POTTER

It has been argued that pre-firing marks designate the potter who made the vessel. They are thus makers' marks or, more accurately, potters' marks. Their function was to identify the pieces, whether an individual vessel or a batch of vessels, made by independent potters during a communal or cooperative stage of production. Moreover, the material discussed from some sites points to the presence of potting groups, each consisting of more than one potter, following the same potting tradition and marking pots of the same type with a specific mark. Thus the mark is also indicative of a wider group. The marks could be seen as a relatively inconspicuous way of telling the products of different potting groups apart and ensuring that each group was recompensed.³⁴

In discussing the material from Syme, I have argued that the mark indicates not only a potting group but also the potter, who, although active in the context of the group, is still clearly an individual being. This being is defined, on the one hand by his/her motor-performance habits during the forming of the pot and on the other, by the particular way of writing the same mark. While the potters of each group place the same mark on pots of the same type, they each incise or impress it in the soft clay in a different way; thus, although the marks are the same conceptual image, they differ from each other. This difference is interpreted here not only as the consequence of an inherent idiosyncrasy but also as a deliberate expression of the potter's individuality. Although the potters could have incised the mark in exactly the same way, thereby ensuring the standardisation of the end result –after all, standardisation characterises the output of many of these units– they chose, instead, to incise it each in a different way, knowing that this would be noticeable to the attentive observer.

The differences in both the making of the pot and the writing of the mark help one approach each potter separately; they give a materialised, historically specific substance and identity to the anonymous potters –anonymous to us but well known to their community. Like any practical skill, to transform the clay into a vessel requires care, craftsmanship and dexterity.³⁵ Through practice, these skilled

33. In many traditional societies pottery production is linked with the economic needs of the household, Rice 1987, 180. For the household as an economic entity, see Halperin 1994, 144-166.

34. e.g Lindblom 2001, 132-133, 135 for a full discussion.

35. For the notion of skill see Ingold 2000, 289-283.

movements gradually become part of the potter's physical development and habits. Writing, too, as Paul Connerton has noted, is an incorporating as well as an inscribing practice: its 'irreducible bodily component' is expressed not only in the actual hand movement but also in the angle at which hand and tool come into contact with the writing surface, affecting the whole stance of the writer.³⁶

Based on these observations, the making of a vessel and, above all, its marking are understood here as a code for non-verbal communication and the transmission of individual identity. It is, in other words, an externalisation practice, sometimes unconscious and sometimes conscious. Through the vessel he/she marked, the potter could declare his/her presence, his/her actual self. The mark is what transforms a vessel, among the many the potter has made, into something other than a simple utilitarian artefact: a medium that its maker has adopted in order to achieve strategic aims in the negotiation of his/her social formation. Even in societies where ceramic production is determined by strict set rules, potters still have a degree of individual choice, which is imprinted on the final output and respected by the community.³⁷ The individual element remains autonomous even under the aesthetic dictates of the community. Thus, I believe that the marking of a pot, acting together with, rather than separately from, the vessel of which it is an organic part, expresses the potter's need to consider, to reinforce and to promote in more permanent forms valuable pieces of his/her experience. And the expression is always a mixture of conscious and unconscious externalisation.

But why does the potter feel this need to externalise the clear statement of his identity through the marking of a pot he/she has made? As mentioned above, most of the models proposed to explain the practice of pot-marking focus on the need to secure the economic interests of a potting group and/or control the manufacture process. Although the value of these scenarios is by no means negligible, I would like to draw attention to a different interpretative pattern that sees marked vessels as vehicles of remembrance. Artefacts are external storage containers of memory.³⁸ They exist as packets of objective knowledge stored outside the individual, a way of recalling experienced sensations that have acted on the mind through the senses. In this view, material objects, like the mind itself, are accessible repositories of a memory that is somehow 'fixed' by material culture. An artefact, however, does not preserve a specific memory unaltered, like a frozen snapshot; what it does is to evoke remembrance, often incompletely and in an unforeseen way.³⁹ Material culture, therefore, precipitates rather than stores remembrance. Person and artefact share a dialogue in which the boundaries between subjective and objective are blurred. Humans may impress themselves on objects, but objects also impress themselves on humans.

In this dialogue of memory, the senses are no longer simply the means of apprehending our experience of the material world. In Ingold's view, we need to start thinking of the body as not only the conduit for but also the subject of constantly

36. Connerton 1989, 76-77. See also Ingold 2000, 402-5.

37. Vogiatzoglou-Sakellariopoulou 2009, 56-57.

38. Donald 1991; Jones 2007; Harris 2010.

39. Kwint 1999; Jones 2004.

shifting sensations.⁴⁰ This dynamic human engagement with the material world is what allows us to perceive and experience the process of remembrance. Memory is not the transmission of discrete packets of objective knowledge; rather, it is the calling up of events in the mind, through the 'dialogic encounter between person and world'.⁴¹

Adopting the view that material culture is active in precipitating remembrance, the marked vessel, apart from any practical use it may have had, is seen here as the mnemonic statement of a whole action, actually a series of actions, carried out by the potter. The potter's individuality, an individuality easily discernible to the experienced observer, has been imprinted on the pot. Bearing in mind that in small societies, where there is little anonymity, most members can recognise the details of their contemporaries' individual expression, remembrance was ensured through the ostentatious display of numerous artefacts. The message transmitted by the vessel is determined by its placement in social relations and the way it is utilised by the associations that arise among subjects and objects, structures and strategies. The vessel effectively has a historical substance, a substance linked to a particular historical, social political and cultural context, within which the vessel was created to provide its message. When the vessel is detached from its familiar world, it no longer functions as a message carrier but becomes an object exposed to the indiscretion of a foreign world. It is simply a utilitarian object seen in economic terms.

All the issues discussed here are by no means conclusive solutions. They are simply proposals allowing us to view the pre-firing marks of Bronze Age Crete from a different angle. Ultimately, then, there can be no firm conclusions regarding the potters who marked their ceramic creations. We can only trace possible routes, branching pathways and dead ends on the map of possibilities indicated by the archaeological record and human nature itself.

40. Ingold 2000, 243-289. See also Sheller 2004; Ahmed 2006.

41. Jones 2004.

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- Abbreviations follow the conventions recommended in the *American Journal of Archaeology* 111.1 (2007), 14-34.
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TABLE 1

NO.	SHAPE	PRESERVED VESSELS' PART	MARK POSITION	MARK	CONTEXT	C-DATE	P-DATE
1	amphora	body	rectangle (in. pp.)	body	Building Y	MM IB	MM IB
2	jar	body/handle	three evenly spaced lines transversed at a right angle by a fourth (in.)	handle	Building V	MM IB	MM IB
3	cooking pot	body/handle	three short oblique parallel lines (in.)	handle	Building V	MM IB	MM IB
4	amphora	rim/handle	two lines crossed at an acute angle (in.)	handle	Building V	MM IB	MM IB
5	basin	body/handle	short vertical line (in.)	handle	Building V	MM IB	MM IB
6	jar	handle	long oblique line (in.)	handle	Building V	MM IB	MM IB
7	pithos	handle	two/three evenly spaced lines transversed at a right angle by a third/fourth (in. pp.)	handle	Building V	MM IB-LM IA	MM IB
8	jar	handle	three evenly spaced lines transversed at a right angle by a fourth (in. pp.)	handle	Building V	MM IB-LM IA	MM IB
9	jar	handle	two lines crossed at an acute angle (in.)	handle	Building V	MM IB-LM IA	MM IB
10	cooking pot	body/handle	short horizontal line (in.)	handle	West Sector-N	MM IB	MM IB
11	pithoid jar	body/handle	two short vertical parallel lines (in.)	handle	West Sector-N	MM IB	MM IB
12	basin	handle	two long oblique lines (in. pp.)	handle	West Sector-N	MM IB	MM IB
13	bowl	rim/body	triangle (in. pp.)	close to rim	West Sector-N	MM IB	MM IB
14	jar	handle	three evenly spaced lines transversed at a right angle by a fourth (in. pp.)	handle	West Sector-N	MM IB	MM IB
15	jug	handle	long vertical line (in. pp.)	handle	West Sector-N	MM IB	MM IB
16	basin	handle	long oblique line (in.)	handle	West Sector-N	MM IB	MM IB
17	jar	body/handle	three evenly spaced lines transversed at a right angle by a fourth (in.)	handle	West Sector-N	MM IB	MM IB
18	cooking pot	handle	four short oblique lines (in. pp.)	handle	West Sector-N	MM IB	MM IB

Table 1. Marked vessels and pre-firing marks at Syme (in.: incised; im.: impressed; pp.: partly preserved).

TABLE 1

NO.	SHAPE	PRESERVED VESSELS' PART	MARK POSITION	MARK	CONTEXT	C-DATE	P-DATE
19	jar	body/handle	three evenly spaced lines transversed at a right angle by a fourth (in.)	handle	West Sector-N	MM IB	MM IB
20	bowl	rim	three evenly spaced lines transversed at a right angle by a fourth (in. pp.)	close to rim	West Sector-N	MM IB	MM IB
21	bowl	rim	four long vertical parallel lines (in. pp.)	close to rim	West Sector-N	MM IB	MM IB
22	jar	handle	short horizontal line	handle	West Sector-N	MM IB	MM IB
23	amphora	handle	short vertical line (in.)	handle	West Sector-N	MM IB	MM IB
24	jar	handle	long oblique line (in.)	handle	West Sector-N	MM IB	MM IB
25	jug	handle	four short horizontal parallel lines (in.)	handle	West Sector-N	MM IB	MM IB
26	jar	rim/body/ handle	five circular dots (im. pp.)	handle	West Sector-N	MM IB	MM IB
27	cooking pot	rim/body/ handle	two short oblique parallel lines (in. pp.)	handle	West Sector-N	MM IB, MM IIB-LM IA	MM IB
28	cooking pot	handle	three short oblique parallel lines (in.)	handle	West Sector-N	MM IB, MM IIB-LM IA	MM IB
29	jug	rim/handle	two lines crossed at an acute angle (in. pp.)	handle	West Sector-N	MM IB	MM IB or MM IIB
30	jar	rim/body/ handle	three evenly spaced lines transversed at a right angle by a fourth (in.)	handle	West Sector-C	MM IB	MM IB
31	jar	body/handle	three evenly spaced lines transversed at a right angle by a fourth (in.)	handle	West Sector-C	MM IB	MM IB
32	cooking pot	body/handle	four short oblique parallel lines (in.)	handle	West Sector-C	MM IB	MM IB
33	cooking pot	body/handle	three evenly spaced lines transversed at a right angle by a fourth (in. pp.)	handle	West Sector-C	MM IB	MM IB
34	jar	rim/body	long line (in.)	handle	West Sector-C	MM IB	MM IB
35	bowl	rim/body	three evenly spaced lines transversed at a right angle by a fourth (in.)	close to rim	West Sector-C	MM IB	MM IB
36	cup	handle	three evenly spaced lines transversed at a right angle by a fourth (in. pp.)	handle	West Sector-C	MM IB	MM IB

Table 1 (cont.). Marked vessels and pre-firing marks at Syme (in.: incised; im.: impressed; pp.: partly preserved).

TABLE 1

NO.	SHAPE	PRESERVED VESSELS' PART	MARK POSITION	MARK	CONTEXT	C-DATE	P-DATE
37	jar	handle	short vertical line (in.)	handle	West Sector-C	MM IB, MM IIB-LM IA	MM IB
38	jar	body/handle	three evenly spaced lines transversed at a right angle by a fourth (in.)	handle	West Sector-C	MM IB, MM IIB-LM IA	MM IB
39	pithos	body/handle	lozenge	handle	West Sector-C	MM IB, MM IIIA-LM IA	MM IB
40	basin	body/handle	short oblique line (in.)	handle	West Sector-C	MM IB, MM IIIA-LM IA	MM IB
41	jug	handle	one long and one short line crossed at a right angle (in.)	handle	West Sector-C	MM IB	MM IB
42	jar	handle	three evenly spaced lines transversed at a right angle by a fourth (in.)	handle	West Sector-C	MM IB	MM IB
43	jar	handle	short vertical line (in.)	handle	West Sector-C	MM IB	MM IB
44	jar	handle	three evenly spaced lines transversed at a right angle by a fourth (in.)	handle	West Sector-C	MM IB	MM IB
45	amphora	body	two lines crossed at an acute angle (in.)	handle	West Sector-C	MM IB, MM IIB	MM IB or MM IIB
46	cooking pot	handle	three evenly spaced triangular dots (in.)	handle	West Sector-C	MM IB-MM IIB	MM IB
47	jug	rim/handle	one long and one short line crossed at a right angle (in.)	handle	West Sector-C	MM IB, MM IIB	MM IB
48	cooking pot	body/handle	two evenly spaced lines transversed at an acute angle by a third (in.)	handle	West Sector-C	MM IB, MM IIB, MM IIIA-LM IA	MM IB or MM IIB
49	jar	handle	three evenly spaced lines transversed at a right angle by a fourth (in. pp.)	handle	West Sector-C	MM IB, MM IIB-LM IA	MM IB
50	cooking pot	handle	four vertical parallel lines (in.)	handle	West Sector-C	MM IB, MM IIB-LM IA	MM IB
51	basin	base/body/handle	short horizontal line (in.)	handle	West Sector-C	MM IB, MM IIB-LM IA	MM IB or MM IIB

Table 1 (cont.). Marked vessels and pre-firing marks at Syme (in.: incised; im.: impressed; pp.: partly preserved).

TABLE 1

NO.	SHAPE	PRESERVED VESSELS' PART	MARK POSITION	MARK	CONTEXT	C-DATE	P-DATE
52	pithos	rim/body	two short lines crossed at right angle (in.)	handle	West Sector-C	MM IB, MM IIB-LM IA	MM IB or MM IIB
53	jar	body/handle	three evenly spaced lines transversed at a right angle by a fourth (in.)	handle	West Sector-C	MM IB, MM IIB	MM IB
54	pithos	rim/body	lozenge (in.)	handle	West Sector-C	MM IB	MM IB
55	cooking pot	handle	three short oblique parallel lines (in. pp.)	handle	West Sector-C	MM IIB	MM IB or MM IIB
56	bowl	rim	five long vertical parallel lines (in.)	close to rim	West Sector-C	MM IB, MM IIB-LM IA, 1st millennium	MM IB
57	jar	handle	five dots (in. pp.)	handle	West Sector-C	MM IB	MM IB
58	amphora	handle	two lines to form a T (in.)	handle	Building U	MM IIB	MM IIB
59	basin	body/handle	two long oblique parallel lines (in. pp.)	handle	Building U	MM IIB	MM IB
60	cooking pot	handle	shallow finger impression (in.)	handle	Building U	MM IIB	MM IB or MM IIB
61	cooking pot	rim/body/ handle	two lines crossed at a right angle (in.)	handle	Building U	MM IIB	MM IIB
62	cooking pot	handle	three short vertical parallel lines (in.)	handle	Building U	MM IIB	MM IB or MM IIB
63	pithos	rim/body	two lines intersected at an acute angle by a third (in.)	handle	Building U	MM IIB	MM IIB
64	jug	rim/neck/handle	two lines in the shape of V (in.)	handle	Building U	MM IIB	MM IIB
65	cooking pot	body/handle	two lines in the shape of V (in.)	handle	Building U	MM IIB	MM IB or MM IIB
66	pithos	upper part	short horizontal line (in.)	handle	Building U	MM IIB	MM IIB
67	jar	upper part	double axe (in.)	shoulder	Building U	MM IIB	MM IIB
68	pithos	rim/body/handle	double axe (in. pp.)	shoulder	Building U	MM IIB-MM IIIA	MM IIB

Table 1 (cont.). Marked vessels and pre-firing marks at Syme (in.: incised; im.: impressed; pp.: partly preserved).

TABLE 1

NO.	SHAPE	PRESERVED VESSELS' PART	MARK POSITION	MARK	CONTEXT	C-DATE	P-DATE
69	pithos	rim/body/handle	two lines in a V-shape (in.)	handle	Building U	MM IIB-LM IA	MM IIB- LM IA
70	amphora	body	double axe (in. pp.)	body	Building U	MM IIB-LM IA	MM IIB
71	jar	body/handle	three evenly spaced lines transversed at right angle by a fourth (in.)	handle	Building U	MM IIB-LM IA	MM IB
72	tumbler	base	Hieroglyphic sign 061 (in.)	below base	Building U	MM IIB	MM IB
73	jar	body/handle	two oblique parallel lines (in. pp.)	body	Building U	MM IB, MM IIB	MM IB or MM IIB
74	pithos	body	double axe (in. pp.)	shoulder	Building U	MM IIIA-LM IA	MM IIB
75	jug	handle	three short oblique parallel lines (in. pp.)	handle	Building Ub	MM IIIA	MM IB
76	basin	body/handle	two vertical parallel lines (in. pp.)	handle	Building Ub	MM IIIA	MM IB
77	pithos	upper part	double axe (in. pp.)	shoulder	Building Ub	MM IIB- MM IIIA	MM IIB
78	jar	handle	five dots (im.)	handle	Building Ub	MM IIIA	MM IB
79	cooking pot	body/handle	three evenly spaced lines transversed at right angle by a fourth (in. pp.)	handle	Sacred Enclosure	MM IB, MM IIB	MM IB
80	cooking pot	handle	five short oblique parallel lines (in. pp.)	handle	Sacred Enclosure	MM IB, MM IIB	MM IB or MM IIB
81	jar	body/handle	three evenly spaced lines transversed at right angle by a fourth (in.)	handle	Sacred Enclosure	MM IIB- MM IIIB	MM IB
82	rounded vessel	rim/body	two lines meeting at acute angle (in. pp.)	below rim	Sacred Enclosure	MM IIIB-LM IA	MM IIIB- LM IA
83	amphora	handle	two lines in a V-shape (in.)	handle	Sacred Enclosure	MM IIIB- LM IIIA	MM IIB- LM IA

Table 1 (cont.). Marked vessels and pre-firing marks at Syme (in.: incised; im.: impressed; pp.: partly preserved).

TABLE 1

NO.	SHAPE	PRESERVED VESSELS' PART	MARK POSITION	MARK	CONTEXT	C-DATE	P-DATE
84	bowl	part (1/3)	triangle (in.)	close to rim	Sacred Enclosure	MM IIIB- LM IB	MM IB
85	pithos	rim/collar/handle	arched line (double axe) (in. pp.)	shoulder	Sacred Enclosure	MM IIIB- LM IA	MM IIB
86	jar	handle	two short vertical parallel lines (in.)	handle	Sacred Enclosure	MM IIIB-LM IA	MM IB
87	cooking pot	body/handle	three short oblique parallel lines (in.)	handle	Sacred Enclosure	MM IIIB-LM IA	MM IB
88	amphora	handle	short horizontal line (in.)	handle	Sacred Enclosure	MM IIIB-LM IA	MM IB
89	jar	body/handle	long oblique line (in.)	handle	Sacred Enclosure	MM IIIB-LM IA	MM IB
90	cooking pot	body/handle	short horizontal line (in.)	body	Sacred Enclosure	MM IIIB-LM IA	MM IB
91	cooking pot	rim/body/handle	two short vertical parallel lines (in.)	handle	Sacred Enclosure	MM IIIB-LM IA	MM IB
92	jar	body/handle	long oblique line (in.)	handle	Sacred Enclosure	MM IIIB-LM IA	MM IIIB- LM IA
93	stemmed cup	middle/low part	two lines crossed at an acute angle	body	Sacred Enclosure	MM IIIB-LM IA	MM IIIB- LM IA
94	amphora	body	rectangle (in. pp.)	body	Sacred Enclosure	MM IIIB-LM IA	MM IB
95	pithos	body	rectangle enclosing two crossing diagonal lines (in. pp.)	body	Building S	MM IIIB-LM IA, LM III	LM IA or LM IB
96	amphora	handle	double T (in.)	body	Building T	MM IB, MM IIB-LM IA	MM IIB
97	pithos	rim	Linear A sign AB27 (in.)	rim	Building T	LM IIIB- Late Geometric	MM IIIA- LM IB
98	cooking pot	handle	two short oblique parallel lines (in. pp.)	handle	Building U or Building Ub	MMIIB-MM IIIA	MM IIB

Table 1 (cont.). Marked vessels and pre-firing marks at Syme (in.: incised; im.: impressed; pp.: partly preserved).

TABLE 2

ONE LONG LINE			
SHAPE	PLACEMENT	DATE	SM
jar	handle	MM IB	SM 6
jug	handle	MM IB	SM 15
basin	hande	MM IB	SM 16
cooking pot	handle	MM IB	SM 24
jar	handle	MM IB	SM 34
jar	handle	MM IB	SM 89
jar	handle	MM IIIB-LM IA	SM 92
TWO LONG LINES			
SHAPE	PLACEMENT	DATE	SM
basin	handle	MM IB	SM 12
basin	handle	MM IB	SM 59
FOUR/FIVE LONG LINES			
SHAPE	PLACEMENT	DATE	SM
bowl	interior close to the rim	MM IB	SM 21
bowl	interior close to the rim	MM IB	SM 56
ONE SHORT LINE			
SHAPE	PLACEMENT	DATE	SM
basin	handle	MM IB	SM 5
cooking pot	handle	MM IB	SM 10
jar	handle	MM IB	SM 22
jar	handle	MM IB	SM 23
jar	handle	MM IB	SM 37
basin	handle	MM IB	SM 40
jar	handle	MM IB	SM 43
basin	handle	MM IB or MM IIB	SM 51
pithos	handle	MM IIB	SM 66
amphora	handle	MM IB	SM 88
cooking pot	handle	MMIB	SM 90

Table 2. Pre-firing mark types at Syme.

TABLE 2

TWO SHORT LINES			
SHAPE	PLACEMENT	DATE	SM
pithoid jar	handle	MM IB	SM 11
basin	handle	MM IIB	SM 76
jar	handle	MM IB	SM 86
cooking pot	handle	MM IB	SM 91
THREE SHORT LINES			
SHAPE	PLACEMENT	DATE	SM
cooking pot	handle	MM IB	SM 3
cooking pot	handle	MM IB	SM 28
cooking pot	handle	MM IB or MM IIB	SM 62
cooking pot	handle	MM IB	SM 87
FOUR SHORT LINES			
SHAPE	PLACEMENT	DATE	SM
jug	handle	MM IB	SM 25
cooking pot	handle	MM IB	SM 32
cooking pot	handle	MM IB	SM 50
T-SHAPED INCISED LINES			
SHAPE	PLACEMENT	DATE	SM
amphora	handle	MM IIB	SM 58
DOUBLE T-SHAPED INCISED LINES			
SHAPE	PLACEMENT	DATE	SM
amphora	handle	MM IIB	SM 96
CROSSED INCISED LINES AT A RIGHT ANGLE			
SHAPE	PLACEMENT	DATE	SM
jug	handle	MM IB	SM 41
jug	handle	MM IIB	SM 47
pithos	handle	MM IB or MM IIB	SM 52
cooking pot	handle	MM IIB	SM 61

Table 2 (cont.). Pre-firing mark types at Syme.

TABLE 2

CROSSED INCISED LINES AT AN ACUTE ANGLE			
SHAPE	PLACEMENT	DATE	SM
amphora	handle	MM IB	SM 4
jar	handle	MM IB	SM 9
jug	handle	MM IB or MM IIB	SM 29
amphora	body	MM IB or MM IIB	SM 45
stemmed cup	body	MM IIIB-LM IA	SM 93
ONE HORIZONTAL AND TWO OBLIQUELY INCISED LINES			
SHAPE	PLACEMENT	DATE	SM
cooking pot	handle	MM IB or MM IIB	SM 48
EVENLY SPACED LINES TRANSVERSED AT A RIGHT ANGLE BY A LONGER ONE			
SHAPE	PLACEMENT	DATE	SM
jar	handle	MM IB	SM 31
jar	handle	MM IB	SM 71
jar	handle	MM IB	SM 2
jar	handle	MM IB	SM 38
jar	handle	MM IB	SM 42
jar	handle	MM IB	SM 30
jar	handle	MM IB	SM 53
jar	handle	MM IB	SM 19
jar	handle	MM IB	SM 17
jar	handle	MM IB	SM 14
jar	handle	MM IB	SM 49
jar	handle	MM IB	SM 81
jar	handle	MM IB	SM 7
jar	handle	MM IB	SM 44
jar	handle	MM IB	SM 79
jar	handle	MM IB	SM 36
jar	handle	MM IB	SM 20
jar	handle	MM IB	SM 35

Table 2 (cont.). Pre-firing mark types at Syme.

TABLE 2

TWO LINES FORMING A V-SHAPE			
SHAPE	PLACEMENT	DATE	SM
jug	handle	MM IIB	SM 64
cooking pot	handle	MM IB or MM IIB	SM 65
pithos	handle	MM IIB - LM IA	SM 69
amphora	handle	MM IIB - LM IA	SM 83
TRIANGLE			
SHAPE	PLACEMENT	DATE	SM
bowl	interior below the rim	MM IB	SM 13
bowl	interior below the rim	MM IB	SM 84
LOZENGE			
SHAPE	PLACEMENT	DATE	SM
pithos	handle	MM IB	SM 39
pithos	handle	MM IB	SM 54
RECTANGLE			
SHAPE	PLACEMENT	DATE	SM
amphora	body	MM IB	SM 1
amphora	body	MM IB	SM 94
RECTANGLE WITH AN X			
SHAPE	PLACEMENT	DATE	SM
pithos	body	LM IA or LM IB	SM 95
DOUBLE AXE			
SHAPE	PLACEMENT	DATE	SM
jar	shoulder	MM IIB	SM 67
pithos	shoulder	MM IIB	SM 68
amphora	body	MM IIB	SM 70
pithos	shoulder	MM IIB	SM 74
pithos	shoulder	MM IIB	SM 77

Table 2 (cont.). Pre-firing mark types at Syme.

