Handmade Burnished Pottery in the Palace of Ayios Vasileios, Laconia (Southern Greece)

Eleftheria Kardamaki – Adamantia Vasilogamvrou

Abstract: The handmade burnished pottery appears in the late 13th and early 12th centuries BCE at many palatial centres of the Greek mainland and is particularly frequent in the Argolid. In the southeastern Peloponnese, Ayios Vasileios is, next to the Menelaion, the second site where this peculiar pottery class was found. The ongoing excavation in the newly found palatial centre may add valuable information for the interpretation of handmade pottery of the early 12th century BCE. The handmade pottery from Ayios Vasileios reflects shapes and decoration of Italian impasto pottery traditions that were common in many other sites of the Greek mainland and on Crete. The new finds seem to support the hypothesis of a foreign – in this case most probably Italian – population segment present in major centres, especially during the period that followed the severe destruction of the palaces in the Argolid. In the light of the typological connections between the Laconian and the Argolidan handmade burnished ware, especially from Tiryns, we suggest a movement of small groups of people from the Argolid to the south.

Keywords: Ayios Vasileios, Mycenaean palaces, LH III C Early, handmade burnished pottery, migrations

Introduction

Among the objects considered to mark the deep changes taking place after the destruction of the palaces on the Greek mainland around 1200 BCE belongs the pottery class of handmade burnished ware, previously known as ‘barbarian’ or Dorian pottery. Although limited in numbers, its ‘archaic’ appearance and manufacture technique contrasted in such a way with the contemporary local pottery that it was immediately connected with the arrival of new populations on the Greek mainland and beyond. The carriers of the handmade burnished ware (hereafter HBW) were consequently also related to the destructive events that led to the collapse of the Mycenaean palaces. Almost 50 years after its first identification, HBW, its roots, inspiration and interpretation still represents a highly debated topic, whereby a clear answer concerning its sudden appearance has not yet been given. The excavation of more material on the Greek mainland and in the Levant during recent years has added new important data and, at the same time, new aspects have been considered in an attempt to understand the conditions that led to the appearance of this pottery.
The topic of this paper is to present the HBW from the newly identified palace of Ayios Vasileios in central Laconia. Although still limited in number, the new material does offer valuable data that will allow us to get a more detailed picture for the chronological and geographical distribution of this ‘alien’ pottery class within LH IIIB2 and LH IIIC Early Mycenaean contexts.

The Contexts of the HBW

The material presented here derives from deposits dating to the early 12th century BCE, a pottery phase termed as Transitional LH IIIB2 – LH IIIC Early, LH IIIC Phase 1 or LH IIIC Early 1 in the Argolid (Fig. 1). However, the exact appearance and character of the site during the final part of the 13th and the beginning of the 12th century BCE cannot be fully understood at the moment. This is mainly due to the fact that primary contexts dating to the latter period are rarely attested among the areas excavated so far, whereas the latest in situ deposits come from an extensive destruction horizon caused by fire dating to the end of LH IIIB1. According to the first evidence from the ongoing study of the material, the earliest building remains can be dated to LH I/IIA. Pottery dating to MH III/LH I is mainly known from the area of the cemetery and the grave goods of the cist tombs. The succeeding phases (LH II – LH IIIB1) seem to represent the major and most flourishing periods of the palace according to the material available so far. The building remains of the latter periods suggest the existence of very large and imposing structures like the large court and the stoas with the alternating columns and pillars. As is the case with other major Laconian sites like the Menelaion, the characteristic pattern painted pottery types of the mature LH IIIA2, and LH IIIB phases are rare, whereas pottery dating to LH IIIC Early is well

---

7 Kilian 2007, 74–75, in his post mortem study discusses economic and social aspects of the phenomenon. The existence of lower status individuals is followed by Stockhammer 2008, 290–293 who observes the presence of HBW according to the model of Bankoff et al. 1996 for the so called ‘Colona ware’ in Virginia and South Carolina. See Jung 2006, 23–24, for a critical assessment of this theory. Small 1990, 3–25, like Walberg 1976, 186–187, previously, discusses the indigenous appearance of the HBW.


9 The term ‘alien’ has frequently been applied to HBW. See Popham et al. 2006.


11 French 2011, 2, tab. 1; 35–49, 67; Podzuweit 2007, suppl. 84. See also Rutter 2003, 193–216; Vitale 2006, 177–204; Kardamaki 2013, 392–416, for the discussion of the pottery typology during the late Palatial and early Post-palatial periods (LH IIIB2 Late, LH IIIC Phase 1 or LH IIIC Early 1).

12 See Kardamaki 2017, 110–111 for a preliminary discussion of the destruction date of the palace.

13 Vasilogamvrou 2013, 72.

14 Vasilogamvrou 2015.
HBW in Ayios Vasileios

According to the material excavated so far, HBW seems to represent a very rare pottery class at Ayios Vasileios. In the layers containing LH IIIC Early pottery described above, only six fragments have been identified (Figs. 1–2). The rarity of the HBW at Ayios Vasileios, however, does not significantly contradict the pattern of its distribution identified so far elsewhere. In Laconia, prior to the discovery of Ayios Vasileios, only the Menelaion had yielded evidence of that ware. From the latter site, 52 vessel fragments have been published, but the material is neither statistically quantified nor does it originate from floor deposits. That the HBW represented a rare group is also seen at the Citadel of Tiryns, the most prominent site for the study of this pottery class. The statistical analysis of the material there shows that the percentage of HBW during the period of its peak, namely in LH IIIC Early, is less than 1% of the total. In some regions, like in Messenia and Attica HBW is almost totally absent and in others like Achaea it is rare. Regarding Achaea, however, the rarity of HBW may lie in the fact that published settlement material from this region is lacking. At Mycenae, Midea, Thebes and Dimini vessels of HBW have been published, but statistical studies that would show the frequency of the pottery class and its relation to the local pottery are rare. Besides, HBW does not occur evenly even inside the same settlement. At Tiryns...

