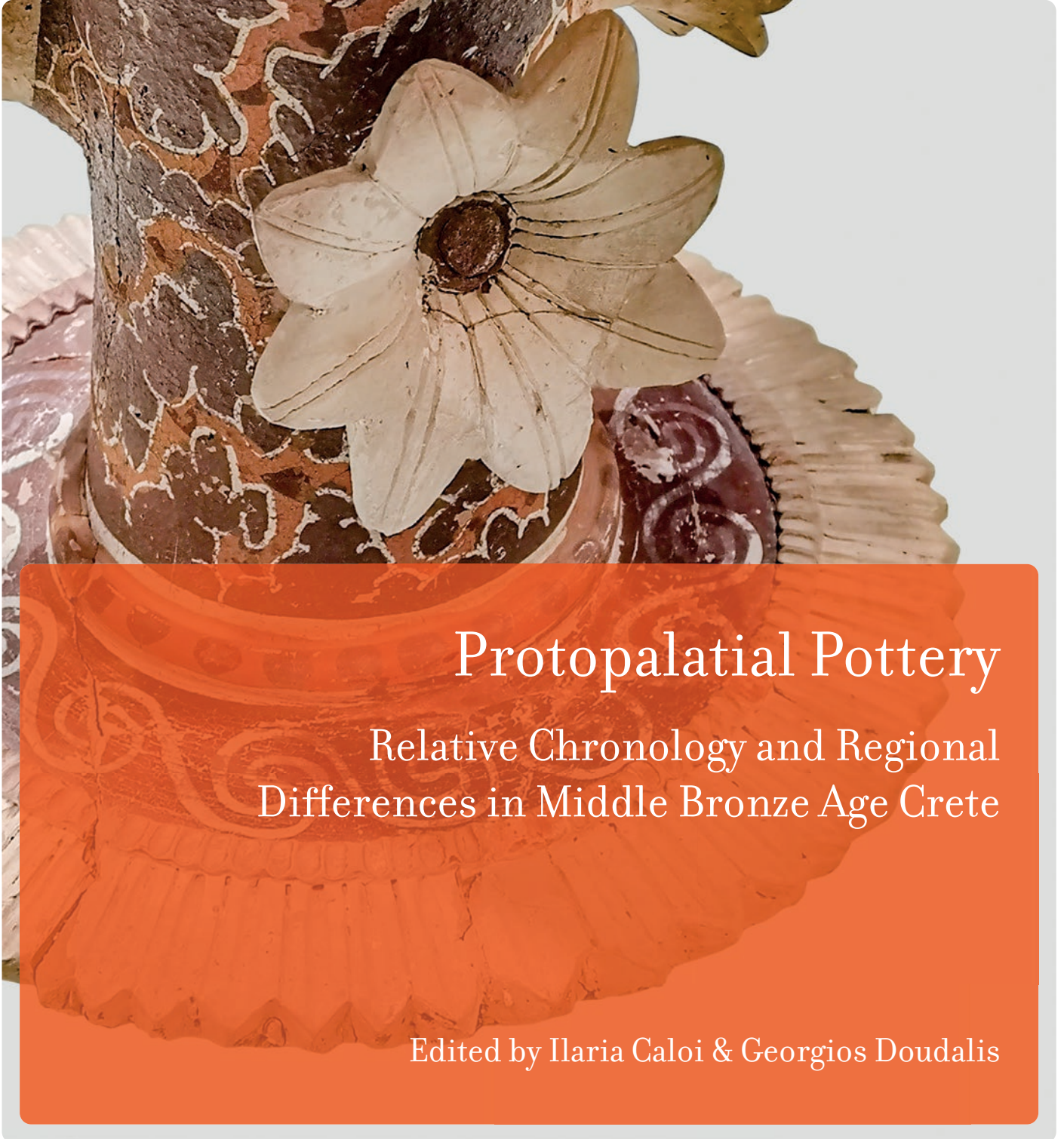


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# Protopalatial Pottery

Relative Chronology and Regional  
Differences in Middle Bronze Age Crete

Edited by Ilaria Caloi & Georgios Doudalis





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Relative Chronology and Regional Differences  
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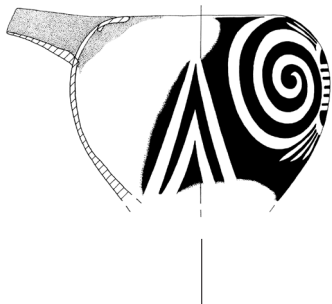
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*To the memory of Giuliano Merlatti*



Giuliano Merlatti (1967-2021)

Original drawing by Giuliano Merlatti



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**PROTOPALATIAL POTTERY**  
Relative Chronology and Regional Differences  
in Middle Bronze Age Crete

INSTAP SCEC, Pacheia Ammos, Crete - 2022, June 10-12

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## 19. The Protopalatial ceramic sequence at Phaistos: a synthesis<sup>1</sup>

Ilaria Caloi

### Introduction

At the palatial centre of Phaistos, located in the Mesara plain in South-Central Crete, all the ceramic phases of the Protopalatial period are represented, thanks to the preserved structures of the palace and related quarters excavated (Pernier 1935; Levi 1976). Besides the two main palatial structures – the North-West and the South-West – (**Fig. 19.1a**), the Protopalatial buildings of Phaistos comprise the Quarter west of the West Court, the *Acropoli Mediana*, the Chalara quarter, and the Hagia Photeini quarter (**Fig. 19.1b**). All these buildings and quarters have revealed Protopalatial contexts, both closed deposits and homogeneous fills, which cover all the phases of the period (see **Tab. 19.1**). They thus allow one to reconstruct a ceramic sequence for the Protopalatial period. Moreover, the Artisan’s quarter located west of the West Court (Todaro 2009) demonstrates that most of pottery consumed at Protopalatial Phaistos was locally produced. The main fabrics used to produce the Phaistian pottery, namely the fine buff and the tempered buff (Betancourt 1990: 8-10) have been identified as local (Wilson & Day 1994), derived from clay sources located in the areas of Moni Odigitria and Vori (Mentesana *et al.* 2016).

Pottery phases	Locations within and outside the Palace	Pottery deposits (stratified or homogeneous)
MM IB Early	Palace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ North-West Building, larnax deposit below Neopalatial Room 11</li> <li>▪ North-West Building, foundation deposit below Neopalatial Room 13</li> <li>▪ North-West Building, bench deposit of Corridor III/7</li> </ul>
	Related quarters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Quarter west of the West Quarter, Rooms IC-CI, CIII, lowest floors</li> </ul>
MM IB	Palace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ South-West Building, fill from Room LXV</li> </ul>
	Related quarters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Quarter west of the West Quarter, Rooms IC-CI, CIII, fill</li> <li>▪ Hagia Photeini, Room Beta, bench deposit</li> </ul>
MM IIA	Palace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ South-West Building, platform deposit of Room IL</li> <li>▪ Lower West Court in front of South-West Building, <i>Bastione II</i> dump</li> </ul>
	Related quarters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Quarter west of the West Quarter, Rooms IC-CI, CIII, upper fill</li> <li>▪ Hagia Photeini, Room Beta, floor deposit</li> <li>▪ Acropoli Mediana, Rooms CVI-CVII, fills beneath the slab floors</li> </ul>
MM IIB	Palace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ South-West Building, northern block, destruction levels of Rooms IL, XXVII-XVIII</li> <li>▪ South-West Building, central block, destruction levels of Rooms LI, LIII, LV</li> </ul>
	Related quarters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Quarter west of the West Quarter, destruction levels of Rooms LXXXI-LXXXV, XCIV-XCV</li> </ul>

TAB. 19.1 TABLE BASED ON CARINCI 2001; 2011; CALOI 2005; 2009; 2013A; 2018.

<sup>1</sup> I would like to thank Filippo Carinci for the great opportunity he gave me to work on Protopalatial pottery from Phaistos. A special thank to Davide Aquini for his help with the figures of this contribution and Don Evelyn for editing the text. The selected drawings are by Giuliano Merlatti and the photos from the SAIA Archive.

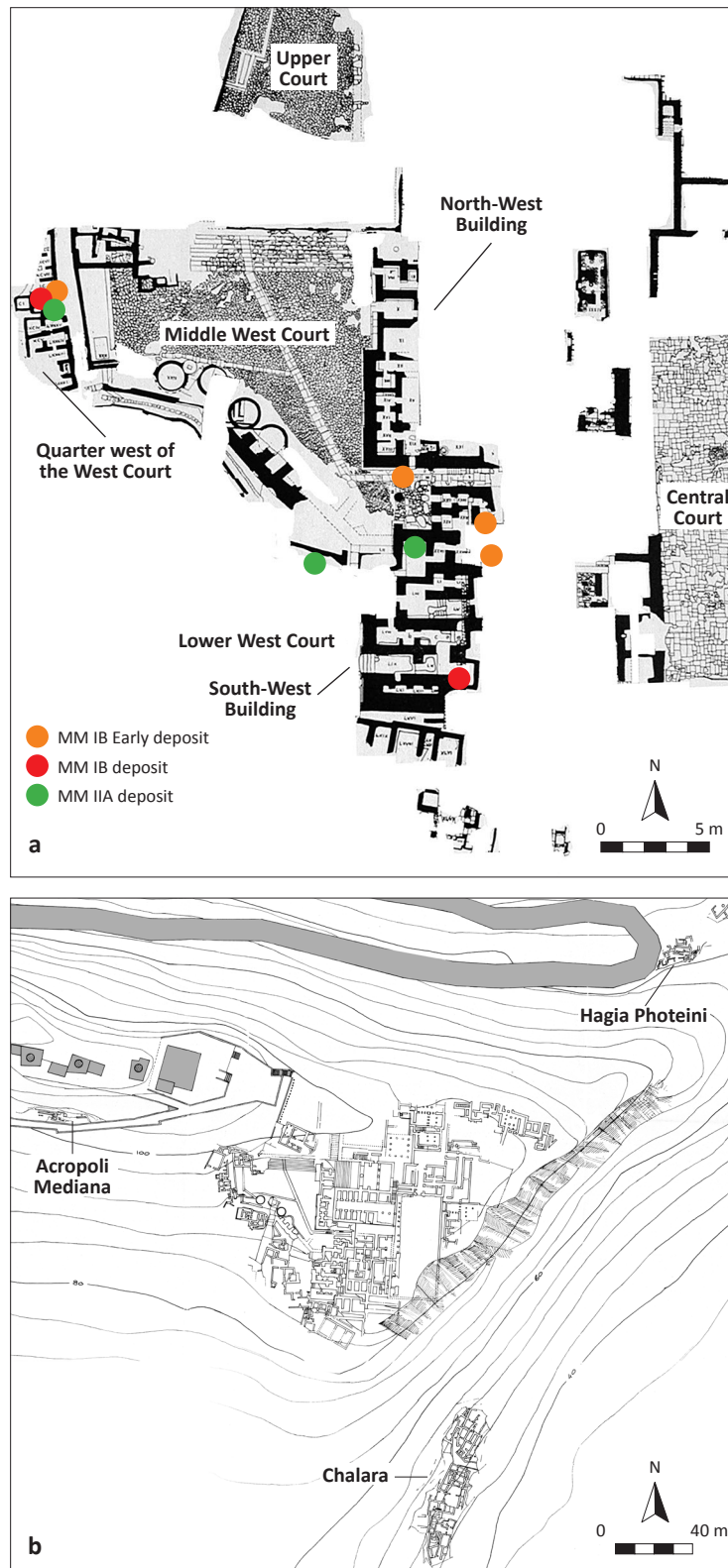


FIG. 19.1 A. THE FIRST PALACE OF PHAISTOS AND ITS RELATED QUARTERS, WITH INDICATION OF POTTERY DEPOSITS DATING TO MM IB EARLY, MM IB, MM IIA. THE MM IIB DEPOSITS ARE NOT INDICATED IN THE PLAN. B. THE PROTOPALATIAL QUARTERS LOCATED ON THE SLOPES OF THE PALACE HILL AND OF THE ACROPOLI MEDIANA HILL.

