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KATIE DEMAKOPOULOU

LACONIA AND ARCADIA IN LH III C MIDDLE: POTTERY AND OTHER FINDS

INTRODUCTION

This paper is an attempt to examine the LH III C Middle phase in Laconia and Arcadia on the basis of pottery and other finds. The material under discussion comes from early excavations in both regions, mostly in cemeteries. In two cases only, the material was recovered from non-funerary contexts. Of the more recent discoveries, the bulk of which is as yet unpublished, only a very limited number could be included. It must be noted that the majority of the pottery, which consists for the most part of closed shapes since it comes from tombs, can be dated by stylistic criteria rather than stratigraphy.

Laconia, in the south-east Peloponnese, was one of the regions in Mainland Greece, which remained important from the beginning until the end of the Mycenaean Age with a number of significant inland sites and the port of Epidauros Limera on the east coast¹ (Fig. 1). Finds from all these sites show connections with other regions of the Mainland, Cyclades and Crete (*RMDP*, 244-252). In Arcadia the most important site is Palaiokastro in the north-west part of this region (Fig. 2), where an extensive cemetery of chamber tombs, dating from LH II A to LH III C Late was located in early and recent excavations. The LH III C material from Palaiokastro shows a marked similarity with Elis and Achaia. There are also connections with Laconia and other parts of the Mainland, as well as with the Cyclades and Crete (*RMDP*, 296-299).

LACONIA

We will start our survey with Laconia, for which an old theory maintained that the whole region suffered a general decline after 1200 B.C. (ÅLIN 1962, 97, 148. — DESBOROUGH 1964, 90. — SNODGRASS 1971, 29-30). However, recent research with the publication of old material and the newer finds from recent excavations shows that Laconia continued to be occupied throughout almost the entire area during the LH III C period with prosperous communities that had connections with other parts of the Mycenaean world (DEMAKOPOULOU 1982). Abundant LH III C pottery from all three subdivisions of this pottery phase, Early, Middle and Late, and some Submycenaean, have been found in different sites of Laconia.

Most of the Laconian LH III C Middle pottery comes from two sites: Epidauros Limera, a flourishing port on the south-east coast, a few kilometres north of Monemvasia, and Pellana north of Sparta, at the end of the Eurotas valley. Important finds of

¹ The survey of prehistoric Laconia by H. Waterhouse and R. Hope Simpson (WATERHOUSE — HOPE SIMPSON 1960. — WATERHOUSE — HOPE SIMPSON 1961) is still very useful for the Bronze Age occupation of this region.

LH III C Middle have also been retrieved from the site of the Amyklaion, south of Sparta, while some pottery of this phase is known from three sites near the south coast of Laconia: Krokeai, Asteri and Phoiniki.²

Epidauros Limera

The material from Epidauros Limera was recovered from an extensive cemetery of chamber tombs arranged in three groups in the areas of Ayia Triada, Bambakia and Palaiokastros (WATERHOUSE – HOPE SIMPSON 1961, 136–137). The cemetery was partly excavated in three seasons, first in 1935 and later in 1953 and 1956.³ The tombs are oval with a short dromos, which, sometimes, has steps and, in some cases, a side chamber. Burials were found on the floor and in pits in the floor. The cemetery was in use for a long period from LH I to Submycenaean. Most of the chamber tombs had been robbed; only Tomb B at Ayia Triada was intact. It was richly furnished with more than 30 clay vases, two bronzes, a dagger and a knife, as well as glass beads and steatite spindle whorls. Three burial pits in the floor of the main chamber of Tomb A at Ayia Triada were found intact, too (DEMAKOPOULOU 1968, 147).

The abundant LH III C pottery from Epidauros Limera includes a substantial group of LH III C Middle vases. They are of importance because they show the existence of distinctive local workshops, the products of which seem to have been influenced by strong external connections.

Noteworthy among them are the stirrup jars, medium and large, FS 174, 175, 176. One of them is decorated in the Close Style (DEMAKOPOULOU 1982, 118, pl. 60:136. – *RMDP*, 290). The decoration with lozenge and triangular patch on the shoulder and zones of zigzag and semi-circles on the body is very well preserved especially on the shoulder (Fig. 3). The vase, although it has been restored from fragments, is one of the finest specimens of the Close Style. Its decoration is very similar to that of a stirrup jar from Asine (*RMDP*, 165 no. 340, fig. 44) and to another from Mycenae (VERDELIS 1966, 78, pls. 84β; 85β). This similarity and the fabric of the stirrup jar from Epidauros Limera strongly suggest that this vessel is an Argive import.

There are two stirrup jars from Epidauros Limera decorated in the Octopus Style. One (Fig. 4) has no shoulder zone and the octopus with four tentacles and a long almond-shaped sac covers the whole surface of shoulder and body. There is a deep fringe painted over its head and another fringe and foliate band on the back of the vase between the tentacles (DEMAKOPOULOU 1968, 166–168 no. 37, pl. 74δ–ε. – DEMAKOPOULOU 1982, 118, pl. 61:138). It has been suggested that this vessel is a Minoan import and it may be dated to the III C Early phase rather than Middle (*RMDP*, 283 n. 151). The decoration of

² A great amount of the Laconian LH III C pottery from Epidauros Limera, Pellana and other sites, including that of the LH III C Middle phase, has been studied and published by the author of this paper, see DEMAKOPOULOU 1968. – DEMAKOPOULOU 1982. P. Mountjoy has more recently thoroughly examined the LH III C pottery from Laconia, see *RMDP*, 251–252, 282–293.