13 In the Menelaion the LH IIIA2 phase is not well represented in general (Catling 2009, 359–399, 460–461). See Mountjoy 2008, 377, for LH IIIB at Ayios Stephanos.
16 Only in one case can HBW be assigned to built structures, namely in the reoccupation level in the area of Building A in Aetos, South Slope (Catling 2009, 240). HBW was also found among the stones of the Aetos Stone Mound (Catling 2009, 247). Catling 2009, 170, notes the higher number of HBW fragments in the Propylis Erosion Gully than in the Aetos Stone Mound, but there is no account of sherds from various fabrics discovered in the deposit. HBW pieces represent 5% of the catalogued pieces from Propylis Erosion Gully. At Aetos Stone Mound HBW is probably less than 2.5% in a weight-based account of the fabrics. 2.5% is the percentage of the pottery belonging to categories other than cooking, painted, plain wares (Catling 2009, 249).
19 In Teichos Dymaion two destruction horizons are assigned to LH IIIC Early. In the first building phase it represents 2.05% of the total and in the third phase (LH IIIC Developed) 9.85% (Stockhammer 2008, 286–287, fig. 71).
20 Rutter 1975, 29 ill. 16 (Athens, Agora). One jug is also known from tomb 4 in the cemetery of Perati (Iakovides 1969, pl. 45c.35). According to Jung 2006, 42 handmade vessels with round bases like the one from the Agora could have imitated the local cooking pots. From Messenia one carinated cup is reported from a possible LH IIIB2 context at Nichoria (Shermerdine 1992, 512, 516; Pilides 1994, 23; Jung 2006, 34 n. 191).
21 At Teichos Dymaion there are some rim fragments with plain ribs. Although their stratigraphical position is not clear they very probably date to LH IIIA Early. In Teichos Dymaion two destruction horizons are assigned to LH IIIC Early and LH IIIC Middle to Late (Jung 2006, 29–30, 204, pl. 25–26).
22 In LH IIIC Early and Middle deposits 1a–c from Thebes, Pelopidou str. excavation, HBW amounts to less than 1% of the total diagnostic features (Andrikou 2006, 12 tab. 2). For Dimini, Midea and Mycenae see: Adrimi-Sismani 2003, 91–93, figs. 10–13; Adrimi-Sismani 2014, 562–570 (Dimini). Demakopoulou – Divari-Valakou 2009, 19, fig. 26; 20 fig. 31 (Midea). French 2011, 379 (no. 66-480, LH IIIA Early 1, Mycenae), 588 (no. 64-455), 590 (no. 64-456), 671 (no. 68-423). In the LH IIIC levels of the Citadel House Area at Mycenae (wash deposits) the coarse handmade pottery does not exceed 1% of the total (French 2011, 827, graph 6). See Romanos 2011, 193–194, for discussion on the frequency of HMBW at Mycenae.
many rooms and areas remained free from this pottery class\(^{23}\) and in other cases there have been concentrations of HBW.\(^{24}\) At the Menelaion no HBW was ever found close to the area of the Mansions. This fact is sometimes interpreted as a sign of the lower social status that this pottery class is believed to represent.\(^{25}\) Another factor that could relate to the rarity of HBW at Ayios Vasiileios could be a chronological one. It is very possible that HBW became more frequent during the later stages of LH IIIC Early and not directly after the destruction in the Argolid during the ‘Transitional LH IIIB2–LH IIIC Early’ or LH IIIC Early 1 phase.\(^{26}\) It is thus more likely to have higher amounts of HBW at those sites that have a longer LH IIIC stratigraphy, although this is also not always the case.\(^{27}\) Unfortunately, in most settlements characterised by a long stratigraphy the remains of the short-lived LH IIIC Early 1 phase are very scant for providing good and safe data for the exact distribution and the percentages of the HBW during the earliest Post-palatial period.\(^{28}\)

\(^{23}\) Kilian 2007, 50–51, 80. Very few pieces of HBW have been found in contexts that seem to have a more elite character during LH IIIB2 and LH IIIC Early (Rahmstorf 2011, 316–318).


\(^{25}\) Catling 2009, 382. No piece of HBW is recorded from the slopes of the Mansion hills and the North Hill. The pottery from these contexts may be slightly earlier than the material from the Prophitis Elias Erosion Gully and the Aetos Stone Mound (Catling 2009, figs. 186, 215).

\(^{26}\) Kilian 2007, 46, fig. 1. The peak of the HBW is during Building Horizon 19, in which pottery of the mature LH IIIC Early phase is present, like the monochrome carinated cups FS 240.

