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1985 The pottery and architecture of the Early Minoan IIA West Court House at Knossos. *BSA* 80: 281–364.
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Ceramic Sets in Context: One Dimension of Food Preparation and Consumption in a Minoan Palatial Setting

Jeremy Rutter

For the past decade, I have been charged with the sorting, dating, and contextual evaluation of the prehistoric pottery recovered at the Middle and Late Bronze Age centre of Kommos on Crete. Excavations at this harbour town situated at the western end of the Mesara plain, less than 5 km south of the ridge at the east and west ends of which lie the better known inland centres of Phaistos and Ayia Triadha, have uncovered a wide range of find contexts of considerable interest for anyone investigating the social implications of prehistoric Aegean cuisine and diet. In view of my own particular interest in the history and function of Minoan ceramics, the following paper will focus on the implications of selected food containers found at Kommos (Betancourt 1990; Watrous 1992; Van de Moortel 1997: 21–274, 689–746, 865–927; 2001) rather than on food remains *per se* (Shay 1995; Reese et al. 1995; 2000; Ruscillo n.d.). I will also concentrate on aspects of food preparation and consumption in the public spaces of the so-called Civic Center at Minoan Kommos (Shaw and Shaw n.d.) at the expense of domestic contexts within the adjacent town (Shaw 1995; Shaw and Nixon 1996; Wright and McEnroe 1996; Shaw and Shaw 1993).

Prologue: a Brief Introduction to Recent Work at Kommos

The focus of attention at Kommos during the decade when I have served as a member of the excavation team has been the so-called Southern Area (Shaw and Shaw 1993). Positioned at and just above sea level, and extending between thirty and a hundred metres inland from the hypothesized location of the Bronze Age shoreline, this portion of the site represents the southernmost extent of the Minoan settlement, separated from steeply sloping terrain to the south by an east-west gully and lying at the foot of higher ground to the north, across which latter the Minoan town spread for several hundred metres to the north and possibly another hundred metres or more to the east as well (Shaw 1995: 12; Hope Simpson 1995:

Mesara, by a second court-centred building occupying virtually the same architectural 'footprint' as its predecessor. We feel confident that this Neopalatial structure (designated T – Figure 4.1) belongs to the same functional category as the monumental complexes that have long been identified at the Minoan centres of Knossos, Phaistos, Mallia, Zakro, and Gourmia – and now Galatas, Petras, and probably Archanes and Chania as well (Rehak and Younger 2001: 394–96, 467–68) – as 'palaces' (Shaw et al. 2001: 1; Shaw 2001: 5–8, fig. 1).¹ Badly damaged very early in its history of use, and as a consequence partially abandoned and also repeatedly remodeled in significant ways, Building T (Figure 4.2) continued to be used throughout the Neopalatial era and into the LMII phase of the succeeding Monopalatial period.² In this last phase, the impressive residence directly across the great east-west road from Building T's northeast corner, our House X (Figures 4.1–2), was refurbished so as to become a seemingly public 'house shrine' (in Room X7) provided with some auxiliary storage space (in Rooms X4 and X5) (Shaw and Shaw 1993: 131–61). Throughout the relatively brief Monopalatial era encompassing LMII to the time of the great destruction at Knossos in early LMIIA2, or a little over a century (Manning 1995: 217–29; Rehak and Younger 2001: 391 table 1; Manning 1999: 335–40, fig. 62), the shrine complex in House X provides by far the richest evidence for human activity of any locale within the Southern Area. But at the beginning of the ensuing Final Palatial period, the shrine appears to have collapsed and been built over, while the huge space occupied by the ruined 'palace' to the south and southwest was likewise remodeled (Shaw 2001: 9). Initially, two large galleries plausibly identified as monumental shipsheds were constructed from cannibalized materials over the northern end of Building T's east wing (Figure 4.1: P1 and P2), while the westernmost surviving portions of T's north wing were converted into an independent structure we have called N (Figure 4.1). Subsequent building during the later 14th and perhaps also early 13th centuries BC resulted in the addition of four more galleries (P3 through P6) to the gigantic ship-storage facility P, as well as a secondary courtyard in the angle between P and N (Figure 4.1: 15) and some minor alterations to Building N. This group of buildings was in turn abandoned at some point during LMIIIB, after which only scant traces of human activity are attested in this region of the site prior to the construction of the earliest temple over the eastern portion of Building N in the later 11th century (Shaw 2000a: 2 table 1.1, 8–10, 90 ns. 6–8; 2000b: 698–700; Callaghan and Johnston 2000: 212–14, pls. 4.1, 4.6, 4.40 [Deposit 1]).

Food Preparation and Consumption in a Palatial Setting at Kommos

The MMIIIB court-centred Building AA appears to have been demolished to below its original floor levels during subsequent building operations, so that very little evidence survives for how the various spaces within it functioned. But its

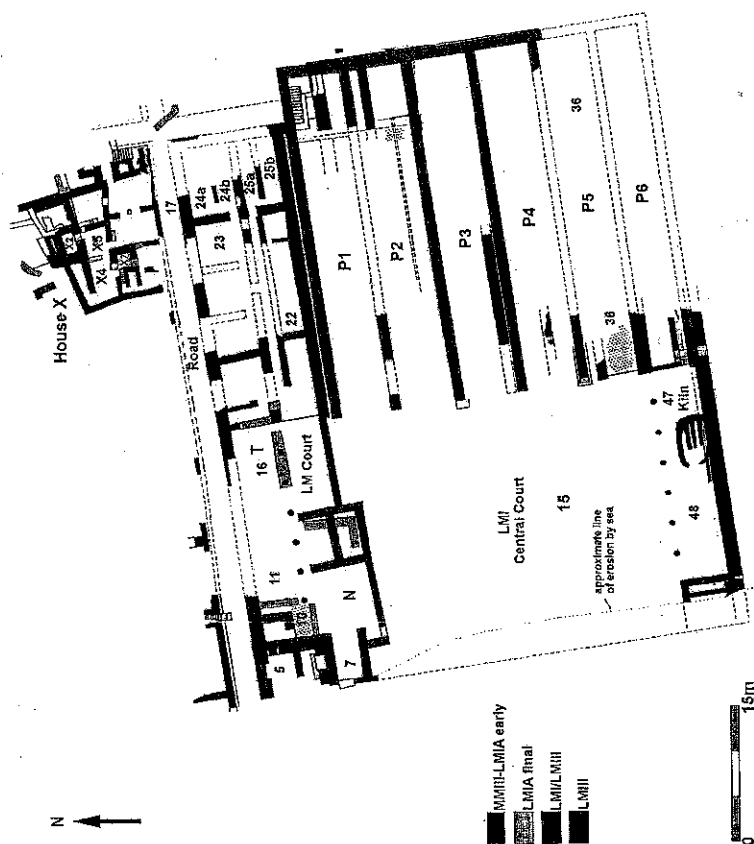


Figure 4.1. MMIII-LMIII period plan of Southern Area at Kommos.