TABLE 2

SIGN OF HIEROGLYPHIC SCRIPT (061)			
SHAPE	PLACEMENT	DATE	SM
tumbler	below the base	MM IB	SM 72
SIGN OF LINEAR A SCRIPT (AB27)			
SHAPE	PLACEMENT	DATE	SM
pithos	on the rim	MM IIIA-LM IB	SM 97
IMPRESSED DOTS			
SHAPE	PLACEMENT	DATE	SM
jar	handle	MM IB	SM 26
jar	handle	MM IB	SM 57
jar	handle	MM IB	SM 78
ANGULAR IMPRESSION			
SHAPE	PLACEMENT	DATE	SM
cooking pot	handle	MM IB	SM 46
FINGER IMPRESSION			
SHAPE	PLACEMENT	DATE	SM
cooking pot	handle	MM IB	SM 60

Table 2 (cont.). Pre-firing mark types at Syme.

TABLE 3

DATE						
SITES	Prepalatial FN-MMIA	Protopalatial MM IB-MM IIB	Neopalatial MM IIIA-LM IB	Post-palatial LM II-LM IIIC	Uncertain MM-LM	TOTAL
Platyvola	1					1
Psathi	1					1
Chania				19		19
Vrysinas		1	31	4		36
Monastiraki		5				5
Kommos		16	9	8		33
H. Triada			9			9
Phaistos		15	3		2	20
Tylissos	3					3
Knossos		4	3	12	3	22
Archanes		3	1			4
Malia		381	2			383
Kastellos		6				6
Karphi				24		24
Syme		91	5		2	98
Myrtos		2				2
Gournia		1	4			5
Mochlos		1	20	8		29
Chalinomouri			3			3
Pseira		1	7			8
Katalimata				6		6
Halasmenos				5		6
Kavousi				18		18
Petras		37	215	1		253
H. Fotia			2			2
Palaikastro		1	3	5	7	17
Zakros			3			3

Table 3. Sites with published pre-firing marks included in the corpus.

TABLE 4

SITES	SHAPES													
	Pithos	Amphora	Jar	Spouted Jar	Palace Style Jar	Lent. Jar	Brid. Spout. Jar	Stirrup Jar	Jug	Basin	Bowl	Cup	Plate	Cooking Pot
Platyvola		1												
Psathi											1			
Chania											3	3		13
Vrysinas		4						3			2	11		9
Monastiraki	3	1												
Kommos	2	1	2			1		1	1			2		17
H. Triada														9
Phaistos	2		3								1	1		7
Tylissos												3		
Knossos	5	4												1
Archanes	1							9						
Malia	9	23	21	120	1				14	7	12	11	2	11
Kastellos			6											
Karphi	2		1							3				10
Syme	14	10	28						7	7	6	3		22
Myrtos									1					
Gournia	2	2							1					
Mochlos	18	6												1
Chalinomouri	3											1		
Pseira	1		1		1				1					
Katalimata														
Halasmenos									1					3
Kavousi	4									2				9
Petras	24	14	1				1		3	3	10	155		9
H. Fotia														2
Palaikastro		3						3					1	4
Zakros	1		1		1									

Table 4. Distribution of marked vessels types.

TABLE 4

SHAPES													
SITES	Tray	Trip. Tray	Lid	Stainer	Spin. Bowl	Lamp	Stand	Collector	Oven	Brazier	Water Pipe	Larnax	Offering Table
Platyvola													
Psathi													
Chania													
Vrysinas	2									1			
Monastiraki													
Kommos		3											
H. Triada													
Phaistos			1						1				
Tylissos													
Knossos													
Archanes			2									2	
Malia			6			2	4	5			1		3
Kastellos													
Karphi		5											
Syme													
Myrtos					1								
Gournia													
Mochlos			3										
Chalinomouri													
Pseira			1										
Katalimata		1											
Halasmenos													
Kavousi				1								1	
Petras		9	2			1							
H. Fotia													
Palaiakastro													
Zakros													

Table 4 (cont.). Distribution of marked vessels types.

TABLE 5

MARK TYPES		
SITES	SINGLETONS	TYPES ATTESTED IN MORE THAN ONE EXAMPLE
Platyvola	J12	
Psathi		
Chania	A7, C42, C43	
Vrysinas	B3-B5, C38, D6, I5, I6	B1, B2
Monastiraki	A6	
Kommos	A14, A16, C5, F38, G2, G11-G13, J4, J6, J7	G10
H. Triada		A19
Phaistos	C19, C27, C28, C40, C44, C51	
Tylissos	C15	
Knossos	C10, C11, D7, G9, J14-J17	
Archanes	F34	
Malia	C13, C20, C22, C25, C30, C32, C36, C37, F1, F4, F9, F12, F15, F19, F22, F25, F26, F29-F32, J1, J2, J5, J8, J10	A9, C2-C4, C31, C34, C46, C47, F2, F3, F5, F6, F8, F10, F11, F13, F14, F17, F20, F21, F27, F28, J3, J9, J11
Kastellos		
Karphi	G4, G6, G8	
Syme	C8, C18, F24, F36, I7	C16, C53, I4
Myrtos	C17	
Gournia		F37
Mochlos	C9, I8, J13	
Chalinomouri		
Pseira		
Katalimata		
Halasmenos	C14	
Kavousi	C49, E1	
Petras	C7, C21, C39, D4, F18, F35	D2, D3, F16, F18, H1-H3
H. Fotia		
Palaikastro	A17, C12, C52, D5	
Zakros	F33	

Table 5. Distribution of site-specific pre-firing mark types.

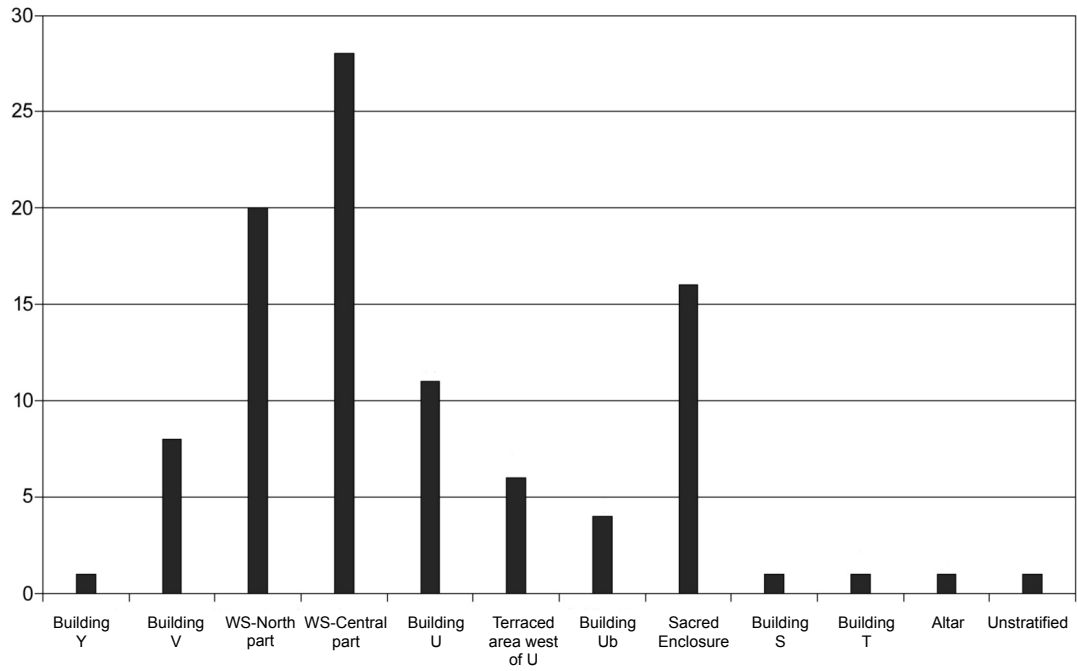


Chart 1. Contextual distribution of pre-firing marks at Syme.

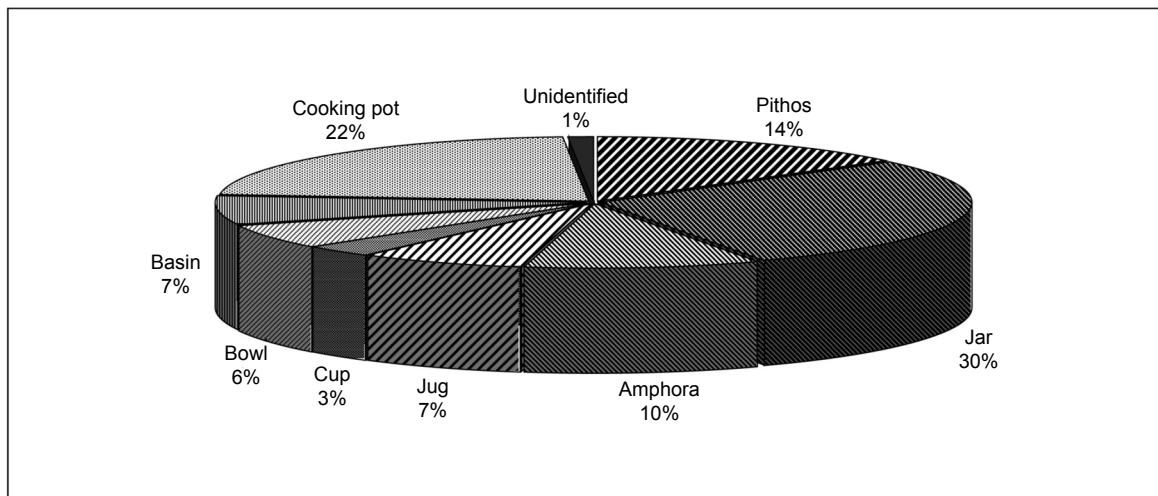


Chart 2. Percentages of vessels types with pre-firing marks at Syme.

CHARTS 3 AND 4

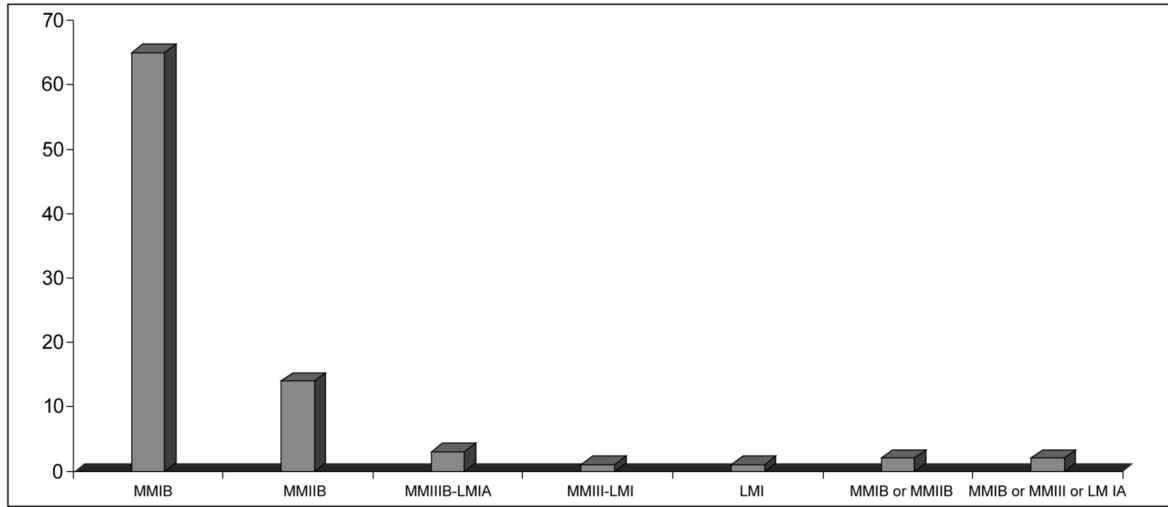


Chart 3. Chronological distribution of marked vessels at Syme.

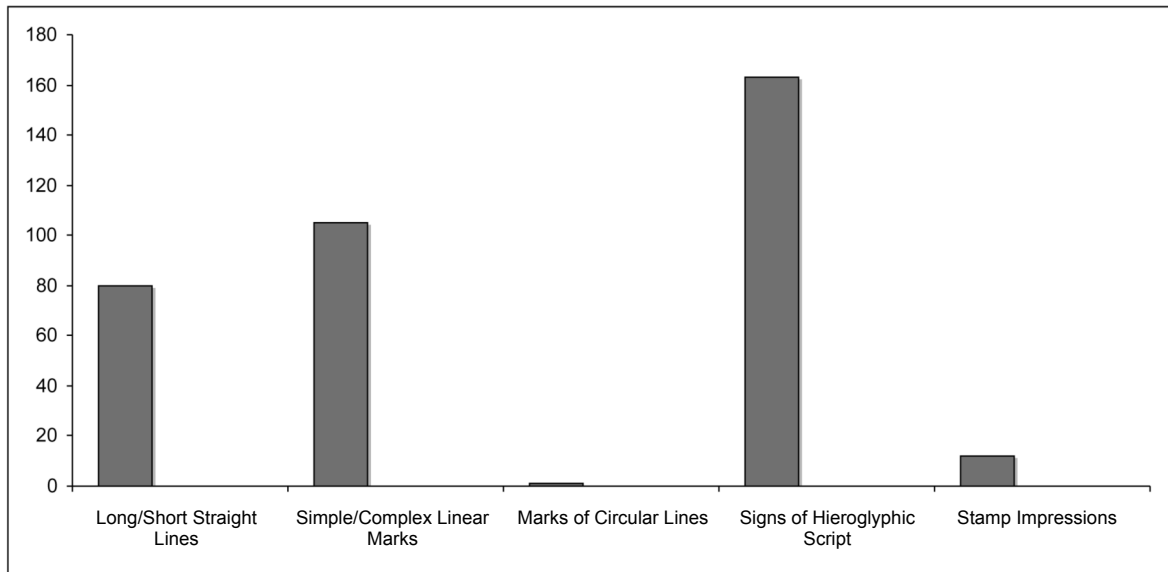


Chart 4. Distribution of pre-firing mark types within MM IIB pottery assemblages at Malia.

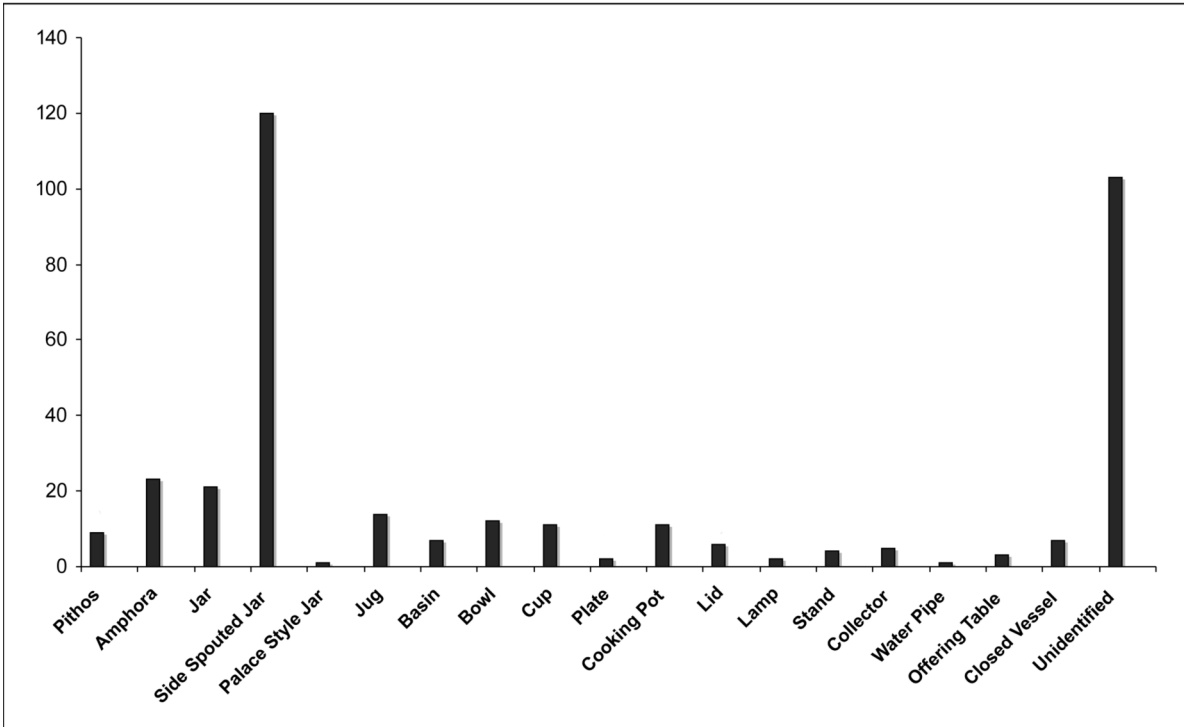


Chart 5. Numbers of vessels types with pre-firing marks at MM IIB Malia.

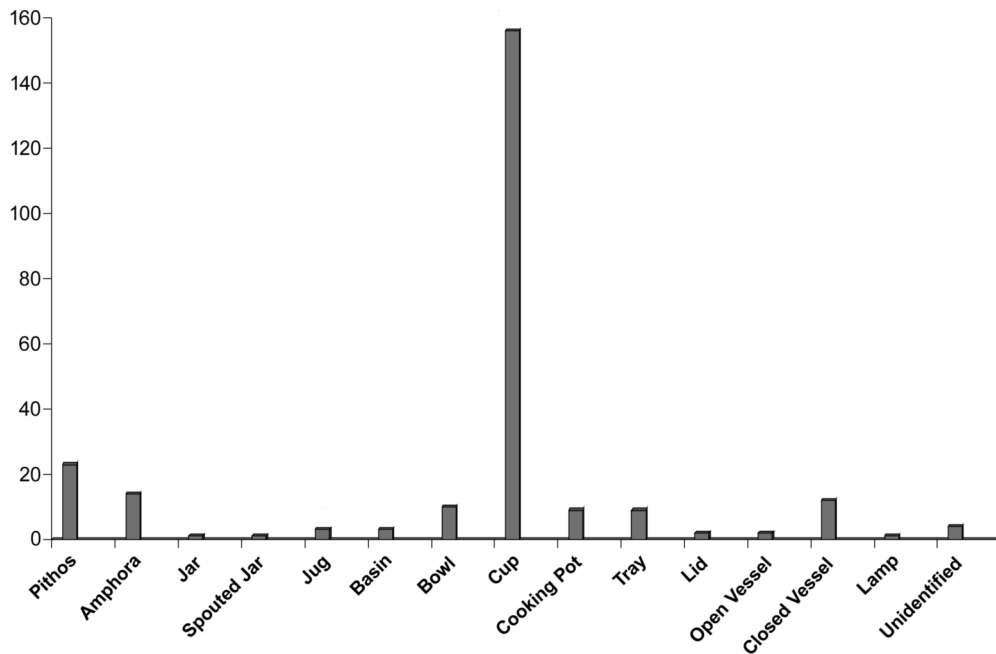


Chart 6. Numbers of vessels types with pre-firing marks at Petras.

CHARTS 7 AND 8

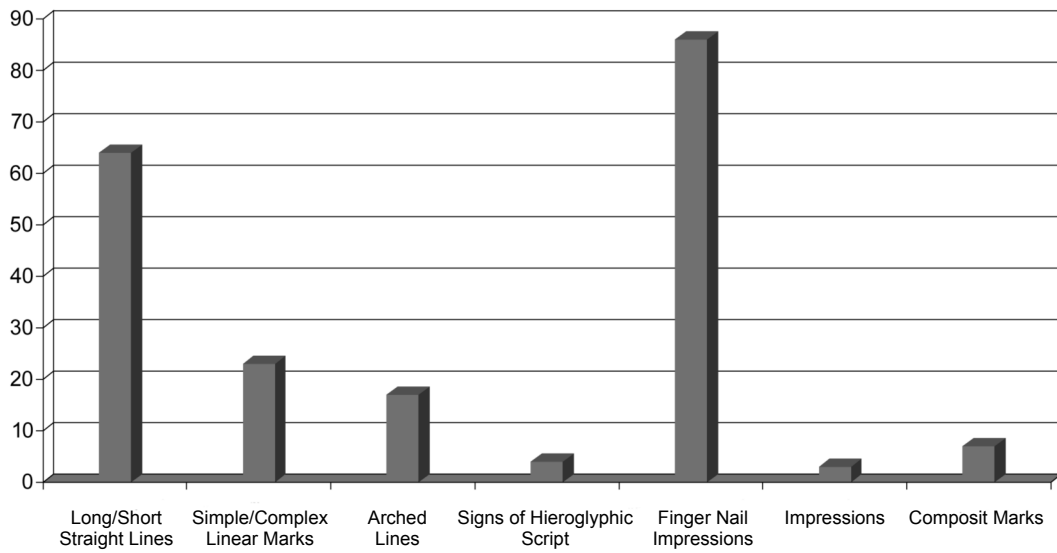


Chart 7. Distribution of pre-firing mark types within Neopalatial pottery assemblages at Petras.

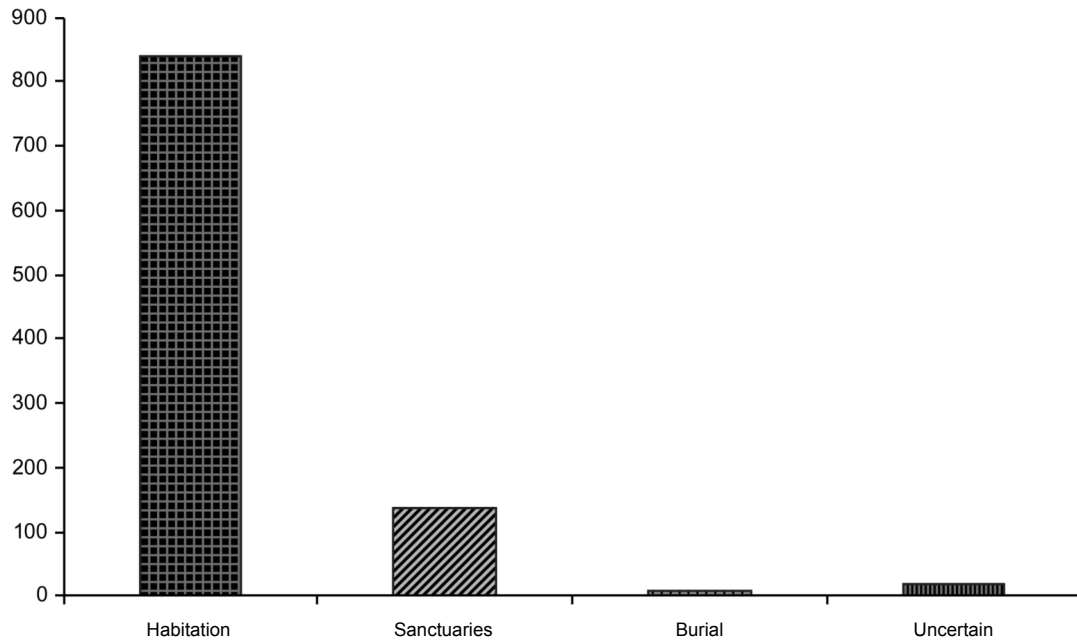


Chart 8. Contextual distribution of vessels with pre-firing marks.

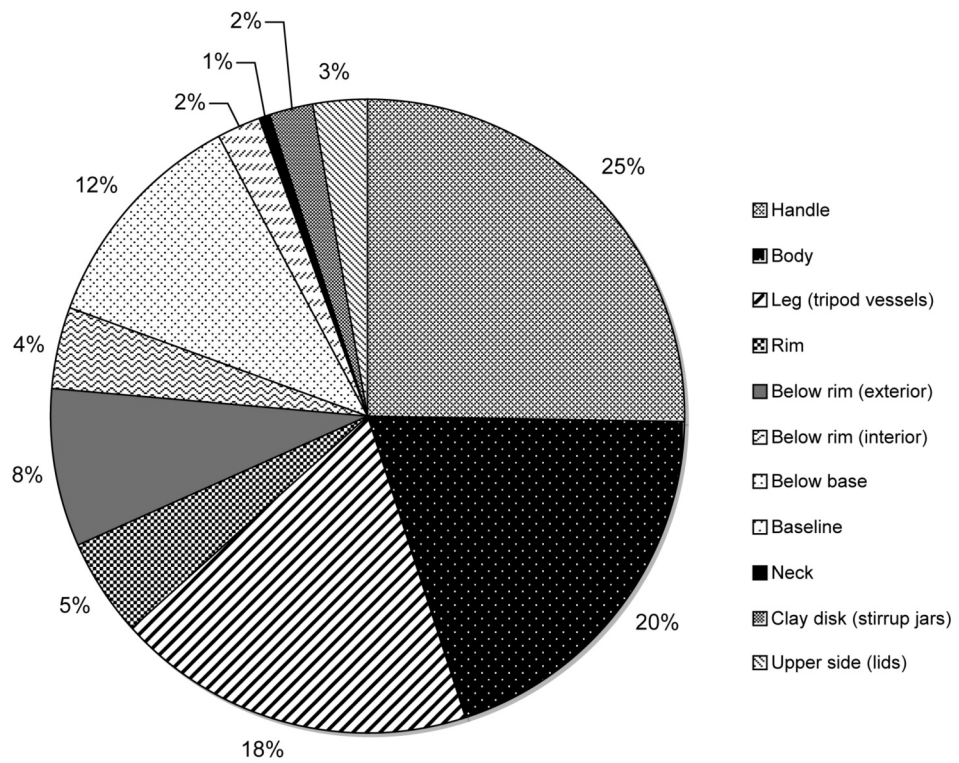


Chart 9. Frequency of marking locations.