\(^{27}\) At Lefkandi the very few handmade burnished vessels that are categorised as ‘alien’ are mainly restricted to Phase 1 (Popham et al. 2006, 215, 218, 217, fig. 2.42; pl. 49). The Lefkandi phase 1 postdates LH IIIC Early 1 and equals Rutter’s Phases 2 and 3, possibly also Phase 4 early (see Mountjoy 1999, 39, tab. II; Stockhammer 2008, figs. 3–4).

\(^{28}\) At Tiryns the stratigraphical division of LH IIIC Early 1 and 2 is not well presented. The levelling on top of the fresco dump in the western staircase of the palace took place in LH IIIC Early 1 (Kardamaki 2013, 413, 416). The layer underneath the floor of room 8/00 in the NE Lower Town is possibly of LH IIIC Early 1 date. However, this material has not been evaluated separately from that of the following phase (LH IIIC Early 2) (Stockhammer 2008, 157–158). In the Citadel House Area at Mycenae one cooking pot of handmade burnished ware was detected among other vessels of LH IIIC Early 1 date (French 2011, 379 [no. 66-480]).

Fig. 2 Handmade burnished ware from Ayios Vasiileios. Scale 1:3 (drawings: 1–4 A. Poelstra Traga; 5 V. Hachtmann)
The pieces from Ayios Vasileios are all very fragmented (Fig. 2.1–4). Due to their diameter and decoration, consisting of plain ribs or ribs with diagonal impressions, three pieces most probably come from barrel-shaped jars or wide-mouthed jars, a form that is very well known from other sites. All one sherd has a vertical profile (Fig. 2.1) but the other two fragments could belong to wide-mouthed jars with an incurring upper body (Fig. 2.2–3). Very interesting is another fragment from the neck and shoulder of a jug that was found in the upper fill of room 10 in Building A (Fig. 2.5). This represents a relatively rare form and it is mainly known from later contexts.

Most fragments have horizontal burnishing marks, but diagonal or vertical ones also appear. The interior surface of the sherds is well burnished but in some pieces the burnishing is not preserved. The surface is more frequently red, rarely brown or black and the clay is gritty grey or red. The first evidence from the macroscopic examination of the material seems to confirm the results from the petrographic and chemical analyses at the nearby Menelaion but also other sites according to which, in most sites where it appears, the HBW is locally produced and is characterised by a lack of standardisation concerning its manufacture and clay structure. Among five probably contemporary sherds, there are two different fabrics of the HBW distinguished at Ayios Vasileios.

One fabric is represented by the jug (Fig. 2.5). It is hard fired and its clay is fine with few inclusions, while the dark surface of the fragment is very well burnished. The clay is micaceous and the few non-plastic angular inclusions are of light and dark colour. Some of the inclusions may be grog. The other fabric is similar, but the inclusions that probably belong to grog are not visible. In none of the identified HBW pieces are shiny platy inclusions, probably schist, macroscopically visible on the surface and clay, as is the case with the local coarse pottery.

According to this, and especially due to the fact that the clay of HBW is micaceous like that from the local pottery, it cannot be excluded that it was produced at or close to Ayios Vasileios. As at Ayios Vasileios, the clay of the HBW from the Menelaion is also described as micaceous, but it also includes grog and schist. However, the latter is at least macroscopically not recognisable in the HBW pottery from Ayios Vasileios. Thus, it will be interesting to confirm via analytical work whether the HBW from two sites lying so close as do Ayios Vasileios and the Menelaion, could be assigned to the same manufacturing place.
The Origins of HBW Pottery in Laconia

By comparing the typology of the HBW vessels from Ayios Vasileios and the Menelaion, one has to reach the conclusion that there are quite a few differences between the two sites. At the Menelaion many vessels have tall everted rims whereas Ayios Vasileios seems to follow or reflect the pottery traditions of sites like Tylins with a preference for barrel-shaped shapes with straight or incurving bodies and lipless rims (Fig. 2.1–3). At Tylins everted rims are rarer and when they occur they are more edged and not as tall as is the case at the Menelaion. In the latter site the most favoured decoration consists of plastic cordons with finger impressions and the plain ribs are very rare. Again, Ayios Vasileios seems to follow sites of the NE Peloponnese where plain ribs are equally frequent or even more frequent than plastic cordons with finger impression. At Ayios Vasileios no piece with finger-impressed decoration has been identified so far, but this may be due to the small number of specimens known from the site. Three pieces carry plain horizontal ribs, and one is interrupted by a fingernail impression (Fig. 2.3).

Although it can be argued that most pieces from both Laconian sites are inspired by central and southern Italian pottery traditions of Recent Bronze Age 1 and 2, the most characteristic Italian shape, the carinated cup, is missing here. Very typical for the pottery of southern Italy are barrel-shaped jars, the so-called ollae with decoration consisting of cordons with finger impressions or plain horizontal ribs. Especially the latter decoration on wide-mouthed jars of various types is now considered to be a very distinctive Italian pattern since similar decoration appears otherwise in regions that seem to have virtually no contact to the Aegean. Such vessel types seem to have a restricted distribution on the Greek mainland and show a concentration area in the Argolid. Finger-impressed ribs, such as the ones carried by the vessels in the Menelaion, are also very well represented in southern Italy, but this kind of decoration has a wider distribution and is considered to be ‘universal’. Close parallels to Subapennine Italian types are also found for the pot with the handle attached to the rim from the Menelaion. Concerning other areas of inspiration, there are