Following on from the fundamental publication devoted to the Protopalatial pottery from Phaistos by Doro Levi and Filippo Carinci (1988), in the last 15 years the pottery from many contexts of both the palatial buildings and peripheral quarters has been re-analysed and published by Filippo Carinci and Vincenzo La Rosa (2001; 2007; Carinci 2001; 2011), Giorgia Baldacci (2017), Sofia Antonello (forthcoming), and myself (2009; 2012; 2013a; 2016). In this paper I will present the result of these studies, focusing on the Phaistos pottery production of all the Protopalatial phases, *i.e.* MM IB, MM IIA and MM IIB. I will also deal with the pottery dating to MM IB Early coming from the few foundation deposits found beneath the walls and/or open spaces of the First Palace. The contexts and contents of the Protopalatial deposits presented in this paper have been already discussed in previous books and/or papers (Caloi 2009; 2012; 2013a; 2018; Baldacci 2017; Antonello forthcoming), thus for this contribution I will focus only on the main characteristics of the pottery retrieved from them.

The research conducted at Phaistos by the above-mentioned scholars in the last 40 years shows that the MM IB deposits correspond to the first phase of use of the palace and related quarters, the MM IIA ones are associated with the main renovation campaign that occurred at the site after the MM IB destruction identified in the palatial South-West Building, and the MM IIB deposits are contained in the next destruction levels of the palatial and non-palatial structures. Recent studies have shown that in MM IIB the edifices of Phaistos suffered two different destructions within the same phase (Carinci 2001; Carinci & La Rosa 2007). The structures belonging to these two sub-phases have revealed associated ceramic deposits, whose pottery was interpreted as belonging to two different ceramic sub-phases, the MM IIB Late and the MM IIB Final (Caloi 2018: 23-25; Antonello 2024: this volume, § 20). In this paper I will deal with the pottery from the first sub-phase, while the pottery from the last sub-phase of MM IIB – MM IIB Final – will be presented by Sofia Antonello in this volume (Antonello 2024, § 20).

Because of space limitations, for each Protopalatial ceramic phase (MM IB Early, MM IB, MM IIA, MM IIB), I will present the main wares, shapes, decorative systems, and manufacturing traits of the pottery, dealing mainly with fine-quality products.

## Pottery from MM IB Early deposits

In terms of stratigraphy the MM IB Early phase at Phaistos corresponds to the foundation of the Palace, while the MM IB phase proper belongs to the use of the Palace in its first phase (Caloi 2009). The Early MM IB phase is represented by a few deposits, which are the foundation deposits located respectively in a larnax below Neopalatial Room 11 (Caloi 2009: 391-394, with lit.) and below Neopalatial Room 13 (La Rosa 2004: 622-628), the bench deposit of Corridor III/7 (Carinci & La Rosa 2007: 96-98, figs 104-108; Caloi 2009: 395), as well as the floor deposits from the lowest floors of Rooms IC-CI, CIII the Quarter west of the West Court (Caloi 2013a: 78-81) (**Fig. 19.1; Tab. 19.1**).

Without presenting all the above-mentioned deposits, already published, I will focus on the most important features of their pottery. The vessels contained in these deposits are mostly hand-made, manufactured using both the layer-building technique and the pinching technique.

The most frequent wares of the MM IB Early deposits at Phaistos are the Polychrome, Barbotine, Printed, Dark-on-Light and Plain. Among the most common shapes are numbered the open-spouted jars with a globular-conical profile and a high, prominent shoulder, as best represented by the specimens found in the larnax of Room 11 (Caloi 2009), here illustrated in **Fig. 19.2b-c**. Very popular too are tall tumbler-shaped conical cups, cylindrical cups, beaked jugs, teapots, and side-spouted jugs.

The Polychrome Ware is mainly represented by open-spouted jars and jugs with linear decoration, usually characterized by horizontal bands or J-spirals (Caloi 2013a: fig. 11). In MM IB Early we see the introduction of the dot-rossette motif in Polychrome Ware. The jug found by Vincenzo La Rosa in the foundation deposit in Room 13 (**Fig. 19.2a**) illustrates this newly introduced motif, here associated with triangles filled with dots. The dot-rossette is well attested not only in Southern Crete, but generally across the island, as shown by comparanda at Knossos, in the so called Woven Style (MacGillivray 2007: 61).

The Barbotine Ware, one of the most popular fine wares at Phaistos in the early phases of the Protopalatial period, is now present with two variants: barnacle work, mainly attested on jugs (Caloi 2009), and barbotine protuberances, which are commonly distributed in rows on the surface of vessels and then covered with white dots. The larnax deposit of Room 11 contains four vessels decorated with this pattern: two globular-conical open-



FIG. 19.2 MM IB EARLY POTTERY. POLYCHROME WARE: A. JUG FROM THE FOUNDATION DEPOSIT BELOW NEOPALATIAL ROOM 13 (AFTER LA ROSA 2004); LARNAX DEPOSIT FROM BELOW NEOPALATIAL ROOM 11; BARBOTINE WARE: B-C. OPEN-SPOUTED JARS; D. PECULIAR TEAPOT; E. CYLINDRICAL CUP; DARK-ON-LIGHT WARE: F. CONICAL CUP. (AFTER CALOI 2009, FIG. 6).



spouted jars (**Fig. 19.2b-c**) and one peculiar teapot (**Fig. 19.2d**), the three of them showing horizontal rows of white-dotted barbotine protuberances, and lastly one cylindrical cup (**Fig. 19.2e**) with vertical rows alternating with painted motifs, namely diagonal white lines and dot series.

Very common in this phase is the plain handleless conical cup, which is tall and straight-sidedly conical, with a flaring rim. Many examples have been retrieved from the bench deposit of Corridor III/7 (Caloi 2009: fig. 7g-j). The dark-on-light handleless conical cups show the same profile as the plain ones, and are decorated with a black band below the rim, both inside and outside, and two creamy-white added lines below the rim exterior (**Fig. 19.2f**).

Pottery of MM IB Early presents some features that continue from the previous Prepalatial period. The strong continuity with the MM IA phase is evident not only in the fabrics and recipes used (Wilson & Day 1994), but also in shapes, and forming techniques. For example, the globular-conical open-spouted jar and the tumbler-shaped cup with flaring rim recall the shapes of vessels found in Phaistian contexts dated to MM IA Final by Simona Todaro (Todaro 2009). Also the plain pinched conical cups of MM IB find their predecessors in MM IA.

Unlike the MM IA Final deposits, the MM IB Early ones show an increasing production of Barbotine Ware, of skeuomorphic shapes and the adoption of new decorative motifs. Most of the pottery from this phase finds comparanda only in the Mesara plain, as shown by the contemporary deposits of Hagia Triada (Caloi 2009: 387), Kommos (Van de Moortel 2006: pls 3.1, 3.8) and the Kamares Cave (Van de Moortel 2011).

### Pottery from MM IB deposits

The MM IB phase corresponds to the first stage of the Palace's life and mainly consists of secondary fills, retrieved both from the palace and the settlement. Deposits dating to MM IB are found in Room LXV of the palatial South-West Building, in the homogeneous dump found in Rooms IC-CI, CIII of the Quarter west of the West Court, and in the quarter of Hagia Photeini (see Caloi 2009) (**Fig. 19.1a-b; Tab. 19.1**). For the MM IB phase, I will deal only with those ceramic wares, shapes and manufacturing characteristics that are typical of Phaistos, focusing on the pottery from the secondary fill of Room LXV of the palatial building, partially published by Levi and Carinci (Levi 1976: 148-151; Levi & Carinci 1988) and by myself (Caloi 2009: 385-386, 404-413), and from the dump found to the Quarter west of the West Court, entirely published in 2013 (Caloi 2013a).

The above-mentioned MM IB deposits present the following wares: Monochrome, Polychrome, Barbotine, Printed, Impressed, Dark on Light, Plain, Red Semi-fine Ware, and Cooking. A few pithoi with barbotine decoration are also included (see Caloi 2005).

New forms are attested in MM IB, namely carinated cups, globular open-spouted jars, open-spouted bucket jars, three-handled jugs, and open trilobate-mouthed jugs with a lateral handle, which are known at Phaistos as 'milk jugs' (*lattiere*: Levi & Carinci 1988: 217-220). It is important to note that the bridge-spouted jars are not common at Phaistos until the MM IIA phase, and are rarely attested in the large-sized version (see **Fig. 19.3d**). The shapes derived from Prepalatial prototypes and known in the previous MM IB Early phase – the globular-conical open-spouted jars, globular-conical teapots and tumbler-shaped cups with flaring rim illustrated in **Fig. 19.2** – are no longer present.

The most popular shapes in Monochrome Ware are the carinated cups, which are present also in Polychrome and Barbotine wares. The MM IB carinated cups of Phaistos are characterised by straight or only slightly concave walls on their upper part, and by a high and non-sharp carination, which can be also quite rounded. The homogeneous dump from the Quarter west of the West Court contains both the type with a rounded carination (**Fig. 19.4a-e**), also in a miniature version (**Fig. 19.4c**) as well as the one with an angular one (**Fig. 19.4f-h**).

Polychrome Ware is represented by many drinking and pouring vessels, as well as by shallow bowls and basins, all decorated in white and red on the black ground. Among drinking vases, the most common shapes are carinated, cylindrical and squat rounded cups, both with plain and quadrilobate mouths, and tumblers with flaring walls. The pouring vases are represented by the newly introduced globular open-spouted jars, open-spouted bucket jars, jugs, and teapots. Among the polychrome vases from the deposit of Room LV there are to be found one cup with quadrilobate mouth decorated with the common MM IB linear decoration, including red lines alternated to series of white dots (**Fig. 19.3a**), and two globular open-spouted jars – one decorated with a large circular motif inscribed with a cross (**Fig. 19.3b**) and the other with vertical, coloured lines and bands (**Fig. 19.3c**). The last pattern is a typical MM IB decoration, attested also on squat rounded cups, as shown by the two examples found in the MM IB dump from Quarter west of the West Court (**Fig. 19.4i-j**). Very popular is the use of linear elements, which run





FIG. 19.3 MM IB POTTERY FROM FILL OF ROOM LXV. POLYCHROME WARE: A: SQUAT ROUNDED CUP WITH QUADRILOBATE RIM; B-C. OPEN-SPOUTED JARS; BARBOTINE WARE: D. LARGE-SIZED BRIDGE SPOUTED JAR; E-F. THREE-HANDLED JUGS; G. OPEN-SPOUTED JAR. (AFTER CALOI 2009).