396; J.W. Shaw 1996: 5–7, 13 n.11). A broad, handsomely paved road (Figure 4.1: 17) runs east-west across the northern portion of this Southern Area and neatly divides the town, with its quite densely packed residential structures on the sloping hillside to the north, from a relatively flat expanse to the south that was occupied from the Middle Minoan (henceforth MM) IIB phase (18th century BC) down to the time of the site's abandonment for one or two centuries beginning in the Late Minoan (henceforth LM) IIIB phase (13th century BC) by a stratified series of monumental buildings which we have collectively termed the site's 'Civic Center' (M.C. Shaw 1996; Shaw 2001: 8–9). Thus far, only small portions of an enormous court-centred structure laid out in this area in the late Protopalatial era have been exposed (the building we call AA; Shaw 2001: 8 and n.9). Both built and destroyed in MMIIIB, this structure was immediately replaced, in the local MMIII ceramic phase that represents the beginning of the Neopalatial era in the

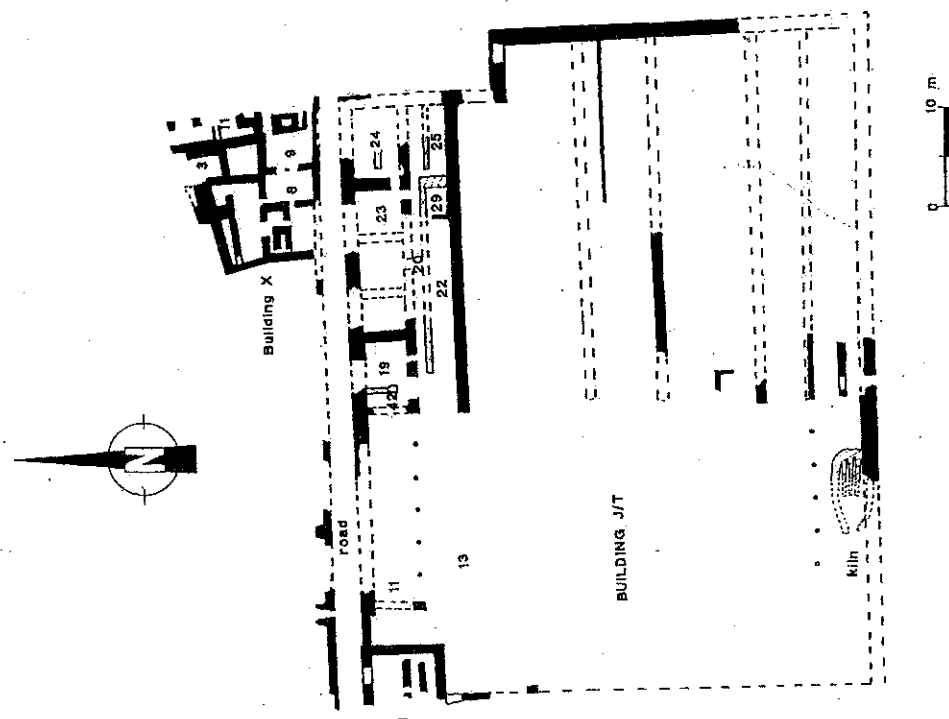


Figure 4.2. Plan of Building T at Kommos (after Driessen and Macdonald 1997: 208, fig. 7.63).

Neopalatial successor, Building T, has fared somewhat better, and we can identify a number of different functions within particular spaces on its ground floor with the help of either specific architectural features or ceramic contents or both. Thus several rooms in the building's northeast corner (Figure 4.1: 23–25) can be confidently identified by concentrations of pithos fragments accompanied by lamps as storage areas, or magazines, during the initial stages of the building's use. The construction of a multiply flued kiln (Figure 4.1: 47) within the space of

the south stoa (Figure 4.1: 48), and the discovery of massive quantities of misfired and broken pottery accompanied by wasters in the debris immediately surrounding the kiln on the east, north, and west, have revealed that this portion of the building for a time served an industrial function (Shaw et al. 2001). This must have occurred when the space in question was unroofed, and consequently when it looked very different from its elegant, original state as a roofed portico with frescoed walls. The eastern end of the north stoa at the opposite side of T's central court (Figure 4.1: 16, east half) was likewise refurbished to accommodate a distinctly different and, chronologically secondary function, in this case the grinding of grain in a series of plaster-lined bins each provided with its own grinding slab. The ceramic assemblage associated with this phase of the space's use (Rutter n.d.: Groups 26 and 33) includes two decidedly unusual shapes – a large, plain, coarse basin (Kommos inv.no. C8342) and a small, decorated, fine tubular-spouted jar (Kommos inv.no. C8337) – that it shares with a contemporary usage of some of the annexes attached to the nearby tholos tomb at Kamillari (Levi 1961–2: 55–76, figs. 83a–d, 90). From this same context at Kamillari comes a relatively well-preserved terracotta model illustrating either grain-grinding or, possibly, bread-making (Levi 1961–2: 145–47, figs. 177a–c; Novaro 1999).³ So in this case an unsuspected connection between a particular kind of food-processing (i.e. the grinding of grain) and an odd pair of ceramic types not previously associated with this activity can be suggested.

Indicators of a food-preparation area can also, of course, take other forms, such as hearths (Metaxa-Muhly 1984; Shaw 1990; M.C. Shaw 1996: 357–59; Rethemiotakis 1999). Several discrete locations of fixed hearths, each accompanied by largely restorable cooking pots, are an interesting feature of palatial structure T. Significantly, no more than one of these locations was in use at any given time in the building's two or three centuries of use. Moreover, these various locales and their associated cooking equipment exhibit some interesting commonalities. The earliest hearth is situated near the central court's southeast corner, against the south wall of space 36 near its western end (Figure 4.1). Lying broken in and immediately adjacent to this hearth were found two large tripod cooking pots (Figure 4.3: C9436, C9430), which differ appreciably in the details of their shapes. The context in which they were found dates to LMIA Early (Van de Moortel 1997: 235–44; 2001: 89–91; Rutter n.d.: Group 9b), probably contemporary with the fire that put T's northeast wing out of use as well as with the destruction of the south stoa. Whether this first cooking site was replaced immediately or not is uncertain; excavation of Building T has thus far not produced a hearth anywhere within it that can be attributed to the next local ceramic phase that we call LMIA Advanced (Table 4.1), the time during which the kiln was constructed and first used within the ruins of the south stoa (Van de Moortel 1997: 245–58; 2001: 91). We can, however, be sure that no cooking pots were produced in the kiln at any time during its one to two generations of active use (Van de Moortel 2001: 43 table 4, fig. 39, 102). In the following LMIA Final phase (Van de Moortel 1997: 258–67;

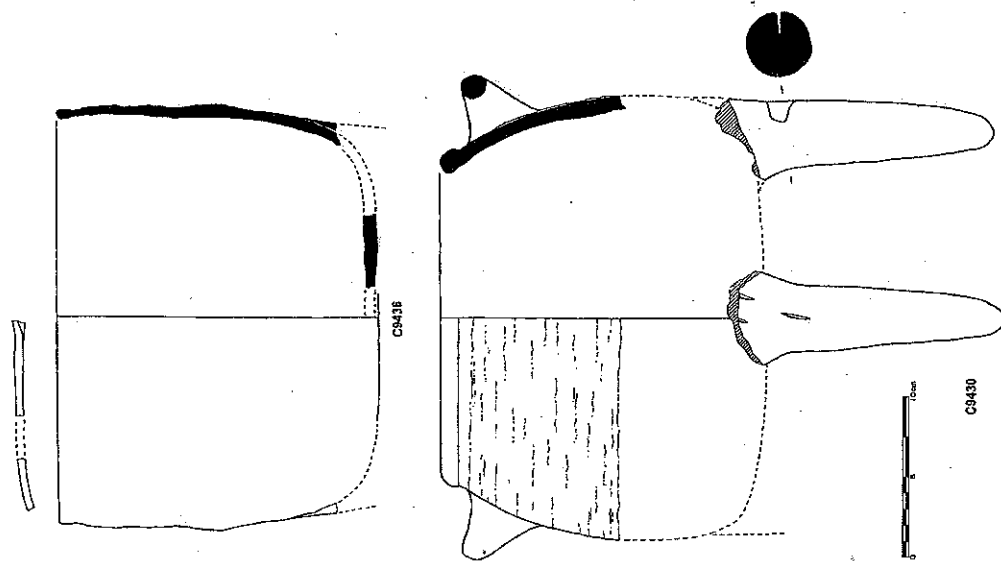


Figure 4.3. *Kommos Building T, space 36, LMLA Early: tripod cooking pots C9436 and C9430.*

2001: 91–92), a new cooking locale that features two adjacent hearths built up against the south wall of space 22 near its western end (Figure 4.1) shows that such activity had been relocated close to the northeast corner of the central court by this time, with roughly the same spatial relationship relative to the building's other former stoa at the court's north end as the earlier cooking site had had with respect to the now ruinous and partially overbuilt remains of the south stoa