---

42 Another Laconian site where HBW has been found is Pellana. There one closed vessel with incisions on the body was excavated in a tomb (Demakopoulou 1982, pl. 59.135; Pilides 1994, fig. 13.6).
43 Catling 2009, figs. 239.PE254-260, 240.PE274, 278.AO49. At Aetos Stone Mound, however, most rims are cut and lipless (Catling 2009, fig. 301.A265, A266, A273).
45 Compare Catling 2009, 235 fig. 239.PE254-260 with Kilian 2007, pl. 7.82; 8.
46 Among the material catalogued, 25 pieces have finger-impressed ribs (Catling 2009, figs. 239.PE254–PE257, PE259–PE260, PE262–PE267; 240.PE274–PE277, PE279, PE284; 278.AO49, AO51; 301.A265, A269–A274) and only three have plain ribs (Catling 2009, figs. 240.PE276, 301.A266, A273).
47 At Tylins, among a total of 179 catalogued pottery individuals (Kilian 2007, pls. 1–14, 15.179) 49 pieces have finger-impressed ribs and 72 have plain ribs.
48 See Jung 2006, 211–216, fig. 24, for the synchronisation of the Italian and Mycenaean/Minoan chronology.
49 HBW carinated cups occur at Dimini (Adrimi-Sismani 2003, fig. 13.BE36013, BE35986; Adrimi-Sismani 2014, 563), Tylins (Kilian 2007, pl. 24.302–311), Korakou (Rutter 1975), Chania (Pålsson Hallager 2003, 253–254, pl. 85.70-P0352/0802/0956, 71-P0182, 84-P1345), Nichoria (Pilides 1994, 23), Lefkandi (Popham et al. 2006, 215, pl. 49.3) and possibly at Teichos Dymeion (Jung 2006, 36 with further references). This form that sometimes has horned handles has excellent parallels in Adriatic and Ionian sites of central-southern Italian pottery traditions (Daimian 2001, 240, fig. 86A; 245, fig. 87B; 248, fig. 88A (Torre Mordillo); Bettelli 2002, 123, fig. 54; 125, fig. 55; Belardelli – Bettelli 2007, 482–483, pl. 115).
50 Buffa 1994, 518, fig. 151 (dolii and ollae of the FBA and the Early Iron Age, Broglio di Trebisacce); Buffa 2001, 262, fig. 89.C.275 (Torre Mordillo).
51 Giardino 1994, 188, pl. 29.6, 8, 18; 191, pl. 31.27; 208, pl. 45.1 (Broglio di Trebisacce, Recent Bronze Age): Jung 2006.
52 A decoration consisting of plain ribs also appears in southeastern Romania, in the Coslogeni group. For a discussion see Jung 2006, 26–28.
53 Jung 2006, pl. 25.
54 Blegen et al. 1958 (Troy); Hochstetter 1984 (Kastanas). See Pilides 1994, fig. 37–38, for vessels with finger-impressed decoration from Cyprus, Troy, the Balkan region, Italy.
55 Kilian 2007, 59–60; Catling 2009, pl. 105.A268; see Jung et al. 2015, 460. See also Chania (Pålsson Hallager 2003).
pieces like the pot stand from the Menelaion, for which the attempt has been made to connect it with northern regions but an Italian inspiration is very possible. Finally, the jug from Ayios Vasileios has no parallels in the Menelaion and it is possible that with this piece we have, for the first time in Laconia, the imitation of a Mycenaean shape in the HBW ware, a phenomenon observed in some other sites. Although more material is required in order to arrive at safe conclusions, one could argue that in Laconia even very close sites like Ayios Vasileios and the Menelaion seem to have used and produced different types of HBW vessels and this conclusion once again demonstrates the complex nature of the HBW phenomenon. The only HBW vessel known from Pellana in the northern parts of Laconia, for which an Anatolian origin or influence is likely, also points in this direction. The small jug with incised zig-zag lines is reminiscent of vases of the so called “Knobbed” ware, a pottery class that appears in Troy during VIIb2. Jugs with similar decoration appear occasionally at Tiryns and on Cyprus.

The Handmade Cooking Pottery

In recent years the need for a more detailed classification of the HBW pottery has been stressed. Various LH IIIC sites have yielded evidence of closed handmade burnished vessels that have been used for cooking and are not readily connected with the group of HBW vessels of rather Italian inspiration discussed above. This kind of vessel appears at sites that produced both HBW of Italian or not closely identifiable inspiration. The category of these jars, recently termed handmade domestic pottery, is a pottery class with a limited shape repertoire. It consists of closed vessels with a relatively high neck and flaring rim. All known examples date in LH IIIC to the Early Iron Age and the region of their distribution during the early stages of the 12th century BCE is mainly central Greece. As there is no clear indication concerning their origin and inspiration, it has been postulated that they represent the result of an indigenous reaction observed at sites that could not produce or possess high quality cooking pots after the destruction of the palaces.

---

56 Hochstetter 1984, 157; Horejs 2005; Rahmstorf 2011, 318. For a different interpretation as a pot stand rather than a pyraunos see Jung 2006, 30–31. According to Jung, the piece from the Menelaion probably belongs to the group of pot stands identified at Dimini and Tiryns and is not related to the pyraunoi of Balkan type (see Horejs 2005, 79–81, 83 and 82, fig. 7, for the discussion and distribution of the pyraunoi in the southern Balkans). Kilian 2007, 27–28, suggests an influence from similar local forms for the HBW pot stands.