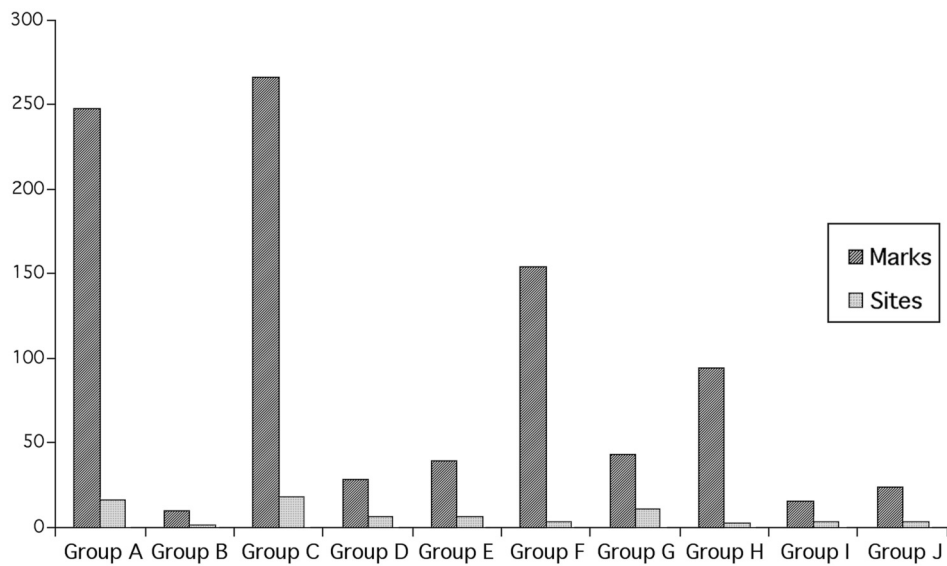


Chart 10. The number of pre-firing marks of each group compared with the number of sites they appeared.

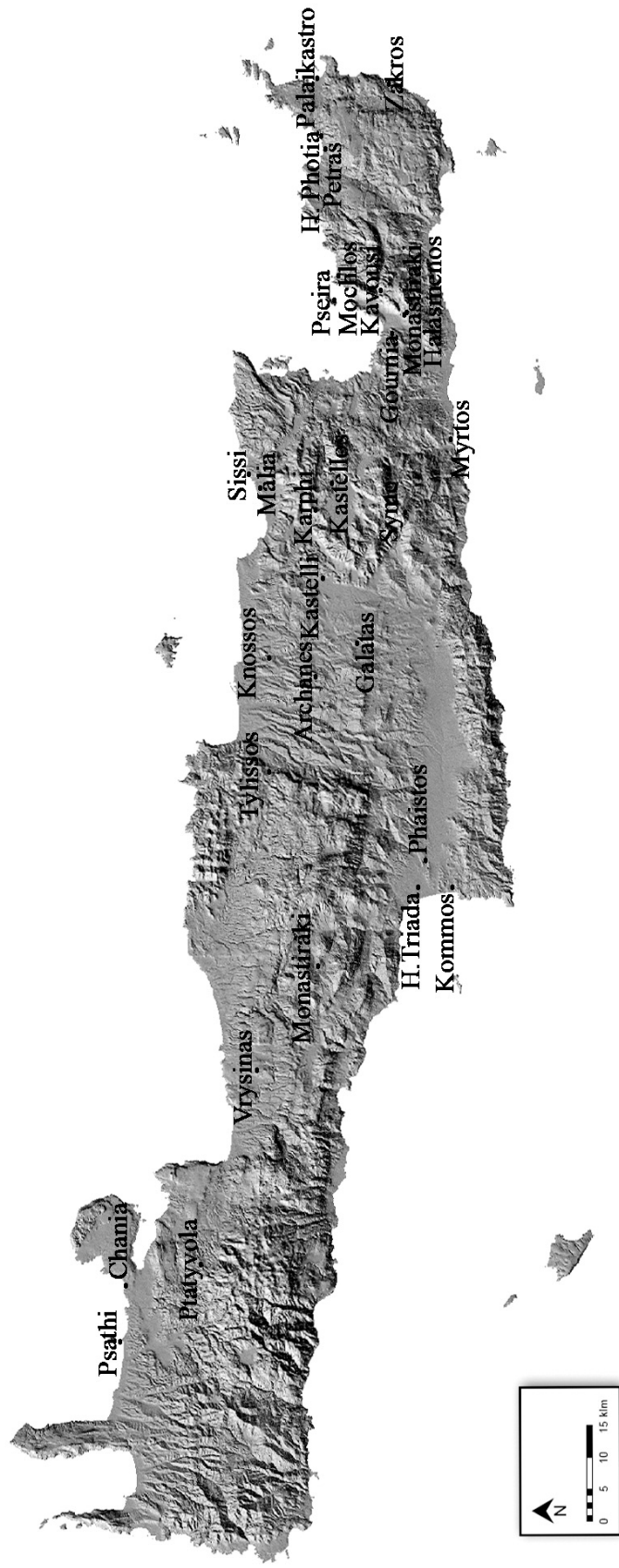


FIGURE 1

Figure 1. Map of Crete with sites mentioned in the text.

FIGURE 2



Figure 2. Plan of the sanctuary of Hermes and Aphrodite at Syme Viannou.

FIGURE 3

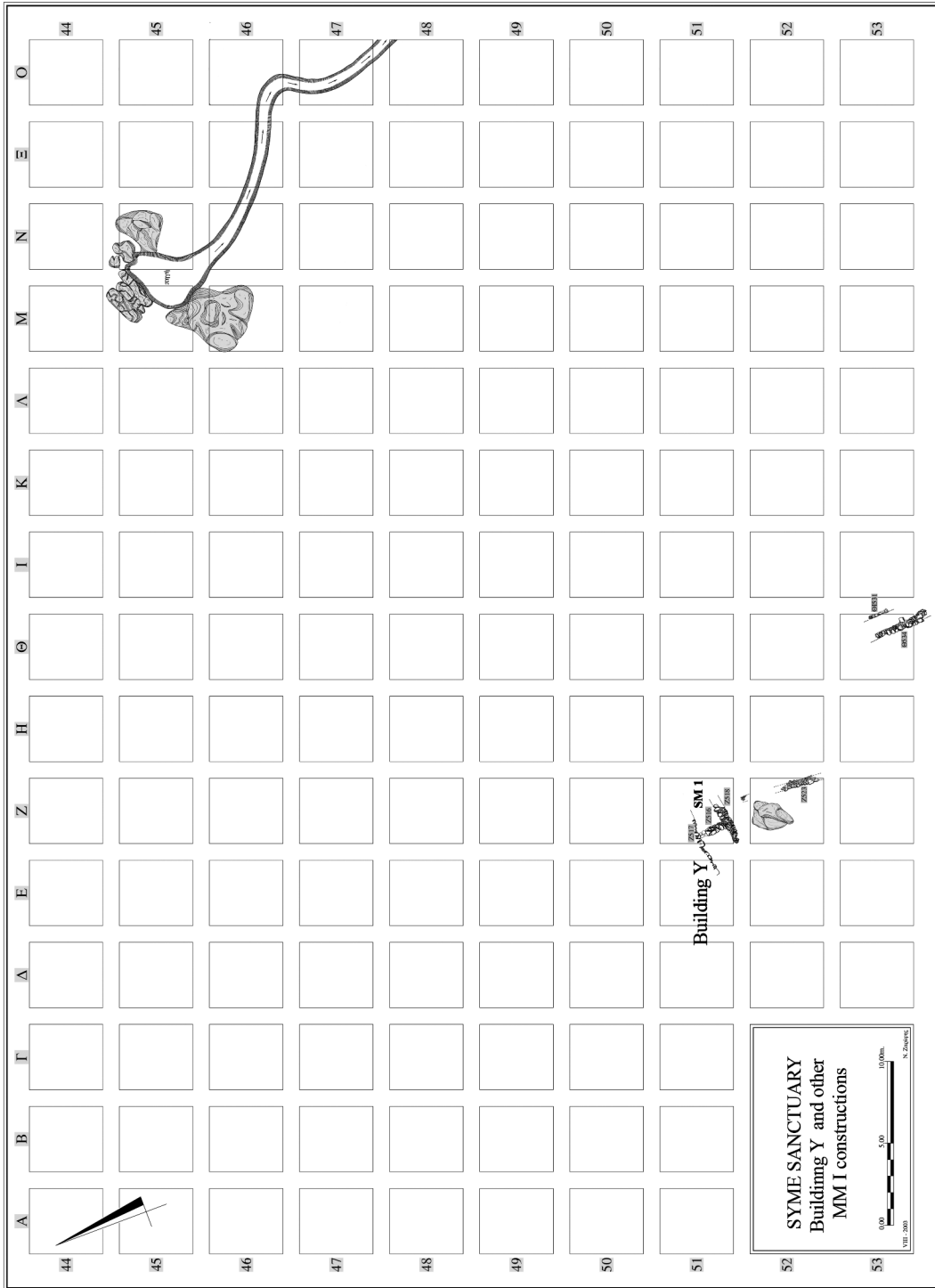


Figure 3. Spatial distribution of pre-firing marks from Building Y.

FIGURE 4

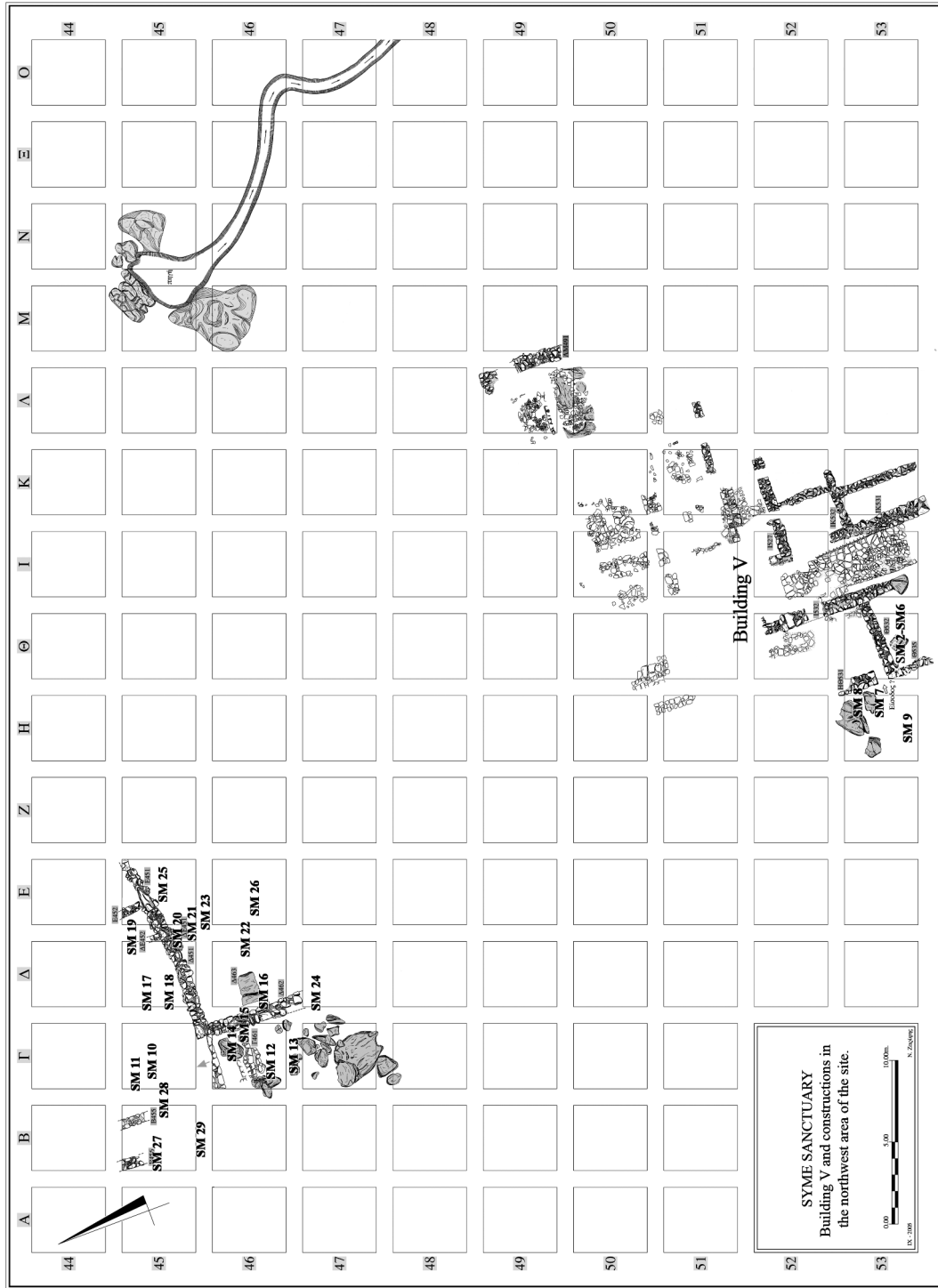


Figure 4. Spatial distribution of pre-firing marks from Building V and the north part of the west sector of the site.

FIGURE 5

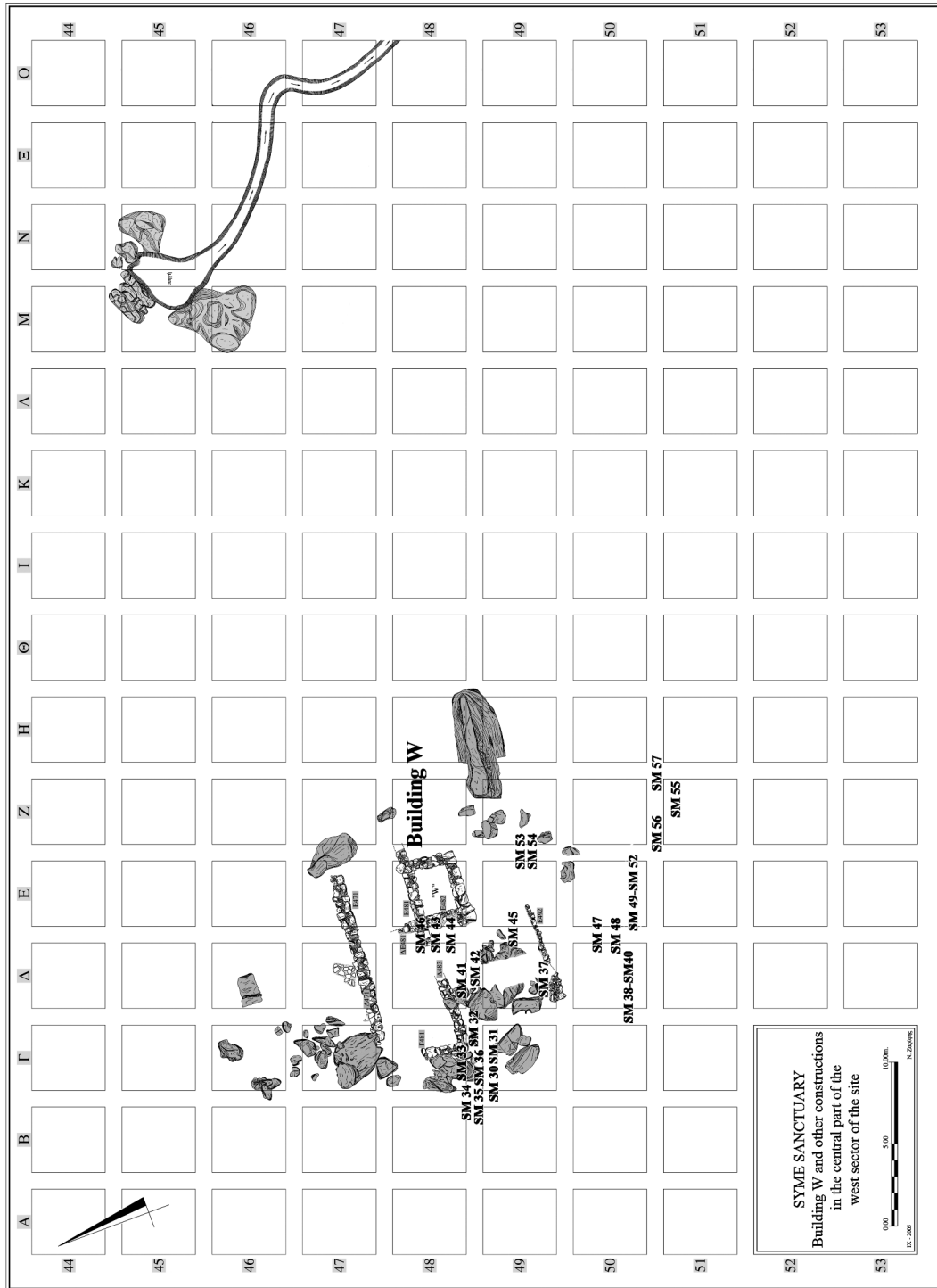


Figure 5. Spatial distribution of pre-firing marks from the central part of the west sector of the site.

FIGURE 6

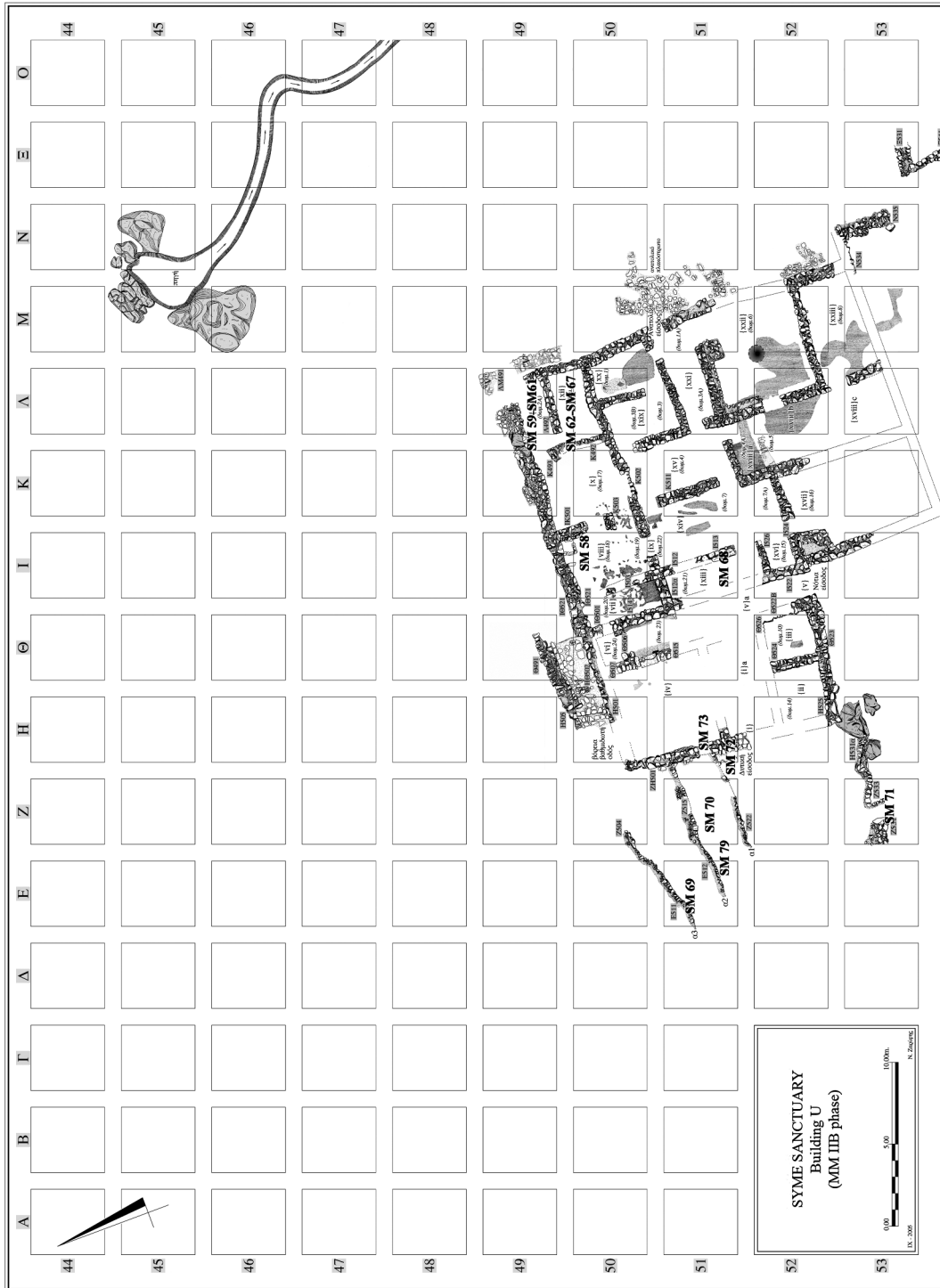


Figure 6. Spatial distribution of pre-firing marks from Building U and the terraced area west of it.

FIGURE 7

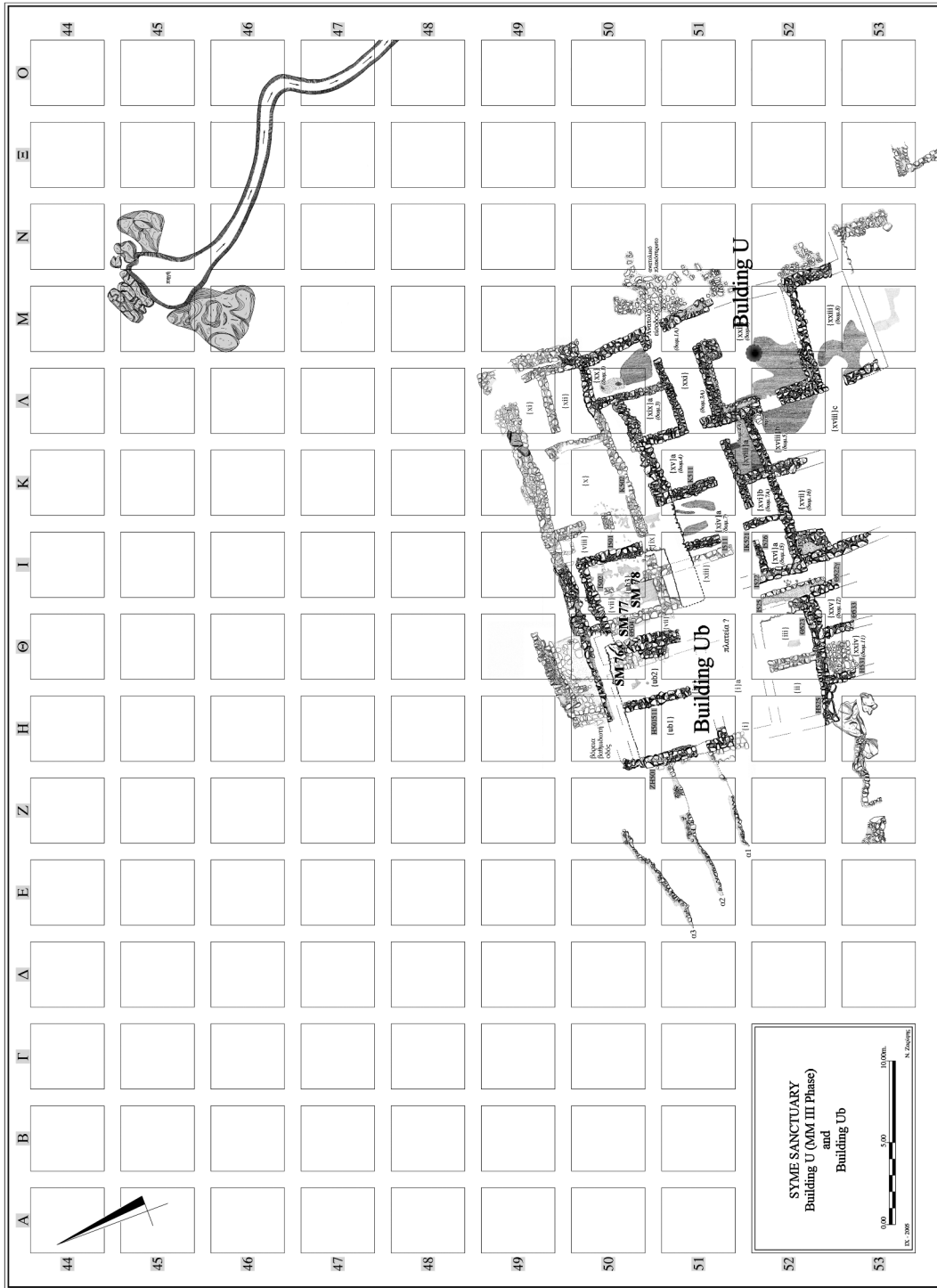


Figure 7. Spatial distribution of pre-firing marks from Building Ub.