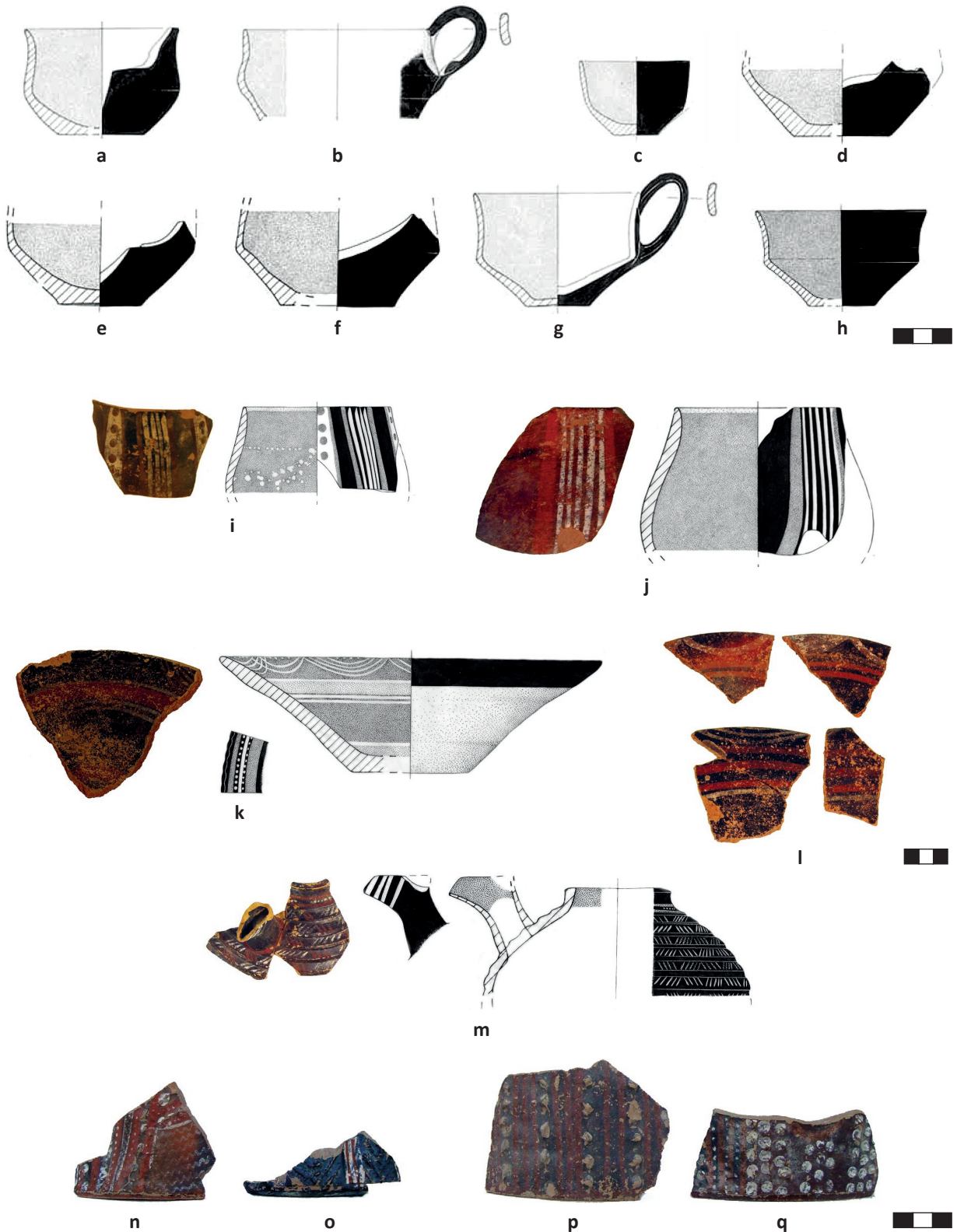


FIG. 19.4 MM IB FILL FROM QUARTER WEST OF THE WEST QUARTER. MONOCHROME WARE: A-H. CARINATED CUPS; POLYCHROME WARE: I-J. SQUAT ROUNDED CUPS; K-L. SHALLOW BOWLS; M. TEAPOT WITH RIDGE DECORATION; BARBOTINE WARE: N-O. LARGE CUPS WITH UNDULATING RIM; P-Q. CYLINDRICAL CUPS. (AFTER CALOI 2013A).

diagonally or spiralling around the vessels. This pattern, mainly found on tumblers or cylindrical cups (*e.g.* Caloi 2009: fig. 9f-g), is similar to what at Knossos has been called the Diagonal Red and White Style by MacGillivray (2007: 11, fig. 4.4). The shallow bowls are quite common in MM IB deposits: they are characterised by flaring walls and are mostly decorated with white and red festoons. The dump from the Quarter west of the West Court has revealed several examples, of which some are illustrated in **Fig. 19.4k-l**. Comparable shallow bowls are attested also at Petras (Tsipoulou 2017) and at Malia like those from *Maisons Sud* (Chapoutier *et al.* 1962), despite being in mixed contexts.

A common product at Phaistos are polychrome vases decorated with horizontal ridges, which imitate metalwork. These are frequent in the MM IB dump found in the Quarter west of the West Court, as exemplified by the teapot of **Fig. 19.4m**, where the ridges are painted with small white and red slashes.

Barbotine Ware is locally produced at MM IB Phaistos and likely exported to the rest of the island. The numerous variants of the MM IB Barbotine Ware have been already discussed elsewhere (Caloi 2009), and here I want to focus only on those skeuomorphic shapes imitating metalwork, which are typical of MM IB Phaistos and much appreciated outside the site. These vessels are well attested in both the deposits of Room LXV and of the Quarter west of the West Court. In the former, there are one-handled and three-handled jugs, a large bridge-spouted jar, and an open-spouted bucket jar (**Fig. 19.3d-g**), decorated with barbotine protuberances which either cover the vase surface leaving reserved areas (**Fig. 19.3f**), or create patterns in the shapes of oval motifs (**Fig. 19.3e**), circular and concentric elements (**Fig. 19.3d**), large festoons (**Fig. 19.3g**) or rosette motifs (**Fig. 19.3f-g**). The second deposit has revealed several fragmentary large cups with undulating walls (**Fig. 19.4n-o**) and cylindrical cups (**Fig. 19.4p-q**), which combine polychrome linear decoration with vertical or diagonal series of barbotine protuberances or wrinkles. Similar vases have been found in the Mesara tholos tombs of Kamilari (Caloi 2019b), Hagia Triada (Cultraro 2003) and Koumasa (Caloi 2011; see also Panagiotopoulos 2024: this volume, § 27).

Unlike North and Eastern Crete, the Light-on-Dark Ware, using white colour on the dark ground, is rare in MM IB. Printed Ware is not much known in MM IB, but is represented by open-spouted jars and by decorated handleless conical cups (Caloi 2009: 404, fig. 9h-m). Impressed Ware appears in MM IB deposits, especially on very elaborate pouring vessels (see Caloi 2009: 409, fig. 12i-l), but it becomes more popular from MM II (see *infra*).

Among the Dark-on-Light Ware the most attested shapes are jugs with vertical bands, askoid jugs with semicircular bands, and side-spouted jugs ornamented with festoons or J-spirals (Caloi 2009). Very common are also the shallow bowls decorated with one, two or more festoons hanging from the rim, as best exemplified by the examples in **Fig. 19.5a-c**. Most of pouring vases appear to be constructed using the layer-building technique, which goes back to the Prepalatial period, while the shallow bowls are probably manufactured using a mould.

Worth noting for the MM IB Phaistian phase is the increase of plain handleless conical cups, which are now present in two variants: one with a more conical profile (**Fig. 19.5d**) and one with a bell-shaped profile (**Fig. 19.5e**). Most are pinched up, but only the second variant seems to be finished on the potter's wheel. The dump from the Quarter west of the West Court has yielded more than 100 specimens (Caloi 2013a), of which some are illustrated here (**Fig. 19.5d-e**).

Concerning the Red Semi-fine Ware, the most attested shapes are the side-spouted jugs, both with oval or trilobate mouth (**Fig. 19.5f-g**). In this phase they are still hand-made. A. Van de Moortel (2006) thinks that they could come from the Pediada. The one published by Rethemiotakis and Christakis (2004: fig. 12.2c) shows the same scheme, but the profile is piriform in comparison to the Phaistian and other Mesara examples. It remains to be understood whether the milk-jugs in red fabric attested at Phaistos, Kommos and in the Kamares Cave in MM IB are imports from Kastelli, as hypothesized by A. Van de Moortel (2006), or local imitations.

The MM IB Phaistian products are well testified to, especially in the Mesara plain. The best comparanda are found in the settlements of Hagia Triada (Baldacci 2024: this volume, § 21), Kommos (Van de Moortel 2006) and the Kamares Cave (Van de Moortel 2024: this volume § 22), as well as in the Mesara tholos tombs, especially at Kamilari (Caloi 2019b) and Hagia Triada (Cultraro 2003), but also at Koumasa (Caloi 2011; Panagiotopoulos 2024: this volume, § 27), Apesokari (Flouda 2023; Vavouranakis *et al.* 2024: this volume, § 26) and Porti (Flouda 2024: this volume, § 25). Worth mentioning are the handleless conical cups found in the tholos tomb B at Apesokari (Vavouranakis *et al.* 2024: this volume, § 26), where they appear to be used in consumption rituals exactly as at the Phaistos Palace. It appears that the most exported Phaistian products in MM IB are the barbotine vessels, which are also the only Phaistian vessels found outside the Mesara plain: they are present in the Iuktas sanctuary (Karetsou & Knappett 2024: this volume, § 3), at Gavdos (Kopaka & Theou 2024: this volume, § 28), and also in