58 Blegen et al. 1958. The exact dating of the vase within the LH IIIC period is not possible. The tomb contained pottery dating mainly from the LH IIIA2 to LH IIIC Advanced and one vessel may be Submycenaean. Demakopoulou 1982, 116–117.


60 Pilides 1994, 37–40, figs. 35, 40. Other HBW vessels with incised decoration are also known from Dimini and Volos (bowls), Tell Qasile and Beirut in the Levant and at Kition on Cyprus. See Pilides 1994, fig. 35.7; Jung 2006, 36–37, pl. 17.7; Guzovska – Yasur-Landau 2007, pl. 114. An Italian inspiration is possible for these vessels. See Jung 2006, 36–37, for the discussion of the pieces from Dimini and Volos, for which, however, the closest parallels are later (Final Bronze Age).

61 Pilides 1994, 77; Jung 2006; Lis 2009, 153–159, differentiates between three groups, namely handmade burnished pottery, Anatolian handmade and domestic handmade pottery. The third type consists mainly of cooking jugs, and the second is handmade pottery confined to Troy.

62 The so-called ‘Küchengeschirr’ at Kalapodi belongs to this group. See also the group of handmade domestic pottery as defined by Lis 2009; Jacob-Felsch 1996, 75–80, differentiated between the ‘handgemachte polierte Ware’ and the ‘Küchengeschirr’. According to this, the second should be a different fabric that is lighter in colour and has a rougher surface. The repertoire includes both Mycenaean and non-Mycenaean shapes (Jung 2006, 41).

63 Jung 2006, 223.

64 See n. 59.

65 Jacob-Felsch 1996 (Kalapodi); Lis 2009, 157, fig. 18.3.1–8 (Kalapodi and Mitrou).

66 Lis 2009, 154, fig. 18.2.

67 Lis 2009, 159.
At Ayios Vasileios two categories of handmade cooking vessels have been identified that do not seem to fall into the category of the Italian-inspired HBW discussed above. The first contains jars with short necks and flaring rims (Fig. 3.1). These vessels occasionally have cut lips. Their surface is smoothed but not well burnished like the HBW vessels or even not at all burnished. Their use in the preparation of food is evident from traces of fire visible on the exterior surface of the fragments. According to the macroscopic examination of the material, all of the identified pieces could have been locally made. The clay of the fragments is gritty and contains a small quantity of mica, schist and small dark or light-coloured angular stones. Such cooking pots have so far been identified in secondary layers containing pottery of the LH IIIA1/A2 Early period and it is possible that they present evidence for an uninterrupted tradition of handmade cooking vessels from MH III/LH I onwards. In various LH IIB contexts of the site, handmade cooking pots dominate but during this period the presence of wheelmade tripods is attested.\(^{68}\) The shape of the LH IIIA handmade cooking jars resemble in an astonishing way pots belonging to the handmade domestic pottery mentioned above that occur during LH IIIC at Aigeira, Kalapodi\(^{69}\) and Athens.\(^{70}\) Moreover, the edged rim is reminiscent of MH III/LH I cooking pots.\(^{71}\) However, at the current stage of research and with the available material, it is not possible to say whether such vessels were in use until the beginning of the 12th century BCE at Ayios Vasileios.\(^{72}\) Therefore, it is not possible to connect the handmade cooking pots of Ayios Vasileios with a pottery tradition that antedates the handmade domestic pottery of the 12th century BCE.\(^{73}\)

The second group of handmade cooking pottery is so far represented by a single piece (Fig. 3.2). It was found in a LH IIIC Early context in Building A. The cooking pot has a short everted rim and its surface is well smoothed but not burnished. It represents a relatively large cooking jar with a strap handle that is highly unusual for the cooking jars of that period. Its fabric is very different from that of the LH IIIA handmade cooking pots as it is very well fired and does not contain any macroscopically visible schist. As there are no predecessors for this form in the repertoire of the handmade cooking pottery at Ayios Vasileios and in Laconia in general, this pot may represent a foreign form. A striking resemblance with Cypriot handmade cooking pots exists for the rim and handle\(^{74}\) but as the base of the vessel is not preserved the comparison to Cypriot cooking pots that have a rounded base should be left open. On the other hand, it is equally possible that this vessel was manufactured under a combined influence from both Mycenaean and HBW or handmade cooking pottery traditions, since such vertical strap handles appear in some closed HBW vessels that imitate local cooking pots.\(^{75}\) A more remote parallel for the rim of the pot from Ayios Vasileios is a jar from Mycenae with a rounded base.\(^{76}\)

\(^{68}\) Kardamaki 2017, 103–104. Evidence for flat-based wheelmade jars also appears sporadically during LH IIIA1/A2. See Horejs 2005, 84, fig. 9, for the distribution of MH/MM and early Mycenaean tripods in the Aegean.

\(^{69}\) One wheelmade pot from Kalapodi has the same thickened zone on the shoulder from the joining of the neck to the upper part of the vessel (Jacob-Felsch 1996, pl. 32,174). The cooking pots of Aigeira also imitate the local pots (Deger Jalkotzy 2003, 466; see Deger Jalkotzy 2003, 460, fig. 3, left for a jug that could have imitated local cooking jugs).