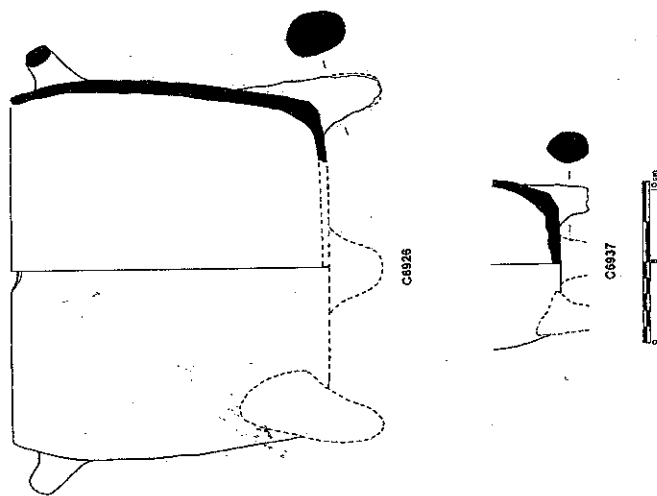


Figure 4.4. *Kommos Building T, space 22, LMLA Final: tripod cooking pots C6926 and C6937.*

(Figures 4.1–2). Once again, we are fortunate enough to have found restorable cooking pots in and immediately around these later LMLA hearths, and once again they are tripod cooking pots of different sorts, but in this case one large one and one small (Figure 4.4: C6926, C6937). Like the earlier LMLA cooking context some 35 m to the south, this one also contained a fair number of mendable drinking cups and jugs (Rutter n.d.: Group 24). Unlike that earlier context, however, this one, broadly contemporary with the grain-grinding horizon in the nearby space 16 just to the northwest, contains a number of fragments from imported vessels including Cypriot Proto Base Ring jugs (Kommos inv. nos. C10777 – C10779), a Late Helladic I Vapheio cup (Kommos inv. no. C6912), and a large transport vessel from an unidentified source (Kommos inv. no. C7626).

The next location for a hearth in Building T is in the northwest corner of its court, built up against the north wall of the court underneath the broad corridor numbered 7 that belongs to the later LMIII Building N' (Figures 4.1–2). The datable periods of use of several architecturally and stratigraphically discrete phases of this hearth are LMIB Late and LMII, but only from the latest phase of its use do we have a cooking jar that was probably used in it (Figure 4.5: C2563; Rutter n.d.:

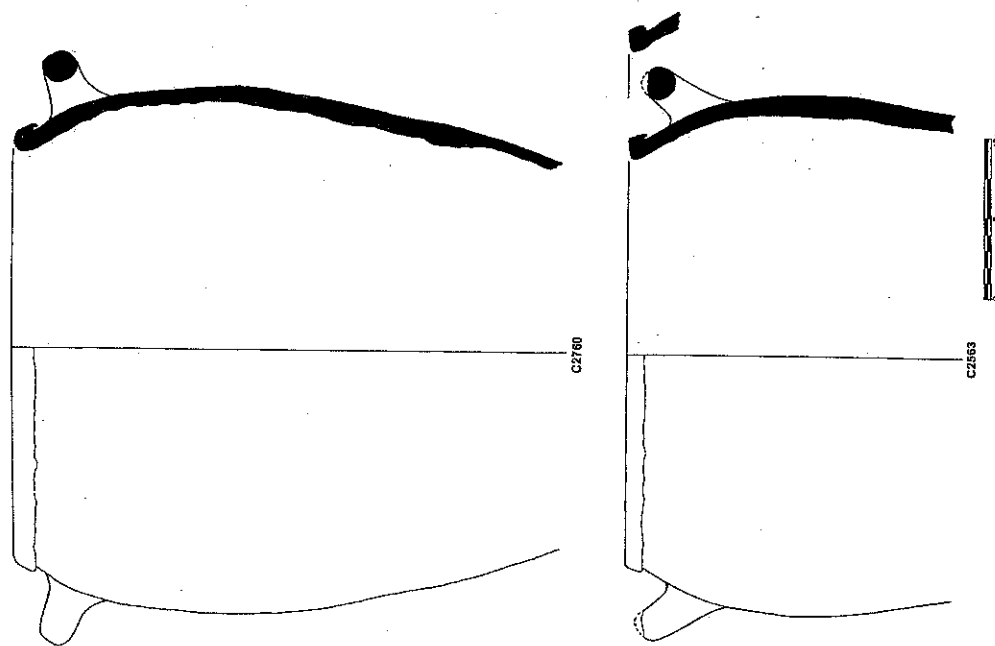


Figure 4.5. *Kommos Building T, cooking jars from space 5 (south) (C2760: LMIB Early) and northwest corner of central court (C2563: LMII).*

Group 45). The discovery of several largely restorable cooking pots – one of them (Figure 4.5: C2760; Watrous 1992: 15 no. 273, pl. 7) a virtual twin of the jar just mentioned – in a LMIB Early dumped fill in the staircase area at the south end of space 5 just to the north (Figure 4.1; Watrous 1992: 14–16 Deposit 7, figs. 17–18, pls. 5–7; Rutter n.d.: Group 40) suggests that either this hearth or else another

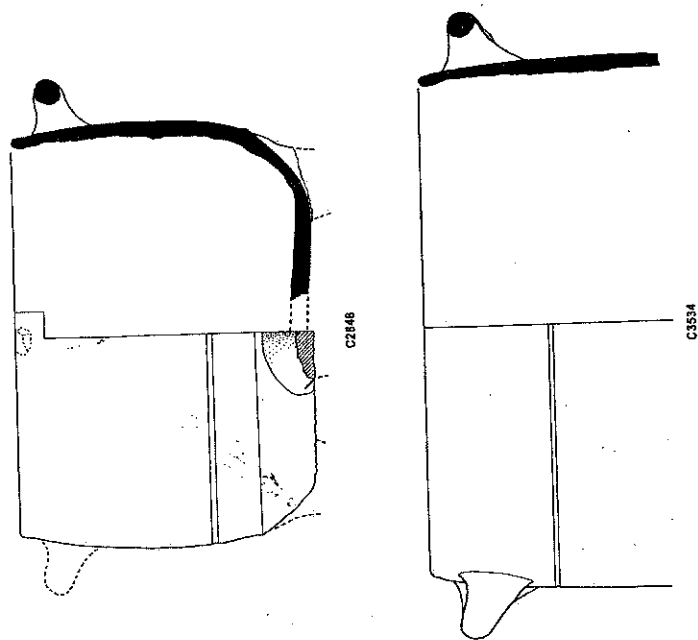


Figure 4.6. *Kommos Building T, space 5 (south), LMIB Early: tripod cooking pots C2848 and C3534.*

one somewhere nearby that has yet to be located was already in use at or near the court's northwest corner shortly after the abandonment of the LMIA Final hearths in space 22. The shape range of these mendable cooking pots has now become slightly more diversified – large tripod vessels (Figure 4.6) are joined by deeper-bodied, horizontal-handled, but legless jars (Figure 4.5). Furthermore, one of the two tripod vessels (Figure 4.6: C3534; Watrous 1992: 16 no. 275, pl. 7) lacks any traces of burning and has an applied reddish yellow slip on the interior, indications that this vase probably had a significantly different function from its somewhat smaller look-alike (Figure 4.6: C2848; Watrous 1992: 15–16 no. 274, pl. 7; Van de Moortel 1997: 201–2, 207–8, 210). Once again, the contexts from which these LMIB and LMII cooking pots come contain copious quantities of drinking cups, jugs, and transport vessels, a substantial number of which are imports. By the time of the LMIB Late and LMII usage of the hearth at the northwest corner of T's court, most of the interior spaces of Building T that have so far been

excavated had gone out of use, a fact which might explain why cooking in the building was now being done in the unroofed court itself.