FIGURE 8

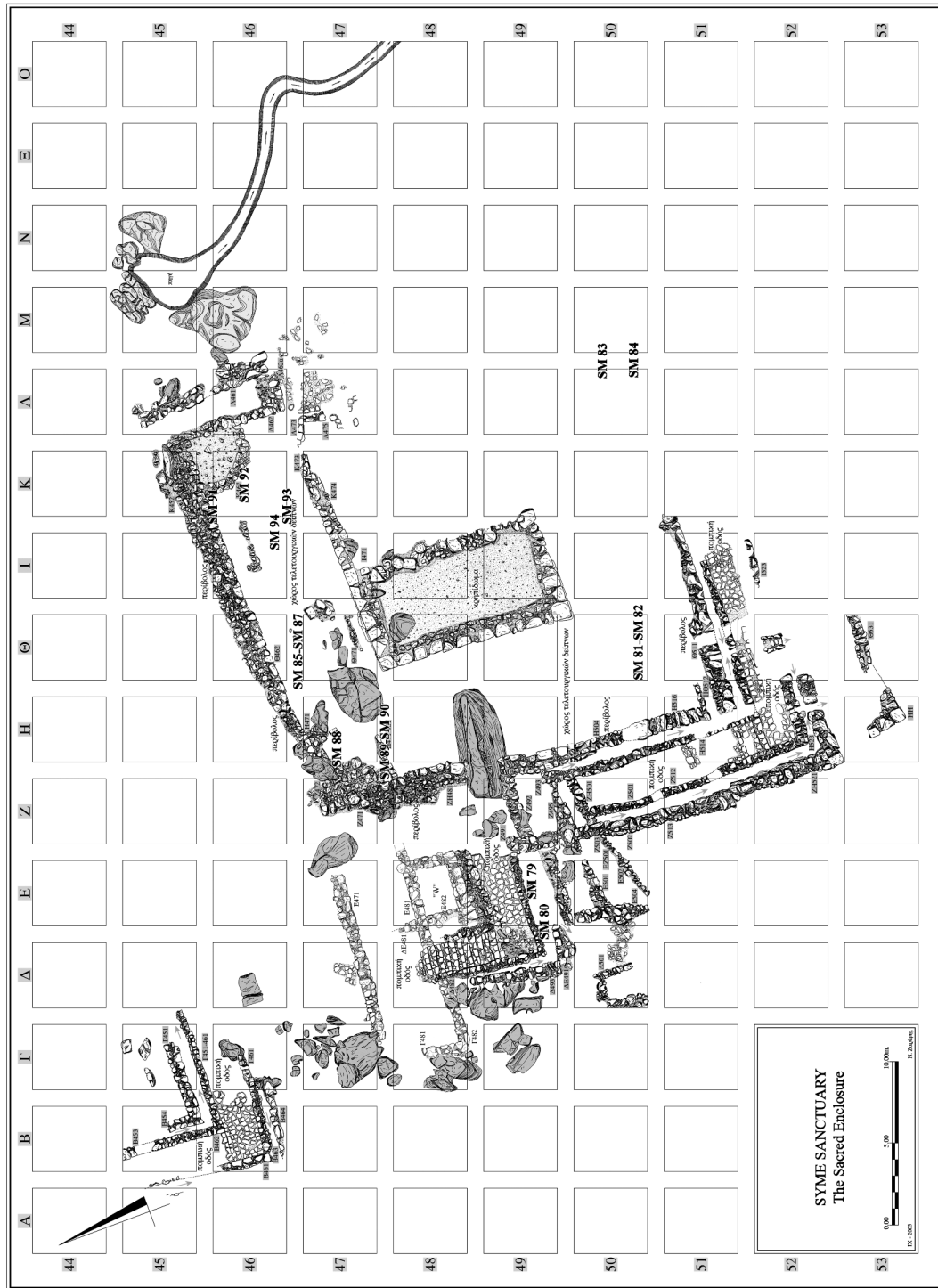


Figure 8. Spatial distribution of pre-firing marks from the area of the Sacred Enclosure.

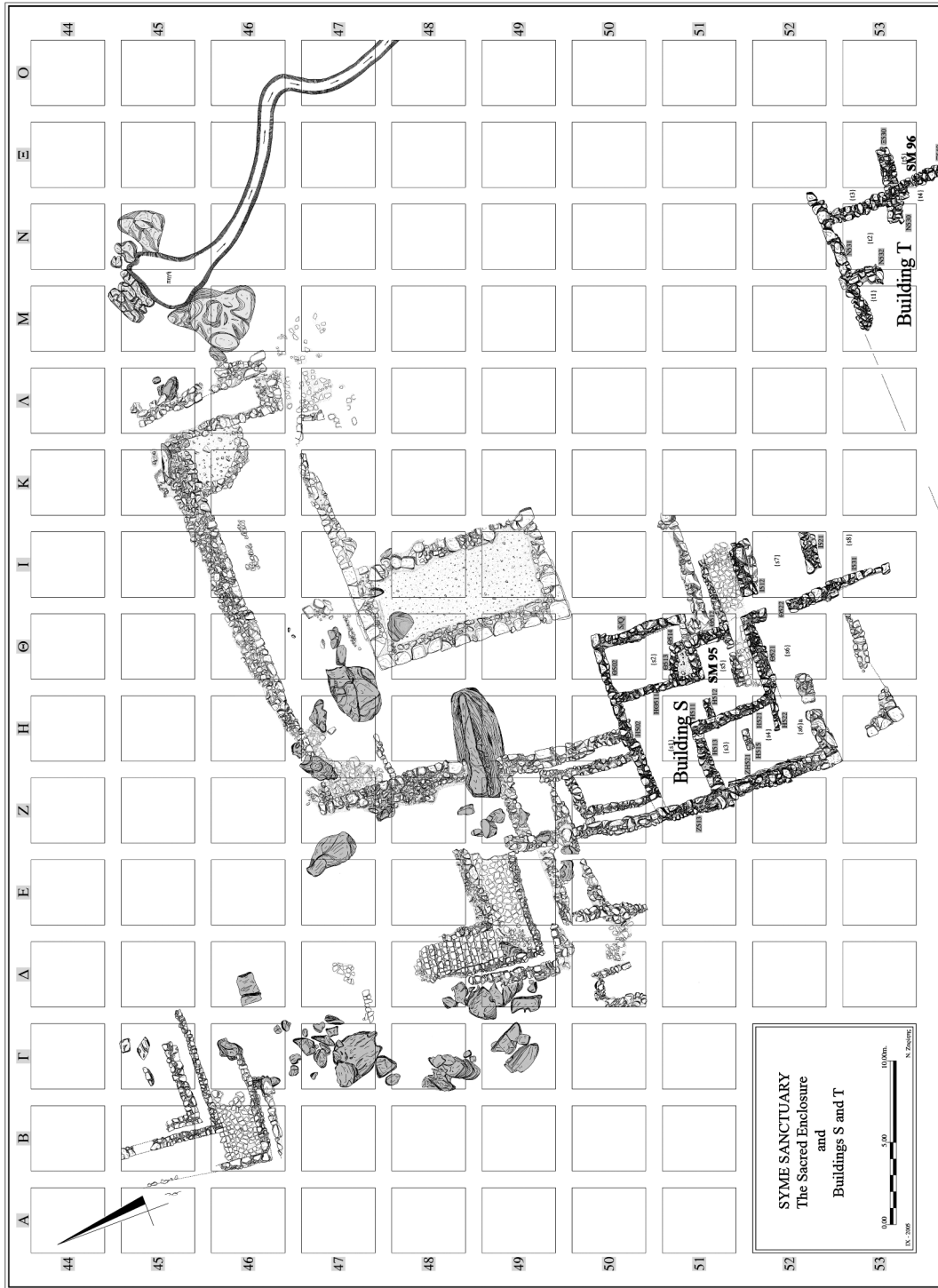


Figure 9. Spatial distribution of pre-firing marks from Buildings S and T.

FIGURE 10

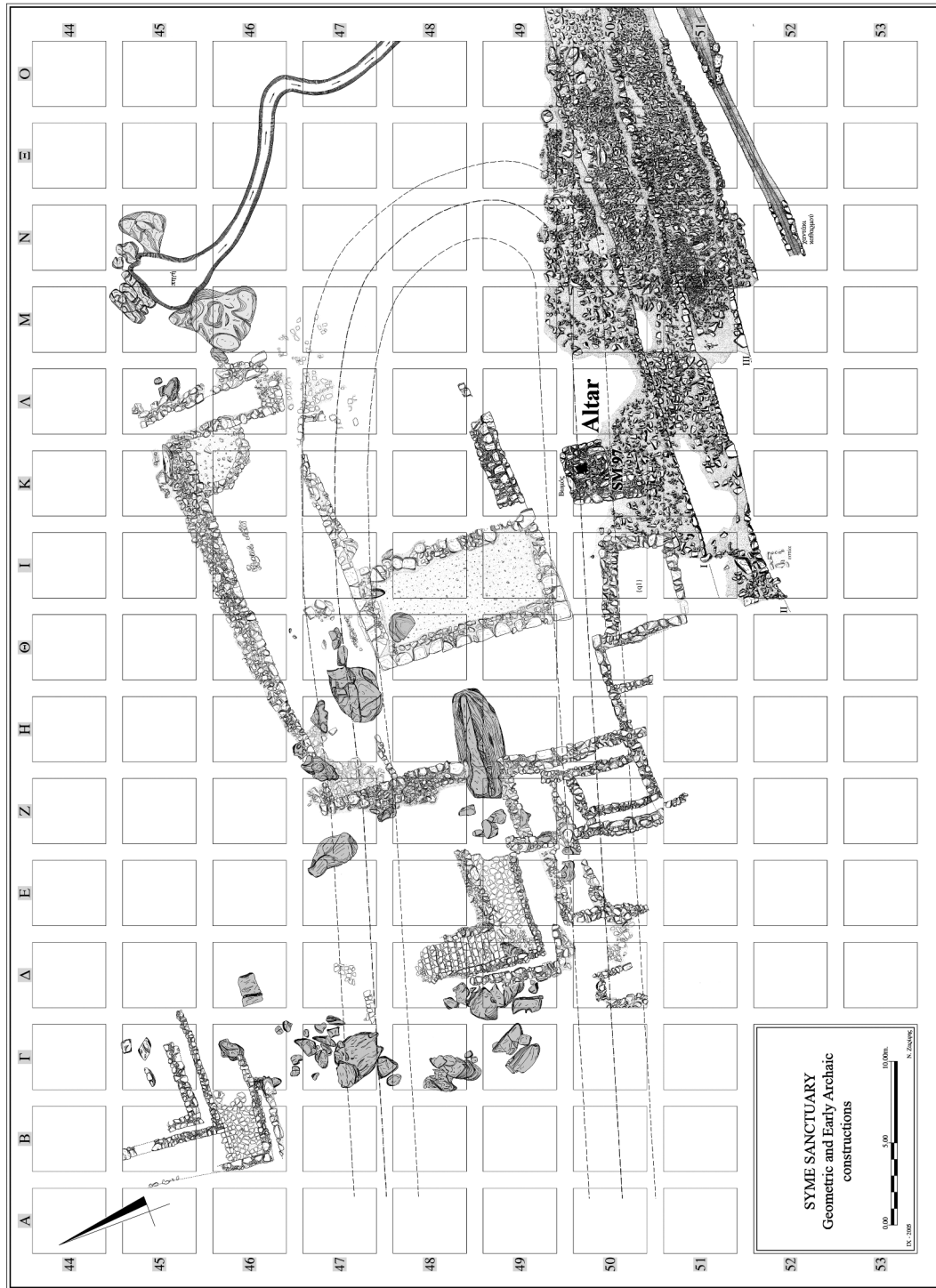


Figure 10. Spatial distribution of pre-firing marks from the area of the Altar.

FIGURE 11

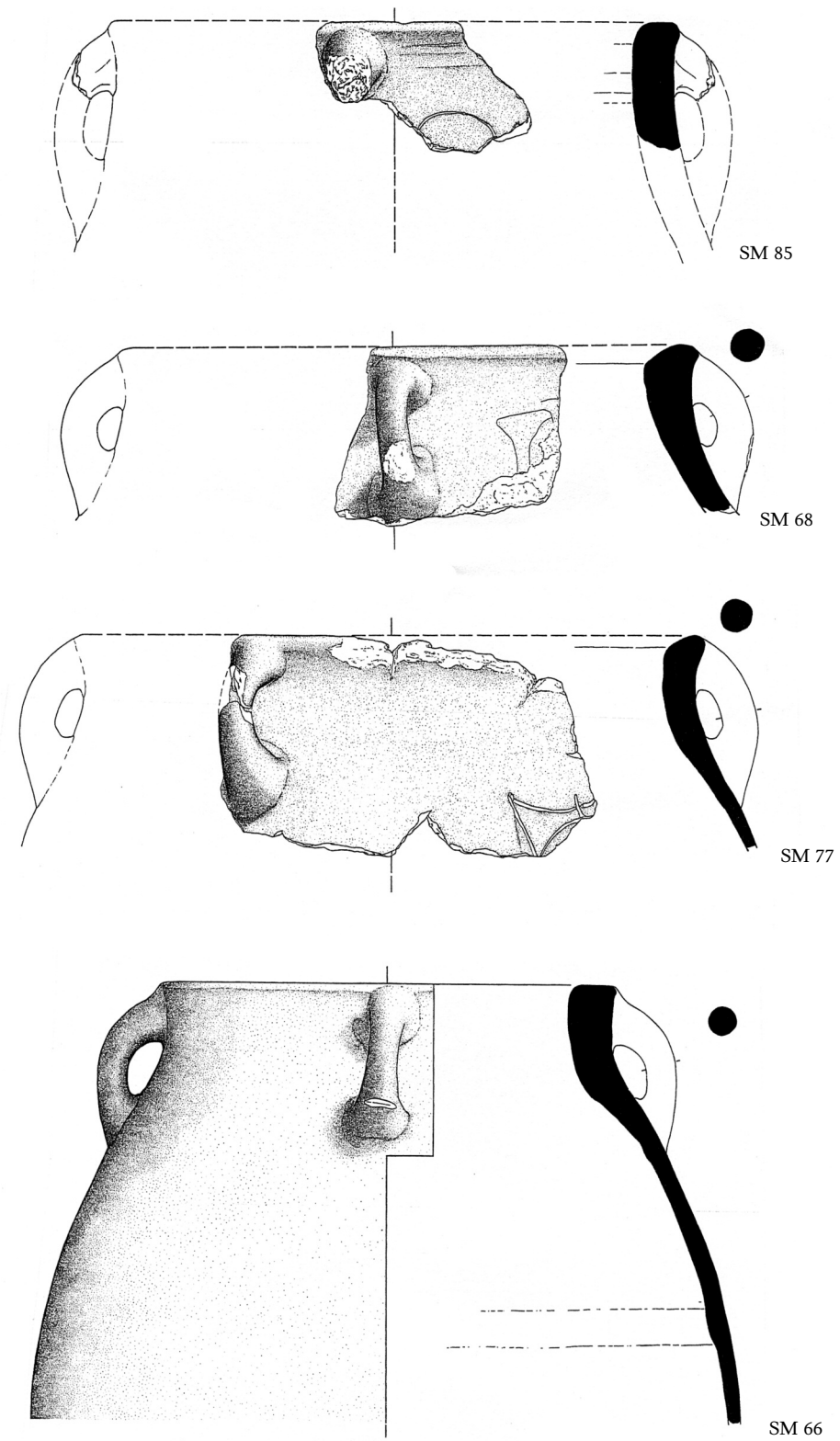


Figure 11. Pithoi with pre-firing marks from Syme: SM 85, SM 68, SM 77, SM 66 (Scale 1:4).

FIGURE 12

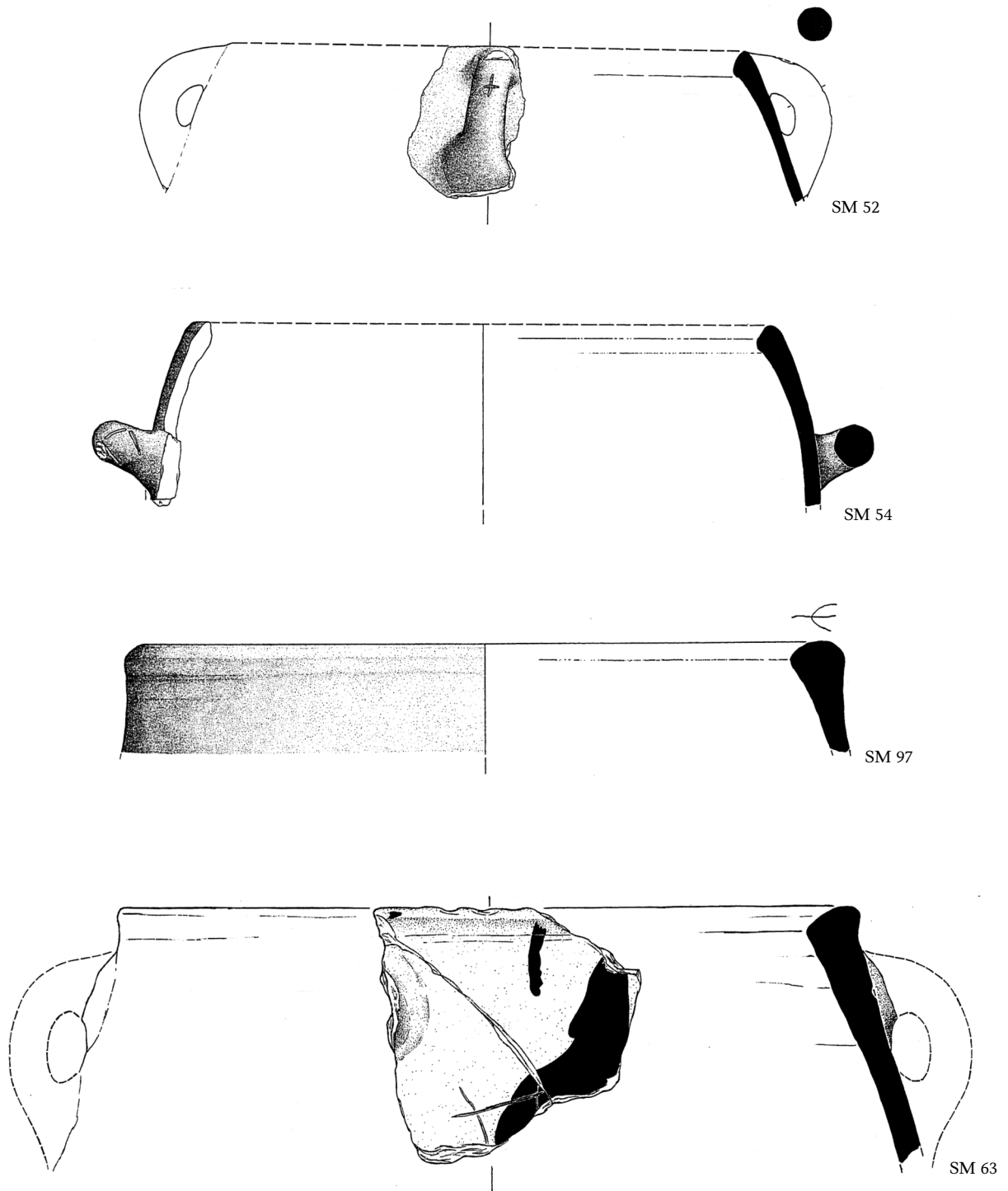
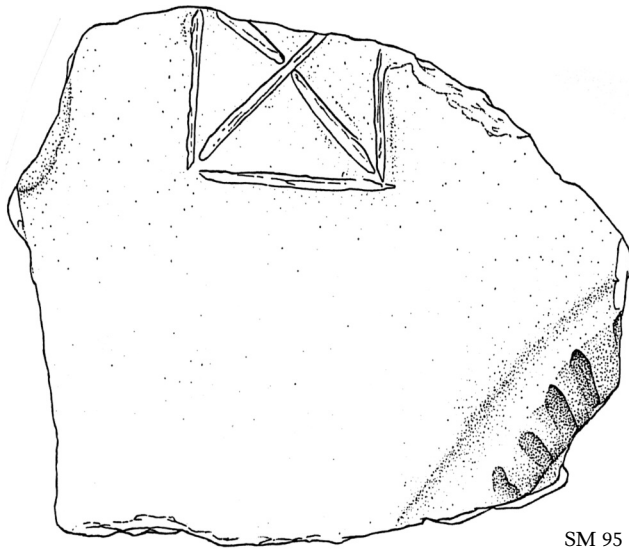
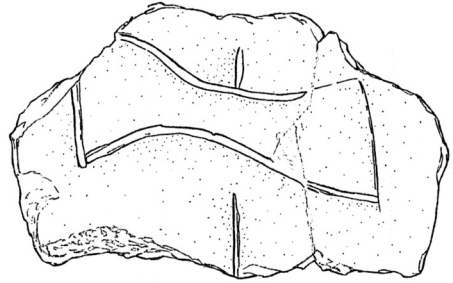


Figure 12. Pithoi with pre-firing marks from Syme: SM 52, SM 54, SM 97 (Scale 1:4) and SM 63 (Scale 1:3).

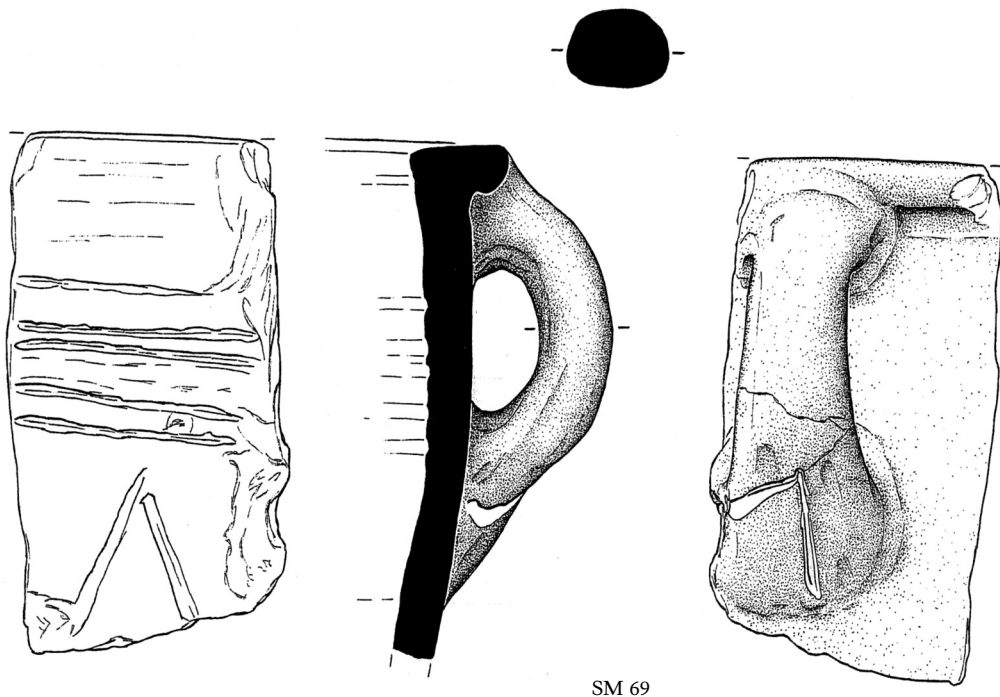
FIGURE 13



SM 95



SM 74



SM 69

Figure 13. Pithoi with pre-firing marks from Syme: SM 95, SM 74, SM 69 (Scale 1:2).

FIGURE 14

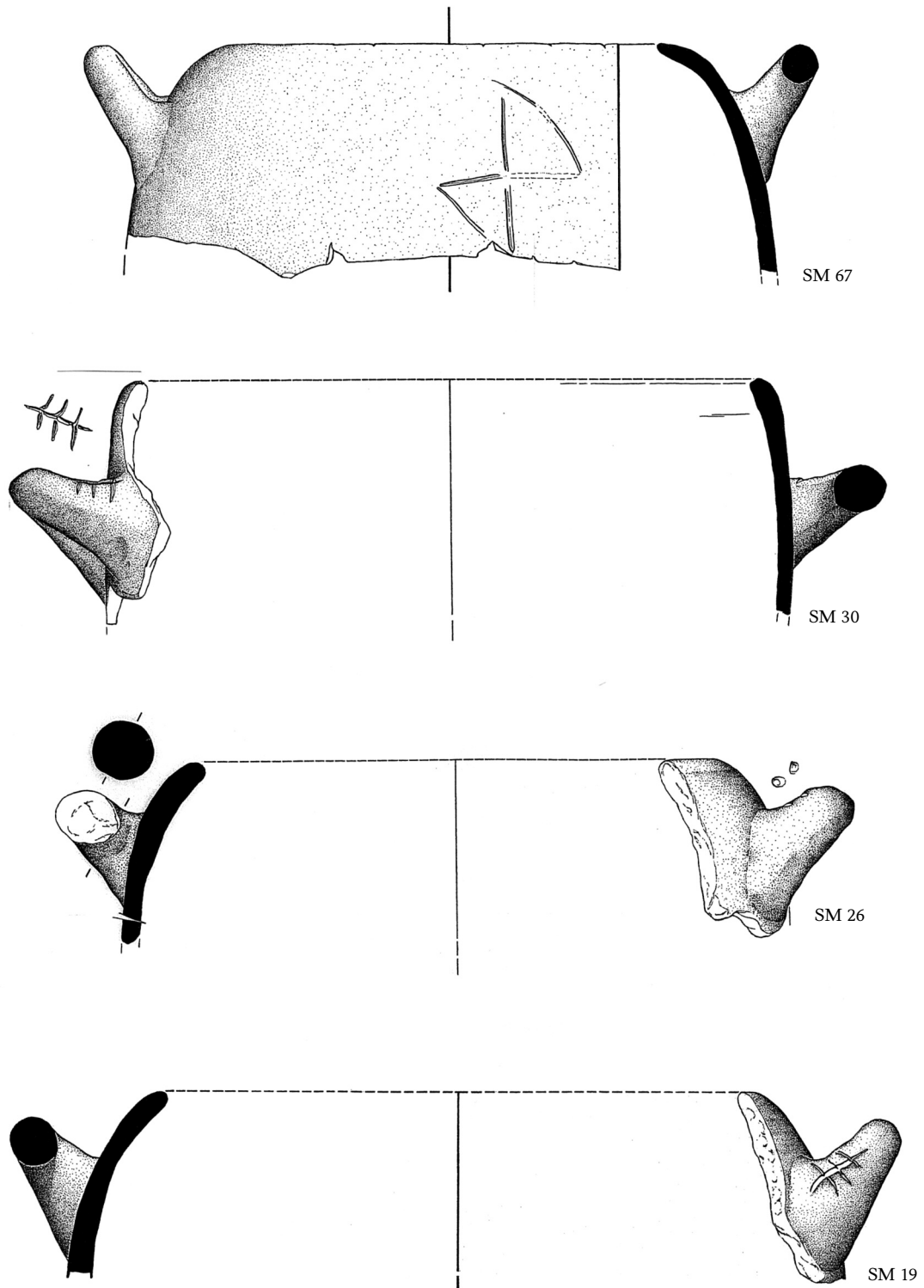


Figure 14. Jars with pre-firing marks from Syme: SM 67, SM 30, SM 26, SM 19 (Scale 1:2).