³ All three excavations were made in emergency after the severe plundering of the Mycenaean chamber tombs. The excavation in 1935 was conducted by Th. Karachalios and is unpublished. Twelve vases from this excavation were recently presented by E. Kountouri (KOUNTOURI 1996/97). This first sounding was followed by a small salvage excavation by N. Drandakis in 1953, with few finds, which are still unpublished, apart from some vases (DEMAKOPOULOU 1982, 119–120, pl. 64:144–145). A more extensive excavation was made in 1956 by C. Christou (CHRISTOU 1961). The abundant pottery and some other finds from this excavation have been published by K. Demakopoulou (DEMAKOPOULOU 1968. – DEMAKOPOULOU 1982, 117–119, pls. 60–62). Much of the Mycenaean pottery from Epidauros Limera has also been discussed by P. Mountjoy (*RMDP*, 247–294, *passim*).

this stirrup jar indeed shows a prominent Minoan influence and has similarities with that on LM III C Early vessels.⁴ However, I should like to draw attention to the similarity of the decorative elements of our vase to two other LH III C Middle stirrup jars, one from Perati (IAKOVIDIS 1969/70, vol. 2, 181–182, fig. 66:198), and the other from Aplomata, Naxos (KARDARA 1977, 18–19 no. 914, pls. 20–21α; 36β), likewise with an octopus with two pairs of tentacles and fringe over the head and along the top of the tentacles.⁵ Furthermore, a LH III C Middle date for our stirrup jar is supported by the fact that it was found in one of the intact burial pits in Chamber Tomb A in the Ayia Triada area at Epidauros Limera together with another stirrup jar of clearly LH III C Middle date (Fig. 6).

The second Octopus Style stirrup jar from Epidauros Limera (Fig. 5. – DEMAKOPOULOU 1982, 118, pl. 60:137. – *RMDP*, 287, 290 no. 219, fig. 98) has a more elaborate decoration. Again there is no shoulder zone, but the lower body is banded. The octopus, the fill with fringed scale between the tentacles and the ovals display strong similarities to some Minoan decorative elements, but also to other ornate scenes on Octopus Style stirrup jars especially from Naxos (KARDARA 1977, 12–13 no. 951, pls. 11–12; 37δ) and Perati (IAKOVIDIS 1969/70, vol. 2, 181–187, figs. 66–73). Although it has been restored from fragments and much has been completed with plaster, this vase is a good specimen of the LH III C Middle Octopus Style and it seems to be a local product.

Another remarkable stirrup jar from Epidauros Limera (Fig. 6) was found in the intact burial pit of Chamber Tomb A in the area of Ayia Triada, together with the stirrup jar decorated with the octopus with two pairs of tentacles (Fig. 4). It is a fine specimen of LH III C Middle with a striking decoration of dot-fringed semi-circles on the shoulder and a starfish flanking a ray pattern on both sides of the belly filled with fine wavy lines, scale, and solid triangles (DEMAKOPOULOU 1968, 165–166 no. 36, pl. 74α–β. – *RMDP*, 290 no. 220, fig. 98). There are two close parallels to the decoration of the ray pattern, one from Kamini, Naxos (ZAPHEIROPOULOS 1966, 339 n. 2, pl. 274β. – *RMDP*, 955 no. 43, fig. 388) and another from Palaia Epidauros on the east coast of the Argolid (ARAVANTINOS 1977, 79–83, fig. 1, pl. 45. – *RMDP*, 165 no. 341, fig. 44). The similarity is notable, although the rays on the Epidauros Limera and Naxos stirrup jars have rounded ends, while the rays on the vessel from Palaia Epidauros are pointed (Fig. 7). Two pairs of pointed rays have also been painted on the shoulder of the Palaia Epidauros vase, which has an octopus on one side of the body. The close similarity of the decoration on the three vessels, especially between those from Epidauros Limera and Naxos, suggests that the two or even all three vases may well be Laconian products (cf. *RMDP*, 252). There are no similar decorative elements such as the starfish and rays on Naxian or Argive pottery of this period. It must also be noted that the foliate band in the central panel of the ray pattern on the back of the Palaia Epidauros vessel (Fig. 7) is similar to the motif on one of the octopus stirrup jars from Epidauros Limera (Fig. 4) and this adds additional support for its Laconian origin.

There is another striking LH III C Middle stirrup jar from Epidauros Limera (Fig. 8) decorated with a large fish on one side of the body and a pattern with pointed rays on the other (DEMAKOPOULOU 1968, 170–171 no. 41, pl. 76α–β. – *RMDP*, 252, 290 no. 221, fig. 98). There are remains of a foliate band on the shoulder. The ray pattern, which is repeated here and also on a krater fragment of the same period from a settlement context at Asteri in South Laconia (*RMDP*, 252, 290 no. 223, fig. 99).