To summarize, cooking activity in Kommos' palatial Building T was always located in relatively well-ventilated spaces either directly adjacent to or actually within the central court. The restorable cooking pots found in direct association with hearths in three different locales represent only two different shapes, tripod cooking vessels and deeper as well as substantially larger jars.⁴ In all the relevant contexts are found substantial quantities of ceramic types associated with drinking – namely, cups and jugs – and usually also vessel types employed for the transport of liquids in bulk (either oval-mouthed amphoras or large stirrup jars), but not pithoi or large open shapes such as tubs and basins. It is difficult not to conclude that these cooking facilities were in every case connected with large-scale feasting and drinking ceremonies that took place either in the central court or in spaces easily accessible to large numbers of people that opened directly off of it (such as the north and south stoas in the early history of Building T). The often very high quality and exotic nature of the pouring and drinking vessels in question further suggest that these festive occasions were attended by the elite members of the society, although the far greater frequencies of more utilitarian versions of these same functional types indicate that the hypothetically higher-ranking users of these exotic vessels were heavily outnumbered at these social gatherings by less privileged members of the society (Moody 1987; Hamilakis 1996: 24–26; 1999: 48–50; Rupp and Tsipopoulou 1999).

A closer examination of the fine wares and readily identifiable imports associated with this hypothesized feasting behaviour provides some additional insights into its nature and evolution through time. For example, in the earliest stages of Building T's use – MMIII and LMIA Early (Table 4.1) – when the entire structure was in service and the cooking facility was positioned in space 36 adjacent to the south stoa, imports are relatively rare, especially insofar as vessels from outside of Crete are concerned. Locally produced tablewares are still decorated in a light-on-dark mode which is stylistically rather crude as well as decoratively impoverished. By far the most common single pattern is a thick and clumsy retorted running spiral, and polychromy is rare. By comparison with pottery of either the preceding MMIB phase or later LMIA and IB phases, ceramics are at a low ebb artistically (Betancourt 1990: 37–48, 96–129 [Contexts 15–21], 166–90 nos. 1410–2036; Van de Moortel 1997: 225–44).

In contrast, the pottery of the subsequent LMIA Final and LMIB Early phases is far richer in every way. Imports have become quite common and take the form of Cypriot black- and red-slipped (or Proto Base Ring) jugs (Rutter 1999: 167–70 table 1), Mycenaean Vaphio cups (Rutter 1999: 180–83 table 6), and semiglobular cups, straight-sided cups, and jugs from several different regions within Crete (Watrous 1992: 149–53, 170–73). Moreover, the imports from regions outside of Crete are markedly concentrated in, if not absolutely restricted to, the Southern Area of the site; that is, they are found principally in the site's Civic Center rather

Palatial Era	Kommos Ceramic Phase	Building Events and Destructors in 'Civic Center' at Kommos	Building Events and Destructors in House X at Kommos
Protopalatial	Middle Minoan IIB	Construction and use of Building AA	
	Middle Minoan III	Construction and initial use of Building T	
	Late Minoan IA Early	Destruction by fire of northeastern wing (spaces 23–25); destruction of south stoa; abandonment of cooking facility in space 36	Construction of House X (?)
Neopalatial	Late Minoan IA Advanced	Construction and initial use of kiln within former south stoa of Building T	Initial use deposits within House X
	Late Minoan IA Final	Construction of walls subdividing former north stoa; grain-grinding in space 16; cooking at west end of space 22; abandonment of south stoa kiln before end of phase	
	Late Minoan IB Early	Deep fills dumped in staircase in south part of space 5 and in spaces 10–11; final floor in space 16 at high level above buried grinding bins	
	Late Minoan IB Late	Cooking in northwest corner of central court and gradual accumulation of feasting debris above this portion of pebbled surface of court; no significant break in activity between LMIB Late and LMII	
	Late Minoan II		
Monopalatial	Late Minoan IIIA1		Up to four LMIB floors preserved in some rooms (e.g. Room X2)
	Late Minoan IIIA2	Construction of Galleries P1 – P2; refurbishment of Building T's NW corner as Building N	
	Late Minoan IIIB	Construction of Galleries P3 – P6; minor remodelling of Building N; final floor deposits in Galleries P1 – P6 and Building N date from near end of phase	
Final Palatial			Initial use of shrine in Room X7
			Flourit of shrine in Room X7
			Collapse and abandonment of shrine (Room X) and associated storage areas (Rooms X4 – X5) early in phase
			Only patches of higher-lying floors survive belonging to renovated building constructed directly over House X

Table 4.1. Chronological table of ceramic phases identified at Kommos and correlation of these with the major era of Minoan palatial culture and with significant episodes of construction or destruction in Kommos' Southern Area.

than in those portions of the town's residential neighbourhoods so far excavated. The later of these two phases witnesses the appearance of an occasional exotic unguent container from Cyprus (e.g. Watrous 1992: 156 no. 278, fig. 70, pl. 51) or elsewhere on Crete (Watrous 1992: 15 no. 270, fig. 18, pl. 6), and also of the earliest Egyptian transport vessel to have been found anywhere on the site (Watrous 1992: 162 no. 277). It is during these two phases that locally produced fine wares decorated in a dark-on-light mode, often combined with light-on-dark accents, first become prominent (Van de Moortel 1997: 258–74), although these were not produced in the south stoa kiln, which in fact went out of use at some point during the LMIA Final phase (Van de Moortel 2001: 94–110). Among the fine wares manufactured at Kommos or in its immediate vicinity are a substantial number decorated with a homogeneous range of patterns in a recurring syntax that suggest an intentional effort on the part of their producers to promote a group of shapes as sets decorated in a single style that I have christened the Floral Paneled Style. The shapes so decorated, in decreasing order of popularity,

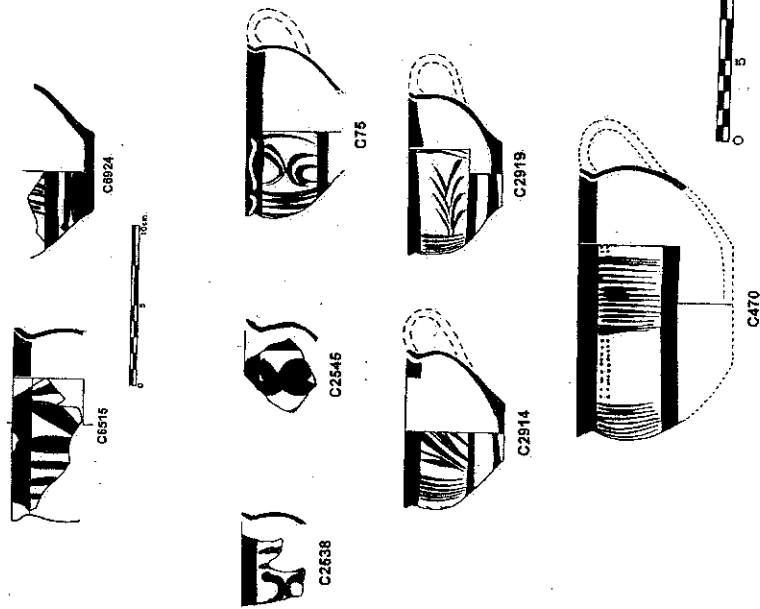


Figure 4.7. Floral Paneled Style: semiglobular cups from Kommos.

are: the semiglobular cup (Figure 4.7); the in-and-out (or horizontal-handled) bowl (Figure 4.8); the collar-necked jug (Figure 4.9); and the oval-mouthed amphora (Figure 4.10). Conspicuously absent from this list are standard Neopalatial shapes such as the straight-sided cup, the bridge-spouted jar, and the beaked jug that are common at other sites (Van de Moortel 1997: 111–14, 146–48, 159–62). The decorative fingerprint of this style is a frieze consisting of alternating groups of six to twelve or more vertically aligned stripes or leaves framing panels in which appear single floral motifs of various kinds – three-petalled buds (Figure 4.11), horizontal (Figure 4.7: C2919) or diagonal (Figure 4.7: C2914) reed sprays – or alternatively single floating or antithetical upright and pendent semicircles, either single (Figures 4.7: C2545, C2538, 4.8: C10820) or double (Figures 4.7: C75, 4.9: C4132). Friezes of this kind occupy the shoulders of collar-necked jugs and the exterior handle zones of semiglobular cups and bowls. The interiors of the horizontal-handled bowls decorated in this style (Figure 4.8) have, by the LMIB



Figure 4.8. Floral Paneled Style: in-and-out (or horizontal-handled) bowls from Kommos.