FIGURE 15

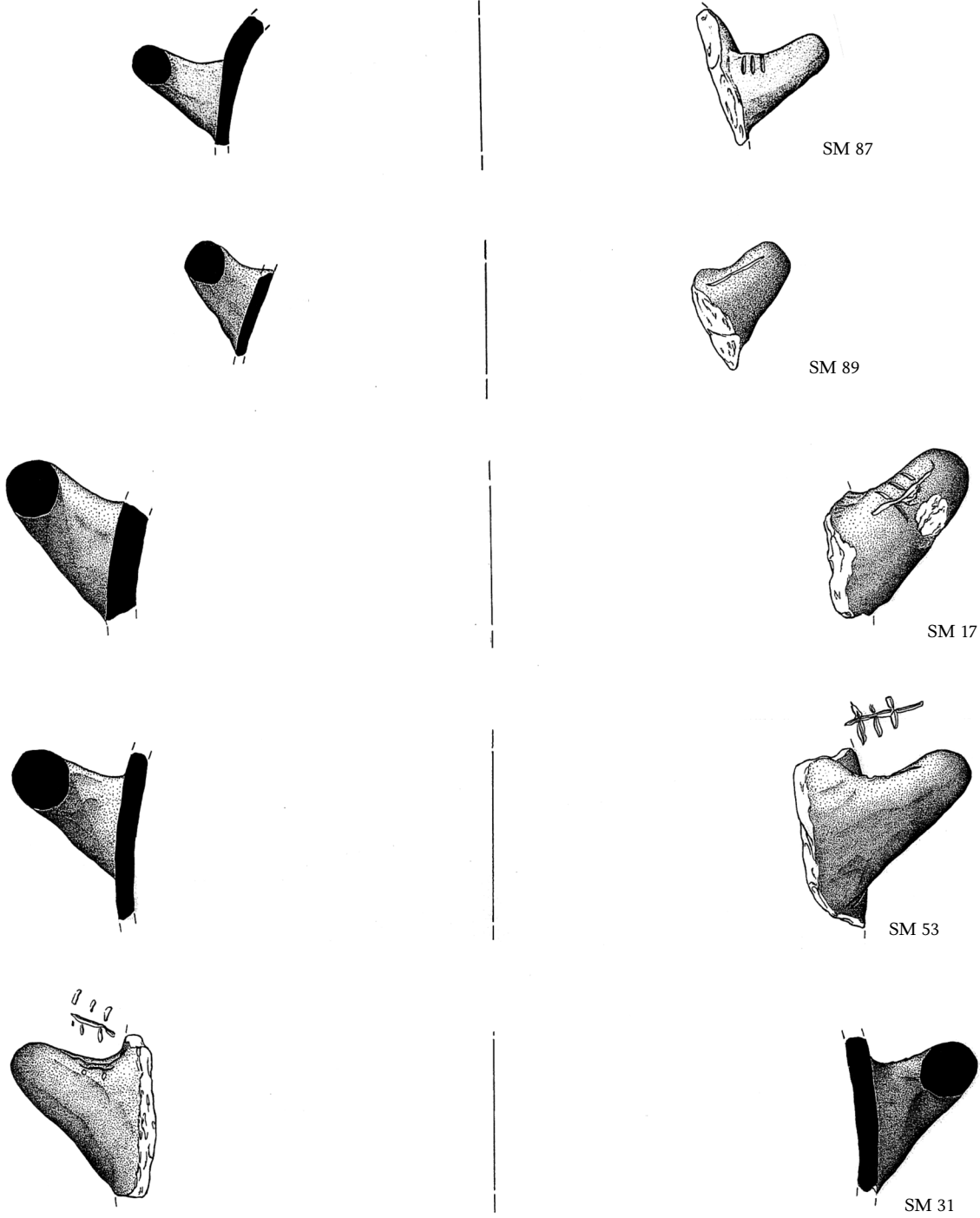


Figure 15. Handles of a cooking pot (SM 87) and jars (SM 89, SM 17, SM 53, SM 31) with per-firing marks from Syme (Scale 1:2).

FIGURE 16

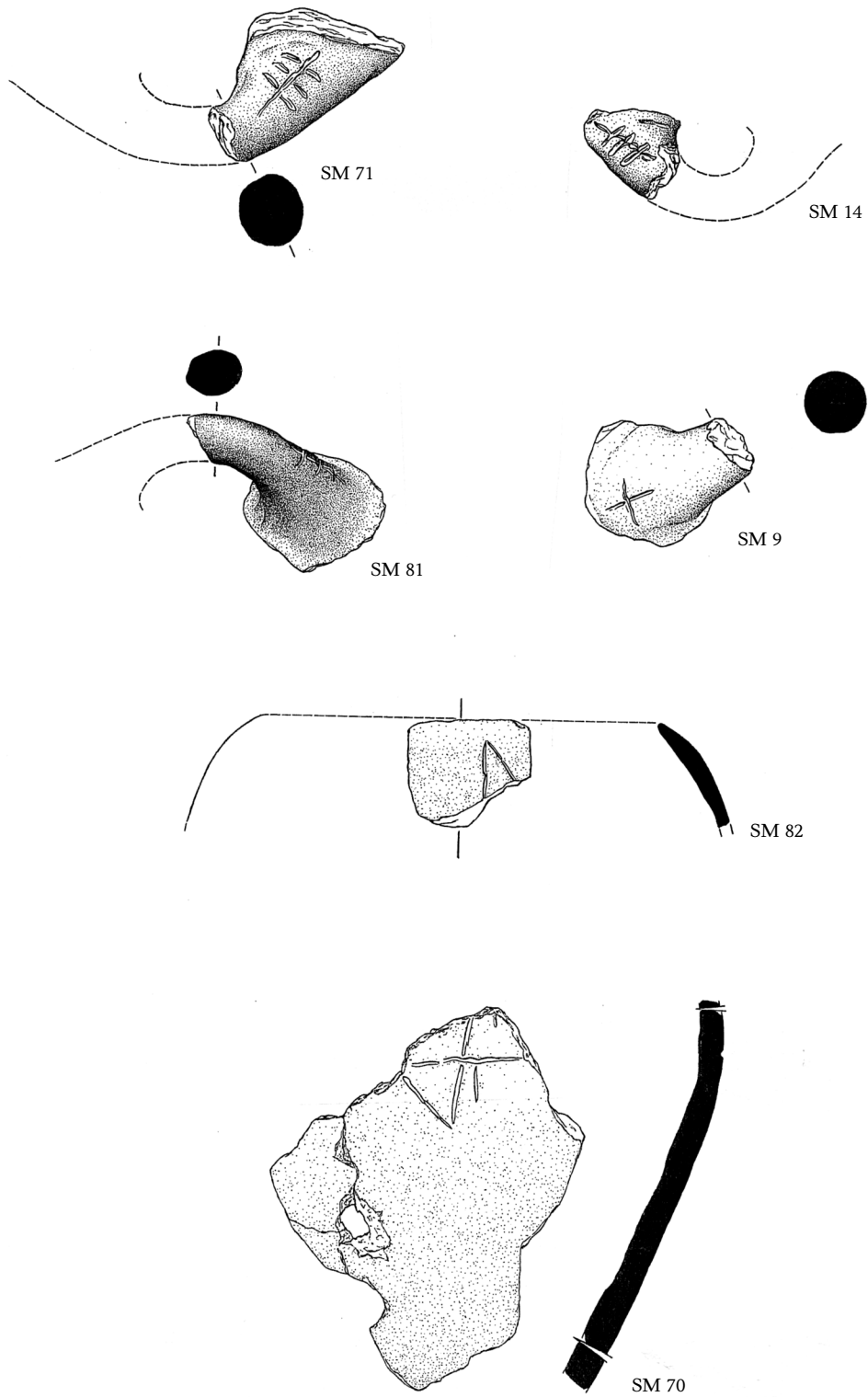


Figure 16. Sherd/s of jars (SM 71, SM 14, SM 81, SM 9), vessel with rounded upper part (SM 82) and amphora (SM 70) with pre-firing marks from Syme (Scale 1:2).

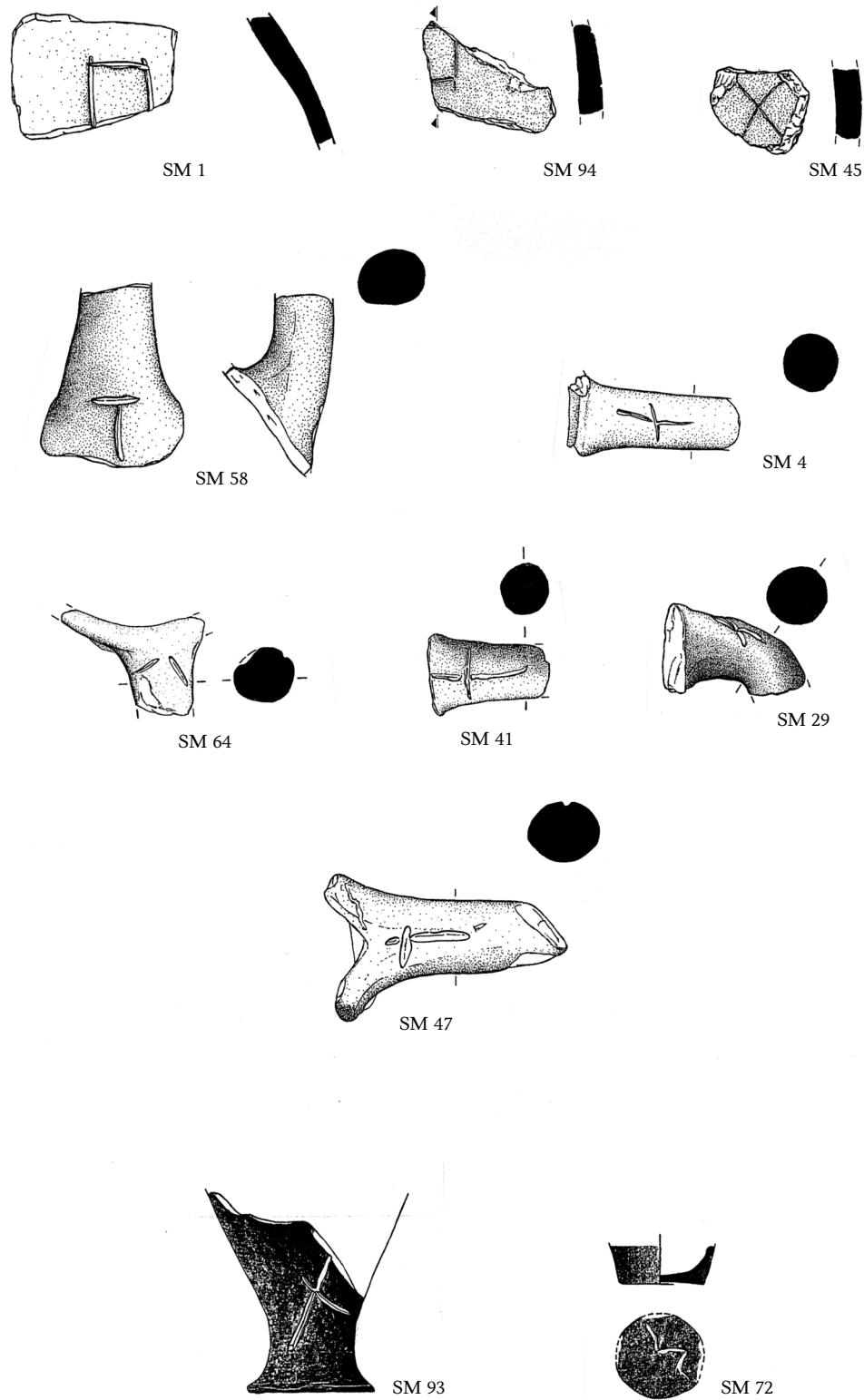


Figure 17. Sherds of amphorae (SM 1, SM 94, SM 45, SM 58, SM 4), jugs (SM 64, SM 41, SM 29, SM 47) and part of a stemmed cup (SM 93) and of a tumbler (SM 72) with pre-firing marks from Syme (Scale 1:2).

FIGURE 18

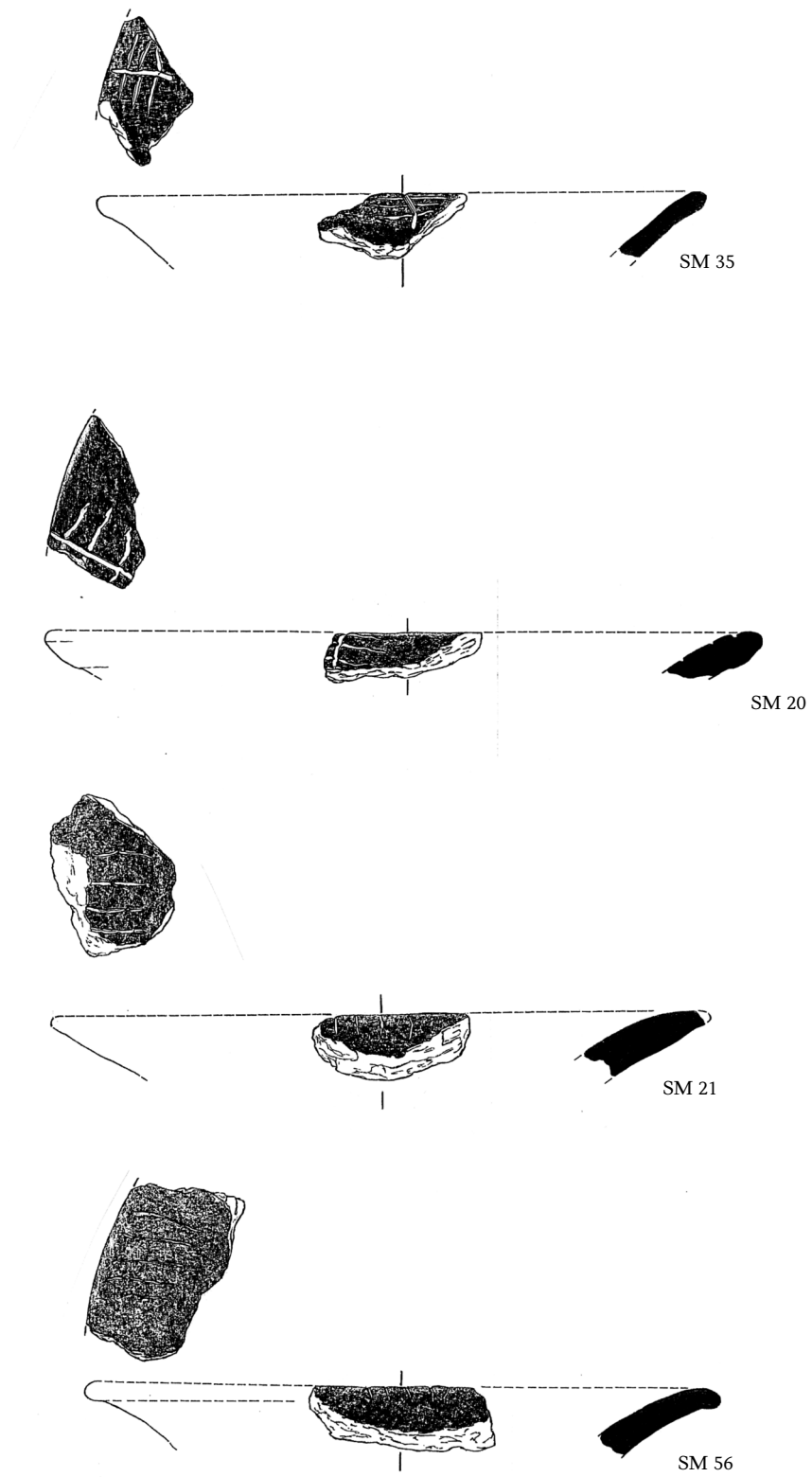


Figure 18. Sherds of bowls from Syme (SM 35, SM 20, SM 21, SM 56) (Scale 1:2).

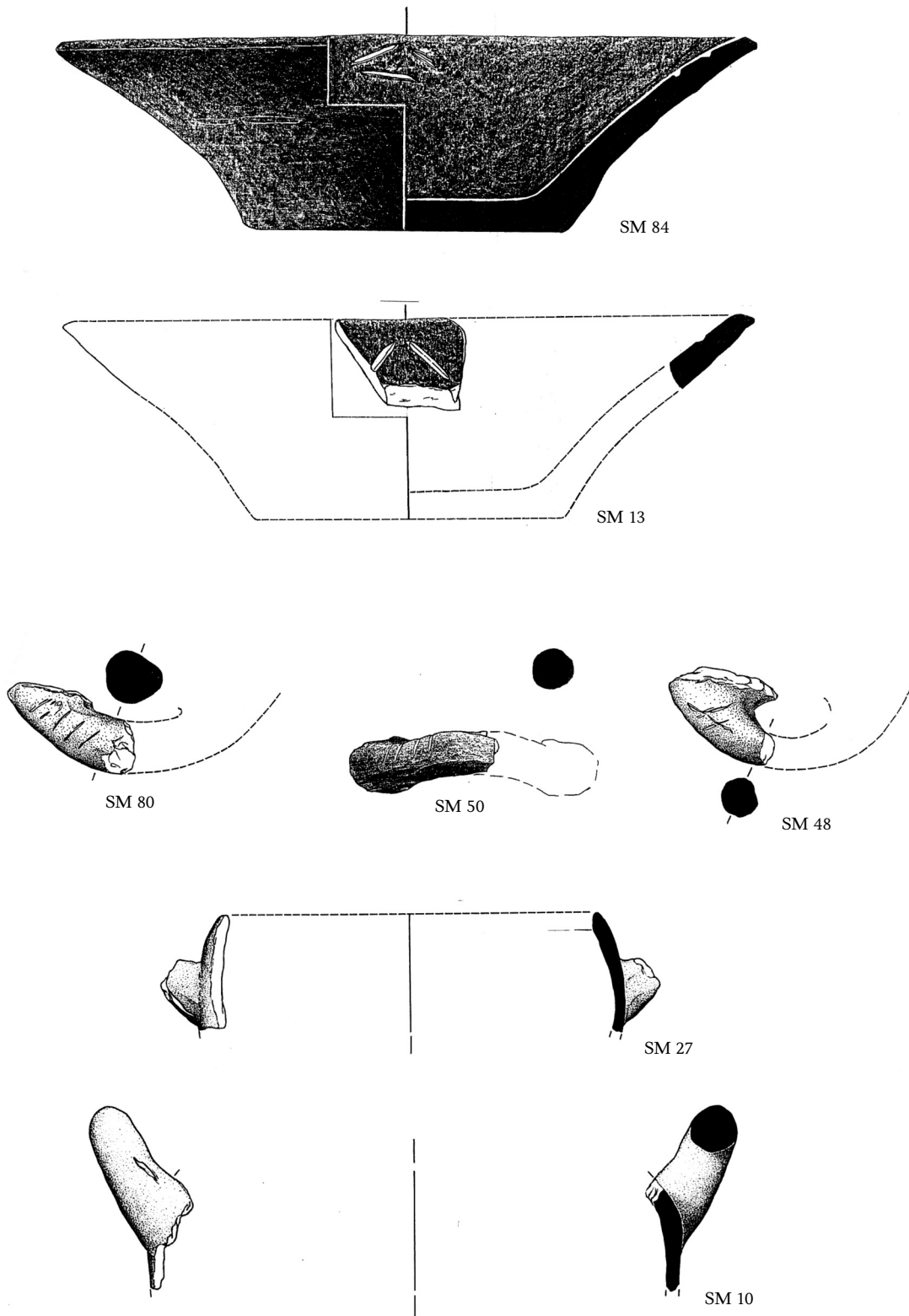


Figure 19. Bowl (SM 84), sherd of a bowl (SM 13) and sherds of cooking pots (SM 80, SM 50, SM 48, SM 27, SM 10) with pre-firing marks from Syme (Scale 1:2).

FIGURE 20

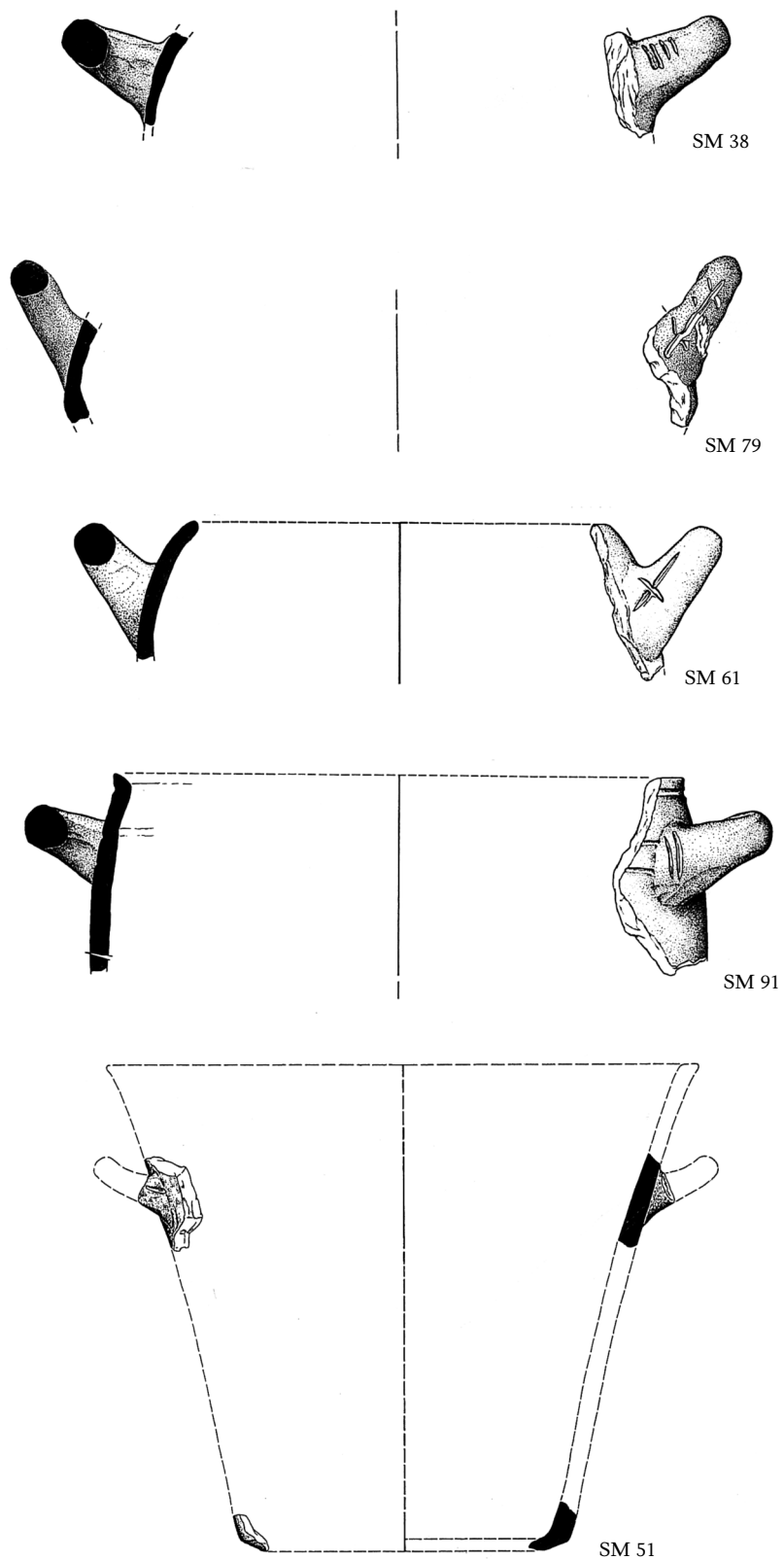


Figure 20. Handles (SM 38, SM 79) and upper parts (SM 61, SM 91) of cooking pots (Scale 1:2) and sherds of a basin (SM 51) (Scale 1:8) with pre-firing marks from Syme.

FIGURE 21

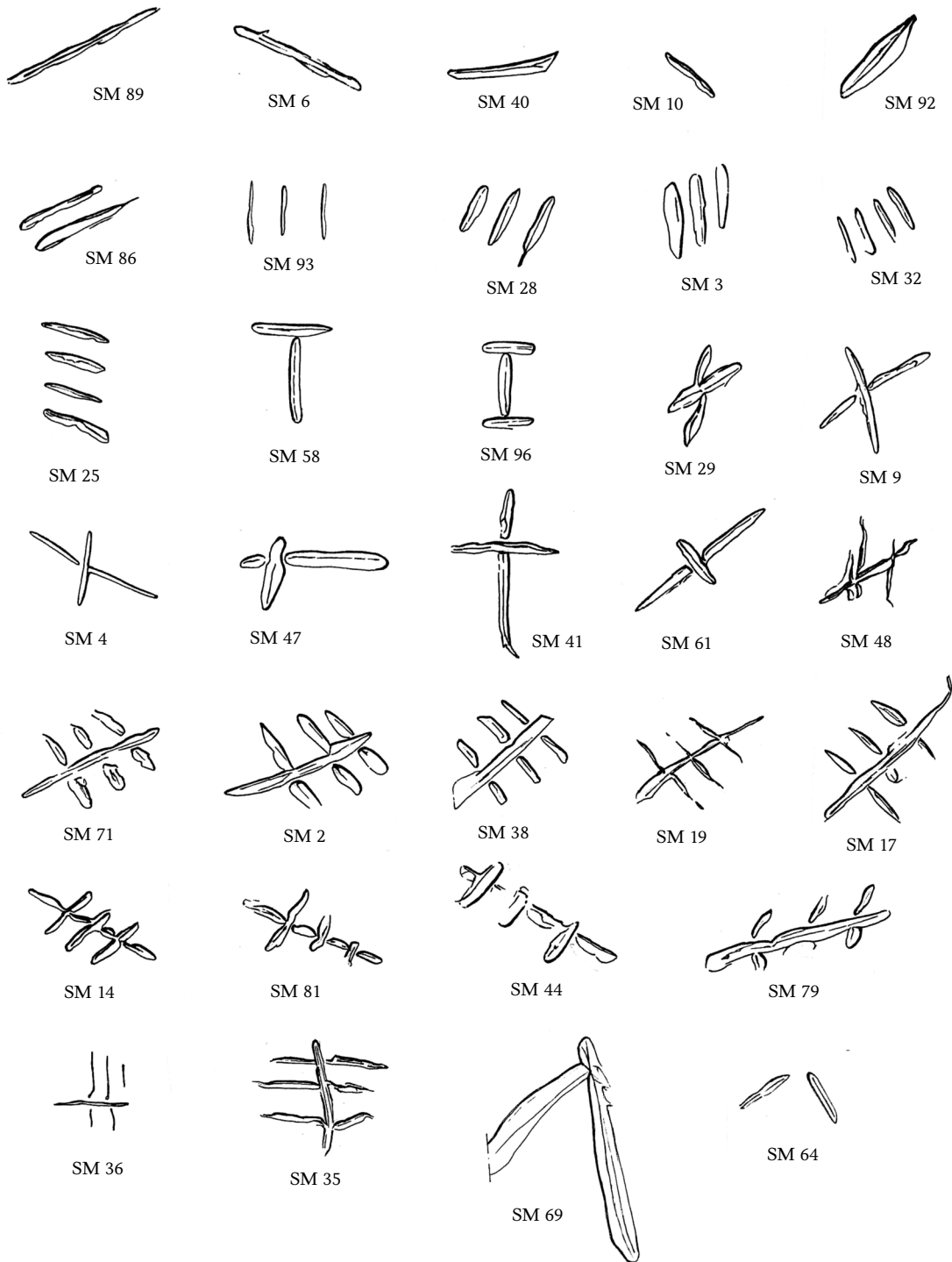


Figure 21. Incised pre-firing marks of various types from Syme (Scale 1:1).