⁴ For this point see also HALLAGER this volume.

⁵ This stirrup jar from Naxos (Aplomata no. 914) has been considered Minoan (KARDARA 1977, 18), but it may well have a Mainland origin (see *RMDP*, 955).

shows that this pattern is a common Laconian motif and provides further evidence for the Laconian origin of the three vases with the same motif from Epidauros Limera, Palaia Epidauros and Naxos. The imposing fish has a large dark head with reserved eye and horizontal wavy lines along the rounded body; it looks almost as if it were swimming (VERMEULE – KARAGEORGHIS 1982, 219, X.117. – GÜNTNER 2000, 297 no. 124, 305). Some other fish on the shoulder of a LH III C Middle stirrup jar from Perati (IAKOVIDIS 1969/70, vol. 2, 175 no. 909, fig. 62) and on a vessel from Tiryns (VERMEULE – KARAGEORGHIS 1982, 219, X.112) of the same period are good parallels.

There is a stirrup jar from Epidauros Limera dated to the III C Middle phase that seems to imitate closely a Minoan vase or even to be a Minoan import (Fig. 9). It has a broad shoulder zone with the rich decoration of arcs and fringe common on Minoan vessels of this period. The bands on handle and spout are also a Minoan feature (DEMAKOPOULOU 1968, 163–164 no. 32, pl. 73α,γ. – *RMDP*, 290 no. 222, fig. 99).

Other shapes of LH III C Middle pottery from Epidauros Limera include the amphoriskos, FS 59 (Fig. 10) and the lekythos, FS 122 (Fig. 11). The amphoriskos is monochrome with narrow reserved bands on the shoulder and on the lower body (DEMAKOPOULOU 1968, 181 no. 66, pl. 79γ). It is a decoration characteristic of this phase with parallels from Asine and Perati (*RMDP*, 251, 287 no. 215, fig. 97). The lekythos with linear decoration (DEMAKOPOULOU 1968, 184–185 no. 78, pl. 82α) also has parallels from the same sites (*RMDP*, 251, 287 no. 217, fig. 97). A LH III C Middle strainer jug, FS 155 (Fig. 12) has a twisted handle and is decorated with triangular patch on the shoulder area (DEMAKOPOULOU 1982, 119, pl. 63:143. – KOUNTOURI 1996/97, 503–505, fig. 13. – *RMDP*, 287 no. 218, fig. 97). This shape is more common in the Dodecanese and Cyclades than on the Mainland, but our vase seems to be locally made (*RMDP*, 251–252). The twisted handle is typical of this phase but is found mostly on jugs, although one of the strainer jugs with snakes on the belly from Perati likewise has a twisted handle (IAKOVIDIS 1969/70, vol. 2, 232–233; vol. 3, pl. 102γ, no. 280). There is also a trefoil-mouthed jug, FS 137, from Epidauros Limera, although its stomion is not preserved (Fig. 13). It is decorated with spirals on the shoulder and bands on the lower body (DEMAKOPOULOU 1968, 183 no. 74, pl. 81α). It could be dated to LH III C Middle or Late, although the ridge at the base of the neck makes a LH III C Middle date more probable (*RMDP*, 252, 291 no. 237, fig. 100). The feeding bottle, FS 162 (Fig. 14), which is monochrome with a narrow reserved zone on the spout area could also be dated to this phase or to LH III C Late (DEMAKOPOULOU 1982, 119, pl. 63:142. – KOUNTOURI 1996/97, 500–501, fig. 9. – *RMDP*, 287). The small straight-sided alabastron, FS 96 (Fig. 15), with foliate band on the shoulder and banded lower body, can be assigned to LH III C Middle (DEMAKOPOULOU 1968, 180 no. 62, pl. 78γ right. – *RMDP*, 287 no. 216, fig. 97).

Amyklaion

We may move now to the Amyklaion in the central Spartan plain on the west bank of the river Eurotas (Fig. 1). The discovery of two fragments of exceptionally large terracotta human figures and of a great number of wheelmade animal figures and Psi-type figurines with elaborate decoration on the hill of Ayia Kyriaki suggests the existence of a cult at this site datable from LH III B2 to LH III C Late/Submycenaean (DEMAKOPOULOU 1982, 43–68, 79–96). In addition to the terracottas, fragmentary pottery was found, including some LH III C Middle pieces. One of them is the fragment of a deep bowl, FS 285, which is monochrome inside (Fig. 16). It is decorated in the Close Style: the main decoration consists of two streamers with antithetic spirals flanking a bivalve panel, and triangular patch as a subsidiary motif (DEMAKOPOULOU 1982, 68, pl. 51:119. – *RMDP*, 290). The fine deco-

ration, which recalls that on Close Style deep bowls from Mycenae (cf. *RMDP*, 172), and the good fabric suggest that the original vase should be an Argive import.