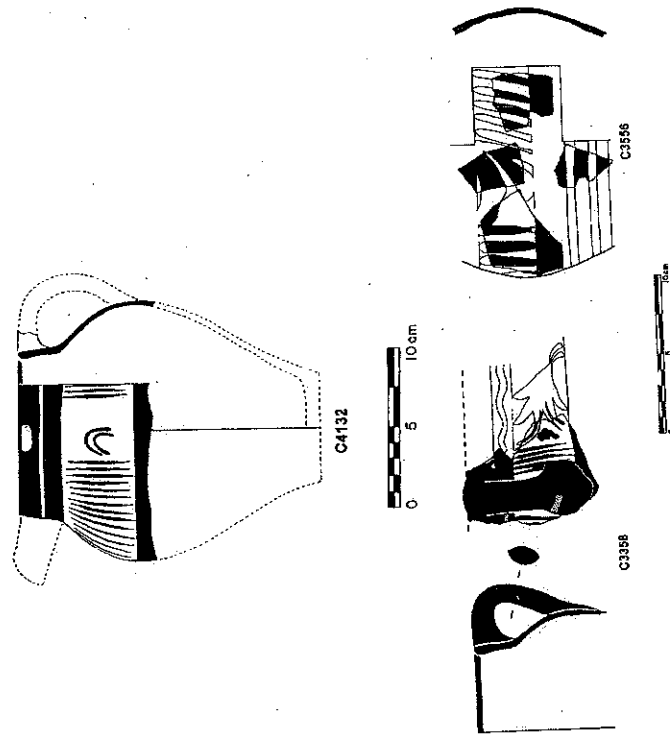


Figure 4.9. Floral Paneled Style: collar-necked jugs from Kommos

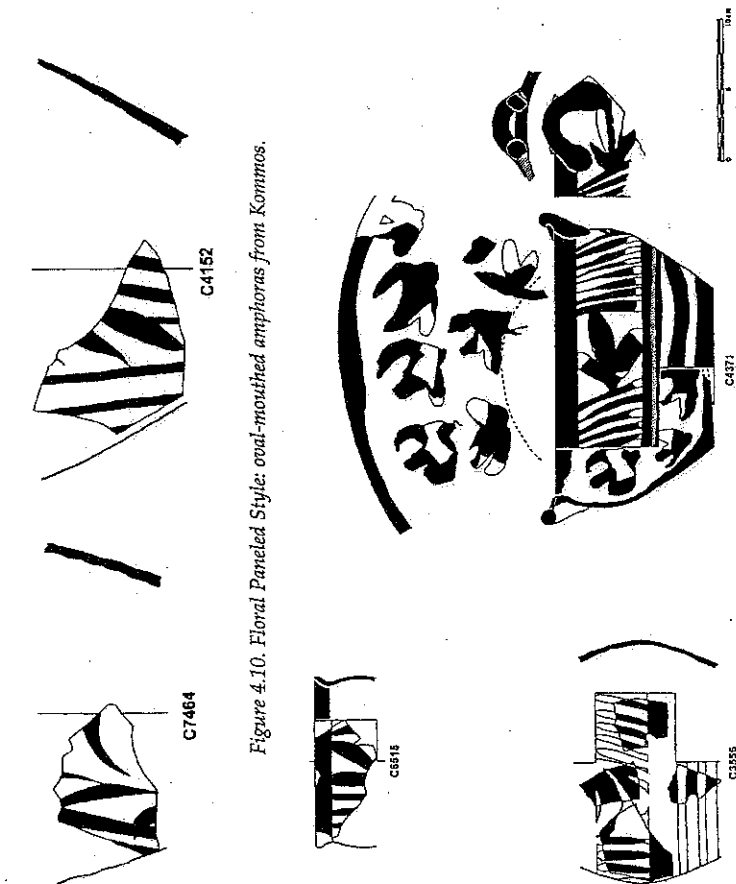


Figure 4.10. Floral Paneled Style: oval-mouthed amphoras from Kommos.

Figure 4.11. Possible LMIA Final set of shapes decorated in Floral Paneled Style from Kommos, Building T.

Early phase, developed a characteristic interior treatment which features groups of three vertical lines, either straight or wavy, alternating with a second motif organized in threes, either shorter vertical lines (Figure 4.8: C10820) or plump diagonal leaves (Figure 4.12: C2755). It is this scheme of triple verticals fringed or alternating with diagonal leaves that then makes up the characteristic ornament of the entire exterior body of the oval-mouthed amphoras decorated in this style (Figure 4.10: C4152, C7464). Examples of this style have been found in comparably dated deposits in the Chalara houses (Levi 1967–8: 110 and n.3 [F.3841], fig. 73a [collar-necked jug]; 110 and n.1 [F.3960], fig. 74a [oval-mouthed amphora]) as well as the palace at Phaistos (Levi 1976: 471, fig. 720, bottom right [semiglobular cup]), and also in one of the houses at Seli (Cucuzza 1993: 31 XXVII-14, pls. 12, 34a = La Rosa and Cucuzza 2001: 108 XXVII-12, figs. 169a, 352 [collar-necked jug]), but they are nowhere nearly as common at either one of these other sites in the Mesara as they are at Kommos.⁵ The evidence from Kommos so far suggests

that cups and bowls, and probably jugs as well, were the first shapes to be decorated in this way, during LMIA Final (Figure 4.11), with the oval-mouthed amphoras possibly being a somewhat later development of the LMIB Early phase. The shape of the reed sprays on some of the teacups from Kommos (Figure 4.7: C2919, perhaps also C2914) indicates that the style persisted into LMIB Late, and a few other teacups from a LMII context include at least one that must have been produced as late as this phase (Figure 4.7: C470). Whether bowls, jugs, and amphoras continued to be decorated in this way by local potters after LMIB Early, however, is uncertain; that is, as an approach to decoration spanning multiple shapes, this Floral Paneled Style may belong exclusively to the LMIA Final and LMIB Early phases.

The evidence in favour of a local centre of production at or near Kommos for this distinctive and easily recognizable style appears to be solid enough, but the same unfortunately cannot yet be said for the notion that different shapes decorated in this way were intended as sets (Wright 1995: 287, 300, 308 n.11), to be used on special occasions in the same way as sympotic services were in Archaic Athens or silver tea services have been in Europe and North America since the 18th century. Only unusual contextual circumstances could possibly prove this point, and our chances of stumbling across such a context are slim at a site that has been as subject to continuous disturbances as has the settlement at Kommos. For what it may be worth, I would simply note that the teacup C2749 and the bowl C2755 both come from the same context (Rutter n.d.: Group 40), while the jug fragment C3358 comes from a context some five metres away to the southeast (Rutter n.d.: Group 37e) that could have been deposited at precisely the same date in LMIB Early (Figure 4.12); that is, these three vessels may have been part or even all of a functionally related group of vessels that it may have been one purpose of the Floral Paneled Style to set apart. In the case of three other vessels representing the same triad of shapes (Figure 4.11: C6515, C4371, C3556), again very closely related in terms of their ornament but in this case featuring thicker stripes and stubby three-petalled buds rather than the thinner stripes and more complex six-petalled sprays of the LMIB Early group, two come from adjacent LMIA Final contexts (Rutter n.d.: Groups 24 and 26), while the jug fragment comes from a later LMIB context (Rutter n.d.: Group 37c) several tens of metres away. So we have surviving physical evidence for at least two possible sets, even if we cannot yet be sure that they were actually intended as such.