FIGURE 22

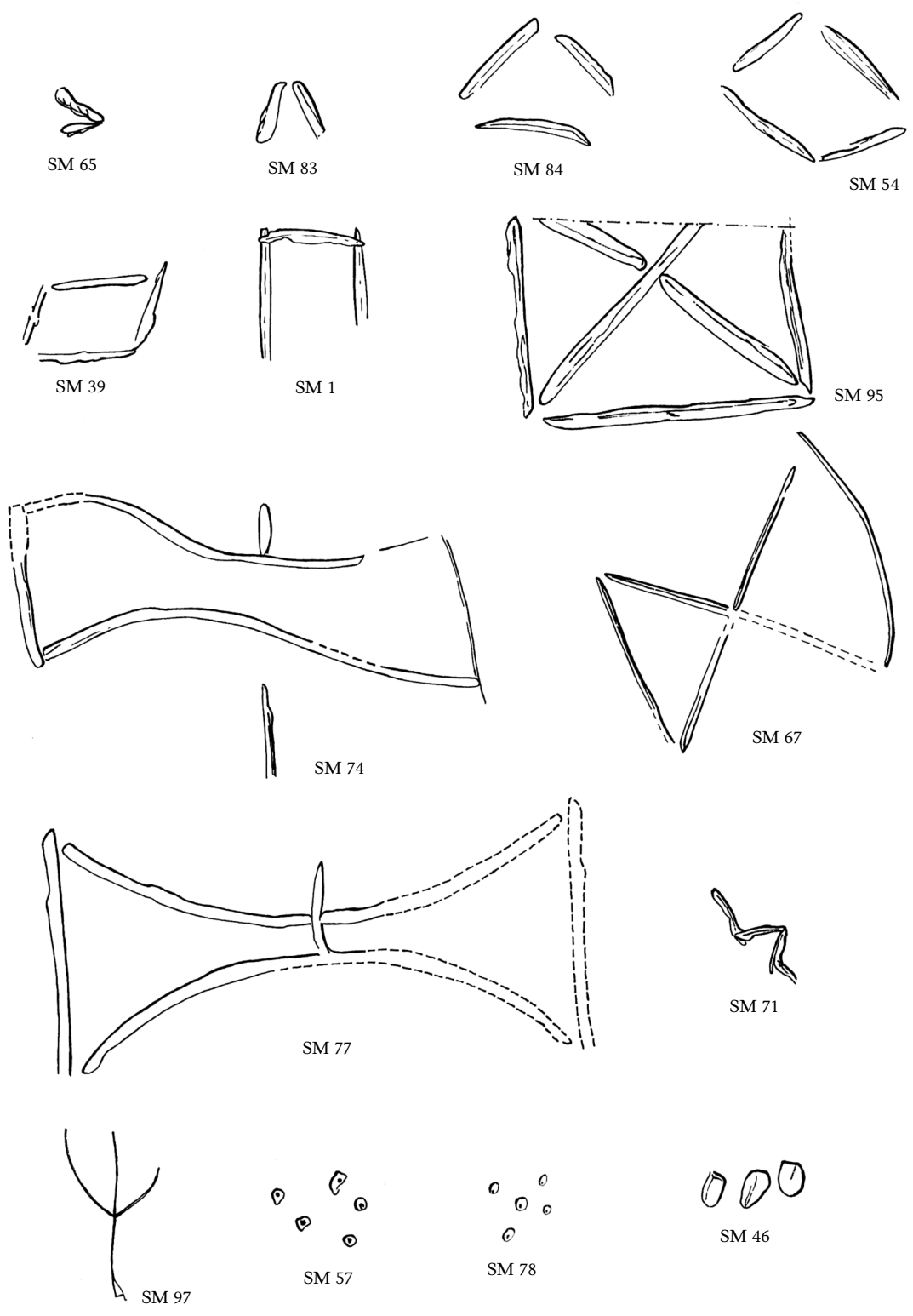


Figure 22. Incised and impressed pre-firing marks of various types from Syme (Scale 1:1).

FIGURE 23

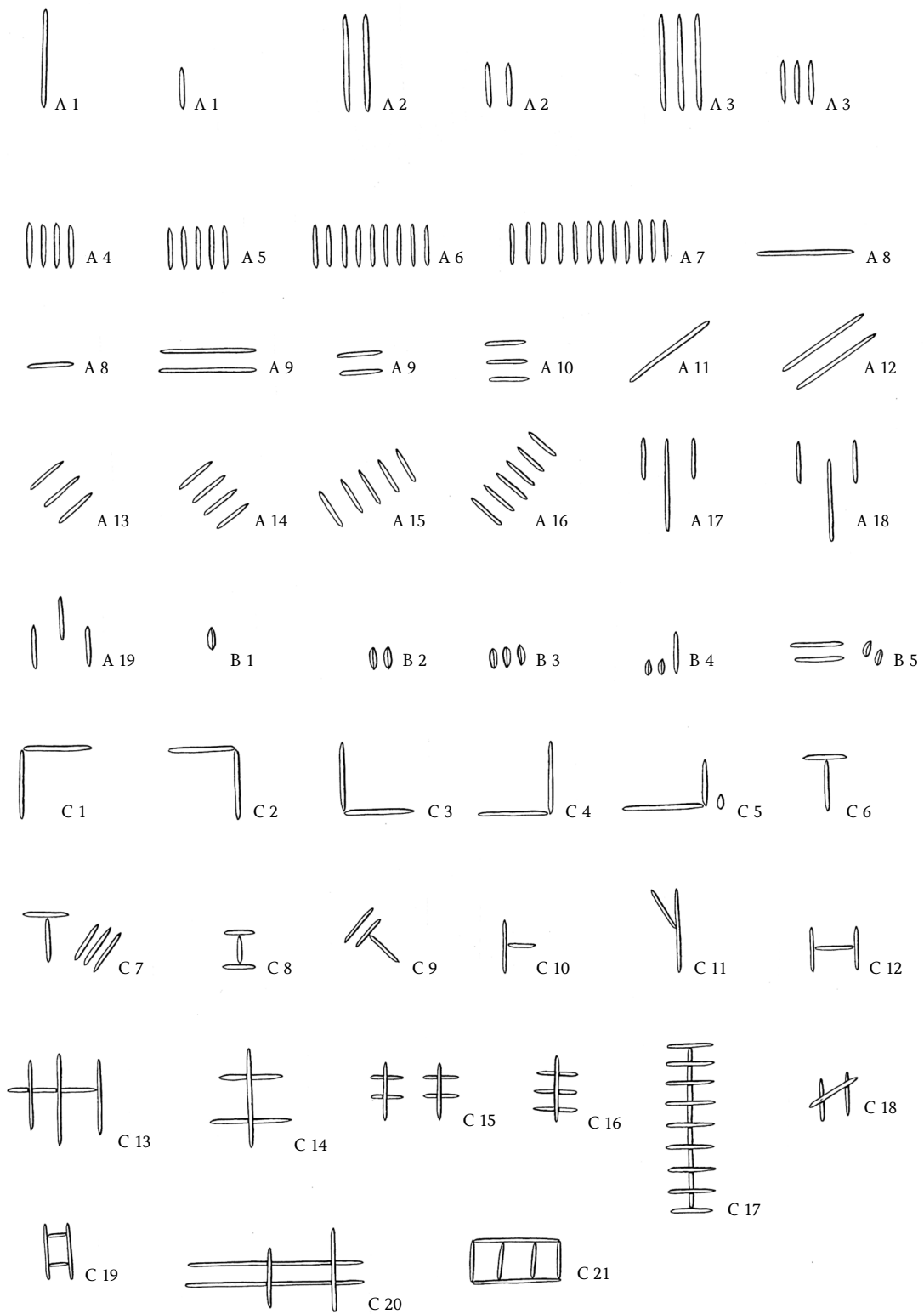


Figure 23. Pre-firing mark types on Cretan Bronze Age pottery (Scale 1:2; the scale of A17-A19, C7, C9, C10, C15, C19 is unknown).

FIGURE 24

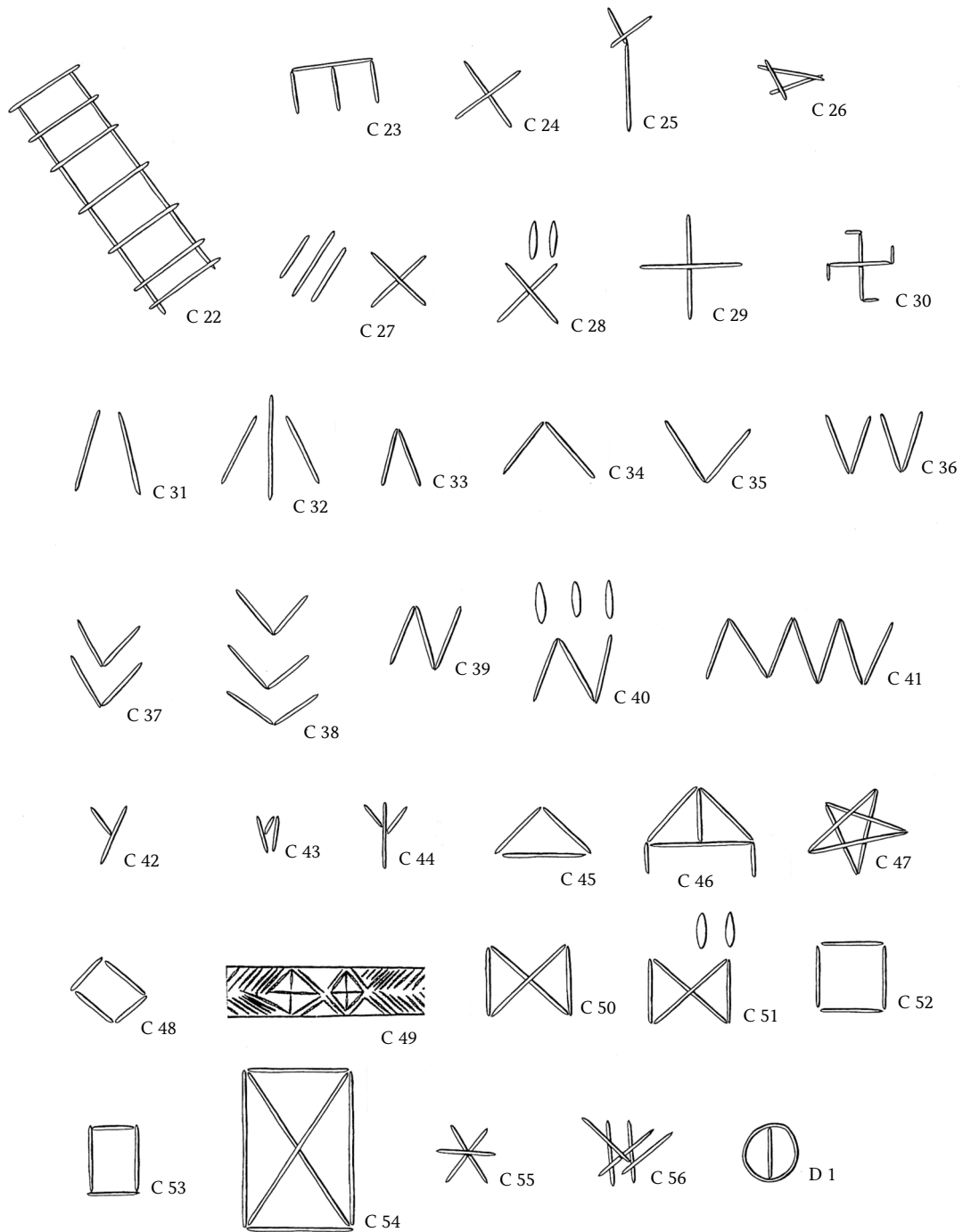


Figure 24. Pre-firing marks types on Cretan Bronze Age pottery
(Scale 1:2; C49 is in scale 1:6; the scale of C23, C28, C39, C40, C44, C51 is unknown).

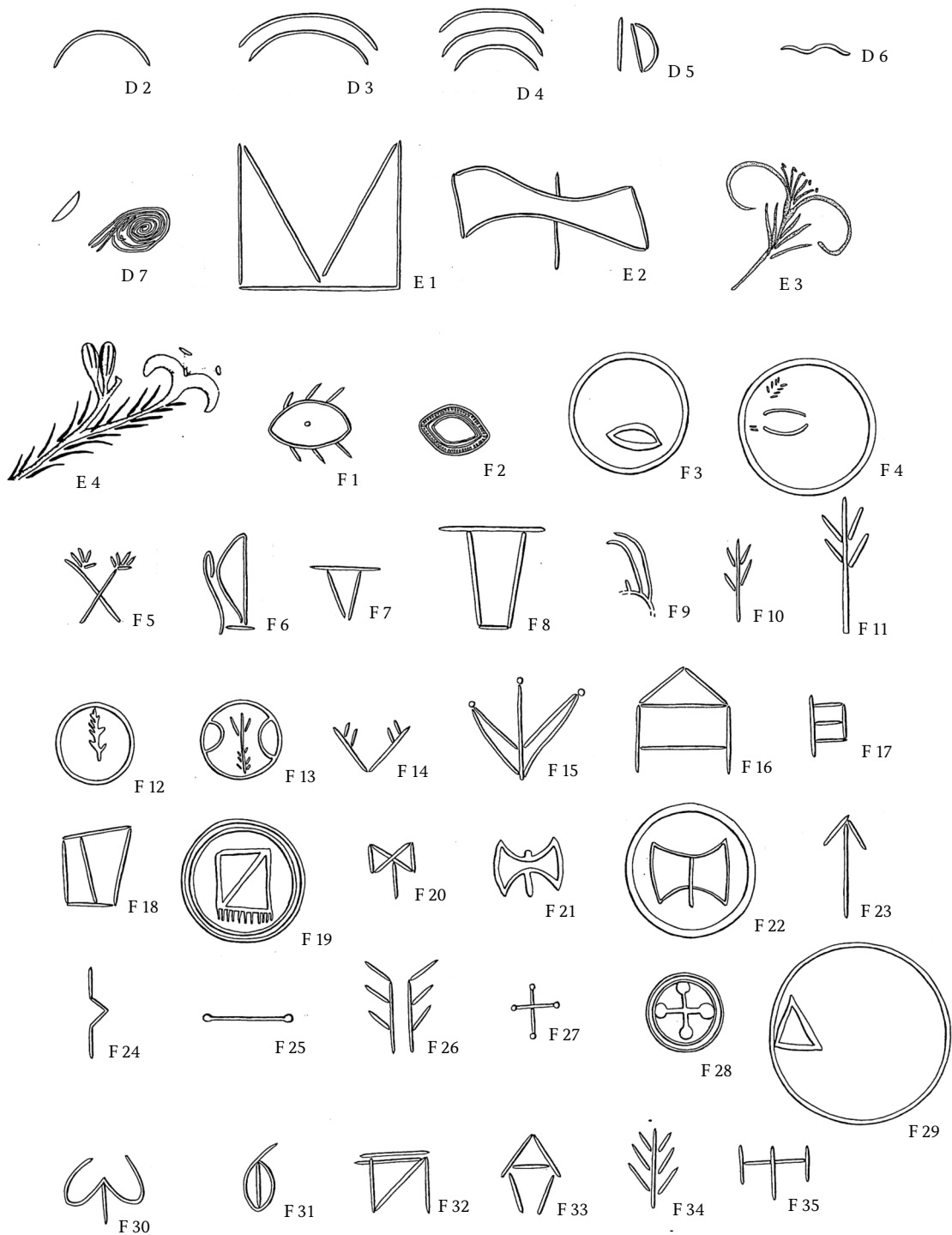


Figure 25. Pre-firing mark types on Cretan Bronze Age pottery (Scale 1:12; E2, F3, F4, F9, F12, F13, F19, F22, F28, F29 are in scale 1:4; the scale of D2-D4, E3, E4, F26, F32-F34 is unknown).

FIGURE 26

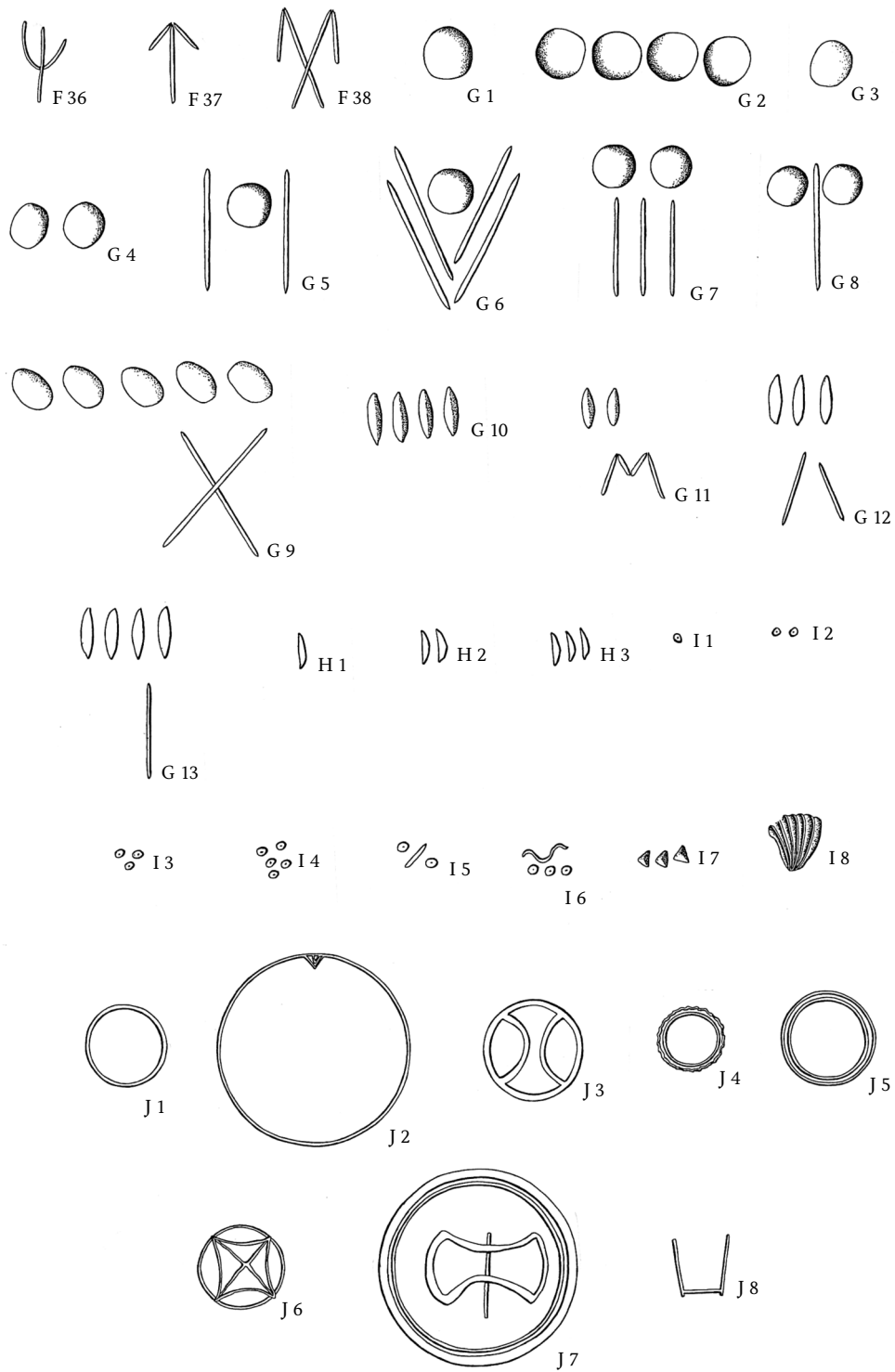


Figure 26. Pre-firing mark types on Cretan Bronze Age pottery (Scale 1:2; J1-J3, J8 are in scale 1:4; J4, J6 are in scale 1:6; the scale of F37 is unknown).

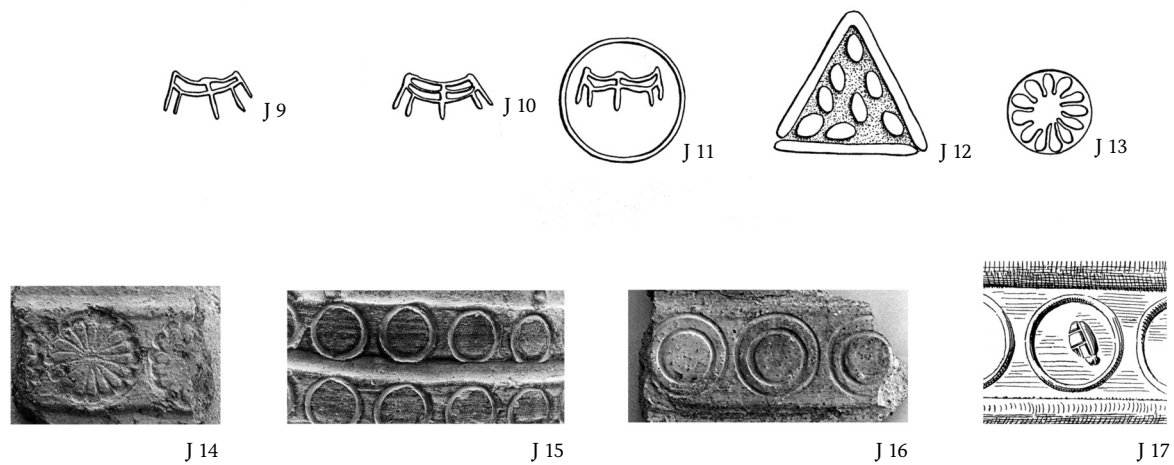


Figure 27. Pre-firing marks on Cretan Bronze Age pottery
(Scale 1:4; J13 is in scale 1:1; the scale of J12 is unknown; J15-J18 are not in scale).



SM 1



SM 2



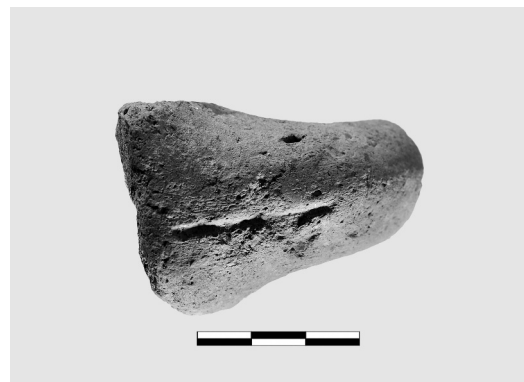
SM 3



SM 4



SM 5



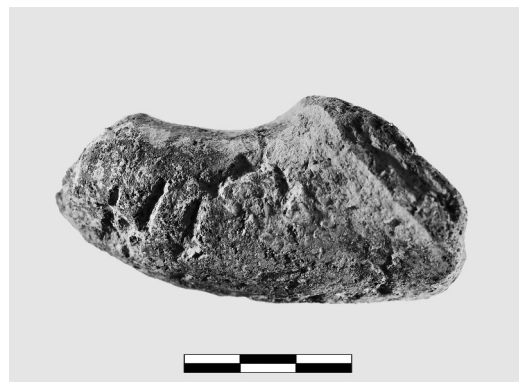
SM 6

Plate 1. Pre-firing marks from Building Y (SM 1) and Building V (SM 2-SM 6).

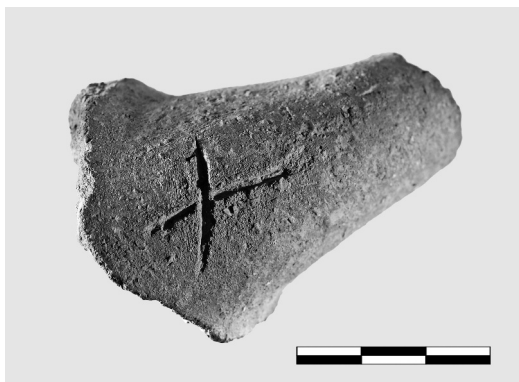
PLATE 2



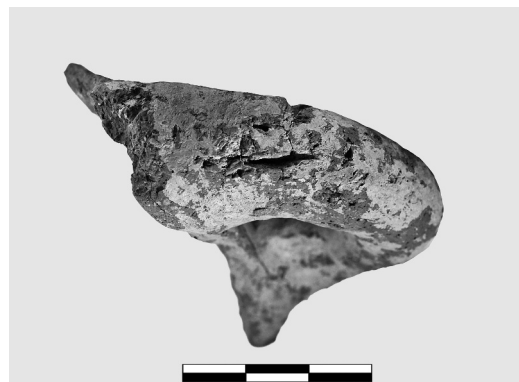
SM 7



SM 8



SM 9



SM 10



SM 11



SM 12

Plate 2. Pre-firing marks from Building V (SM 7-SM 9) and the north part of the west sector of the site (SM 10-SM 12).