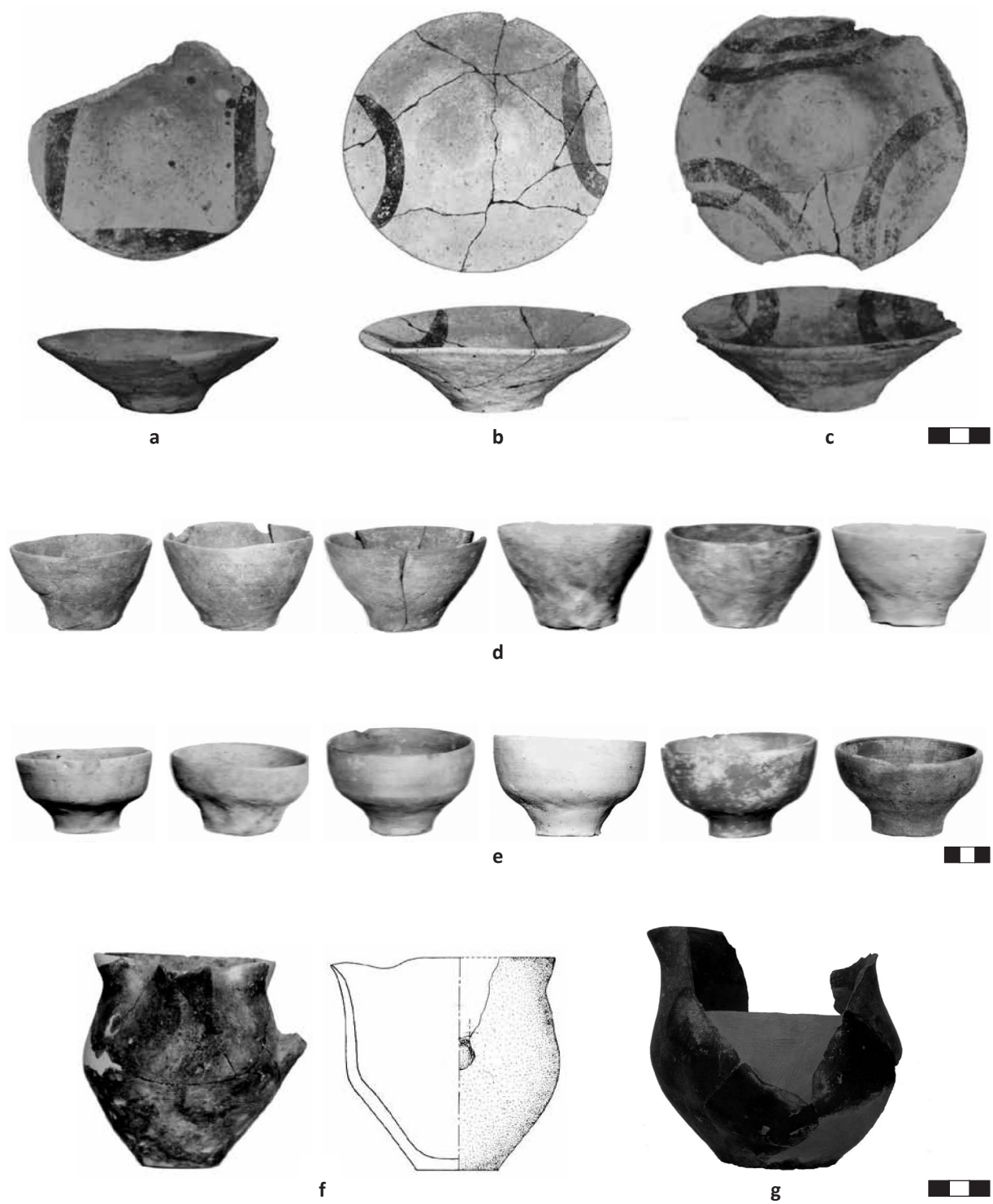


FIG. 19.5 MM IB FILL FROM THE QUARTER WEST OF THE WEST COURT. DARK-ON-LIGHT WARE: A-C. SHALLOW BOWLS; PLAIN WARE: D: HANDLELESS CONICAL CUPS WITH CONICAL PROFILE; E: HANDLELESS CONICAL CUPS WITH BELL-SHAPED PROFILE; RED SEMI-FINE WARE: F-G. TRILOBATE-MOUTHED SIDE-SPOUTED JUGS. (AFTER CALOI 2013A).

the few deposits known from West Crete, like at Nopigeia Kissamos and Kastelli at Chania (see Caloi 2009, with lit.). Some good comparanda for MM IB productions of Phaistos are found in the decorative systems of MM IB vases at Knossos (MacGillivray 2007), Petras (Haggis 2007; Tsipopoulou 2017) and also at Malia, especially in the *Maisons Sud* (Chapoutier *et al.* 1962).

## Pottery from MM IIA deposits

The MM IIA pottery of Phaistos is quite well known, thanks to the recent publication of most of the ceramic deposits identified there (Caloi 2007; 2009; 2012; 2013a; 2018; Baldacci 2017). Recent studies of such pottery have shown that the homogeneous deposits dating to MM IIA are those listed in **Tab. 19.1**: they are the platform deposit of Room IL in the palatial South-West Building, the *Bastione* II dump in the Lower West Court, the upper fill found in Rooms IC-CI, CIII in the Quarter west of the West Court, the fill from the *Acropoli Mediana* and the Room Beta floor deposit from the Hagia Photeini quarter (Caloi 2009: 386-387; Caloi 2005) (**Fig. 19.1a-b**). The MM IIA fills from the Quarter west of the Quarter west of the West Court and from the *Acropoli Mediana* have been published in full respectively by myself (Caloi 2013a) and by Baldacci (2017), while the two deposits from the Room IL platform and *Bastione* II have been only preliminarily published first by Levi (1976) and Carinci (1988), and then by myself (2012; 2016; 2020); their complete publication is in preparation. In this paper I will present the most characteristic ceramic wares and shapes from these two deposits, whose pottery is very similar to that already published from the MM IIA deposits of the *Acropoli Mediana* (Baldacci 2017) and of the Quarter west of the West Court (Caloi 2013a).

Together with the pottery decorated in Monochrome, Polychrome, Barbotine, Impressed, Dark-on-Light wares already present in the MM IB phase, new ceramic classes are attested to in all the MM IIA deposits of Phaistos, namely: the Polychrome on buff-reserved surface Ware, the fine Dark-on-Light Ware, and the Creamy-coated Ware. Even if the fabrics in use for the MM IIA productions are the same as in the previous MM IB, the newly introduced wares are manufactured using very fine and hard-fired fabrics.

The Monochrome Ware is mainly used for carinated and squat rounded cups, but may include tumblers, cylindrical cups, hemispherical bowls, bridge-spouted jars, and unusual teapots, as shown in the MM IIA fill of the *Acropoli Mediana* (see Baldacci 2017). The platform deposit of Room IL has revealed a new type of carinated cup, introduced in the Phaistian repertoire in MM IIA: the short-rimmed carinated cup (**Fig. 19.6a**), which finds several comparisons both at Knossos (MacGillivray 2007) and at Petras (Tsipopoulou 2017). It also contains a squat rounded cup with a very shiny surface and ridge decoration, which imitates metallic prototypes. Among the monochrome cups of the *Bastione* II dump, there are a conical goblet with lugs on the rim (**Fig. 19.7b**), and two open vases showing grooved decoration: a tall-rimmed carinated cup (**Fig. 19.7a**), which derives from the MM IB examples, but now with a sharper carination and more concave upper walls, and a two-handled shallow bowl (**Fig. 19.7c**), peculiar in having the grooved decoration on the interior surface of the vase. The carinated cup with horizontal grooves of **Fig. 19.7b** represents a very popular MM IIA type, witnessed not only in other contemporary deposits at Phaistos (see Caloi 2009), but across numerous sites of North-Central and Eastern Crete (*e.g.* Malia, Sissi, Mochlos, Chryssi, Palaikastro, *etc.*), as illustrated in many papers of this volume.

The Polychrome Ware from Phaistian MM IIA deposits is characterized by the introduction of new pigments – orange and yellow – now combined in the same vessel with red and white (Caloi 2009; Baldacci 2017). The most attested shapes are drinking cups, pouring vases, but also containers and special vessels, like pedestalled bowls with a central hole, which are particularly attested in the *Bastione* II dump (Caloi 2022). Among the drinking vessels, the carinated cups are the most popular, followed by squat rounded cups, conical goblets, and hemispherical cups. The platform deposit of Room IL contains all these shapes. The carinated cup in **Fig. 19.6d** is decorated on the upper part with one sequence of rosettes and one of lozenge-type motifs, while in the lower part it shows a series of white arches around the base, which is a typical motif of MM IIA products (see *infra*). The other carinated cup illustrated in **Fig. 19.6c** shows a sequence of white vertical lines painted with red slashes. The same decorative scheme is applied also on the conical goblet illustrated in **Fig. 19.6e**, with red rhombus motifs on white bands, and on the squat rounded cup in **Fig. 19.6f** with red dots on white bands.

The most popular pouring vase in the MM IIA deposits of Phaistos is the globular spouted jar, which is still mainly produced with an open spout and two handles in the form of acute angles (see **Figs 19.6-19.7**), but which may also appear with a bridge-spout and grooved handles (see Caloi 2009: 424, fig. 15b). Among the spouted jars

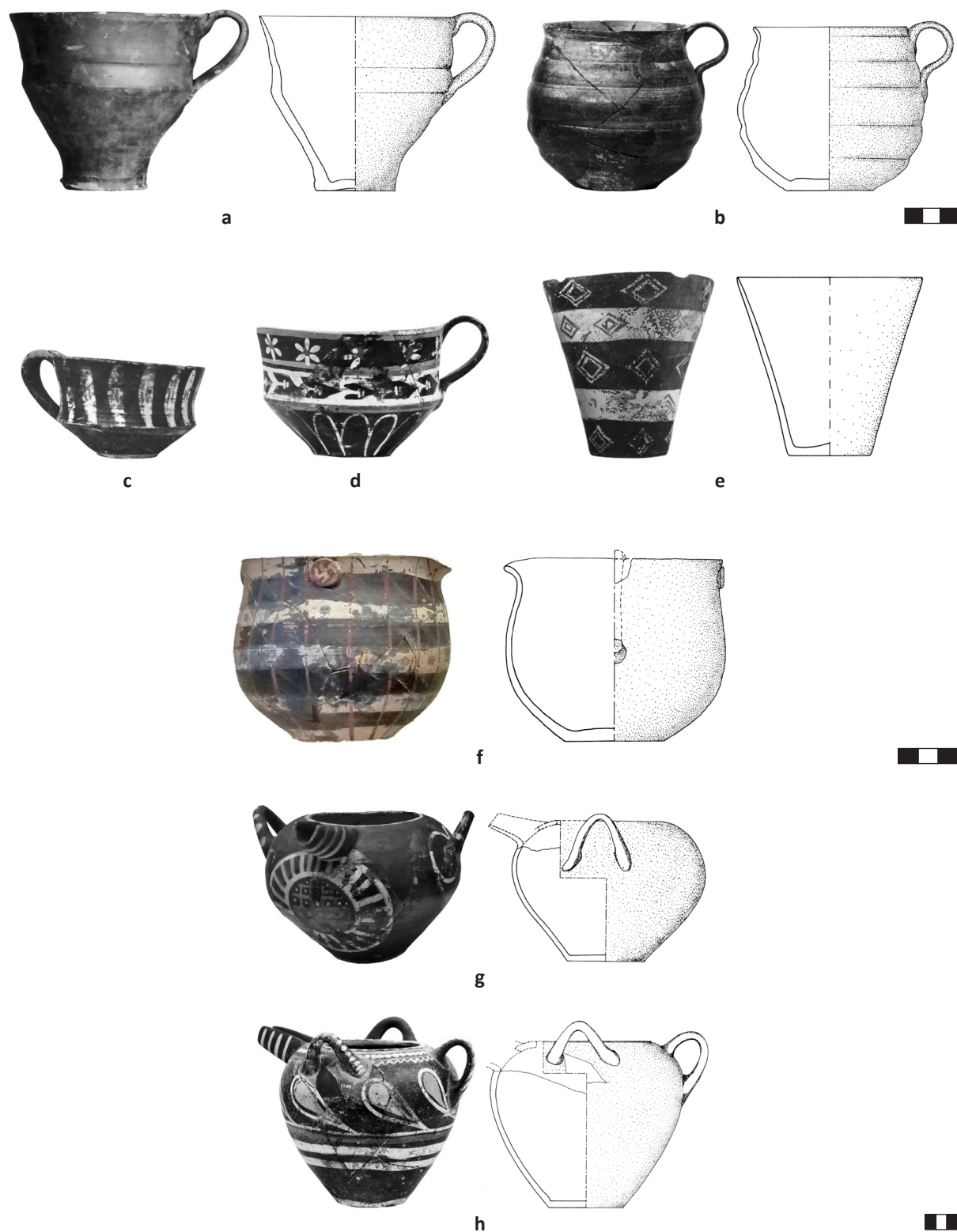


FIG. 19.6 MM IIA PLATFORM DEPOSIT OF ROOM IL. MONOCHROME WARE: A. SHORT-RIMMED CARINATED CUP (F 95); B. SQUAT ROUNDED CUP (F 74); POLYCHROME WARE: C-D. CARINATED CUPS (F 193 AND F 84); E. CONICAL GOBLET (F. 73); F. SQUAT ROUNDED CUP (F 185); G-H. BRIDGE-SPOUTED JARS (F 90 AND F 231).

found in the platform deposit of Room IL there are specimens displaying the new motifs of the ceramic phase at Phaistos: the example in **Fig. 19.6g** illustrates the typical two-faced scheme introduced in MM IIA, while the specimen in **Fig. 19.6h** displays a series of orange-filled amygdaloid motifs contoured by white lines. The *Bastione* II dump contains many specimens comparable with those found in the MM IIA fill from the *Acropoli Mediana*. For example, it includes open-spouted jars showing the following popular MM IIA motifs: series of motifs filled in orange, outlined in red and white, and terminating with white spirals (**Fig. 19.7e**); series of white oval motifs with red added motifs, outlined by white dots (**Fig. 19.7f**); sequences of small white arches, variously combined on the surface vessel (**Fig. 19.7e-f**); series of white running spirals (**Fig. 19.7g**). Moreover, similarly to the carinated cup illustrated in **Fig. 19.6d**, these vases show a series of white arches or angular motifs running around their bases.