\(^{70}\) Rutter 1975, 29, ill. 16. It has been dated to LH IIIB2 – LH IIIC Early. This vase also has an edged rim, however its fabric is described as relatively fine and sandy. The ring from the joining of the neck to the shoulder, observed on the piece from Ayios Vasileios, is missing on that amphora.

\(^{71}\) Catling 2009; Zerner 2008.

\(^{72}\) According to Jung 2006, 46–47, the handmade cooking pots and the handmade cooking pots with round base could have been produced by nomadic shepherds that were in close cultural and economic interaction with the Mycenaean areas. We thank Reinhard Jung for discussing with us this issue and Jeremy Rutter and Walter Gauß for the discussion on the pieces.

\(^{73}\) At Kalapodi there is no good evidence of LH IIIB contexts in order to understand the chronological distribution of handmade cooking vessels (Jacob-Felsch 1996, 92). Walberg 1976, 186–187, notes the production of burned pots in earlier periods and suggests that it was due to difficult conditions that this pottery was produced. Walberg stresses the fact that one of the main features of this pottery, which is the burning, is mainly to make the vessel water tight. Rutter 1976, replies that the predecessors are too few to establish continuation from earlier period.

\(^{74}\) Jung 2011, fig. 1.1. We thank R. Jung for pointing out to us the Cypriot cooking pots as parallels.

\(^{75}\) Mycenaean cooking pots produced in HBW are known from Mycenae and Tiryns, Thebes, Dimini and Kastro/Palia in Volos (Jung 2006, 39–40). Some examples seem to deviate from the main type, like the vessel from Mycenae that has a rounded base.
ios can be found in handmade Aeginetan cooking jars. The latter is particularly interesting as in Laconia the Aeginetan cooking pottery of the LH IIIC Early period is very rare. On the other hand, the handles of the Aeginetan pots always have a round section and are not strap as is the case with the vessel from Ayios Vasileios.

**Discussion**

Although the small quantity of the new material and its recovery within secondary layers do not allow much interpretation regarding the function of the HBW at Ayios Vasileios, some first conclusions can be made. In general, its typological analysis suggests connections with southern Italian pottery traditions and, at the same time, it confirms the lack of standardisation observed among the HBW used at various sites. The latter possibly indicates a small-scale production that could have been conducted even within small entities. It is noteworthy that HBW in the Mene-laion was probably produced by using locally available sources but in a distinct technological way that sets it apart from the local wares.

From all the theories presented regarding the appearance of the HBW on the Greek mainland and in the Levant, the one that includes the physical presence of foreign groups from Italy is now most broadly accepted. The interpretation of these movements towards the east is, however, still not fully understood. On the one hand, contacts between the Aegean and Italy started much earlier. From LH IIIA onwards Mycenaean pottery was regularly imported into Italy, whereas the production of Mycenaean shapes became more frequent in many Italian sites during LH IIIC. The introduction of new European-type bronze weapons, ornaments and other objects, mainly during the Post-palatial period, is believed to come from Italy. The so-called clay spools, swords of Naue II type, flange-hilted daggers of Pertosa type and bronze fibulae all appear for the first time during the final Palatial and the early Post-palatial period in Greece and seem to have constituted

---

Fig. 3 1. Handmade cooking pot, LH IIIA1/LH IIIC Early; 2. Handmade cooking pot, LH IIIC Early. Scale 1:3 (drawings: 1 A. Poelstra Traga; 2 R. Jung)

---

76 Rutter 2003, 207, fig. 7.4.
77 Lindblom 2001. Two cooking jars from Aetos Stone Mound have the profile of Aeginetan cooking pots (Catling 2009, 427, fig. 309.A413, A416).
79 Catling 2009, 381.
82 Jones 1986, 207–209. But there are also imports during LH IIIC (Vagnetti 1993, 151; Jones et al. 2005, 541, pl. 120, and recently Jung et al. 2015).
83 See Bouzek 1985, 121, fig. 57; 122, 152–159, for the distribution of the Naue II swords and bow fibulae and for early (LH IIIIB) examples from the Aegean. Belardelli – Bettelli 2007, 483–484; Jung 2009, 72–77.
a ‘package’.84 The distribution of many of these objects, and especially the weapons, is wide and very quickly reaches Cyprus and the eastern Mediterranean.85 In this regard the connection of metal workers or foreign warriors, even mercenaries in the service of the palaces who brought new technologies to Greece and Cyprus with migration movements that followed the destruction of the palaces has also been suggested.86 On the other hand, one could argue that the presence of all these new objects does not necessarily presuppose the physical presence of Italian groups. They could have represented the result of contacts, exchange and trade and reflect the transfer of new ideas in both directions.87 This would explain why in various sites of the Aegean only some components of the Italian package appear and not all. In Achaen, where the largest number of Naue II swords has been observed, HBW pottery is rather rare. In the Menelaion no clay spools have ever been identified. At Kontopigado, the LH IIIC Early 1 settlement and workshop located 5km south of the Acropolis, clay spools are found but there is no evidence for the use of HBW.88 On Cyprus much of the HBW cannot be readily related to Italy but the new types of bronze weapons are well represented.89

