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S. Deger-Jalkotzy

Stratified Pottery Deposits from the Late Helladic III C Settlement at Aigeira/Achaia

in: S. Deger-Jalkotzy – M. Zavadil (eds.), LH III C Chronology and Synchronisms. Proceedings of the international workshop held at the Austrian Academy of Sciences at Vienna, May 7th and 8th, 2001, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften philosophisch-historische Klasse Denkschriften 310 (Vienna 2003) 53–75

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Kongress Wien
2001

LH III C CHRONOLOGY AND SYNCHRONISMS

EDITED BY

SIGRID DEGER-JALKOTZY AND MICHAELA ZAVADIL

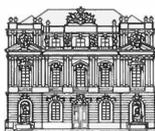
ÖSTERREICHISCHE AKADEMIE DER WISSENSCHAFTEN
PHILOSOPHISCH-HISTORISCHE KLASSE
DENKSCHRIFTEN, 310. BAND

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BAND 20 GEMEINSAM MIT SCIAM 2000



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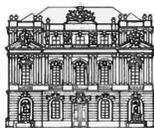
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SIGRID DEGER-JALKOTZY AND MICHAELA ZAVADIL

Mykenische Kommission
der österreichischen Akademie
der Wissenschaften
A-1010 Wien, Dr. Ignaz Seipel-Platz 2

Mv. Nr. 775



VERLAG DER
ÖSTERREICHISCHEN AKADEMIE DER WISSENSCHAFTEN
WIEN 2003

Vorgelegt von w. M. SIGRID DEGER-JALKOTZY in der Sitzung am 4. Oktober 2002

Gedruckt aus Mitteln des Holzhausen-Legats der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften und mit Unterstützung des Bundesministeriums für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Kultur

Umschlagbild:

Grotta-Krater: nach A. Vlachopoulos, fig. 10, *in diesem Band* (Zeichnung: Lena Lambrinou)

¹⁴C Graph: Kombinations-Kalibrierung von 8 Proben aus Aigeira von P. Stadler, nach S. Deger-Jalkotzy, "Work in Progress: Report on the 'End of the Mycenaean Civilization' Project for the years of 1999–2001", 468, fig. 11 in: M. Bietak (ed.), *The Synchronisation of Civilisations in the Eastern Mediterranean in the Second Millennium BC. II. Proceedings of the SCIAM 2000 - EuroConference, Haindorf, 2nd of May–7th of May 2001*. Contributions to the Chronologies of the Eastern Mediterranean IV Denkschriften der Gesamtakademie, Band 29, Wien 2003

Umschlaggestaltung: Hannes Weinberger

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ISBN 3-7001-3146-1

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Wien

Grafik, Satz, Layout: Angela Schwab

Druck: Druckerei Ferdinand Berger & Söhne GesmbH, Horn

Printed and bound in Austria

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SIGRID DEGER-JALKOTZY

STRATIFIED POTTERY DEPOSITS FROM THE LATE HELLADIC
III C SETTLEMENT AT AIGEIRA/ACHAIA*

The topography and the character of the LH III C settlement on the “acropolis” of Aigeira in NE Achaia have been described by E. ALRAM-STERN in this volume (see also DEGER-JALKOTZY – ALRAM-STERN 1985, 393 f.). During LH III C Aigeira was neither a large nor an important settlement. Its scientific value lies simply in the fact that it is one of the very few Mycenaean settlement sites which have been excavated in Achaia,¹ and that it is the only settlement site of which a more substantial preliminary report on LH III C stratigraphy and pottery chronology has been published² (DEGER-JALKOTZY – ALRAM-STERN 1985). The fact that the LH III C chronology of Achaia still represents an unsolved problem³ is even more regrettable since it was during this period that Achaia became one of the most prosperous regions of the Aegean. Under these premises the evidence from Aigeira may be useful as a starting point for studies of the chronology of the LH III C period in the NW Peloponnese.⁴

* Acknowledgements: Many thanks are due to E. Alram-Stern for a longterm cooperation at Aigeira and for fruitful suggestions; to B. Eder, M. Zavadil and R. Jung for discussing with me the contents of this text; to N. Nightingale for checking the English version of the manuscript.