Some of the wheelmade bovid figures from the Amyklaion are finely decorated in the Close Style, such as the bull fragment with rosettes and triangular patch (DEMAKOPOULOU 1982, 59–60, pl. 34:79). The fragment of another LH III C wheelmade bovid figure with rosettes, found in one of the Syringes at Tiryns, is a close parallel (VERDELIS 1965, 73, pl. 86γ). There is an almost complete wheelmade bull figure (Fig. 17) and some fragments of others from the Amyklaion, which are richly decorated with typical motifs of LH III C Middle such as fringed semi-circles, zigzag and elaborate triangles with bird heads (DEMAKOPOULOU 1982, 59–60, pls. 27:69; 32:57α; 34:80–80α). It is noteworthy that these elaborate motifs were used not only for the decoration of vases but also of terracotta figures.

Two fragments of ring-based kraters, FS 282, from the Amyklaion might also be dated to LH III C Middle. Both are monochrome inside; one is decorated with joining semi-circles and a stem, the other with half-rosette and antithetic spiral (DEMAKOPOULOU 1982, 70–71, pl. 50:117. – *RMDP*, 290 nos. 224–225, fig. 99). Another fragment comes from a krater with a pictorial scene (DEMAKOPOULOU 1982, 69–70, pl. 50:116. – VERMEULE – KARAGEORGHIS 1982, 113, 217, X.36). It is a battle scene, and what remains of it now shows parts of three men drawn in silhouette in different scale and on different levels; they are taking part in the battle. This krater fragment might be dated to LH III C Middle like other pictorial vessels with battle scenes (cf. GUNTNER 2000, 203 no. 116). It can be compared with pictorial krater fragments with similar figures and of the same date from Lefkandi, Amarynthos (VERMEULE – KARAGEORGHIS 1982, 137, 223, XI.66; 135, 223, XI.56), and Kalapodi (FELSCH 1981, 86, fig. 7).

Pellana

One of the most important Mycenaean sites in Laconia is Pellana located in the north Eurotas valley, 25 km north of Sparta (Fig. 1). Excavations there, first in 1926 (KARACHALIOS 1926. – WATERHOUSE – HOPE SIMPSON 1961, 125–127) and more recently by Spyropoulos (SPYROPOULOS 1989), revealed a chamber tomb cemetery which was in use from LH II A to Submycenaean (*RMDP*, 244). Some of the tombs are large tholos-shaped tombs and contained rich finds, although they had been looted. The LH III C pottery from the earlier excavation in one of the large tombs includes quite a few vases from all three phases of the period, Early, Middle and Late, and even some Submycenaean. The shapes and decoration of the LH III C pottery from Pellana show not only internal connections with other Laconian sites, but also contacts with other Mycenaean centres and Crete. A LM III C Middle or Late stirrup jar, FS 175, was imported from Crete (DEMAKOPOULOU 1982, 115–116, pl. 57:129. – *RMDP*, 293 no. 242, fig. 100), probably via the port of Epidauros Limera. Of the LH III C Middle pottery from Pellana, noteworthy is a complete kalathos, FS 291 (Fig. 18), with a conical shape and linear decoration inside and out (DEMAKOPOULOU 1982, 115, pl. 57:127. – *RMDP*, 290 no. 226, fig. 99). There are some good parallels of LH III C Middle from Attica, notably from Athens, and Naxos (cf. *RMDP*, 602 nos. 497–499, fig. 224 [Athens]; 959 nos. 72–73, fig. 392 [Naxos]).

Other Laconian sites

A Mycenaean cemetery of chamber tombs was discovered on the side of a hill near the village Krokeai (WATERHOUSE – HOPE SIMPSON 1960, 103–105. – DEMAKOPOULOU 1982, 108). The site of Krokeai is known from the quarries of *lapis laedaemonius* which were located

in this area.⁶ A remarkable composite vase comes from a robbed chamber tomb of this cemetery (DEMAKOPOULOU 1982, 108–109, pl. 55:123). It is a triple askoid vessel decorated with circles and semi-circles, stripes and triangle with fringe fill (Fig. 19). It might be dated to LH III C Middle,⁷ although a LH III C Late date is also possible (*RMDP*, 293).

Another Laconian site is Phoiniki opposite Epidauros Limera near the west coast (Fig. 1). Among the stray finds coming from looted tombs in this area is an intact stirrup jar FS 175 (Fig. 20), which might be of LH III C Middle date, although the rude decoration points rather to LH III C Late. The shoulder area is decorated with wavy lines and a careless net pattern, with barred handles and a rudely painted spiral on the top disk, while the lower body is banded (DEMAKOPOULOU 1982, 110, pl. 56:125. – *RMDP*, 293 no. 239, pl. 100).

ARCADIA

After Laconia we pass to Arcadia where the most important site is Palaiokastro (Fig. 2). The site is located in north-west Arcadia close to the border with Elis and near the river Alpheios. An extensive cemetery of chamber tombs has been excavated, first in 1957 by C. Christou, then Ephor of Laconia and Arcadia, who investigated six tombs; and in the 1980s by Th. Spyropoulos who dug over 100 tombs.⁸ Although many of the tombs had been robbed, a great amount of pottery was found, which dates the cemetery from LH II A to LH III C Late (DEMAKOPOULOU – CROUWEL 1998, 281. – *RMDP*, 296). Some of the rock-cut chamber tombs were tholos-shaped with circular and vaulted chambers like the tombs at Pellana. Similar chamber tombs imitating tholos tombs are also found at Volimidia in Messenia. One of the tombs, found in the first excavation at Palaiokastro, has a carved triangular space above the entrance recalling the relieving triangle of Mycenaean tholoi (DEMAKOPOULOU – CROUWEL 1998, 271–274, fig. 5, 282 n. 54, with references). The settlement to which the cemetery belonged has not as yet been located.