Barbotine Ware is less visible than before. As discussed in a 2009 paper devoted to Barbotine Wares in Phaistian products (Caloi 2009), in MM IIA the most used barbotine variants are the protuberances and the crinkled ridges, which can be used as a single row or in parallel series creating complex motifs, often in association with the above-mentioned polychrome motifs. The *Bastione* II dump has revealed many fragmentary bridge-spouted jars (**Fig. 19.8a**), bucket jars (**Fig. 19.8b**), and jugs (**Fig. 19.8c**), which find precise comparanda with the already published examples from the MM IIA deposits of the *Acropoli Mediana* fill (Baldacci 2017) and the Quarter west of the West Court (see Caloi 2009: fig. 15). It appears that in MM IIA the barbotine vessels continued to be exported as one of the most appreciated products of Phaistos.

In MM IIA, the production of the Impressed Ware starts to increase, later becoming truly popular in MM IIB. Alessandro Sanavia (2014; 2017) has studied this class of pottery, proving that is a local production, much distributed in the MM II(A and B) deposits of the palace and other quarters, and exported outside the site as well. In MM IIA, the preferred vases for this decoration appear to be the pouring vases, often characterised by elaborate and unusual forms imitating metallic prototypes. In his study, Sanavia (2014) distinguishes between products realised with and those without the use of a stamp device. The *Bastione* II dump has revealed both sorts: the first type of decoration is represented in a polychrome bridge-spouted jar ornamented with a series of circular impressions below the rim (**Fig. 19.8d**) and in a peculiar, high-collared teapot with an exaggerated spout, which is decorated with elliptical impressions (**Fig. 19.8e**); the second type is present in the two-handled carinated bowl, ornamented with two series of oval impressed motifs both on the incurved rim and on the sharp carination (**Fig. 19.8f**).

The new Polychrome on buff-reserved surface Ware is mainly attested on bridge-spouted jars, and on carinated and hemispherical cups, but may appear also in jugs and shallow bowls. It is characterised by a thick creamy slip, which is painted in polychromy, with three – black, red and white – pigments, or just two, in black and white.

The *Bastione* II dump has revealed several examples of open-spouted jars and one carinated cup that display one of the most popular decorative patterns of MM IIA at Phaistos, *i.e.* a series of vertical white-bordered black bands, and the alternation of vertical black and white lines on the clay surface (**Fig. 19.9a-e**). A very close parallel, likely imported from Phaistos, is deposited in the Kamares Cave, as illustrated in this volume (Van de Moortel 2024, § 22, fig. 22.5). Together with these patterns, the publication of the MM IIA from the *Acropoli Mediana* (Baldacci 2017) and from the Quarter west of the West Court (Caloi 2013a; see also Caloi 2009: fig. 15) has already shown that the most frequent motifs on vases in Polychrome on buff-reserved surface Ware are the following: ladder-like motif, scale-like pattern, irregular black bands alternating with lines forming a pattern imitating stone surface, white-bordered black or brown geometric motifs (circular, elliptical, amygdaloid) distributed on the surface.

The platform deposit of Room IL has revealed two vessels – a carinated cup and a hemispherical cup – with a double decoration: half the vase is covered with black elements with white added dots, and the second half is black painted with red lines (**Fig. 19.9m-n**). Some of the MM IIA deposits of Knossos, namely the Royal Pottery Stores (MacGillivray 2007: 125, n° 6, fig. 4.14) and the deposit C from the South West Houses (Macdonald & Knappett 2007: 83-84, n° 293, fig. 3.16) have revealed a few similar examples, which could be Phaistian imports.

The second, newly-introduced ware is the Fine Dark-on-Light, which is mainly represented by handleless conical cups and hemispherical cups (**Fig. 19.9f-l**). The interior is often characterized by a splashed decoration in dark paint, while the outer face can be plain or is frequently decorated with horizontal ridges (**Fig. 19.9g-l**). On several specimens, the latter are associated with a painted decoration: the external rim may show a series of diagonal slashes or festoons in brown or red paint (**Fig. 19.9j**). This class is represented also by specimens decorated with black dripping/trickle both on the inner and outer faces (**Fig. 19.9k-l**).





FIG. 19.7 MM IIA *BASTIONE II DUMP*. MONOCHROME WARE WITH GROOVED DECORATION: A. CARINATED CUP (F 2255); B. CONICAL GOBLET (76/14 140); C. SHALLOW BOWL (76/11 2); POLYCHROME WARE: D-G. OPEN-SPOUTED JARS (76/17, 76/17 4, 76/17 5, 76/17 1).

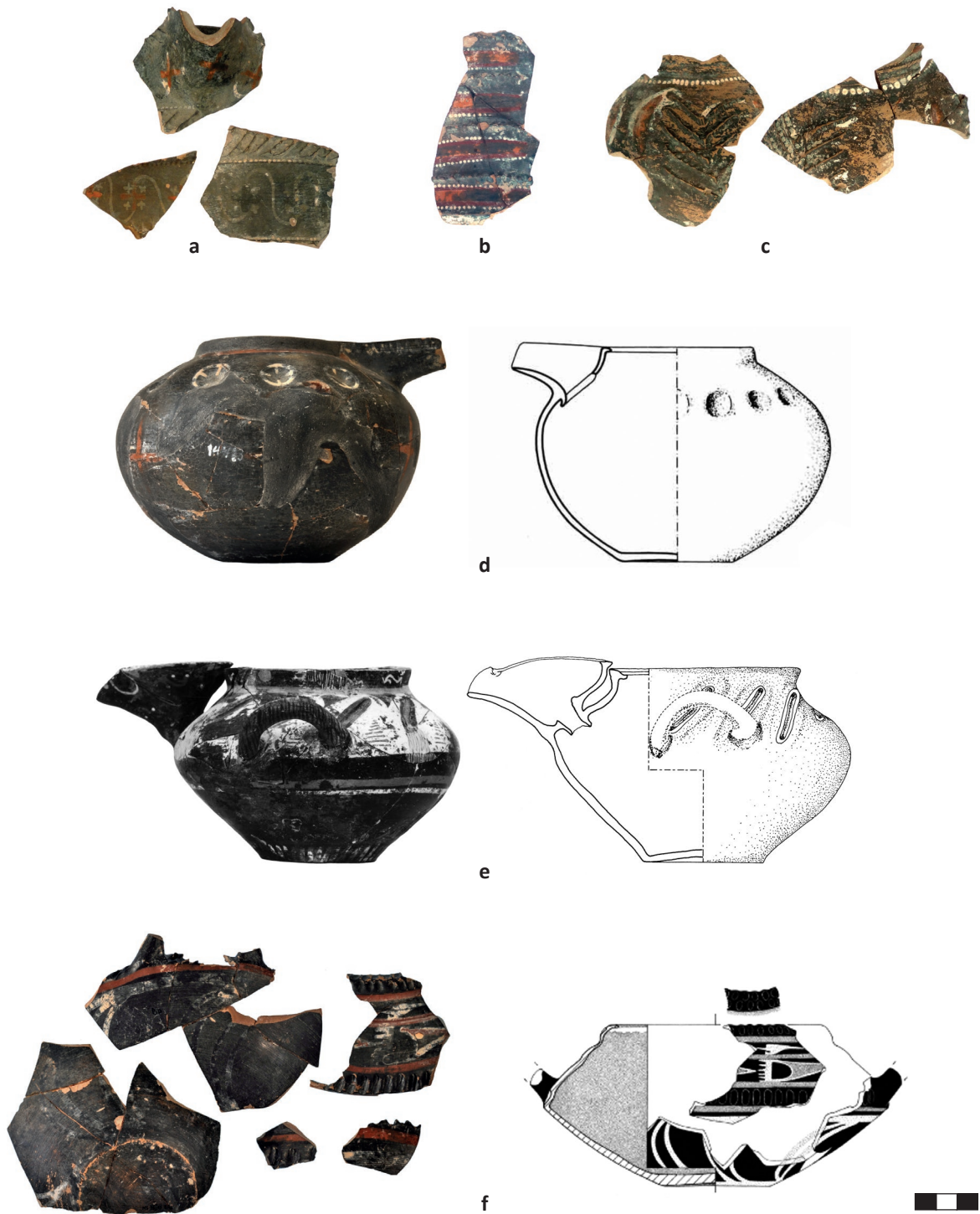


FIG. 19.8 MM IIA *BASTIONE* II DUMP. BARBOTINE WARE: A-C. BRIDGE-SPOUTED JAR (76/14 134); B. BUCKET JAR (76/19 22); C. JUG (76/19 23); IMPRESSED WARE: D. BRIDGE-SPOUTED JAR (F 2326); E. PECULIAR TEAPOT (F 1928); F. CARINATED BOWL (76/11 100).