Let us for a minute accept the notion that ceramic sets of this kind were indeed being manufactured at or near Kommos for use on particular occasions at the site. The following hypothetical consequences of such a notion merit future testing:

1. The shape range of the set suggests that the principal forms of activity which it served was the serving of something in bowls attractively decorated on both interior and exterior, accompanied by the drinking of a liquid decanted

from medium-sized amphoras into jugs, and then poured from those into cups. That is, it does not seem possible to identify all the shapes produced in the Floral Paneled Style as marking a single activity such as drinking, in contrast, for example, to the somewhat later Ephyraean Style of the LHIIIB Greek Mainland (Mountjoy 1983; 1986: 37, 44, 46–49, fig. 47: 1, 5 [FS 143 jugs], 54 [FS 254 goblets]; 1999: 25, 100 nos. 83–84, figs. 17–18 [FS 118 and FS 135 jugs], 103 and n.418 [FS 262 high-handled goblet or dipper] 264 no. 75, fig. 87 [FS 279 krater]) or earlier Protopalatial sets comprising cups and bridge-spouted jars (MacGillivray 1987). It is, I suppose, just conceivable that the bowls were designed to hold some kind of additive to the beverage being served in the cups (compare modern sugar bowls, cream pitchers, and ice buckets). But if the beverage being consumed was wine, as most authorities imagine was the case (e.g. Hamilakis 1996; 1999; Wright 1995), I cannot think of what an appropriate additive might be.

The absence of a large bowl form from the Floral Paneled Style that might be considered functionally comparable to the Mycenaean through Hellenistic krater may be evidence for a fundamentally different approach to ceremonial drinking on the part of the Minoans in which the primary beverage (wine?) was consumed in undiluted form (Van de Moortel, pers. com.). Whether or not this practice is in turn connected with the generally smaller capacity of Minoan drinking vessels in Protopalatial and Neopalatial times in comparison to, for example, contemporary Middle Helladic and Mycenaean goblets and even kantharoi is another question that may be worth pursuing.

2. The items served in the small to medium-sized bowls of the Floral Paneled style are, in my opinion, likely to have been one or more foodstuffs that had been prepared for consumption at the various cooking installations-surveyed earlier. The absence of mendable cooking dishes and trays from the groups of cooking pots found in and around these cooking facilities suggests that the items to be eaten did not take the form of a flatbread of some sort. A better candidate for what was eaten, in view of the palace's location, might be some form of seafood, such as the limpets (*Patella*) consumed in such enormous quantities at the later sanctuary of Kommos during the early Archaic period (Reese et al. 1995: 204–73; 2000: 495–560, 571–642).

3. The sets are indicative of an interest in establishing a sense of local identity during the periods when we have some confidence that they were produced; the choice of specific shapes implies a conscious rejection of types popular at the same time elsewhere. The ratios of drinking cups to jugs, and the maximum number of cups or jugs belonging to a particular set, may independently provide some indication of how large the group was that made use of a single service, or set of vases. At present, for example, it is unclear whether a given set was designed to serve an individual or a group – neither of the two hypothetical sets so far identified consists of two or more cups or jugs (Figures 4.11–12).⁶

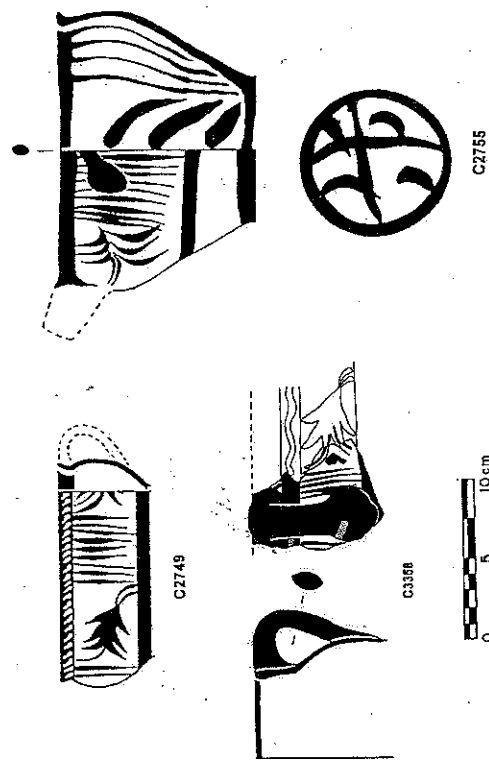


Figure 4.12. Possible LMIB Early set of shapes decorated in Floral Paneled Style from Kommos, Building T.

4. Usage of a distinctively decorated Kommian set for the activities just hypothesized would set individuals and/or groups apart from those using different types for the same purposes. Such formally discrete yet functionally equivalent types were definitely in use at Kommos during LMIA Final and LMIB Early, whether in the form of locally made vessels such as conical cups, ewers (or bridge-spouted jars), and kalathoi on the one hand, or of exotic imports such as Cypriot jugs and fancily decorated Mycenaean or non-local Minoan cups on the other. Whether or not a social hierarchy was expressed by individuals' choices of drinking vessels used at communal celebrations in Building T is an intriguing question, but unfortunately one that the limited nature of the contextual information that survives has simply not allowed us as yet to address in any systematic fashion.
5. What if any relationship there may be between the Floral Paneled Style and the later styles of the so-called 'Special Palatial Tradition', that flourished during the later LMIB period (Betancourt 1985: 140–48; Müller 1997), is a question which it might be rewarding to explore. Syntactically closest to the Floral Paneled Style of Kommos would appear to be the Alternating Style of the very end of the LMIB phase. But the range of decorative motifs that characterizes the Alternating Style is quite different from the uniformly floral decorative content of the Kommian predecessor. The Alternating Style also lacks the neatly defined rectangular panels of the Floral Paneled Style. Furthermore, Müller's exhaustive treatment of the shapes exploited in the

four 'styles' that together constitute Betancourt's 'Special Palatial Tradition' (viz. Marine, Floral, Abstract and Geometric, and Alternating) shows clearly how different these are from the earlier Floral Paneled Style of Kommos: collar-necked jugs and in-and-out bowls are relatively rare in the later LMIB styles, for example, and oval-mouthed amphoras are altogether absent.

6. Finally, although the identification and interpretation of sets of fine decorated vases has often enough been a focus of scholarly attention in Aegean prehistory, I am not aware of a comparable interest in the identification of cooking or kitchen sets. One reason for this is no doubt the lack of some means of identifying a cooking set as such, a coarse ware equivalent of the decorative features that I have used above to define what I have termed the Floral Paneled Style. In the absence of distinctive modes of decoration, production techniques, or surface finishes applied to Minoan cooking pots, perhaps we should simply rely upon spatial contexts – that is, hearths, ovens, and other cooking facilities – to establish a series of Minoan cooking sets. Already published evidence from Kommos makes clear that some hearths are associated with dishes and trays, others with tripod pots alone or else with tripod pots accompanied by deeper-bodied jars.⁷ As noted above, the cooking installations in palatial Building T never feature the first two shapes, and this must surely reflect the nature of the food being prepared. But what does the regular pairing of tripod cooking vessels signify, and is anything in particular to be read into the fact that the two vessels in question in the Building T contexts routinely differ significantly, although in different ways (Figures 4.3, 4.4, and 4.6)?

A Final Palatial Epilogue

During at least the first half of the ensuing Monopalatial era, the phase termed LMII, feasting continued to take place in the central court of Building T at Kommos, but this may have been discontinued toward the end of the 15th century. In the meantime, exchanges with Egypt and Cyprus had increased markedly (Watrous 1992: 173–83; Rutter 1999), while substantial numbers of transport vessels from the Syro-Palestinian region and a reasonably full suite of Western Anatolian tablewares (e.g. Rutter 1999: 143, 175–76 table 4, figs. 1–2; Günel 1999: Lev. 156: 2, 162: 1–2, 174: 1–3) are further evidence of Kommos' rapidly expanding participation in eastern Mediterranean intercultural exchanges following the dramatic and relatively sudden collapse of Minoan Neopalatial culture around mid-century.