Most of the pottery from Palaiokastro belongs to the LH III C Middle and Late phases. However, it should be noted that it is frequently difficult at Palaiokastro to distinguish between these two phases. The pottery from this site has close similarities to that from the neighbouring regions of Elis and Achaëa, with which the settlement of Palaiokastro must have been closely connected. Furthermore, it reveals links with pottery from Attica (Perati), Naxos and Crete (DEMAKOPOULOU – CROUWEL 1998, 281–283. – *RMDP*, 296). The Minoan influence is prominent and it is especially apparent in the shapes used, such as the tall straight-sided alabastron, and in the decoration of the Octopus Style stirrup jars (*RMDP*, 296–297). Contacts with Crete might have come via Laconia, where the Minoan influence has also been prominent, and especially via the port of Epidauros Limera. Imported vessels, however, are not many and most of the pottery, apart from the affinities in shape and decoration with other regions, display also local characteristics that form a unique local style.

⁶ For the location of the quarrying area of *lapis laedaemonius* and the use of this distinctive stone in Minoan and Mycenaean times for the manufacture of seals and vessels, see WARREN 1992.

⁷ For a LH III C Middle multiple vase consisting of six small amphoriskoi and a single high-swung handle (for the most part missing), see *RMDP*, 1233, pl. 3a. For composite vases of LH III C Middle cf. also *MDP*, 170, fig. 217.

⁸ The finds from the first excavation at Palaiokastro by Christou have been published, see DEMAKOPOULOU – CROUWEL 1998. The material from the excavations by Spyropoulos is still unpublished, but it is extensively displayed in the Tripolis Archaeological Museum: see a short excavation report and illustrations of some of the finds in FRENCH 1989/90, 1, cover illustration (Tomb 10), and BLACKMAN 1996/97, 33–34, figs. 42–45.

Most impressive of the vases found in Palaiokastro are the stirrup jars, FS 175, some of which are very large. A finely made one, which comes from the early excavation, is 0.35 m high (Fig. 21). It has a rich and complex decoration with fringed octopus motifs on the shoulder and zones of semi-circles, zigzag and chevrons adorning the upper body and the top disk, while the lower body is covered with zones of fine lines (DEMAKOPOULOU – CROUWEL 1998, 276–277 no. P1, pl. 53a–d. – *RMDP*, 298–299, pl. 1b,d). The execution of the decoration and the various elaborate motifs are similar to those on LH III C Middle stirrup jars with ornate decoration from Perati and Naxos, while the stylised octopuses are derived from Minoan prototypes (DEMAKOPOULOU – CROUWEL 1998, 277–282 with references. – *RMDP*, 299). It is noteworthy that the fringed, stylised octopuses on the Palaiokastro stirrup jar are reminiscent of those on the stirrup jars from Epidauros Limera (Fig. 4) and Naxos (KARDARA 1977, 18–19 no. 914, pls. 20–21α; 36β). It is notable that the inspiration from the decorated pottery of other parts of the Aegean is treated here in such a manner that the overall result is a vigorously and imaginatively decorated vessel. It is surely the product of an important LH III C Middle local pottery workshop that made good use of decorative elements drawn from the pottery of other regions. Finds from the earlier excavation include the fragments of another large stirrup jar of LH III C Middle, likewise with rich and finely painted decoration of elaborate triangles and other motifs typical of the period (DEMAKOPOULOU – CROUWEL 1998, 280–281 no. P8, pl. 57a–b).

The extensive recent excavations at Palaiokastro brought to light more octopus stirrup jars, some of them also large (BLACKMAN 1996/97, 33, fig. 42). Other stirrup jars of this type have elaborate decoration, which includes pictorial motifs. A few have been illustrated in preliminary reports. One is very impressive, almost 0.40 m high with plaited handles; it is decorated with elaborate triangles with bird heads on the shoulder and panels on the body containing fish and elaborate antithetic spirals (FRENCH 1989/90, cover illustration. – *RMDP*, 298, pl. 1a). A large stirrup jar has an elaborate decoration on the belly including a pair of heraldic birds in a panel (BLACKMAN 1996/97, 33, fig. 43).

Another shape is the four-handled jar. One is decorated with octopus and another with stemmed spirals on the shoulder and a loop around the central vertical handle terminating in hooked tails (BLACKMAN 1996/97, 33, fig. 44). This is a local decorative motif, while the shape of the four-handled jar is characteristic of Achaea and Elis. From the early excavation comes another four-handled jar with floral motifs on the shoulder (DEMAKOPOULOU – CROUWEL 1998, 277 no. P3, pl. 54b). The recent excavations brought to light a few tall straight-sided alabastra, FS 96–97, and some straight-sided stirrup jars, likewise a common shape in Achaea and Elis (*RMDP*, 297–299). Another typical feature of Achaea is the frequent use of trimmed krater and kylix bases as lids, a phenomenon occurring also at Palaiokastro. Other common shapes from the recent excavations are the belly-handled amphora, FS 58, and the amphoriskos, FS 59.