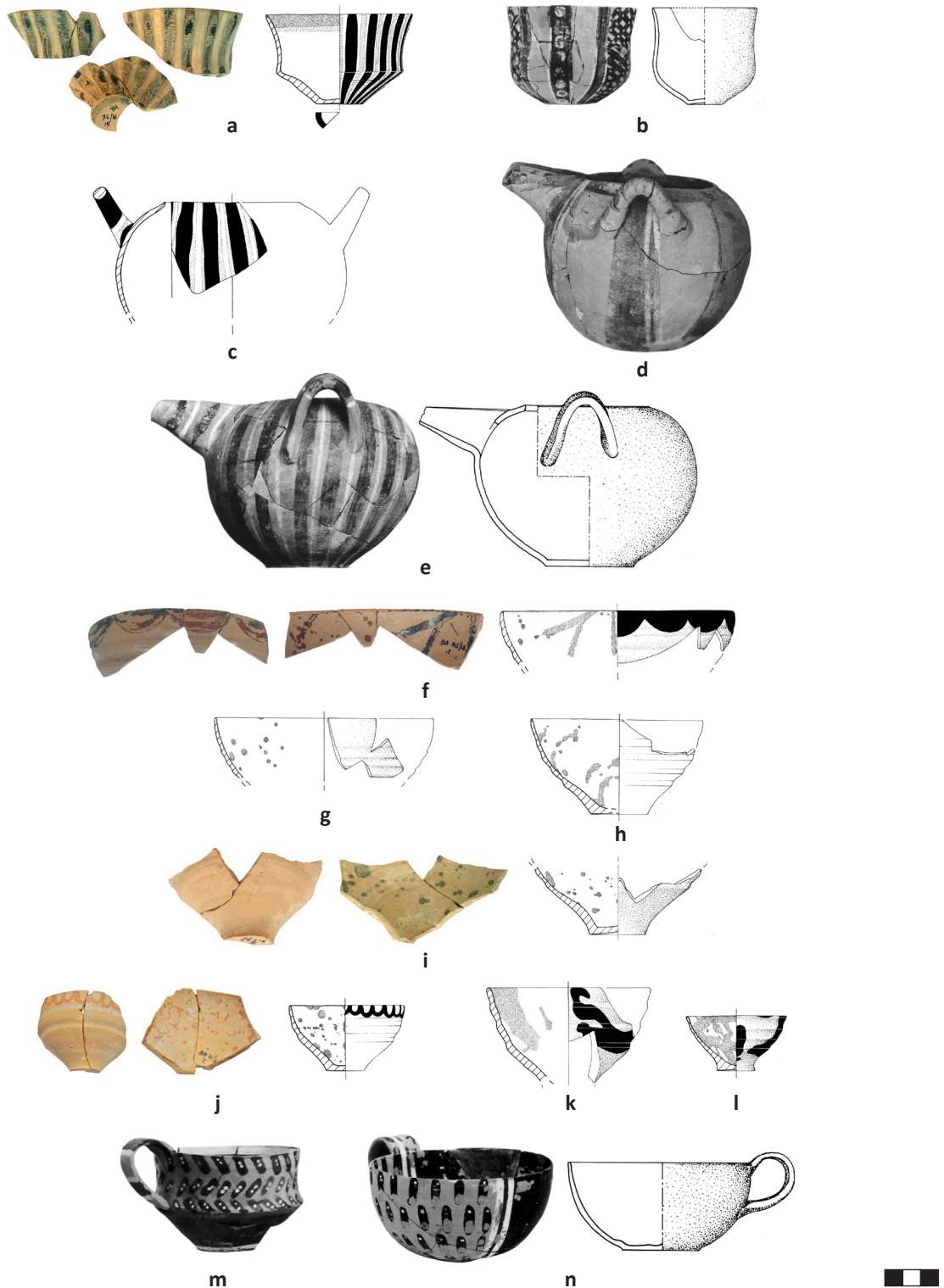


FIG. 19.9 MM IIA *BASTIONE II* DUMP. POLYCHROME ON BUFF-RESERVED SURFACE WARE: A. CARINATED CUP (76/16 15); B. SQUAT ROUNDED CUP (F 1923); C-E. BRIDGE-SPOUTED JARS (76/16 80, F 1919, F 1956); FINE DARK-ON-LIGHT WARE: F-G. HEMISPHERICAL CUPS (76/16 1, 19A); H-J. HANDLELESS CONICAL CUPS WITH GROOVED DECORATION (76/16 2, 19B, 6); K-L. HANDLELESS CONICAL CUPS WITH DRIPPING (76/16 4, 76/17 101). MM IIA PLATFORM DEPOSIT OF ROOM 1L: VASES WITH MIXED DECORATION: M. CARINATED CUP (F 85); N. HEMISPHERICAL CUP (F 86).

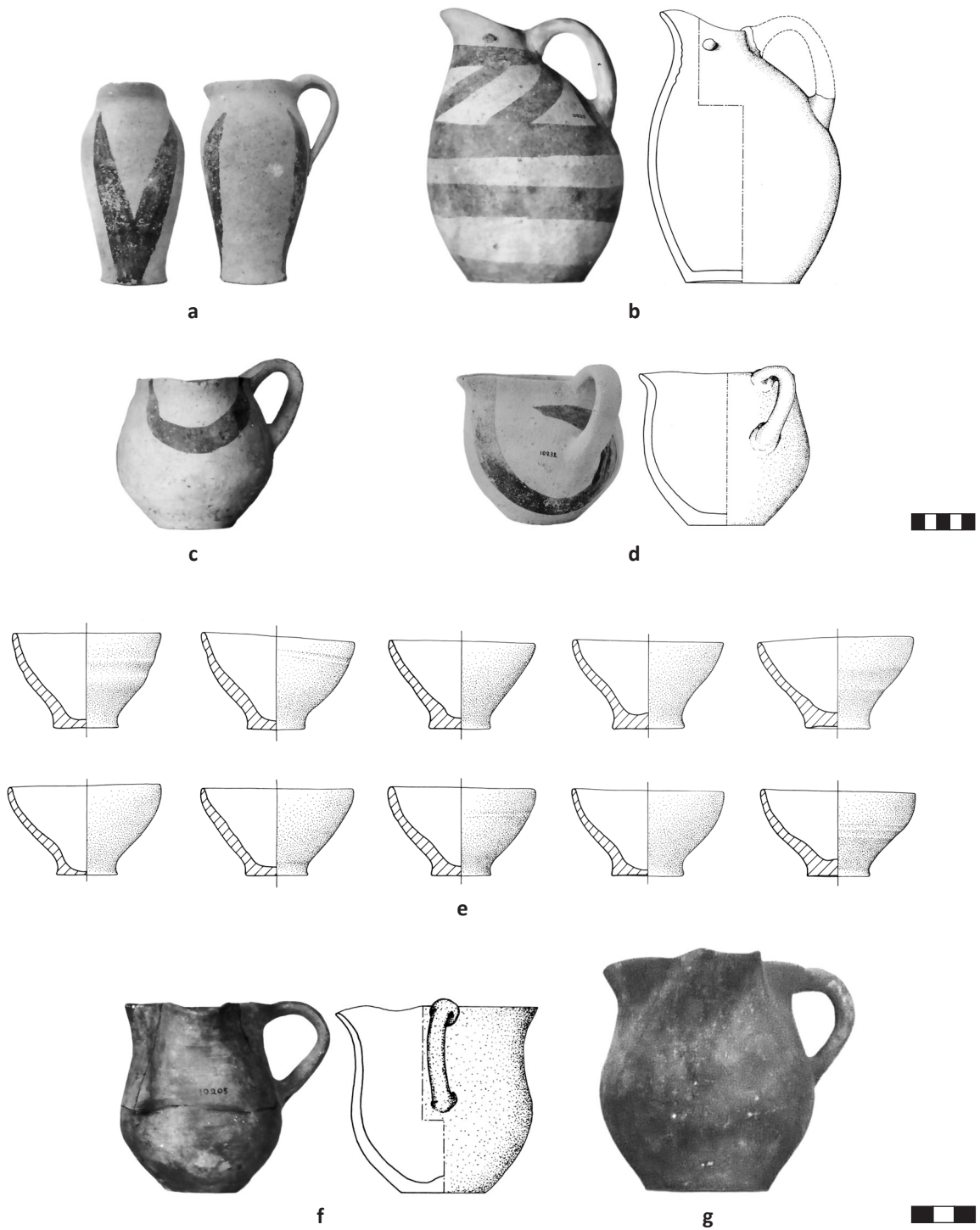


FIG. 19.10 PLATFORM DEPOSIT OF ROOM II. DARK-ON-LIGHT WARE: A. JUG WITH LEAF DECORATION (F 119); B. ASKOID JUG (F 31); SIDE-SPOUTED JUGS: C-D. (F. 41, F. 23); PLAIN FINE WARE: E. HANDLELESS CONICAL CUPS (2/26 13, 3/13 40, 3/3 16, 3/18 14, 3/8 6, 3/9 9, 3/5 18, 3/13 3, 3/18 5, 3/9 8) ; RED SEMI-FINE WARE: F-G. SIDE-SPOUTED JUGS (F 91, F 59).



Both the Polychrome on buff-reserved surface and the Fine Dark-on-Light wares are mainly recovered on sites sharing the Phaistian products, like Hagia Triada (see Baldacci 2024: this volume, § 21) and Kommos, and in a few Mesara tholos tombs, like Vorou, but they are rare outside the Mesara plain (see comparanda in Caloi 2009: 432-433).

The Creamy-coated Ware, already studied by Baldacci and Sanavia (2018), is another product that appears at Phaistos in MM IIA mainly for drinking cups, but also for shallow bowls; it can be plain, with no added decoration, or with red and black decoration.

The Dark-on-Light Semi-fine and Plain Wares of MM IIA deposits are used for many shapes already known from the previous MM IB phase: the beaked jug, the askoid jug, side-spouted jug, the stamnos, the amphora (see Caloi 2009: 428, fig. 17). Likewise, the decorative patterns are not particularly different, as shown by the examples in **Fig. 19.10a-d** from the platform deposit of Room IL, illustrating one jug with the leaf decoration (the so-called 'leaf jugs'), an askoid jug with semicircular bands, and two side-spouted jugs, which were already attested in the previous phase. The main difference is, however, the increasing use of the potter's wheel to finish them off.

Among the Plain Ware productions of MM IIA, I will focus only on the plain handleless conical cups because it appears that in this phase they are produced using different forming techniques. I summarise here what I have already published (Caloi 2019a; 2021). Both the platform deposit of Room IL and the *Bastione* II dump have revealed hundreds of such handleless conical cups, which are both wheel-fashioned, *i.e.* hand-built and then shaped on the potter's wheel, and wheel-thrown (see **Fig. 19.10e**). The first can be wheel-coiled or wheel-pinched (Caloi 2021), while the wheel-thrown specimens appear to be mostly thrown-off-the hump (Caloi & Bernardini 2024; in preparation). In comparison to the previous MM IB version, the plain handleless conical cups seem to be more frequently known not only in the Mesara sites (see Kamilari for example: Caloi 2019b), but also in the North, as exemplified by the specimens found at Knossos (Macdonald & Knappett 2007). This pattern thus shows the export of a new drinking cup to be consumed in communal gatherings, the same phenomenon which in the successive Neopalatial period will be adopted across the island in a very widespread way.

Worthy of mention is the output in Red Semi-fine Ware. In MM IIA, the shapes have the same profiles, but their manner of manufacture appears to change. In MM IIA, some side-spouted jugs start to be produced with the use of the potter's wheel. The side-spouted jugs in Red Semi-fine Ware are likely used on the hearth, as is demonstrated by the traces of black discolouring below the spout of some specimens from the platform deposit of Room IL (Caloi 2013a: 47) (**Fig. 19.10f-g**). Some of them find comparisons with the pitchers retrieved from Mochlos (Doudalis 2022: MOX.19, pl. 3c-d), opening the possibilities that vases with vertical handles could have been used to cook or heat substances near a fire. A new project has been started in 2024 for the experimental reproduction of these side-spouted jugs with the collaboration of Jerolyn Morrison and Irene Sandei. This project, combined with a new petrographic study by Eleni Nodarou devoted to the products in red semi-fine fabric/s from Phaistos, will help in understanding the specific use of these vessels.

## Pottery from MM IIB deposits: a review of fine wares and shapes

The MM IIB deposits are the best represented at Phaistos as they are contained in most of destruction levels of the two palatial buildings and peripheral quarters of the site (**Fig. 19.1**). Since it is not clear for all the destruction levels from the Phaistian buildings whether they belong to the first or to the second destruction of the MM IIB phase, **Fig. 19.1a** does not include the indication of MM IIB deposits.