However, the study of the Italian-type pottery such as HBW and the so-called pseudominyan wares seems to suggest the physical presence of foreign groups.90 The percentage of the HBW is very low within the Mycenaean settlements and there is nothing to suggest that this pottery class and its content was ever really traded. That Ayios Vasileios and the Menelaion also belonged to the sites that may have had direct or indirect contacts with Italy is not only suggested by the HBW found there but is also supported by new chemical analyses conducted on the material from Punta di Zambrone. In the course of the latter analysis, one deep bowl has been isolated as deriving from Laconia.91 Although swords of Naue type II have not been reported from Laconia, other bronze implements such as fibulae are identified both at Ayios Vasileios and Ayios Stephanos.92

If, then, the HBW can be connected with the real presence of newcomers from Italy, the new evidence strengthens the hypothesis of a rather substantial group of foreigners living in Laconia in close proximity to each other. More material is required in order to confirm the hypothesis that these groups living at or close to Ayios Vasileios and the Menelaion respectively produced different shapes since the process of imitating local closed vessels in handmade ware is observed only at the former site (Fig. 2.5).

The starting point of the Italian groups is also not easy to define. According to the data available so far, there are two regions providing good evidence for the presence of Italian people during the Palatial period. These are Chania on Crete93 and Tiryns and Mycenae in the Argolid. Tiryns is not only the site that delivered the largest numbers of HBW but it is also the site where

---

84 Bouzek 1985, 241–242. The first real presence of clay spools at Tiryns takes place in LH IIIC Middle (Rahmstorf 2011, 321–322, 329, fig. 5). The earliest secure evidence of clay spools in the Aegean and Cyprus are recorded in an advanced stage of LH IIIC Early–LH IIIC Developed (Lefkandi Phase 1b). However, the geographical and chronological distribution of the clay spools is not in agreement with their movement east from Italy as the clay spools in the Aegean do not really antedate the spools from Cyprus and the Levant (Rahmstorf 2011, 320–323).


86 Kilian 2007; Jung 2009; Pilides – Boileau 2011, 119–120, see a possible connection between the provenance of HBW in Cyprus and the Troodos region and the introduction of new bronze types by the makers of HBW.


88 The clay spool from Kontopigado probably belongs to a very early type and is also the earliest artefact of such kind in the Greek mainland (Kaza-Papageorgiou et al. 2011, 206, fig. 4.2).


90 The so-called pseudominyan pottery has been found at Tiryns, at Chania and at Dimini (Kilian 1980; Pålsson Hallager 2003; Adrimi-Sismani 2014, 599–561).

91 Jung et al. 2015.

92 Kilian 1985, 149, fig. 2.IIB1; 152, 162. The study of the small finds from Building A is in progress.

93 According to Pålsson Hallager 2011, 371–372, the presence of immigrants from Italy living in the houses of locals at Chania during LM IIIB1 is possible. The number or the HBW vessels increased during LM IIIIB2 at Chania.
the production of Mycenaean forms in HBW starts very early. This is also the site where what Klaus Kilian called a high stage of assimilation of the Italian groups took place. Thus, it is possible that the events that occurred in the Argolid after the destruction of the palaces triggered the movement of a population previously situated in the palaces. The major destructions at Tiryns, Mycenae and Midea in LH IIIB2 that were followed by at least two more destruction events during LH IIIC Early must have created a very unstable environment for the local population. Following Kilian, these events led to the arrival of refugees at the site of Tiryns at the end of that period.

One explanation for the distribution of HBW would be that the Italian population previously living in the Argolid or Chania moved to various areas and settled down in major centres like Tiryns during the mature stages of LH IIIC Early. A migration of groups familiar with the production of HBW pottery from the Argolid to Laconia could have taken place by sea, but as the Menelaion and Ayios Vasileios are located at a considerable distance from the coast and as there is no evidence of HBW at coastal sites of that period like Ayios Stephanos, movement through the mountainous area of northern Laconia is also possible. This, rather than a movement directly on a sea route and from Italy, would explain the rarity of the HBW in Achaea. However, since the amount of HBW constantly increases during LH IIIC Early, it cannot be excluded that the older population was accompanied by new groups of people that travelled by sea from Italy. Evidence from Laconia is scarce in this latter aspect as both Ayios Vasileios and the Menelaion show no real evidence for occupation after the earliest stage of LH IIIC Early (LH IIIC Early 1). The large concentration of Italian-type HBW in the Argolid could even indicate that the movements of these groups targeted large centres, with which they were already familiar during the Palatial period. In this respect, the increase in HBW during LH IIIC Early could also reflect the existence of a friendlier environment for the production of this pottery class after the collapse of the palaces. In the general picture also including the eastern Mediterranean, these movements, either from Italy or departing from the Aegean, are part of the so-called sea peoples waves depicted in the mortuary temple of Ramesses III at Medinet Habu. These probably involved real migrations as well as piracy, all kinds of processes to be expected after the collapse of the palatial state in Greece.

The ongoing excavation at Ayios Vasileios will possibly yield more new data in the future and will help us to understand better the long debated phenomenon of the HBW in the Mycenaean territories during the period of major political and economic changes that followed the destruction of the palaces.

Acknowledgments: The present study was conducted in the framework of an INSTAP-Post Doctoral Fellowship (2015) and of a FWF research project (P28023-G25). The authors are grateful to N. Karadimas, D. Kondyli and S. Voutsaki for their help during the study of the material.