A fragmentary hydria, FS 128, from the early excavation, with antithetic spiral motif on the shoulder may be dated to LH III C Middle (DEMAKOPOULOU – CROUWEL 1998, 279–280 no. P12, pl. 56c). Quite a few small stirrup jars decorated in the Argive Close Style were found in the early and more recent excavations at Palaiokastro. From the early excavation comes a restored stirrup jar richly decorated in the Close Style, as well as fragments which belong to one or possibly two more Close Style stirrup jars (DEMAKOPOULOU – CROUWEL 1998, 278–279 nos. P8, P9a–c, pl. 55a–c). The original vessels could have been imported from the Argolid.

In addition to the pottery, some bronzes were recovered in the tombs at Palaiokastro. A type II sword, two spearheads, a knife, and a pin were found in the earlier excavations, associated with burials (DEMAKOPOULOU – CROUWEL 1998, 274–276 nos. B1–B5, figs. 6–9, pl. 52a–c). A second sword of type II, a dagger, a knife, some bronze pins, and

violin bow fibulae come from the recent excavations.⁹ These warrior burials may well be of LH III C Middle date. Warrior burials with similar swords and spears dated to about the same phase were found in the Patras region of Achaea (PAPAZOGLU-MANIOUDAKI 1994, 177–184, 200, figs. 3–5). This is another link between LH III C Palaiokastro and Achaea, apart from that indicated by the pottery. The tombs at Palaiokastro and their finds show the existence of a prosperous community in north-western Arcadia close to Elis during LH III C times. It has been suggested that Palaiokastro belonged to a western Greek cultural *koine* at this time (RMDP, 243–296). The pottery, however, shows clear connections with Laconia and the Aegean, as well.

CONCLUSION

The survey of the LH III C Middle pottery and other finds from Laconia and Arcadia has demonstrated that both areas participated in the revival or final flourishing phase of the Mycenaean civilisation around the middle of the 12th century B.C. However, the whole corpus of the pottery, which comes mostly from cemeteries, does not help us to distinguish in these two regions two sub-phases within LH III C Middle, termed Developed and Advanced, detectable in other major settlement sites. Yet the pottery found so far is of great significance because it shows strong internal and external relations and interregional interactions. The finds from Palaiokastro in Arcadia and from Epidauros Limera, the Amyklaion, and Pellana in Laconia show that these important centres were closely connected with other areas of the Mycenaean world including the Cyclades and Crete. The prosperity of these centres at this time is shown not only by the abundant and fine pottery, but also by the monumental chamber tombs imitating tholoi and the bronzes which accompanied some of the burials. The key and the most important site for contacts with the external world was of course Epidauros Limera with its strategic coastal location. Influence from Crete and other parts of the Aegean, so evident in Epidauros Limera, could well have reached the Amyklaion in central Laconia and Pellana in the north, as well as Palaiokastro in north-western Arcadia through this important port. The LH III C Middle period was a flourishing time in most regions of the Aegean. This was primarily owing to the extensive connections between them with exchange of goods and ideas.

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⁹ The bronzes from the recent excavations at Palaiokastro are displayed in the Archaeological Museum at Tripolis; see BLACKMAN 1996/97, 33.

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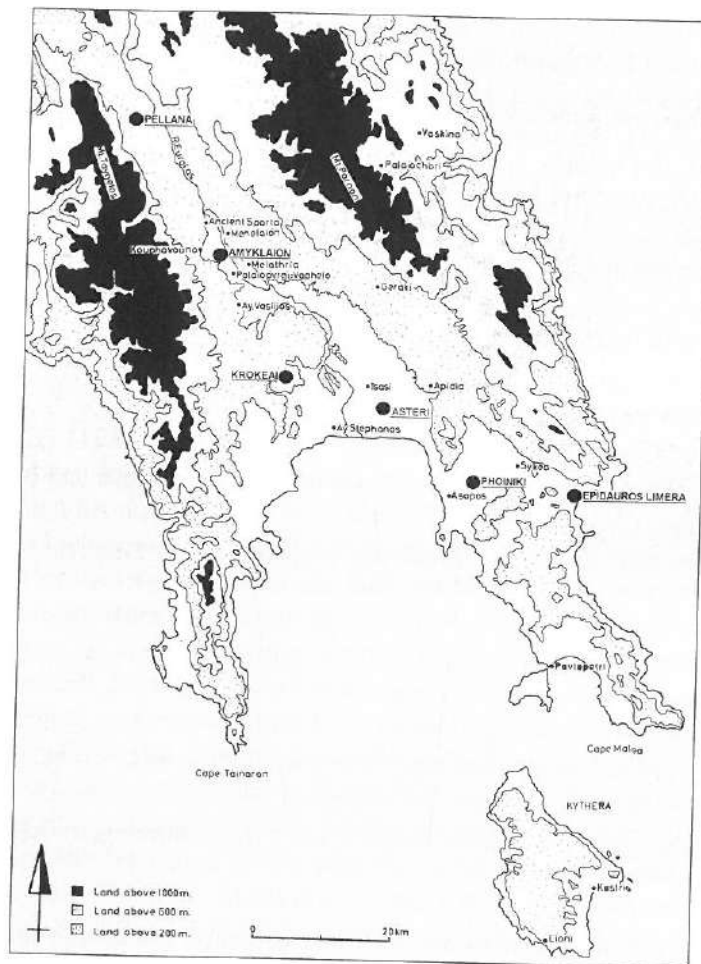