SM 13



SM 14



SM 15



SM 16



SM 17



SM 18

Plate 3. Pre-firing marks from the north part of the west sector of the site (SM 13-SM 18).

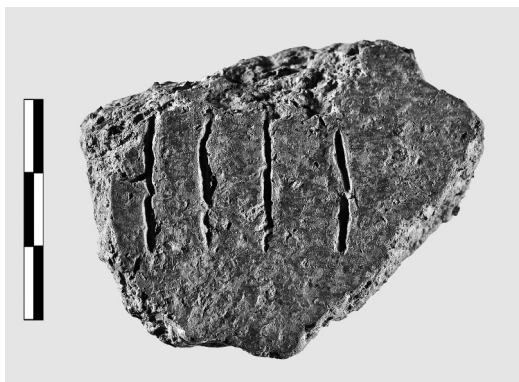
PLATE 4



SM 19



SM 20



SM 21



SM 22



SM 23

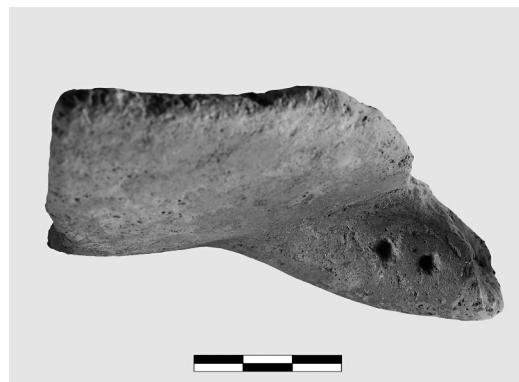


SM 24

Plate 4. Pre-firing marks from the north part of the west sector of the site (SM 19-SM 24).



SM 25



SM 26



SM 27



SM 28



SM 29



SM 30

Plate 5. Pre-firing marks from the north (SM 25-SM 29) and central (SM 30) parts of the west sector of the site.

PLATE 6



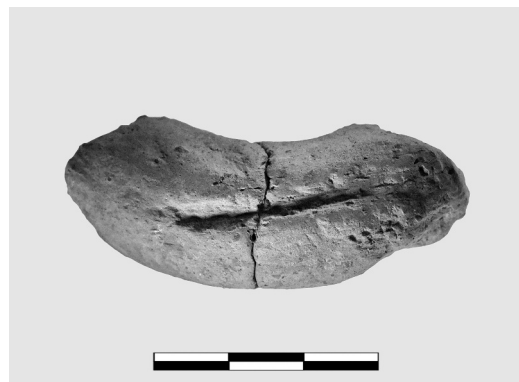
SM 31



SM 32



SM 33



SM 34

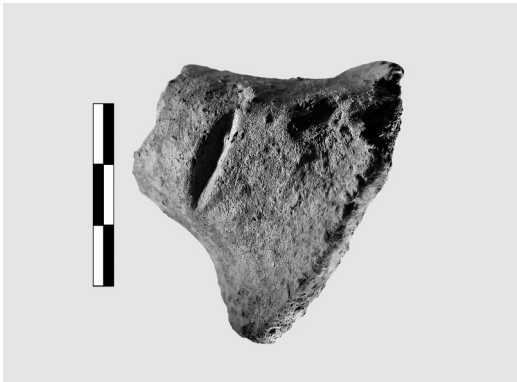


SM 35



SM 36

Plate 6. Pre-firing marks from the central part of the west sector of the site (SM 31-SM 36).



SM 37



SM 38



SM 39



SM 40



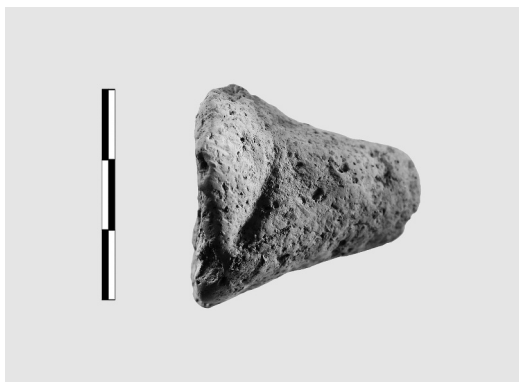
SM 41



SM 42

Plate 7. Pre-firing marks from the central part of the west sector of the site (SM 37-SM 42).

PLATE 8



SM 43



SM 44



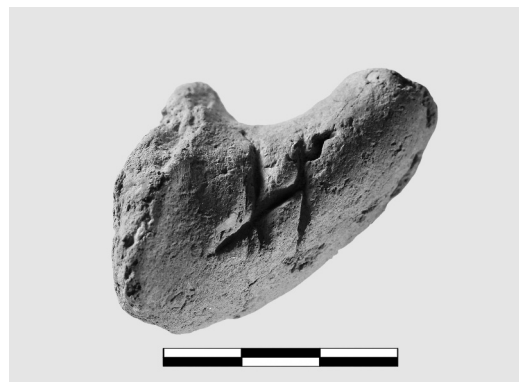
SM 45



SM 46



SM 47



SM 48

Plate 8. Pre-firing marks from the central part of the west sector of the site (SM 43-SM 48).



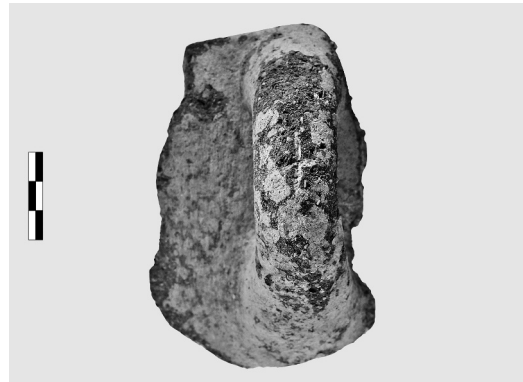
SM 49



SM 50



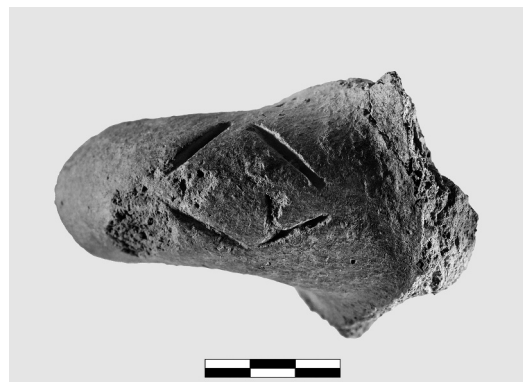
SM 51



SM 52



SM 53



SM 54

Plate 9. Pre-firing marks from the central part of the west sector of the site (SM 49-SM 54).

PLATE 10



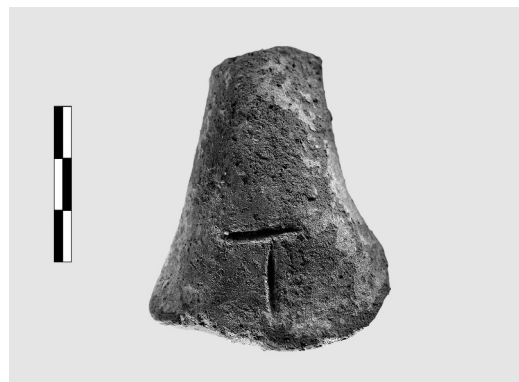
SM 55



SM 56



SM 57



SM 58

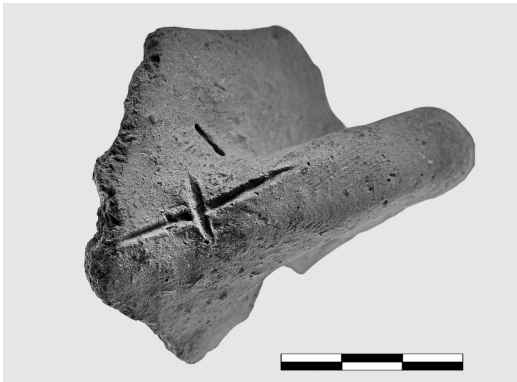


SM 59



SM 60

Plate 10. Pre-firing marks from the central part of the west sector of the site (SM 55-SM 57) and from Building U (SM 58- SM 60).



SM 61



SM 64



SM 62



SM 65



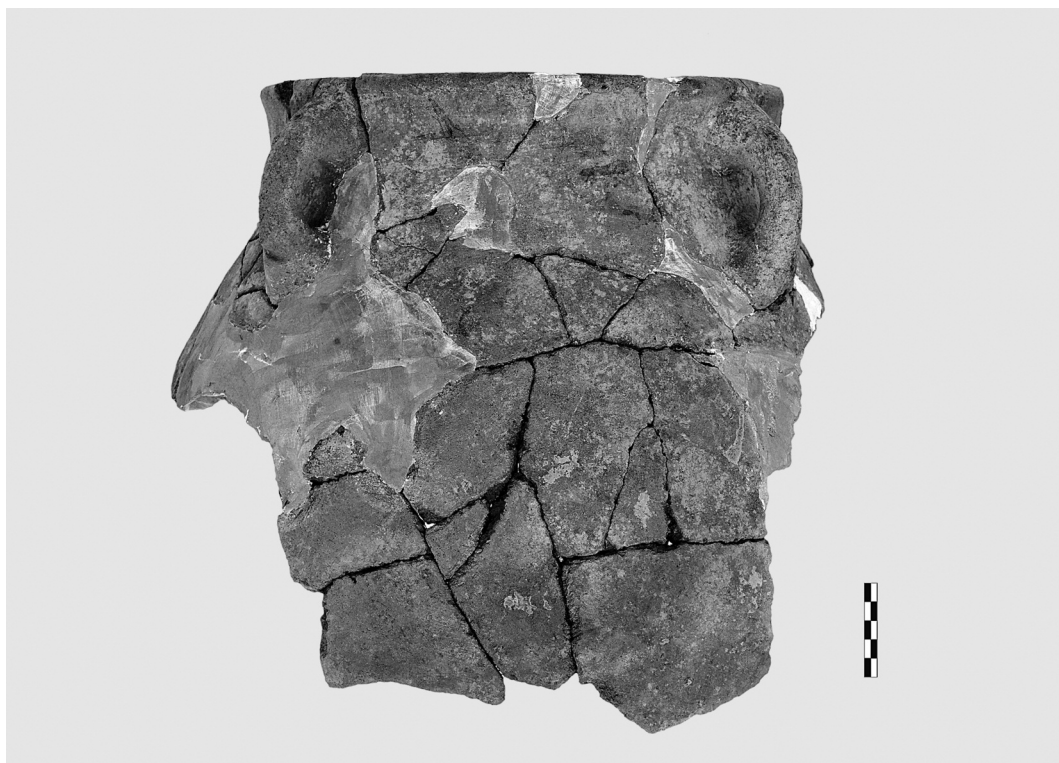
SM 63

Plate 11. Pre-firing marks from Building U (SM 61-SM 65).

PLATE 12



SM 67



SM 66

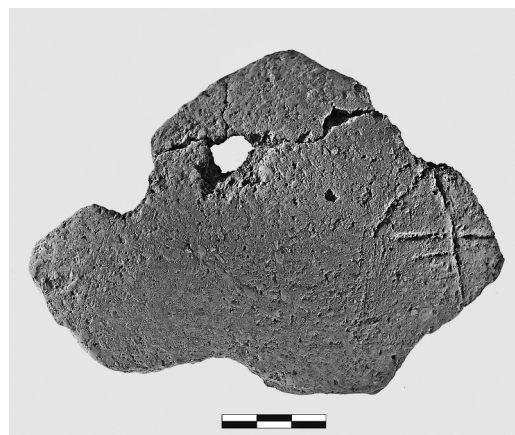
Plate 12. Pre-firing marks from Building U (SM 66-SM 67).



SM 68



SM 69



SM 70



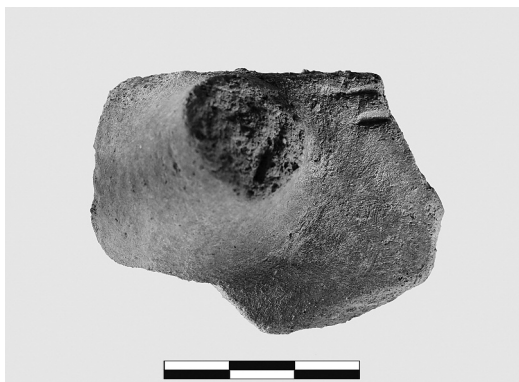
SM 71



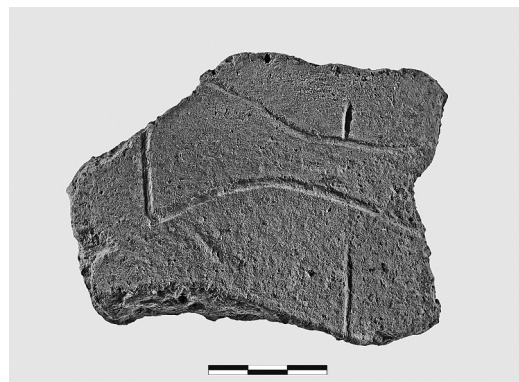
SM 72

Plate 13. Pre-firing marks from Building U (SM 68) and the terraced area west of Building U (SM 69-SM 72).

PLATE 14



SM 73



SM 74



SM 75

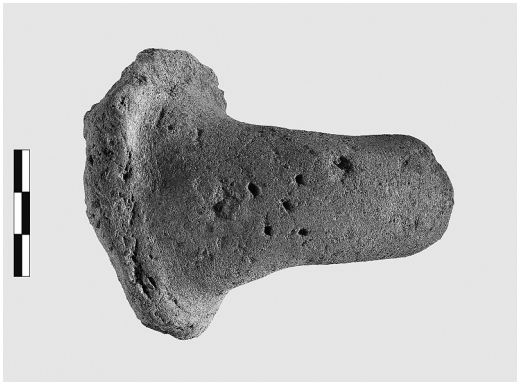


SM 76



SM 77

Plate 14. Pre-firing marks from the terraced area west of Building U (SM 73-SM 74) and Building Ub (SM 75-SM 77).



SM 78



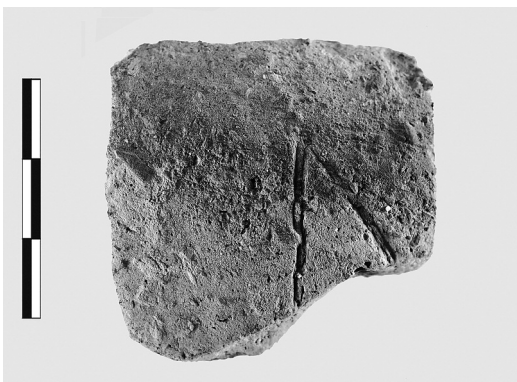
SM 79



SM 80



SM 81



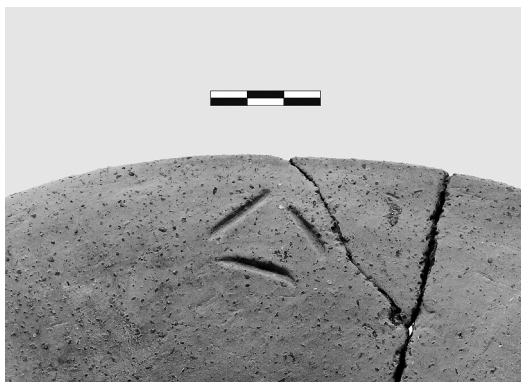
SM 82



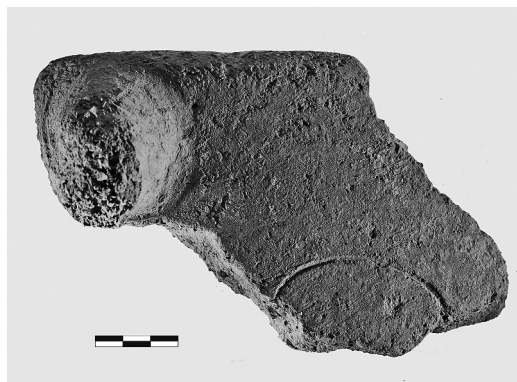
SM 83

Plate 15. Pre-firing marks from Building Ub (SM 78) and the area of the Sacred Enclosure (SM 79-SM 83).

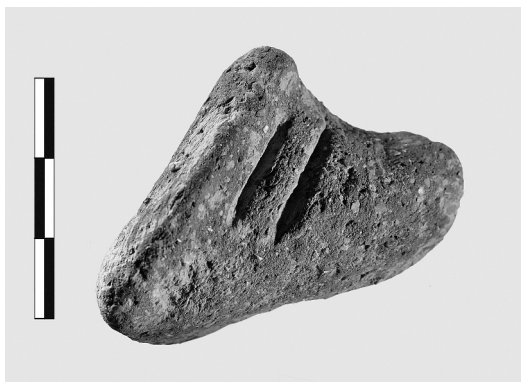
PLATE 16



SM 84



SM 85



SM 86



SM 87



SM 88

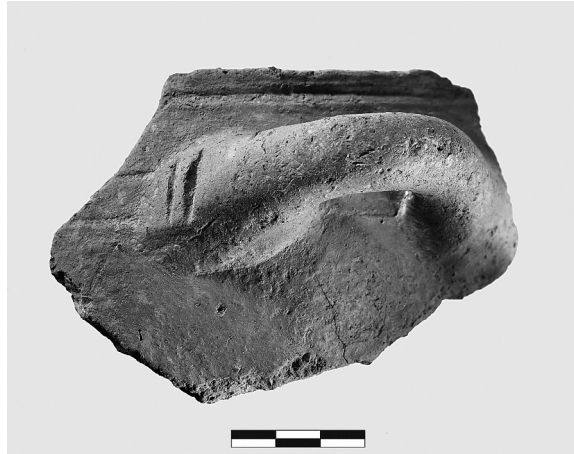


SM 89

Plate 16. Pre-firing marks from the area of the Sacred Enclosure (SM 84-SM 89).



SM 90



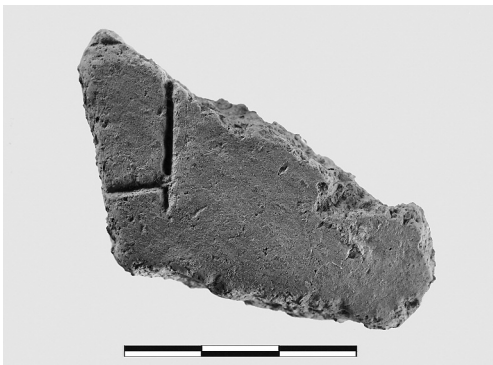
SM 91



SM 92

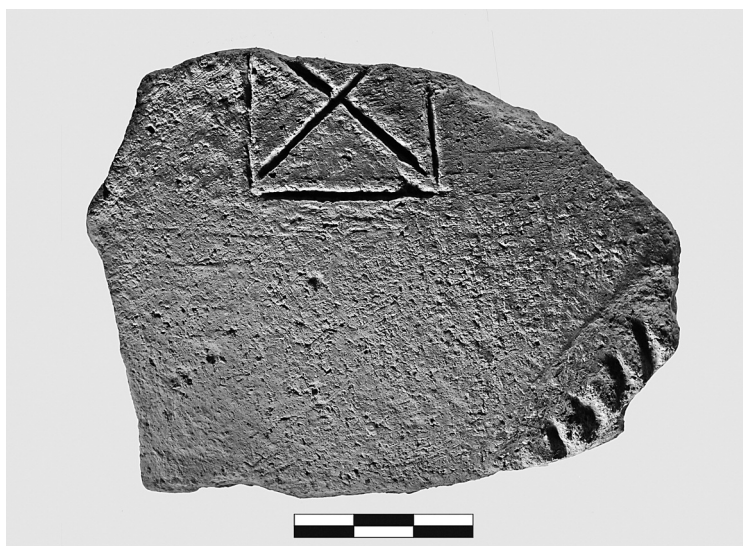


SM 93



SM 94

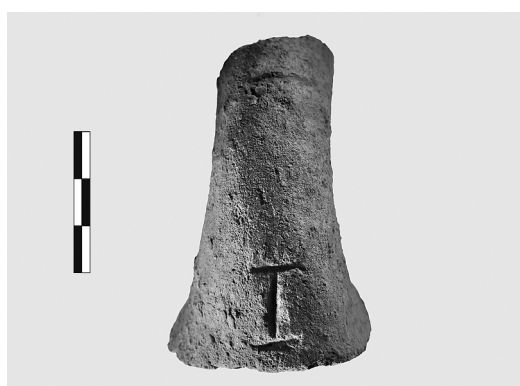
Plate 17. Pre-firing marks from the area of the Sacred Enclosure (SM 90-SM 94).



SM 95



SM 97



SM 96



SM 98

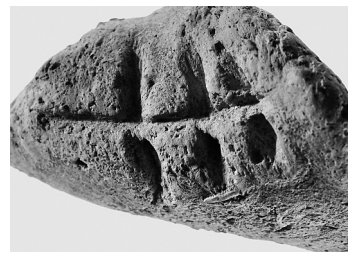
Plate 18. Pre-firing marks from the area of Buildings S (SM 95) and T (SM 96), the Altar (SM 97) and from the fill under Building Q (SM 98).



SM 31



SM 71



SM 2



SM 38



SM 30



SM 53



SM 19



SM 17



SM 14



SM 49

Plate 19. Pre-firing marks of Interaction Group I.

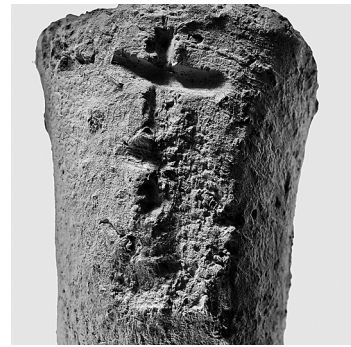
PLATE 20



SM 20



SM 35



SM 7



SM 44



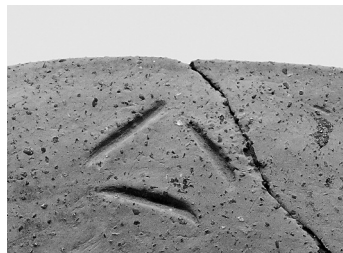
SM 39



SM 54



SM 13



SM 84



SM 1



SM 94



SM 12



SM 59

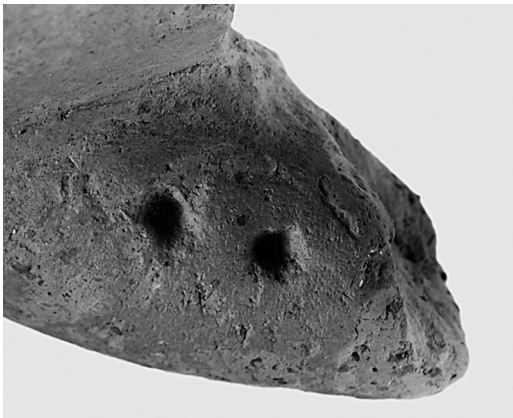
Plate 20. Pre-firing marks of Interaction Group II (SM 20, SM 35), III (SM 7, SM 44), IV (SM 39, SM 54), V (SM 13, SM 84), VI (SM 1, SM 94) and VII (SM 12, SM 59).



SM 21



SM 56



SM 26



SM 57



SM 78

Plate 21. Pre-firing marks of Interaction Group VIII (SM 21, SM 56) and IX (SM 26, SM 57, SM 78).

ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ

Στον παρόντα τόμο δημοσιεύονται τα σημεία κεραμέως που έχουν μέχρι σήμερα εντοπιστεί στο ιερό του Ερμή και της Αφροδίτης στη Σύμη της Βιάννου. Η παρουσία τους οργανώνεται σε επτά ενότητες-κεφάλαια. Στο πρώτο κεφάλαιο, η δημοσίευση εστιάζεται στα ανασκαφικά δεδομένα, με στόχο τον ασφαλέστερο χρονολογικό προσδιορισμό των κεραμικών σημείων, αφού μόνον ακριβή στοιχεία της ανασκαφικής συνάφειας (context) μπορούν να στηρίξουν ερμηνευτικές προσεγγίσεις, σχετικές με τη χρήση και τη λειτουργία τους. Στα αμέσως επόμενα κεφάλαια ακολουθεί η μελέτη των αγγείων επάνω στα οποία χαράχτηκαν ή εμπιέστηκαν τα σημεία, καθώς και των σημείων καθεαυτών. Στο τέταρτο κεφάλαιο επιχειρείται η ανάδυση των κεραμέων ως δρώντων ατόμων χαμένων στη λήθη του χρόνου. Στη συνέχεια, προκειμένου να αναδειχθεί η πρακτική του μαρκαρίσματος των αγγείων εντός της Κρήτης, κατά την εποχή του Χαλκού, η μελέτη επεκτείνεται στην εξέταση αντίστοιχων δημοσιευμένων συνόλων από άλλες θέσεις. Η ανάλυσή τους καταλαμβάνει το έκτο κεφάλαιο του τόμου. Στο τελευταίο κεφάλαιο συζητείται η πιθανή ερμηνεία ή οι ερμηνείες των σημείων κεραμέως.

Ένα σύνολο 98 οστράκων και αγγείων αποσπασματικής διατήρησης που φέρουν σημεία κεραμέως ήλθε στο φως στη Σύμη κατά τη διάρκεια των ανασκαφών, οι οποίες διενεργήθηκαν από το 1972 έως το 2003 (Table 1, Chart 1). Συγκριτικά με τις τεράστιες ποσότητες αμαρκάριστων αγγείων που απέδωσε το ιερό, οι περιπτώσεις αυτές καταδεικνύουν ότι η συγκεκριμένη πρακτική σίγουρα δεν ήταν ευρέως διαδεδομένη.