94 Recent analyses by Rahmstorf 2011 suggest a smaller proportion of HBW than previously thought during the Palatial period.
95 See French 2011 for the stratigraphy during LH IIIC in the Citadel House Area of Mycenae. And also Stockhammer 2008 for the NE Lower Town in Tiryns.
96 Kilian 1980, 173.
97 The HBW of the Ionian Islands and northwestern Greece does not belong to the HBW vessels of Italian type (Jung 2006).
98 Catling 2009, 374, 378, 453 dates very few pieces in LH IIIC Middle. For discussion on the Menelaion see Vitale 2006, 200.
Bibliography

Adrimi-Sismani 2003

Adrimi-Sismani 2014
Β. Αδρύμη-Σισμάνη, Ιωλκός – η εϋκτιμενη πόλη του Ομήρου: ένα αστικό κέντρο στον μύχο του Παγασητικού Κόλπου. Το διοικητικό κέντρο, οι οικίες και το νεκροταφείο (Volos 2014).

Andrikou 2006

Aravantinos – Vasilogamvrou 2012

Avila 1980

Badre et al. 2005

Bankoff et al. 1996

Belardelli – Bettelli 1999

Belardelli – Bettelli 2007

Bettelli 2002
M. Bettelli, Italia meridionale e mondo miceneo. Ricerche su dinamiche di acculturazione e aspetti archeologici, con particolare riferimento ai versanti adriatico e ionico della penisola italiana, Grandi contesti e problemi della Protostoria italiana 5 (Florence 2002).

Blegen et al. 1958

Boileau et al. 2010

Bouzek 1985
Buffa 1994

Buffa 2001

Catling 2009

Catling – Catling 1981

Damiani 2001

Deger-Jalkotzy 1977

Deger-Jalkotzy 2003

Demakopoulou 1982
K. Δημακοπούλου, Το μυκηναϊκό ιερό στο Αμυκλαίο και η ΥΕ ΙΙΙ Γ περίοδος στη Λακωνία (Athens 1982).

Demakopoulou – Divari-Valakou 2009

Eder – Jung 2005

French 2011

Giardino 1994

Guzowska – Yasur-Landau 2007

Hochstetter 1984
Horejs 2005

Iacono 2015
F. Iacono, Feasting at Roca. Cross-cultural encounters and society in the southern Adriatic during the Late Bronze Age, European Journal of Archaeology 18, 2, 2015, 259–281.

Iakovides 1969
Σ. Ιακωβίδης, Περιτη. Το Νεκροταφείον, Βιβλιοθήκη της εν Αθήναις Αρχαιολογικής Εταιρείας 67 (Athens 1969).

Jacob-Felsch 1996

Jones 1986

Jones – Tomlinson 2009

Jones et al. 2005

Jung 2006

Jung 2008

Jung 2009

Jung 2011

Jung et al. 2015

Karageorghis – Kouka 2011

Kardamaki 2013
Kardamaki 2017

Kaza-Papageorgiou et al. 2011

Kilian 1980

Kilian 1985

Kilian 2007
K. Kilian, Die handgemachte geglättete Keramik mykenischer Zeitstellung, Tiryns XV (Wiesbaden 2007).

Lindblom 2001
M. Lindblom, Marks and Makers. Appearance, Distribution and Function of Middle and Late Helladic Manufacturers’ Marks on Aeginetan Pottery, Studies in Mediterranean Archaeology 128 (Jonsered 2001).

Lis 2009

Mommsen et al. 2002

Mountjoy 1997

Mountjoy 1999
P. A. Mountjoy, Regional Mycenaean Decorated Pottery (Rahden/Westf. 1999).

Mountjoy 2008

Pålsson Hallager 2003

Pålsson Hallager 2011

Pilides 1994
D. Pilides, Handmade Burnished Wares of the Late Bronze Age in Cyprus, Studies in Mediterranean Archaeology 105 (Jonsered 1994).

Pilides – Boileau 2011
Podzuweit 2007
C. Podzuweit, Studien zur spätmykenischen Keramik, Tiryns XIV (Wiesbaden 2007).

Popham – Milburn 1971

Popham et al. 2006

Rahmstorf 2011

Romanos 2011

Rutter 1975
J. B. Rutter, Ceramic evidence for northern intruders in southern Greece at the beginning of the Late Helladic III C Period, American Journal of Archaeology 79, 1975, 17–32.

Rutter 1976

Rutter 2003

Schachermeyr 1980
F. Schachermeyr, Die ägäische Frühzeit IV. Griechenland im Zeitalter der Wanderungen vom Ende der mykenischen Ära bis auf die Dorier, Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, philosophisch-historische Klasse, Sitzungsbericht 372 (Vienna 1980).

Shelmerdine 1992

Small 1990

Stockhammer 2008

Taylour – Janko 2008

Vagnetti 1993

Vasilogamvrou 2013
Handmade Burnished Pottery in the Palace of Ayios Vasileios, Laconia (Southern Greece)

Vasilogamvrou 2014

Vasilogamvrou 2015

Vasilogamvrou 2018

Vitale 2006

Wace French 1969

Walberg 1976

Whitbread 1992

Whitbread – Jones 2008

Zerner 2008
C. Zerner, The Middle Helladic pottery, with the Middle Helladic wares from Late Helladic deposits and the potters’ marks, in: Taylour – Janko 2008, 177–298.