Fig. 1 Map of Laconia (after *RMDP*, 245, fig. 81)

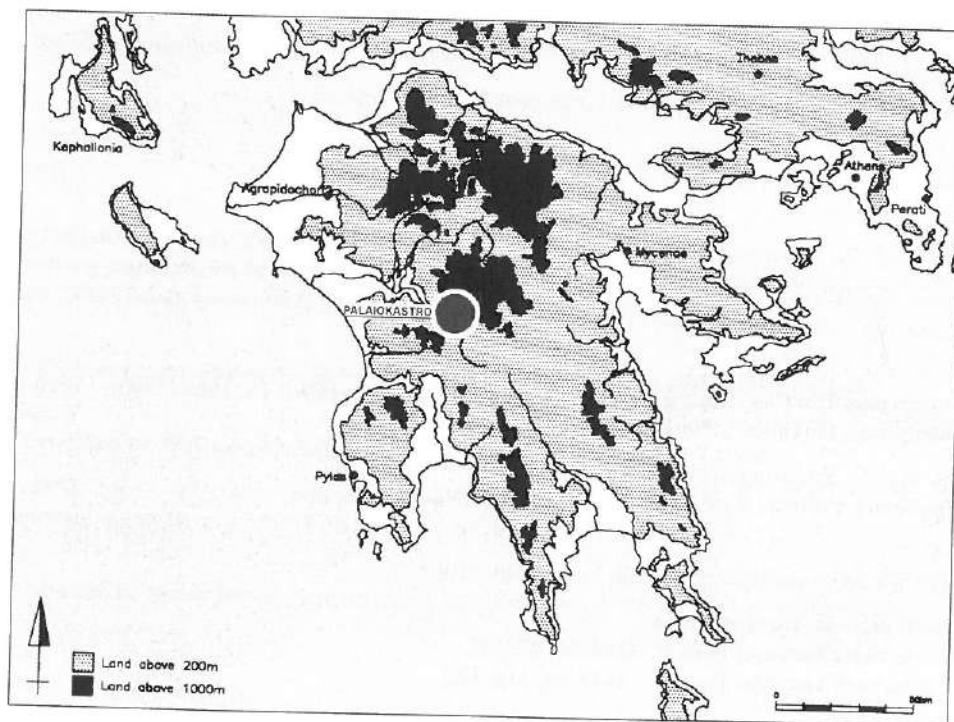


Fig. 2 Map of the Peloponnese showing Palaiokastro (after *MOUNTJOY* 1990, 250, fig. 7)