At about the time of the great destruction at Knossos ca. 1380 BC or very shortly thereafter, Kommos' Civic Center underwent a thoroughgoing architectural transformation that appears to have reflected a notable shift in the principal functions that this area of the site served. As either a natural prelude to

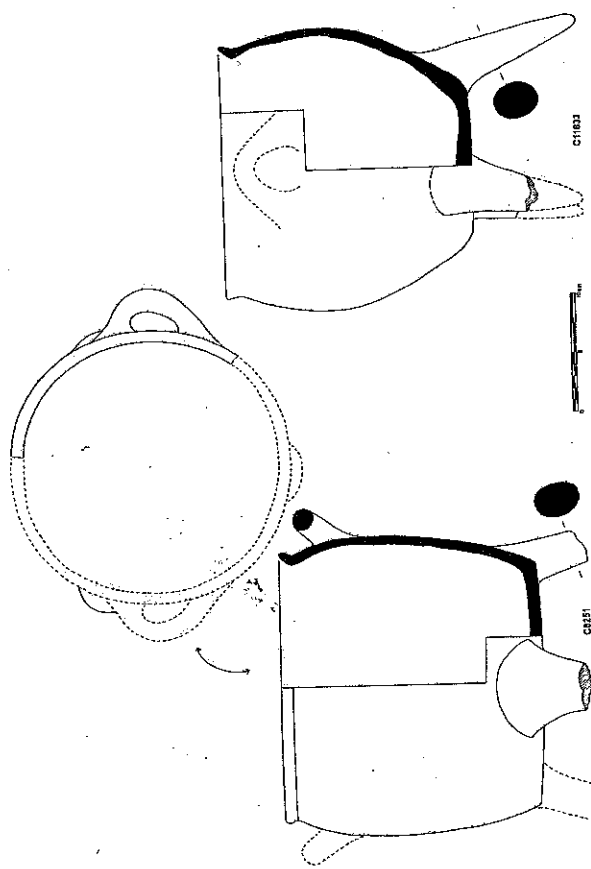


Figure 4.13. Kommos, northeast corner of court fronting Building N on south and Galleries P1 – P2 on west. LMIIA2: tripod cooking pots C18251 and C11833.

or an artificial part of this massive reconstruction effort, the west wing of Building T was entirely removed, and its formerly enclosed court became readily accessible from the sea to the west and perhaps from the south as well. Cooking continued to take place in the new Buildings P and N, but the social context of this cooking appears to have been quite different. Toward the east end of Gallery P2 was found a LMIIA2 hearth not far from a possible oven located in the gallery's southeast corner. A small floor deposit that included a large fragment of a tripod cooking pot (Kommos inv. no. C10466), a couple of plain conical cups, a pattern-decorated collar-necked amphora, and a large fragment of a possible second, all of these probably local, also featured a Cypriot Base Ring II cup, a plain, dark-surfaced Cypriot lamp, and a plain Mycenaean kylix (Rutter n.d.: Group 56b). Just outside the western end of Gallery P1 in the northeastern part of the court was found a contemporary LMIIA2 floor deposit that included two tripod cooking pots (Figure 4.13: C18251, C11833), two cooking jars (Figure 4.14: C18205, C11836), single examples of pattern-decorated specimens of a teacup, a collar-necked jug, and a horizontal-handled bowl, three conical cups, a Cypriot bucchero juglet, a Western Anatolian reddish-brown burnished jug, a Canaanite jar bearing a possibly Cypriot post-firing incised mark on one handle, and an East Cretan amphora or jug (Rutter n.d.: Group 56e). The location of the hearth to be connected

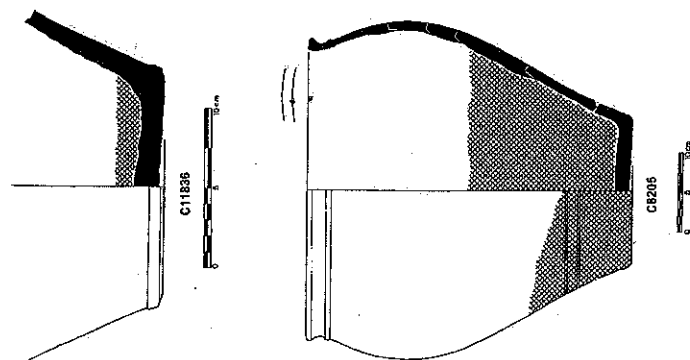


Figure 4.14. Kommos, northeast corner of court fronting Building N on south and Galleries P1 – P2 on west, LMIIIA2: cooking jars C8205 and C11836.

with the cooking pots in this second LMIIIA2 group is uncertain, but the overall character of this assemblage is similar to that from Gallery P2 in its international flavour and its relatively broad range of shapes, many of them distinctly utilitarian. Might these two multicultural but aesthetically rather unremarkable ceramic assemblages have been left behind by international groups of seamen who worked in and around shipsheds P1 and P2 during the first generation or two of their use?

A final pair of LMIIIB floor deposits marking the sudden abandonment of Building N once again includes a mix of tripod cooking pots (Figure 4.15: C2497 = Watrous 1992: 79 no. 1362, pl.34; C2494 = Watrous 1992: 78 no. 1346, fig. 50, pl. 32) and cooking jars (Figure 4.15: C2496 = Watrous 1992: 78 no. 1352, pl. 78; Figure 4.16: C6403 = Watrous 1992: 77 nos. 1332+1334, pl. 32; Figure 4.16: C6402 = Watrous 1992: 77 no. 1336, pl. 31; C6442 = Watrous 1992: 77 no. 1335, fig. 49, pl. 32). The cooking facility where these pots were presumably used was a large hearth occupying a roughly central position in Room 5 at the building's northwest

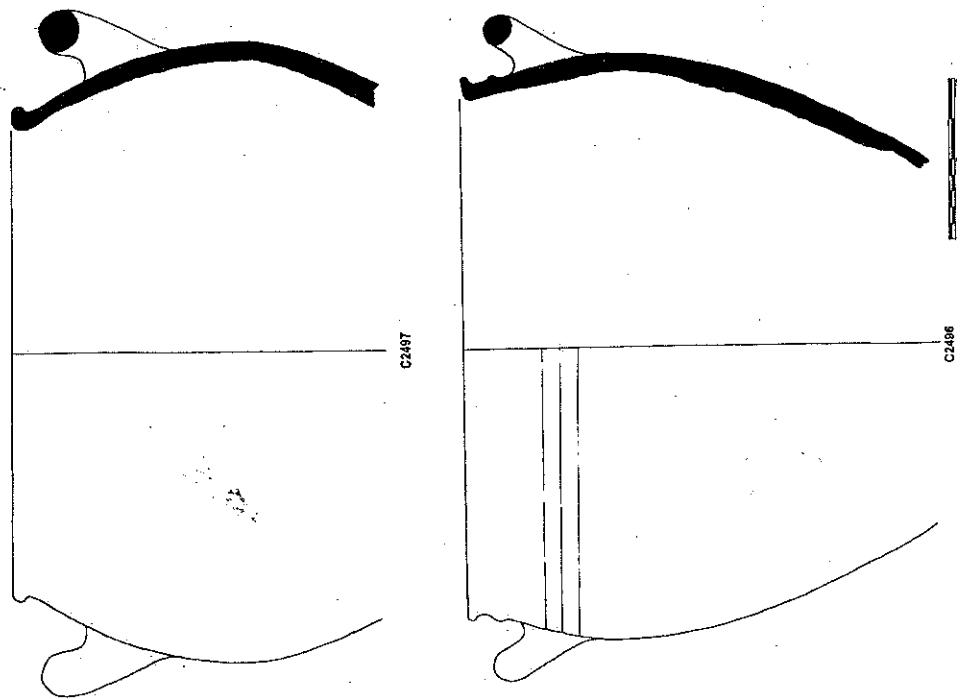


Figure 4.15. Kommos, Building N, LMIIIB: tripod cooking pot C2497 and cooking jar C2496.

corner. The remaining vessels in these large deposits include a wide range of pattern-decorated and plain vases that were locally manufactured – feeding bottles, semiglobular cups, kylikes, deep bowls, an amphoroid krater, a basin, a lid, and transport stirrup jars among the former, conical cups, champagne cups, kylikes, ladles, shallow rounded bowls, basins, deep two-handled jars, and pithoi among the latter – as well as Chaniote, East Cretan, and Sardinian imports

mass-feasting that is such a pronounced feature of the Neopalatial and early Monopalatial deposits in and around the court of Building T.