In the next pages, I will deal with the pottery contained in those deposits – listed in **Tab. 19.1** – coming from the Phaistian structures that certainly collapsed in the first partial destruction of the site, before the final one at the end of the period. Because of space limitations, it is not possible to give a detailed description of the MM IIB pottery of Phaistos, so I will present only its most idiosyncratic wares, shapes, and decorative systems, focusing on ceramic material from two deposits of the palatial South-West Building that have been already studied and published by Carinci. These two deposits come from the northernmost block (Rooms XXVII-XXVIII, Rooms IL, LI-LV) of the South-West Building, which collapsed in MM IIB and was then abandoned before the final re-occupation of the edifice (Carinci 2001: 523-524; 2007; Caloi 2018: 24, table 2). The first is the floor deposit found at the ground floor of Room XXVII (Carinci 2011: 83-90) and the second is the floor deposit retrieved from the *sottoscala* of Rooms LIII-LV (Carinci 2001; see also Levi & Carinci 1988: 356).

Concerning fine wares, the most attested are the Monochrome, Polychrome, Impressed, Light-on-Dark, Dark-on-Light, and Plain wares. For the semi-fine productions, the same wares are attested, with the addition of the Plain, the Red Semi-fine and the Cooking wares, which will not be discussed here.

Most fine wares attested in MM IIA continued on into MM IIB, except for the Polychrome on buff-reserved surface Ware. Less common are the Barbotine and the Creamy-coated wares, which are now used only to produce very special vessels, mainly coming from the palatial South-West building (Baldacci & Sanavia 2018). As emphasized by Baldacci and Sanavia (2018), in MM IIB the Creamy-coated Ware is often associated with barbotine work.

In this phase a new ceramic class becomes particularly common, the Egg-shell Ware. It fits well into the fine Polychrome Ware, but is distinguished by the extreme thinness of its products, varying in thickness between 0.1 and 0.2 cm.

Concerning MM IIB shapes, there is the appearance of new drinking cups, the straight-sided and the shallow cup, and new containers, like the small pitharakia and the three- or four-handled jars – called *pitharakia miniaturistici* by the Italian excavators (Levi & Carinci 1988: 166-170), which will not be discussed here. As already pointed by Carinci, the straight-sided cup appears at Phaistos in MM IIB and this is the main difference with Knossos, where it dates back to MM IIA (MacGillivray 2007). Despite the fact that they are all named straight-sided cups, there are many variants: one with a cylindrical profile, and two with a conical profile, either on a large base or on a narrow base (Levi & Carinci 1988: 202-210). This variety is visible in all the wares in which they are represented. Likewise, the newly introduced shallow cup, produced both in Dark-on-Light and Plain wares, is attested in two variants, with a plain rim or a ledge-rim (Levi & Carinci 1988: 244-245; Baldacci 2017: 102). The latter will become very popular in the next MM IIB Final and MM IIIA deposits of Phaistos, but also in those of Knossos and other Central Crete sites (see Antonello 2024: this volume, § 20). The rounded cup with everted rim, although already present in the earlier stages (see MM IIA examples in Caloi 2009), becomes very common in MM IIB deposits, where it has a more standardised, hemispherical profile. Likewise, the bridge-spouted jar is now more standardised than before, and has preferably an ovoidal profile with large, rounded, and grooved handles.

The manufacture of the MM IIB fine productions at Phaistos appears to be both wheel-thrown and wheel-fashioned. An ongoing programme of micro-CT analysis on Phaistian Protopalatial productions (Caloi & Bernardini in preparation) has shown that many MM IIB small vases, especially cups, seem to be wheel-thrown, while pouring vases appear to continue the combination of the layer-building technique with the potter's wheel.

The Monochrome Ware is mostly represented by drinking vessels, especially carinated and straight-sided cups, and pouring vessels, *i.e.* bridge-spouted jars and teapots. Some of these products are known in the floor deposit of Room XXVII and here illustrated in **Fig. 19.11a-d**.

Polychrome Ware is the best represented fine ware, mainly used to produce drinking and pouring vases – the same shapes are reported also in Monochrome Ware, plus jugs of different types, as well as a wide range of special vessels (*i.e.* pedestalled bowls, rhyta, stands, *etc.*), now also characterized by plastic decoration.

Two popular patterns on MM IIB cups are the repetition of elements all around the vase, such as loops with red discs or chained double lines, and the subdivision of the surface into horizontal zones, decorated with running spirals, alternating with bands, lines or series of discs. The ceramic deposit of Room XXVII has revealed at least two straight-sided cups decorated with these two schemes, as illustrated in **Fig. 19.11e-f**. The MM IIB straight-sided cups may also show a third, less frequent, pattern, that is the two-faced one; it is characterised by a large motif, usually a daisy, repeated two times on the vase (see Levi & Carinci 1988: 124).

The MM IIB carinated cups may have two distinct patterns on the lower and upper parts, or a single decorative motif that no longer respects the tectonics of the vase, as it occupies both the lower and upper parts of the cup. Cups similarly decorated are found in various MM IIB deposits both of Phaistos (see Levi 1976: pl. 131; Caloi 2013a: 45, with lit.) and of those Mesara sites sharing its ceramic productions, as best represented at Hagia Triada (Baldacci 2024: this volume, § 21, fig. 21.5a).

The bridge-spouted jar is the most frequent type among the pouring vases. Two decorative patterns are the most commonly encountered in the Phaistian repertoire: the first is a two-faced scheme, already observed on cups, where a complex motif is repeated on the two sides of the vase. This is most frequently composed of a single element, such as a large daisy or a stylized palm, or of spirals and vegetal elements connected on the two sides of the vase. There are also decorative motifs depicting animals, especially the octopus, or more abstract motifs, like the pelta motif, variously combined with spirals or vegetal elements (Levi & Carinci 1988: 124). The deposit from the *sottoscala*



FIG. 19.11 MM IIB FLOOR DEPOSIT OF ROOM XXVII. MONOCHROME WARE: A-B. CARINATED CUPS (F 695, F 626); C-D. STRAIGHT-SIDED CUPS (F 692, F 694); POLYCHROME WARE: E-F. STRAIGHT-SIDED CUPS (F 525, F 625) G-H. ROUNDED CUPS WITH EVERTED RIM (F 521, F 527).



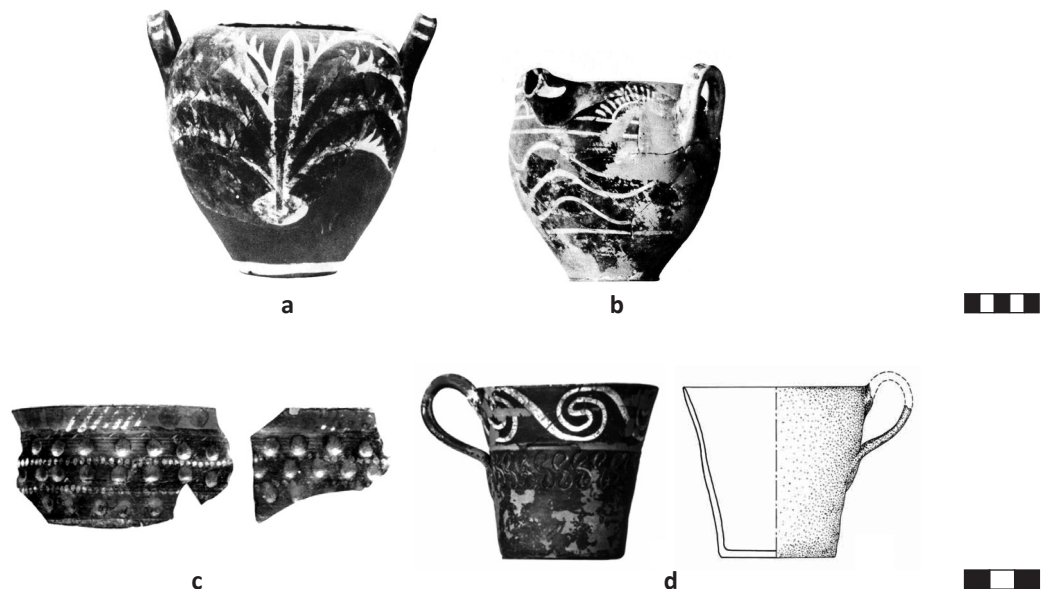
of Rooms LIII-LV has revealed several examples similarly decorated (Levi & Carinci 1988: 124, 127, 356; Levi 1976: pls 104, 108, 110), of which one with a stylised palm is illustrated in **Fig. 19.12a**. The second type includes the repetition of a motif all around the vases, like wavy lines or vegetal elements (Levi & Carinci 1988: 125).

In MM IIB, a new decorative motif appears and becomes greatly popular, namely the half-rosette, which is well attested on bridge-spouted jars and on straight-sided cups (Levi & Carinci 1988). The deposit from *sottoscala* of Rooms LIII-LV has revealed at least one bridge-spouted jar (**Fig. 19.12b**) with the half-rosette motif set on the vase's shoulder in a quadripartite scheme (a scheme deriving from the previous Protopalatial phases), and with white wavy lines on the lower part. This decoration continues, though in a more schematic way, in the successive MM IIB Final phase (Antonello 2024: this volume, § 20). It is known also in the Knossian Trial KV deposit, where it is called Sunrise Style by MacGillivray (1998: 136-137).

Very common in MM IIB is the pattern called Wavy-line Style by MacGillivray (1998: 136-138), mainly found on rounded cups with everted rims and characterized by white wavy lines or scale patterns, with polychrome motifs filling the interstices. This scheme is often adopted also for the decoration of Egg-shell Ware products. This high-quality ceramic class becomes popular at Phaistos in MM IIB especially for the production of rounded cups with an everted rim. Two very elaborate specimens, already described in detail by Carinci (Levi & Carinci 1988: 189), come from the floor deposit of Room XXVII: they are decorated both outside and inside, and show a peculiar motif on the interior base (**Fig. 19.11g-h**). These cups could have been produced through moulds, as already hypothesised by MacGillivray (1998: 56). Such products, mainly attested in the Palace of Phaistos, are rare outside it, but are found at Knossos, at Palaikastro and Kato Symi, and also in the Cyclades and Eastern Mediterranean (see MacGillivray 1998: 56, with lit.).

It is in MM IIB that Polychrome vases produced at Phaistos, with their more standardised shapes and decorative systems, seem to be increasingly appreciated and exported both across the island and outside it, especially into the Near East and Egypt (see Fitton *et al.* 1999).

The Impressed Ware is popular in the MM IIB phase, where it is mainly to be seen on monochrome or polychrome vases (*e.g.* rounded cups with everted rim, carinated and straight-sided cups, and bridge-spouted jars). Of the several fragments retrieved from the *sottoscala* both of Room LV and of Rooms LIII-LV (see Sanavia 2014), worthy of mention are two cups illustrated in **Fig. 19.12c-d**. The first, coming from Room LV, is a straight-sided cup with two decorated zones: the upper one shows white running spirals, while the lower one a sequence of



**FIG. 19.12** MM IIB DEPOSIT FROM *SOTTOSCALA* OF ROOMS LIII-LV. POLYCHROME WARE: A-B. BRIDGE-SPOUTED JARS (F 1366, F 1358); IMPRESSED WARE: C. ROUNDED CUP WITH EVERTED RIM (F 1882). MM IIB DEPOSIT FROM *SOTTOSCALA* OF ROOM LV. IMPRESSED WARE: D. STRAIGHT-SIDED CUP (F 298).

impressed elements in the shape of S (**Fig. 19.12d**). The second, from Rooms LIII-LV, is a fragmentary, rounded cup with everted rim which combines different series of impressed circles to painted series of white dots (**Fig. 19.12c**). These products, which in MM IIA are mainly located on the Mesara plain, from MM IIB commence to be exported outside it (Sanavia 2014), as shown also by the fragments found in the MM IIB deposits published in this volume from the Iuktas sanctuary (Knappett & Karetsou 2024, § 3) and Gavdos (Kopaka & Theou 2024, § 28). Apparently also fragments in Impressed Ware are to be found in the Cyclades and in Egypt could be Phaistian imports.