Τα σημεία, βάσει του σχήματός τους, ομαδοποιούνται σε 24 κύριες τυπολογικές ενότητες, από τις οποίες οι είκοσι μία (21) περιλαμβάνουν εγχάρακτα σημεία και οι τρεις (3) εμπιέστα (Table 2). Τα σημεία είναι απλά ως προς τη σύλληψή τους: το καθένα αποτελείται από απλά στοιχεία, όπως γραμμικές εγχαράξεις και εμπιέστες κουκκίδες (στιγμές), γωνιώδη σχήματα και δακτυλικά αποτυπώματα. Ορισμένα αγγεία φέρουν μεμονωμένα σημεία, όπως μία και μοναδική γραμμική εγχάραξη ή ένα δακτυλικό αποτύπωμα. Τα υπόλοιπα σημεία αποτελούνται από δύο ή περισσότερα στοιχεία του ίδιου είδους.

Τα περισσότερα σημεία χαράχτηκαν σε ευρύστομα αγγεία και σε χύτρες: είκοσι οκτώ (28) και είκοσι δύο (22) δείγματα αντίστοιχα (Chart 2). Αυτά συνιστούν το 50% του συνολικού αριθμού των αγγείων/οστράκων με σημεία κεραμέως. Επίσης εντοπίστηκαν δεκατέσσερα (14) σημεία σε πίθους και δέκα (10) σε αμφορείς. Ακόμη έξι (6) σημεία εμφανίζονται σε φιάλες και επτά (7) σε λεκανίδες και πρόχους. Τα κύπελλα με σημεία είναι σπανιότατα. Τα αγγεία που μαρκάρονται, όπως προκύπτει

από τη μελέτη, είναι κυρίως εκείνα που χρησιμοποιούνται στην αποθήκευση και το μαγείρεμα, ενώ τα αγγεία σερβιρίσματος φαγητού και τα αγγεία πόσης δεν μαρκάρονται συχνά. Στις περισσότερες μάλιστα περιπτώσεις τα σημεία ήταν άμεσα ορατά.

Η συχνότερη χρήση των μαρκαρισμένων αγγείων στο ιερό τοποθετείται στον χρονικό ορίζοντα της παλαιοανακτορικής περιόδου (Chart 3). Σημαντικό ποσοστό, το 66% του συνόλου, βρέθηκε σε ανασκαφικές συνάψεις που χρονολογούνται στη MM IB και σχετίζονται με τα κτίρια Υ, V και το κτίριο ή τα κτίρια στο βόρειο τμήμα της δυτικής περιοχής του ιερού. Μερικά άλλα μαρκαρισμένα όστρακα, το 15% του συνόλου, χρονολογούνται στην MM IIB περίοδο και τα αγγεία από τα οποία προέρχονται χρησιμοποιήθηκαν στο κτίριο U. Ελάχιστα δείγματα, μόλις το 3% του συνόλου, χρονολογούνται στη MM IIIB ή YM IA περίοδο και σχετίζονται με τον Ιερό Περίβολο. Το σημείο SM 97 χρονολογείται στο ευρύ χρονικό πλαίσιο της MMIII/ YMIA, ενώ το SM 95 τοποθετείται στην YM IA ή στην YM IB. Τέλος, η ακριβής χρονολόγηση δεκατεσσάρων (14) σημείων κεραμέως είναι ανέφικτη, αφού η ανασκαφική συνάψια είναι πολύ διαταραγμένη και τα μορφολογικά και τεχνολογικά χαρακτηριστικά των αγγείων/οστράκων δεν παρέχουν στοιχεία για ασφαλή χρονολογική τοποθέτηση. Τα SM 29, SM 45, SM 48, SM 51-SM 52, SM 55, SM 60, SM 62, SM 65, SM 73, SM 80 ίσως να χρονολογούνται στους MM IB ή MM IIB χρόνους, ενώ τα SM 69 και SM 83 μπορούν να τοποθετηθούν εξίσου στη MM IIB, τη MM IIIA, τη MM IIIB και την YM IA περίοδο.

Οι σύνθετες τυπολογικές αναλύσεις, οι εκτεταμένοι κατάλογοι, οι αναλυτικές περιγραφές και οι χρονολογικές παρατηρήσεις, τα σχέδια και οι φωτογραφίες, όλη αυτή η τεράστια προσπάθεια, να δοθεί μια όσο το δυνατόν λεπτομερέστερη τεκμηρίωση και παρουσίαση του υλικού πολιτισμού του παρελθόντος, αφήνει στην αφάνεια συχνά τον άνθρωπο. Το άτομο που δημιούργησε, χρησιμοποίησε, αγάπησε και δέθηκε με τα υλικά αντικείμενα ή ακόμη και τα απέρριψε. Η σύνδεση των σημείων κεραμέως με τους αγγειοπλάστες, οι οποίοι κάποτε κατασκεύασαν τα αγγεία και εμπίεσαν ή χάραξαν το σημείο, δεν έχει τύχει επαρκούς διερεύνησης στο πλαίσιο του προϊστορικού Αιγαίου. Στο τέταρτο κεφάλαιο επιχειρείται η προσέγγιση των ανθρώπων εκείνων οι οποίοι έπλασαν και μάρκαραν όσα αγγεία βρέθηκαν στο ιερό της Σύμης, αξιολογώντας γραφολογικά τον γραφικό χαρακτήρα των κεραμέων και συνεξετάζοντας τα μορφολογικά και τεχνολογικά γνωρίσματα των μαρκαρισμένων αγγείων.

Η συνεξέταση του γραφολογικού προφίλ κάθε σημείου με τα τεχνολογικά χαρακτηριστικά του αγγείου, στο οποίο αυτό χαραχτηκε ή εμπιέστηκε, επέτρεψε την ταύτιση εννέα ομάδων (Interaction groups). Οι κεραμείς που αντιπροσωπεύονται από κάθε ομάδα ξεχωριστά διαπιστώνεται ότι συνδέονται με ισχυρούς δεσμούς, όσον αφορά στην κεραμική τεχνολογία αλλά και στην επιλογή του σημείου καθεαυτού. Παράγουν αγγεία του ίδιου σχήματος με την ίδια κεραμική τεχνική και τα μαρκάρουν με τον ίδιο τύπο σημείου, το οποίο χράσσεται ή εμπιέζεται στην ίδια θέση σε όλα σχεδόν τα αγγεία. Τα βασικά μορφολογικά και τεχνολογικά χαρακτηριστικά της παραγωγής δεν διαφέρουν, ώστε παρέχεται η εικόνα ενός κατά περίπτωση ομοιογενούς κεραμικού συνόλου. Παρά την ομοιότητά τους, ωστόσο, τα σημεία παρουσιάζουν διαφορές κατά τον τρόπο με τον οποίο αποτυπώθηκαν εξαιτίας, έως ένα βαθμό, του γραφικού χαρακτήρα του μεμονωμένου κεραμέα. Οι κεραμείς

θα μπορούσαν, ενδεχομένως, να είχαν υιοθετήσει μια συγκεκριμένη μέθοδο εγχάραξης, με αποτέλεσμα τη μεγαλύτερη δυνατή τυποποίηση του σημείου. Αντίθετα όμως, ο κάθε κεραμέας τοποθέτησε το ίδιο σημείο στον μαλακό πηλό με το δικό του ιδιαίτερο, ατομικό στυλ. Αυτή η έμφαση στην ατομική γραφική έκφραση ερμηνεύεται εδώ ως αποτέλεσμα όχι μόνον των γραφικών ιδιοτυπιών αλλά και της ανάγκης κάθε κεραμέα να προβάλλει την προσωπικότητά του όσο γίνεται πιο ξεκάθαρα σε ένα σύνολο αγγείων με ομοιόμορφα μορφολογικά και τεχνολογικά χαρακτηριστικά. Η ομοιομορφία αυτών των στοιχείων στα αγγεία ενός δεδομένου συνόλου βοηθά τον προσεκτικό παρατηρητή να ταυτίσει ευκολότερα το ατομικό γραφικό στυλ του κάθε κεραμέα, ιδιαίτερα στην περίπτωση όπου δύο ή περισσότερα αγγεία χρησιμοποιήθηκαν ταυτόχρονα. Φαίνεται, λοιπόν, ότι το σημείο είναι δηλωτικό-διακριτικό της κάθε ομάδας κεραμέων αφενός και των κεραμέων που δραστηριοποιούνται εντός αυτής της ομάδας αφετέρου.

Στο πέμπτο και στο έκτο κεφάλαιο παρουσιάζονται και αναλύονται τα σημεία κεραμέως από τις υπόλοιπες θέσεις της Κρήτης (Table 3). Η συγκριτική μελέτη των σημείων κεραμέως αναδεικνύει συγκεκριμένα-στερεότυπα πρότυπα σχετικά με τους συνδυασμούς τύπων σημείων, τις κεραμικές κατηγορίες και τα σχήματα, τις θέσεις και τις συχνότητες μαρκαρίσματος. Ορισμένα πρότυπα μαρκαρίσματος, όσα συζητούνται εδώ, έχουν βρεθεί στις περισσότερες θέσεις. Το υψηλό ποσοστό αμαρκαρίστων αγγείων συγκρινόμενο με το αντίστοιχο των «σεσημειωμένων» αποδεικνύει ότι το μαρκάρισμα των αγγείων δεν ήταν ευρέως διαδεδομένη πρακτική. Οι κεραμείς μάρκαραν μόνον ένα χαμηλό ποσοστό της παραγωγής τους. Το μαρκάρισμα περιοριζόταν σε ακόσμητα χρηστικά αγγεία, τα οποία χρησίμευαν για αποθήκευση, μεταφορά και μαγείρεμα, ενώ σημεία σε λεπτότεχνα αγγεία είναι άγνωστα στις μέχρι σήμερα δημοσιεύσεις. Τα αγγεία που εντοπίστηκαν σε κάθε θέση, με ελάχιστες εξαιρέσεις, είναι κατασκευασμένα από τοπικούς πηλούς. Το γεγονός δηλώνει ότι προοριζόνταν αποκλειστικά για την κάλυψη τοπικών αναγκών και όχι για διανομή σε περιφερειακό, διαπεριφερειακό και υπερπόντιο εμπόριο ως σκεύη για μεταφορά αγαθών ή ως εμπόρευμα καθεαυτά. Οι συνηθέστεροι τύποι σημείων είναι εκείνοι που αποτελούνται από απλά ή πιο σύνθετα γραμμικά μοτίβα, ενώ τα εμπιέστα σημεία είναι λιγότερο κοινά από τα εγχάρακτα (Chart 10). Τα γραπτά σημεία είναι σχεδόν άγνωστα. Τα σύνθετα σημεία, δηλαδή όσα αποτελούνται από συνδυασμό δύο ή περισσότερων στοιχείων, σπανίζουν. Τα σημεία τοποθετούνται σε πολύ εμφανείς περιοχές του αγγείου, ενώ ελάχιστα είναι τα παραδείγματα με σημεία σε λιγότερο ορατά τμήματα της επιφάνειας του αγγείου (Chart 9).

Τα σημεία αυτά, παρόλο που εμφανίζονται σε πολλές αρχαιολογικές θέσεις –στοιχείο ικανό να στηρίξει την υπόθεση ότι υπήρχε ένα κοινό σύστημα μαρκαρίσματος εκτεινόμενο σε ολόκληρο το νησί– παρουσιάζουν διαφοροποιήσεις ως προς τη συχνότητα εμφάνισής τους από τη μία θέση στην άλλη. Επιπλέον, παράλληλα με αυτές τις κοινές τάσεις, σε αρκετές περιπτώσεις έχουν ταυτιστεί συγκεκριμένα πρότυπα μαρκαρίσματος με συγκεκριμένες θέσεις. Σε πολλά κεραμικά κέντρα, για παράδειγμα, τα αγγεία έχουν μαρκαριστεί με τύπους σημείων που απαντώνται μόνον στη συγκεκριμένη θέση, μαζί με πιο διαδεδομένα απλά σημεία κεραμέως (Table 5). Πολλά από τα σημεία αυτά συναντώνται μόνον μια φορά, ενώ άλλα μαρτυρούνται σε πολλά παραδείγματα, είτε του ίδιου είτε διαφορετικού σχήματος, πάντοτε όμως

τοποθετημένα στο ίδιο σημείο ανά σχήμα. Διαφορές έχουν εντοπιστεί και στη συχνότητα μαρκαρίσματος των αγγείων σε συγκεκριμένους οικισμούς. Παρόλον ότι τα μαρκαρισμένα αγγεία αντιστοιχούν πάντοτε σε χαμηλά ποσοστά σε σχέση με τα αμαρκάριστα, σε ορισμένες περιπτώσεις τα στοιχεία δηλώνουν, με βάση τις ποσοτικές και ποιοτικές παραμέτρους της έρευνας, ότι το μαρκάρισμα ήταν περισσότερο διαδεδομένη πρακτική στον ένα οικισμό απ' ό,τι στον άλλον.

Όλα αυτά φανερώνουν καθαρά ότι μερικές από τις ομάδες κεραμίων, που δραστηριοποιούνταν σε διάφορα κέντρα παραγωγής, χρησιμοποιούσαν ένα συγκεκριμένο ρεπερτόριο σημείων και ακολουθούσαν προκαθορισμένους κανόνες στο μαρκάρισμα των αγγείων τους. Οι διαφοροποιήσεις όλων αυτών των μεταβλητών ανάμεσα στις θέσεις υποδεικνύουν την παρουσία διαφορετικών παραδόσεων μαρκαρίσματος σε καθεμιά από αυτές. Συνεπώς, αντί για ένα ομοιότυπο σύστημα μαρκαρίσματος διαδεδομένο σε ολόκληρο το νησί, μπορούμε να μιλήσουμε για αριθμό περιφερειακών παραδόσεων μαρκαρίσματος ή ακόμη και για ιδιαίτερη παράδοση ανά συγκεκριμένη θέση. Τα περιορισμένα ποσοτικά και ποιοτικά δεδομένα μάς εμποδίζουν τόσο να σκιαγραφήσουμε τα βασικά χαρακτηριστικά των τοπικών αυτών συστημάτων μαρκαρίσματος, όσο και να εξιχνιάσουμε τις μεταξύ τους πιθανές αλληλεπιδράσεις. Προς το παρόν, η εικόνα παραμένει θολή. Η δημοσίευση νέου υλικού από περισσότερες θέσεις καθώς και νέες έρευνες θα βοηθήσουν να κατανοήσουμε την οργάνωση των τοπικών συστημάτων μαρκαρίσματος αγγείων και να χαρτογραφήσουμε την εξάπλωση κάθε παράδοσης εντός ενός ιδιαίτερα σημαντικού γεωγραφικού χώρου, όπως είναι η Κρήτη. Οι αναπτυσσόμενες περιφερειακές παραδόσεις μαρκαρίσματος συνάδουν απόλυτα με τον τοπικισμό που παρατηρείται στα πρότυπα της κεραμικής παραγωγής, καθώς και σε άλλες εκφάνσεις του υλικού πολιτισμού στις διάφορες περιοχές του νησιού.

Το νόημα των σημείων κεραμέως έχει απασχολήσει πλείστους ερευνητές ήδη από τα πρώτα χρόνια της αιγαιακής αρχαιολογίας. Η ομοιότητα μεταξύ πολλών σημείων κεραμέως και σημείων των αιγαιακών γραφών αρχικά οδήγησε αρκετούς μελετητές, κυρίως επιγραφολόγους, να συνδέσουν τα σημεία με προ-αλφαβητικά αιγαιακά σημεία και επιγραφές. Αυτές οι προσπάθειες, ωστόσο, απέβησαν άκαρπες και αναζητήθηκαν άλλα ερμηνευτικά πρότυπα, εμπνευσμένα από εθνογραφικά παράλληλα, ενσωματώνοντας στην επιχειρούμενη ερμηνεία πληροφορίες από επιστημονικές προσεγγίσεις στη μελέτη της κεραμικής. Στην πλειονότητα των περιπτώσεων, τα σημεία κεραμέως σχετίζονται με κεραμείς ή/και με εργαστήρια. Άλλοι ερευνητές υποστηρίζουν ότι τα σημεία προσδιορίζουν τη χωρητικότητα και το περιεχόμενο των αγγείων, τον προορισμό ή την απόκτηση κυριότητας του τελικού προϊόντος ή ότι αποτελούν θρησκευτικά σύμβολα ή σηματοδοτούν μια συγκεντρωτική στρατηγική ελέγχου στην κεραμική παραγωγή. Άλλες προτεινόμενες λειτουργίες, οι οποίες όμως δεν είναι γενικά αποδεκτές, συνδέουν τα σημεία κεραμέως με εθνικές ομάδες, αριθμητικά συστήματα, ποιότητα και κόστος κεραμικής. Σύμφωνα με άλλες, τα αγγεία υποτίθεται ότι μαρκάρονταν για την αποφυγή διάδοσης μολύνσεων από άρρωστους κατόχους, για να βοηθήσουν τους τυφλούς χρήστες ή ακόμη και για τον υπολογισμό του χρόνου, ώστε να καθίσταται δυνατή η πρόβλεψη των εποχικών αλλαγών. Όσο διαφορετικές και αν είναι, οι περισσότερες θεωρίες συγκλίνουν στο ότι τα σημεία κεραμέως λειτουργούσαν με ποικίλους τρόπους.

Η μοναδική υπόθεση σχετικά με τη χρήση και τη σημασία των σημείων κεραμέως, που επιβεβαιώνεται από αρχαιολογικά τεκμήρια σε διάφορες θέσεις της Κρήτης της εποχής του Χαλκού, είναι εκείνη που συνδέει τα σημεία με τους αγγειοπλάστες. Ακολουθώντας την επικρατέστερη εκδοχή, η οποία υποστηρίζεται από πολλούς μελετητές αλλά και από εθνογραφικές μαρτυρίες, στην παρούσα μελέτη προτείνεται ότι τα κρητικά σημεία κεραμέως προσδιορίζουν τον κεραμέα ο οποίος μάρκαρε την παραγωγή του με σκοπό να την αναγνωρίσει. Οι τοπικές ομάδες κεραμένων χρησιμοποιούσαν ένα συγκεκριμένο ρεπερτόριο σημείων και ακολουθούσαν προκαθορισμένους κανόνες στο μαρκάρισμα των αγγείων τους. Επομένως τα σημεία κεραμέως θεωρούνται μονολειτουργικές και όχι πολυλειτουργικές οντότητες. Αγγεία διαφορετικού μεγέθους συχνά φέρουν σημεία του ίδιου τύπου και, αντίστροφα, αγγεία ίδιας χωρητικότητας φέρουν ποικίλα σημεία, αποκλείοντας έτσι το ενδεχόμενο αυτά να λειτουργούσαν ως δηλωτικά της χωρητικότητας ή του βάρους. Κανένα σημείο δεν μπορεί να ταυτιστεί ως δηλωτικό συγκεκριμένων αγροτικών προϊόντων και η χρήση τους προβάλλει πολύ ασυνεπής, ώστε να συνδεθεί με τον προορισμό του περιεχομένου τους. Επίσης, το υπό συζήτηση υλικό από ορισμένες θέσεις υποδηλώνει την ύπαρξη ομάδων κεραμένων, η καθεμιά συγκροτούμενη με περισσότερους του ενός κεραμείς, που ακολουθούν την ίδια κεραμική παράδοση και μαρκάρουν αγγεία του ίδιου τύπου με συγκεκριμένο σημείο. Με τον τρόπο αυτόν το σημείο γίνεται αναγνωριστικό και της ευρύτερης ομάδας. Τα σημεία θα μπορούσαν να θεωρηθούν ένας τρόπος επισήμανσης των διαφορετικών προϊόντων που κατασκευάστηκαν από τις διαφορετικές ομάδες κεραμένων.

Κατά την ανάλυση του υλικού της Σύμης υποστηρίζεται από τον γράφοντα ότι το σημείο δηλώνει τον κεραμέα ως άτομο. Το άτομο αυτό προσδιορίζεται αφ' ενός από τις συνήθειες κινητικές του δεξιότητες κατά το πλάσιμο του αγγείου και αφ' ετέρου από τον συγκεκριμένο τρόπο επίθεσης του ίδιου σημείου στην επιφάνειά του. Οι κεραμείς κάθε ομάδας τοποθετούν το ίδιο σημείο σε αγγεία του ίδιου τύπου. Ο καθένας το χαράζει ή το εμπιέζει στον ωμό πηλό με διαφορετικό τρόπο, με αποτέλεσμα τα σημεία να διαφέρουν μεταξύ τους, μολονότι αποτελούν την ίδια εννοιολογική εικόνα. Αυτή η διαφορά ερμηνεύεται εδώ όχι μόνον ως απόρροια μιας ιδιαίτερης ιδιοσυγκρασίας αλλά και ως εσκεμμένη έκφραση της ατομικότητας του κεραμέα. Οι διαφορές τόσο στην κατασκευή του αγγείου όσο και στη γραφή του σημείου βοηθούν στο να προσεγγίσουμε τον κάθε κεραμέα ξεχωριστά: προσδίδουν υλική υπόσταση και ταυτότητα στους κεραμείς –άγνωστους για εμάς αλλά γνωστούς στην κοινότητά τους. Όπως κάθε πρακτική δεξιότητα, η μετάπλαση της αργιλομάζας σε αγγείο απαιτεί προσοχή, τεχνική ικανότητα και δεξιότητα. Με την εξάσκηση, αυτές οι εξειδικευμένες κινήσεις βαθμιαία γίνονται μέρος της σωματικής ανάπτυξης και των συνηθειών του κεραμέα. Κατά τον ίδιο τρόπο και η γραφή ενσωματώνει την υλική υπόσταση του χεριού του κεραμέα που την παρήγαγε. Αυτή ταυτοποιείται όχι μόνον βάσει της επαναλαμβανόμενης κίνησης του χεριού του αλλά και της γωνίας, υπό την οποία χέρι και εργαλείο ήλθαν σε επαφή με την επιφάνεια του αγγείου, επηρεάζοντας απόλυτα τη στάση του γραφέα. Με βάση αυτές τις παρατηρήσεις, η κατασκευή ενός αγγείου αλλά κυρίως το μαρκάρισμά του στη μελέτη αυτή κατανοούνται ως κώδικας μη-λεκτικής επικοινωνίας για την προβολή και επιβεβαίωση της ατομικότητας των κεραμένων. Με την εγχάραξη συγκεκριμένου

σημείου ο κεραμέας δήλωνε την παρουσία του, τον ίδιο του τον εαυτό. Το σημείο είναι εκείνο που μεταβάλλει την ιδιότητα ενός αγγείου ανάμεσα στο πλήθος των ομοιοτύπων του, που κατασκεύασε ο κεραμέας. Από απλό χρηστικό αντικείμενο γίνεται ένα μέσο για την υπενθύμιση και την αναγνώριση της κοινωνικής του δράσης.

Γιατί, όμως, ο κεραμέας αισθάνεται αυτή την ανάγκη ξεκάθαρης δήλωσης της ταυτότητάς του μέσω του μαρκαρίσματος του αγγείου που κατασκεύασε; Όπως προαναφέρθηκε, η πλειονότητα των προτεινόμενων μοντέλων ερμηνείας της πρακτικής μαρκαρίσματος των αγγείων εστιάζεται στην ανάγκη εξασφάλισης των οικονομικών συμφερόντων μιας ομάδας κεραμέων ή και τον έλεγχο της παραγωγικής διαδικασίας. Μολονότι η αξία αυτών των ερμηνευτικών προτάσεων δεν είναι καθόλου αμελητέα, είναι απαραίτητο να εστιάσουμε την προσοχή μας σε ένα άλλο ερμηνευτικό πρότυπο, σύμφωνα με το οποίο τα μαρκαρισμένα αγγεία είναι φορείς ενθύμησης. Τα αντικείμενα είναι εξωτερικά σκεύη μεταβίβασης-μεταφοράς μνήμης. Υιοθετώντας την άποψη ότι ο υλικός πολιτισμός ενεργοποιεί την πρόκληση αναμνήσεων, το μαρκαρισμένο αγγείο, πέραν της όποιας πρακτικής του λειτουργίας, θεωρείται εδώ ότι είναι ένα μνημονικό τέχνασμα για τη δήλωση μιας ολοκληρωμένης πράξης ή μάλλον μιας σειράς πράξεων, που εκτέλεσε ο κεραμέας. Η ατομικότητα του κεραμέα έχει αποτυπωθεί στο αγγείο, ατομικότητα η οποία εύκολα διακρίνεται από τον έμπειρο παρατηρητή. Στις μικρές κοινωνίες τα περισσότερα μέλη μπορούν να αναγνωρίσουν τις λεπτομέρειες της ατομικής έκφρασης των συγχρόνων τους, η δε ενθύμηση εξασφαλίζεται μέσω της επίδειξης πολυάριθμων τέχνηργων. Το μήνυμα που μεταφέρει το αγγείο προσδιορίζεται από την ένταξή του στο πλαίσιο των κοινωνικών σχέσεων και τον τρόπο με τον οποίο χρησιμοποιείται συνειρμικά μεταξύ των δρώντων υποκειμένων. Το αγγείο έχει ιστορική σημασία που συνδέεται με ένα συγκεκριμένο ιστορικό, κοινωνικοπολιτικό και πολιτιστικό πλαίσιο, εντός του οποίου δημιουργήθηκε και μεταφέρει το μήνυμά του. Όταν το αγγείο αποσπάται από το οικείο του περιβάλλον, παύει να λειτουργεί ως φορέας μηνυμάτων αλλά μεταβάλλεται σε αντικείμενο εκτεθειμένο στην αγνωσία ενός άγνωστου κόσμου. Δεν είναι πια παρά ένα χρηστικό αντικείμενο ειδωμένο με οικονομικούς όρους.

THE BOOK
*THE SANCTUARY
OF HERMES AND APHRODITE
AT SYME VIANNOU*

V

ΣΗΜΕΙΑ ΚΕΡΑΜΕΩΝ

BY KOSTIS S. CHRISTAKIS

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