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Endnotes

- 1 For a fairly comprehensive bibliography through 1999 on the Minoan architectural form conventionally identified as a 'palace', see http://projects.dartmouth.edu/history/bronze_age/lessons/bib/12bib.html (1 December 2001). The monumental Protopalatial building at Monastiraki in the Amari valley is probably also 'palatial', and is omitted from the list of names in the text simply because the building in question is not of Neopalatial date.
- 2 For the terms 'Monopalatial' and 'Final Palatial', Rehak and Younger 2001: 384–85 and n.5, 441–42; Rutter 1999: 139, 148–149 and ns. 1 and 3. Unlike the 'palaces' of the Neopalatial era which conform in most respects to a single architectural form (*supra* n.1), those of the 'Monopalatial' (LMII – IIIA1) and 'Final Palatial' (LMIIIA2 – [mid-?]LMIIIB) eras are yet poorly defined in architectural terms. The 'palaces' to which these terms refer might thus more appropriately be conceived of as 'administrative centres' represented by Linear B documents (Knossos, Chania) or, in the case of the later era, sometimes merely by monumental building programs (Ayia Triadha, Tyllissos).
- 3 The well-dated and close parallels from Kommos' Building T make a somewhat earlier dating toward the end of LMIA for the Kamari miniature coarse basins and fine tubular-spouted jar, as well as the four terracotta models, preferable to Novaro's suggested date for these in LMIB. The tubular spouted jar from Building T space 16 at Kommos (C8337) is

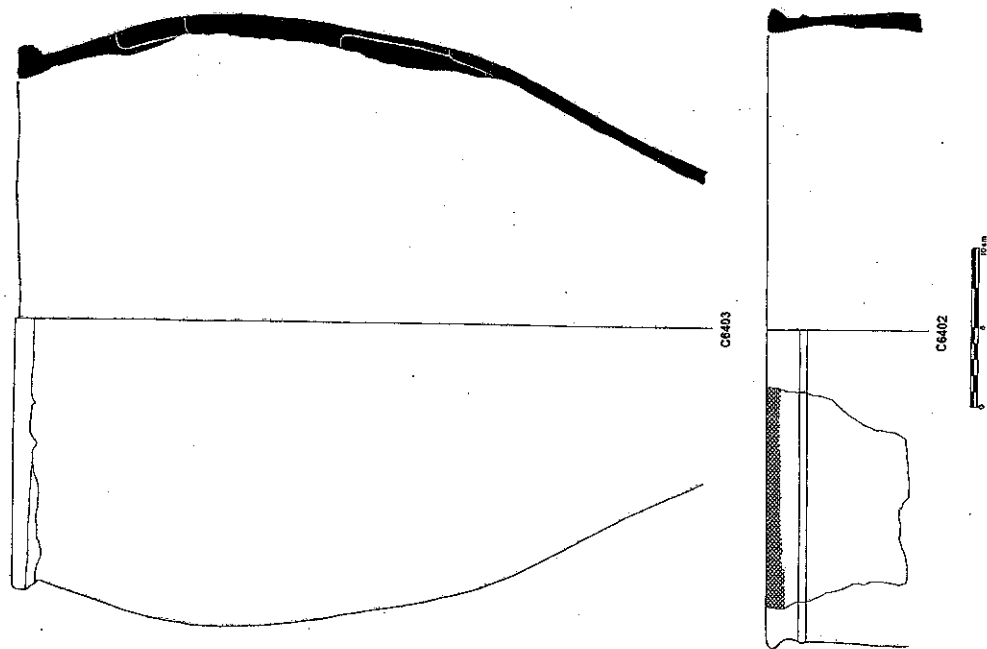


Figure 4.16. Kommos, Building N, LMIIIB: cooking jars C6403 and C6402.

(Watrous 1992: 76–79 Deposits 77–78, figs. 49–51, pls. 30–34; Rutter n.d.: Groups 59–60). These look like normal household floor deposits, closely comparable to those from houses excavated on the hillside and hilltop to the north of the road. They encompass the full range of storage, cooking, eating, and drinking functions typical of ordinary household debris. In other words, there is no ceramic evidence from Final Palatial levels in Kommos' Southern Area for the kind of periodic

sufficiently similar to that from Kamilarí to suggest that the two may have been products of the same workshop or even individual potter.

- 4 Recent publications focussing on Middle and Late Minoan cooking pottery include: Betancourt 1980; Borgna 1997; Tzedakis and Marlew 1999: 85-92 (A. Tsigounaki on Protopalatial Apodoulou), 93-97 (A. Kanta on Protopalatial Chania), and 110-116 (Y. Tzedakis on Andreadaki-Vlaski on Neopalatial and Postpalatial Chania); Hallager 2000: 158-63, fig. 32.
- 5 Many of the examples of the style illustrated here have already been published by Watrous 1992: 5 no. 85, fig. 13 (= Figure 4.7: C2538), 6 no. 91, pl. 2, fig. 13 (= Figure 4.7: C2545), 15 no. 267, pl. 6, fig. 18 (= Figure 4.12: C2755), 18 no. 305 (= Figure 4.9: C4859), 21 no. 346, pl. 9, fig. 18 (= Figure 4.7: C75), 21 no. 354, pl. 9, fig. 19 (= Figure 4.8: C470), 29 no. 494 (= Figure 4.10: C7464), 103 nos. 1781 and 1783, pls. 45-46, fig. 65 (= Figure 4.7: C2919 and C2914, respectively), 104 no. 1801, pl. 45, fig. 65 (= Figure 4.9: C4132). Additional examples of the following shapes have also been published by Watrous: teacups: 3 no. 36, pl. 1 (C5539), 10 nos. 174 and 173, pl. 4 (C3033 and C5203, respectively), 13 no. 229, pl. 5 (C5471), 22 no. 371, pl. 9 (C2250), 103 no. 1782, pl. 46 (C2915); oval-mouthed amphora: 104 no. 1804, pl. 45 (C5814).
- 6 A fragment published by Watrous (1992: 3 no. 36, pl. 1 [C5539]) appears to have belonged to a semiglobular cup decorated identically to the set illustrated here in Figure 4.11. The context from which this fragment comes lies well outside Building T on the sloping hillside to the north and was probably refuse from the Neopalatial occupation of the House of the Snake Tube. It is uncertain whether the vessel represented by this fragment was part of a larger set (several other constituents of which come from Building T) or belonged to another small set decorated indistinguishably from the small set identified in Building T.
- 7 At least three different kinds of cooking sets can be identified within the town of Kommos alone on the basis of specific cooking assemblages associated with hearths: (a) cooking dishes and trays but no tripod vessels or jars: Hilltop Room O12, LMIIIA (Shaw and Nixon 1996: 65; Watrous 1992: 50-53 Deposit 46, nos. 872, 884, 916, 918; note also the lid no. 871); (b) tripod vessels only: Central Hillside, House of the Snake Tube, Room 5, LMIIIB (Wright and McEnroe 1996: 230-32, pls. 3.114, 3.151; Watrous 1992: 96 Deposit 93 nos. 1663-1664, pl. 43, fig. 63); (c) a tripod vessel and a horizontal-handled jar: Central Hillside, House of the Snake Tube, Room 4, LMIIIB (Wright and McEnroe 1996: 226-29, pls. 3.113, 3.115; Watrous 1992: 95-96 Deposit 92, nos. 1654-1655, pl. 42, fig. 62). In the case of the last example, a second hearth in the same room contained a single brazier (Watrous 1992: 95 no. 1653, pl. 42, fig. 62), presumably indicative of another kind of cooking-related activity.

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