Among the fine light-on-dark productions, there is the White-Dotted Style, which is adopted mainly for straight-sided cups. This decoration appears in MM IIB but becomes very popular in the next MM IIB Final and MM III phases, not only at Phaistos (Antonello 2024: this volume, § 20), but also at Knossos (MacGillivray 1998; Mathioudaki 2018).

If in several sites of North-Central and Eastern Crete from MM II there is an increase of light-on-dark products to the detriment of the polychrome ones, at Phaistos this phenomenon does not occur. On the contrary, the polychrome productions are burgeoning strongly still in MM IIB, expressed in elaborate shapes and complex decorations, often combined with impressed motifs. The growth of the Light-on-Dark Ware is instead more evident in the following MM IIB Final sub-phase, likely in connection with a more simplification of decorative patterns (Antonello 2024: this volume, § 20).

Without dwelling on the Phaistian MM IIB Dark-on-Light wares, I wish only to remark that despite the preference for more elongated shapes (especially for simple jugs and side-spouted jugs), most of the decorative patterns of the semi-fine products in Dark-on-Light, whether pouring vases or containers, show the same schemes that date back to MM IB or MM IIA. This is best-exemplified by the dark-on-light ‘leaf jugs’ and the askoid jugs with semicircular bands, especially those from the floor deposit of Room XXVII (**Fig. 19.13a-c**). The latter, together with the oval-mouthed amphorae with the triple-axe motif, are now much appreciated across the island, as shown by the Phaistian imports found in the Amari Valley (Apodoulou: Venieri 2016; 2024: this volume, § 24, and Monastiraki: Kanta 1999; 2024: this volume, § 23), at Malia (Poursat & Knappett 2005) and Gavdos (Kopaka & Theou 2024: this volume, § 28).

The floor deposit of Room XXVII shows the newly introduced shallow cups – both plain and ledge-rimmed. In **Fig. 19.13d-f** they are visible both in Plain and in Dark-on-Light wares, the latter decorated with black dripping/trickle.

Concerning the handleless conical cups, they are very similar to the MM IIA vessels in their shape, with a regular conical profile, but in MM IIB there is an increase in wheel-thrown cups (**Fig. 19.13g-h**).

In MM IIB, Phaistos continues its long-term production of high-quality vessels in fine Polychrome and Impressed wares, which however show a dichotomy. It appears that there are some products, which in terms both of shapes and of decorative systems, are quite standardized – thus carinated cups, rounded cups with everted rim, and straight-sided cups in Polychrome wares. These are apparently the vases produced to be exported both inside the island (Knossos *in primis*) and in the Aegean and Eastern Mediterranean, as exemplified by the numerous vessels interpreted as of Phaistian origins. It has been already suggested elsewhere (Carinci 2000; Caloi 2013b) that Phaistos likely exported its ceramic products to Knossos and then from here they circulated in the Mediterranean basin. On the other hand, there is also an increase in a very experimental and high-quality output of special vessels (rhyta, stands, pedestalled bowls, kraters, *etc.*), which are produced in Creamy-coated with barbotine work, Impressed and Polychrome wares, also with plastic decoration, which seem rather to be produced only for a local, exclusive and palatial consumption.

### **The Phaistos ceramic production from MM IB to MM IIB: a *crescendo***

The Protopalatial ceramic production of Phaistos appears to be a *crescendo*, running from MM IB to MM IIB. The high-quality output of the Phaistian potters is expressed in different ways for each phase of the Protopalatial period. In MM IB, the Barbotine Ware vessels appear to be among the most demanding and time-consuming products, and it is not by chance that they are the most appreciated across the island, as shown in the papers of this volume. We have observed that vases or fragments of MM IB Barbotine Ware from Phaistos are present in the Mesara tholos tombs, in the sanctuaries of the Kamares Cave and of Iuktas, as well as in the island of Gavdos.

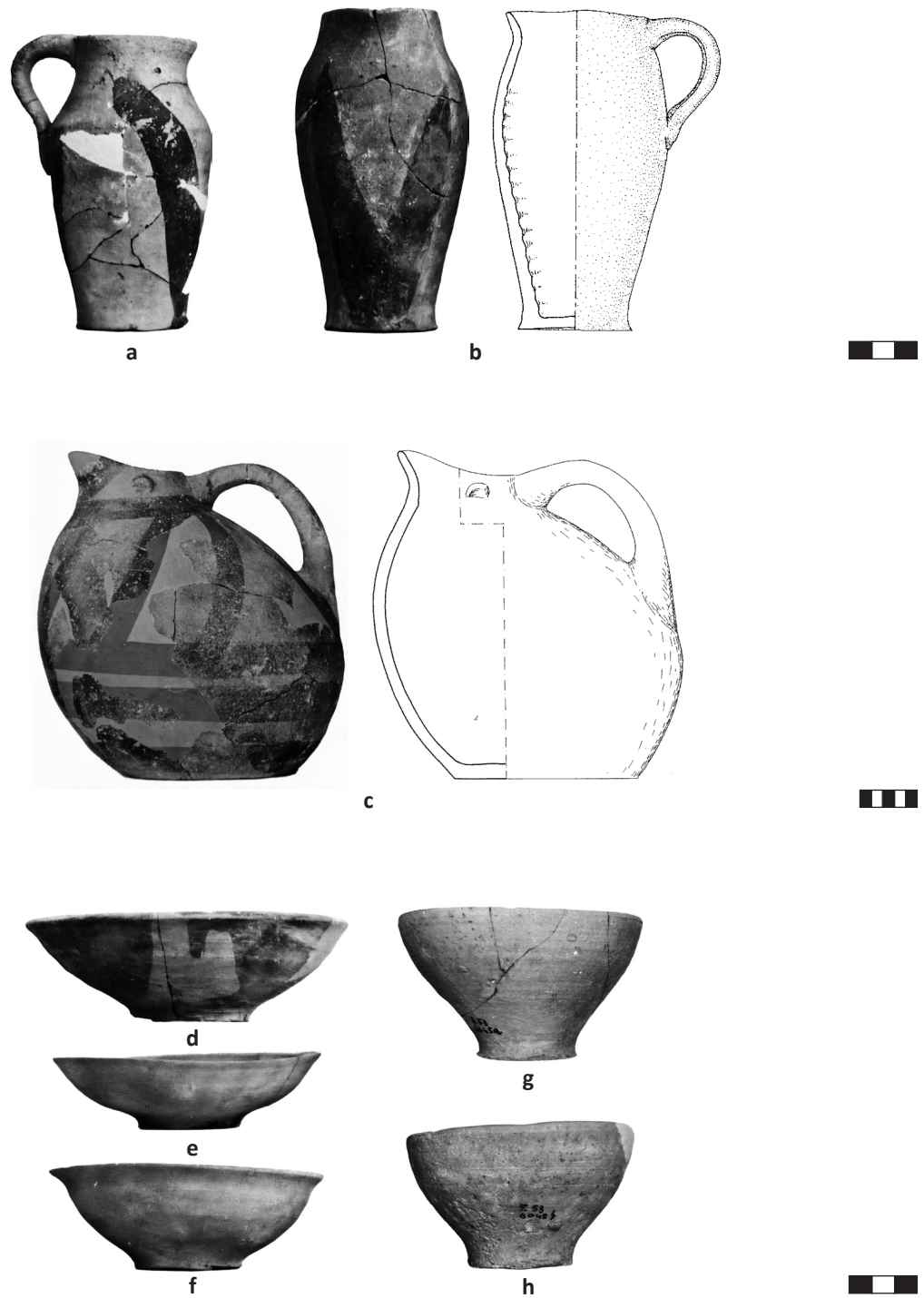


FIG. 19.13 MM IIB FLOOR DEPOSIT OF ROOM XXVII. DARK-ON-LIGHT WARE: A-B. JUGS WITH LEAF DECORATION (F 652, F 657); C. ASKOID JUG (F 961); D. SHALLOW CUPS WITH EVERTED RIM (F 649); PLAIN WARE: E. SHALLOW CUP WITH PLAIN RIM (F 682); F. SHALLOW CUP WITH EVERTED RIM (F 638); HANDLELESS CONICAL CUPS: G-H. (F 6045A-B).

Then, in MM IIA, comes the introduction of new wares (and possibly ceramic sets), produced by a new forming technique – wheel-throwing. This and the concomitant increase of mass-produced cups (*i.e.* handleless conical cups) arguably reflect a change in the political dynamics at Phaistos. I have proposed elsewhere (Caloi 2020) that the new, innovative forming technique was adopted by a new leadership at Phaistos, one that was also the agent of the remodelling of the South-West Building that occurred now. This change at Phaistos is mirrored also in the Mesara plain and in the nearby Amari Valley, where there is visible a rise in site complexity both in settlements (see Hagia Triada, Monastiraki) and necropoleis (*e.g.* Kamilari: Caloi 2019b). This phenomenon may be detected across the island as well, with a growth in exports and emulations of Phaistian products. Some of the last are now also used for consumption purposes, in imitation of palatial etiquette, as is best exemplified by the widespread adoption of the Phaistian-type conical cup at Knossos and in other Cretan sites (*e.g.* Gouves). The MM IIB phase represents the acme of the Phaistian ceramic production, with an increase of high-value products, with Polychrome and Impressed Wares being preferred. This choice runs counter to preferences in the rest of the island, where the Polychrome Ware disappears in favour of the more widespread Light-on-Dark Ware. The production of more standardised types – carinated cups, the rounded cups with everted rim, bridge-spouted jars – is probably best understood as exemplifying a new language shared by emerging elites across the island. This is also likely to be true in the Eastern Mediterranean basin as well, as testified by the types of products found in the Cyclades, in Egypt and in the Near East. As said, this specific and standardised production contrasts with the experimental exuberance of the Phaistian potters, as expressed in the distinctive output of special and also unique vessels found exclusively in the South-West Palatial Building.

Despite the difficulties of determining Phaistian exports apart from Phaistian-inspired products, it is evident that those responsible for the ceramic output at Phaistos had changed the nature of their clientele between MM IB and MM IIB. In MM IB, the Phaistian ceramic production is mainly shared by the Mesara plain sites, then it starts to be known and becomes widespread outside this area. This success is likely due to an increasing number of specialised, and highly-skilled potters working on the site and possibly also outside it, as suggested by Carinci in this volume (2024, § 29); they shared a long-term ceramic tradition, which goes back to Prepalatial times.

A new programme of petrographic analysis, a desideratum for the whole of Crete in the Protopalatial period, would help in defining the trajectories of the Phaistian products across the island and in the rest of the Mediterranean, so shedding new light on the complex relationships in the Minoan world and beyond it too.

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