Fig. 3 Stirrup jar with Close Style decoration from Epidauros Limera



Fig. 5 Stirrup jar with Octopus Style decoration from Epidauros Limera



Fig. 4 Stirrup jar with Octopus Style decoration from Epidauros Limera

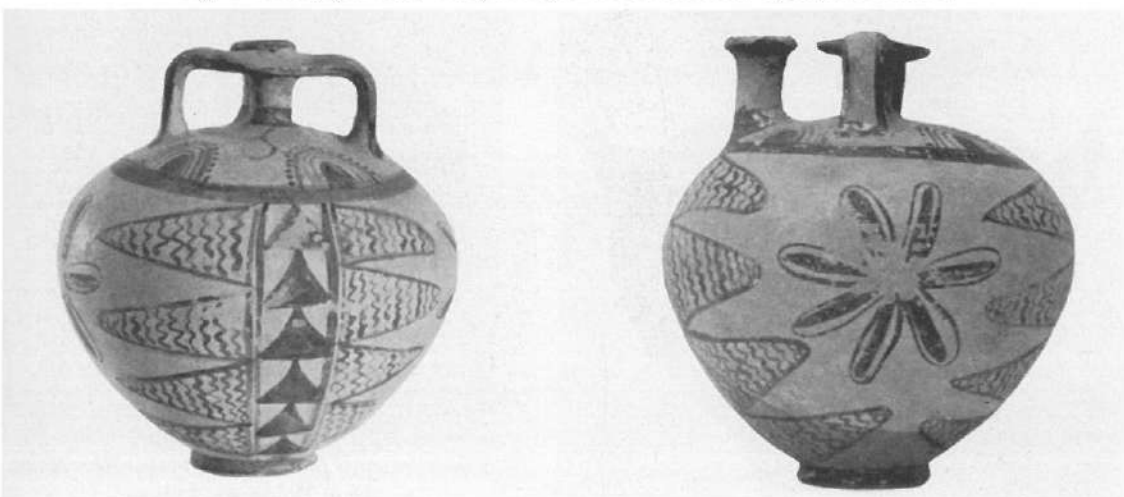


Fig. 6 Stirrup jar with starfish and ray pattern from Epidauros Limera

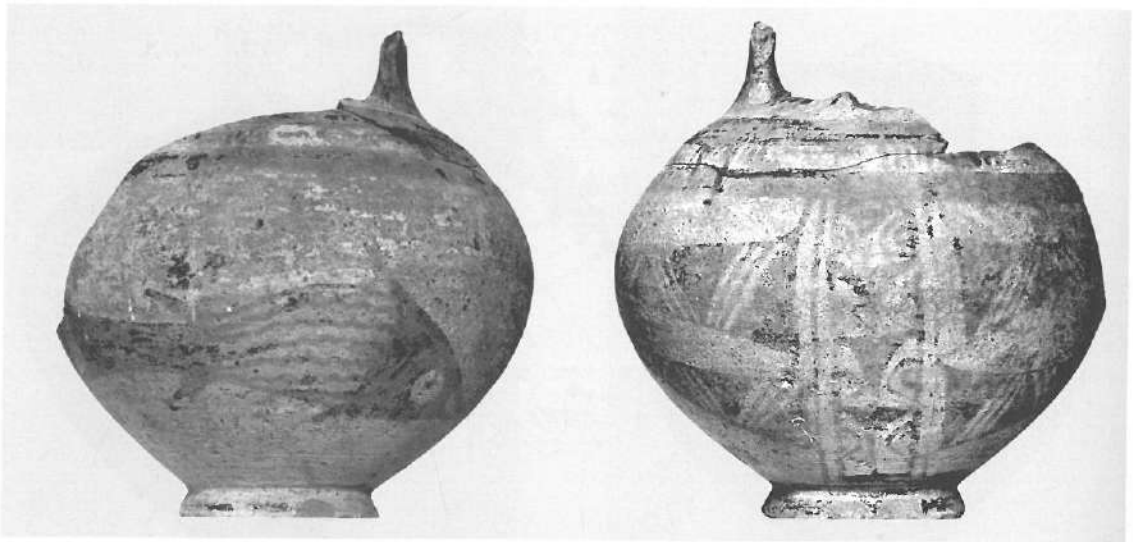


Fig. 8 Stirrup jar with fish and ray pattern from Epidauros Limera



Fig. 7 Stirrup jar with octopus and ray motif from Palaia Epidauros



Fig. 9 Stirrup jar with curvilinear decoration from Epidauros Limera

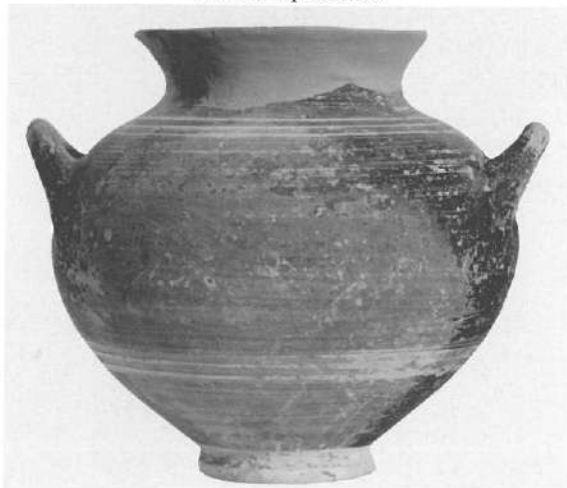


Fig. 10 Darkground amphoriskos from Epidauros Limera



Fig. 11 Lekythos with linear decoration from Epidauros Limera



Fig. 12 Strainer jug from Epidauros Limera



Fig. 13 Fragmentary trefoil-mouthed jug from Epidauros Limera



Fig. 14 Monochrome feeding bottle with narrow reserved shoulder zone from Epidauros Limera.



Fig. 15 Straight-sided alabastron from Epidauros Limera



Fig. 16 Fragment of a deep bowl with Close Style decoration from the Amyklaion



Fig. 17 Fragmentary terracotta bull figure with elaborate decoration from the Amyklaion



Fig. 18 Kalathos with linear decoration from Pellana



Fig. 19 Triple askoid vessel from Krokeai



Fig. 20 Stirrup jar from Phoiniki

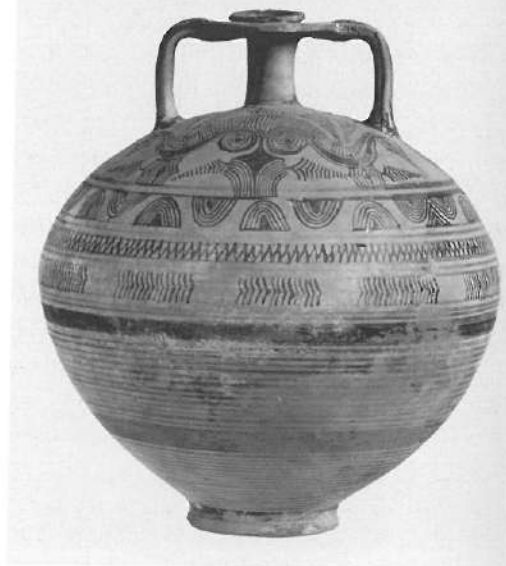


Fig. 21 Large stirrup jar with elaborate decoration from Palaiokastro