¹ Apart from Aigeira, settlement remains of LH III C have been excavated at Chalandritsa-Stavros, Katarraktis-Drakotrypa, Teichos Dymaion, and recently at Patras-Pagona. Other settlement sites have been located by surface finds (KOLONAS 1996–97).

² The LH III C settlement evidence of *Chalandritsa-Stavros* has been briefly reported (KOLONAS 1990. – KOLONAS 1996–97, 482), and limited information concerning *Katarraktis-Drakotrypa* has been published (PAPADOPOULOS 1979, 24 with ref.). – From *Teichos Dymaion* (for the site see PAPADOPOULOS 1979, 24 with reference to the preliminary reports) a fair amount of pottery finds has been illustrated (MASTROKOSTAS 1966a, pls. 137–139. – MASTROKOSTAS 1966b, pls. 70–72. – MASTROKOSTAS 1966c, pls. 61–66. – MASTROKOSTAS 1967a, pls. 162–168. – MASTROKOSTAS 1967b, 159 f., figs. 186 f. – PAPADOPOULOS 1978, passim). However, the stratigraphy of the site has remained a riddle which will hopefully be solved by the new Teichos Dymaion research project under the direction of Dr. L. Kolonas (KOLONAS 1996–97, 470 and n. 8). – The new Mycenaean settlement at *Patras-Pagona* (STAVROPOULOU-GATSI 2001) may also have lasted beyond the end of LH III B, but material study has to be awaited (I am grateful to Mrs. Stavropoulou-Gatsi for having shown some of the pottery to me).

³ In contrast to the lack of Mycenaean settlement evidence from Achaia, a great number of Mycenaean tombs (mostly of the chamber or tholos tomb types) and cemeteries have produced abundant burial finds. They testify to the extraordinary wealth of the region during LH III C when Achaia obviously reached a pinnacle of cultural and economic achievements. However, the chronological setting of the burial deposits within the subphases of LH III C has so far remained unclear. Stratified burials have only occasionally been found (PAPAZOGLU-MANILOUDAKI 1994), and the stylistic idiosyncrasies of the funerary pottery are an obstacle to the synchronisation of pottery styles between Achaia and other regions of the Aegean.

⁴ Due to the difficulties of dating LH III C pottery from Achaia (supra ns. 2 and 3), the occurrence of Achaian vases in datable contexts of sites outside of Achaia has been sometimes used as a guideline for the pottery chronology of Achaia (MOUNTJOY 1990, 267–270. – *RMDP*, 404 f., 424–441). However, the occurrence of Achaian imports at “foreign” sites does not secure a *terminus ad quem* for the invention of a given element of pottery style at home in Achaia. It could just as well signify a *terminus ante quem*. It therefore

It has to be pointed out that Aigeira also had some disappointments in store for its excavators. The pottery finds testify to the fact that the LH III C site was inhabited until the end of the period (DEGER-JALKOTZY – ALRAM-STERN 1985, 422 f. – DEGER-JALKOTZY 1991, 28, fig. 2), and the plateau on top of the settlement hill continued to be inhabited during the Early Iron Age (DEGER-JALKOTZY 1991, 28 f., fig. 3). However, sometime during the Geometric or the Archaic periods the site was converted into a cult place (ALZINGER 1985. – SCHWARZ 1986), and the post-Mycenaean building activities, particularly in connection with a temple of the Archaic period (ALZINGER 1985), heavily damaged the Mycenaean habitation layers. The remains of the later stages of LH III C and of the Early Iron Age were destroyed and mostly removed. Only the lower Mycenaean strata were preserved, and even these showed, at some locations, the signs of disturbances by later building activities and by the modern agricultural use of the site.

Reinvestigation of the excavation evidence⁵ has confirmed that the three Mycenaean levels, which were found preserved, may be interpreted in terms of three habitation phases (see ALRAM-STERN this volume). Their sequence is shown in Fig. 1: The floors of the lowest Mycenaean level either rested directly upon the natural soil or, at some locations, upon a layer of topsoil which contained both prehistoric pottery (ALRAM-STERN 2003) and LH III C “Handmade Burnished Ware” (DEGER-JALKOTZY 1977. – DEGER-JALKOTZY – ALRAM-STERN 1985, 395–397. – DEGER-JALKOTZY 2003). The first Mycenaean level was overlaid by the floors of another settlement stratum which exhibited the same orientation of buildings and the same pottery characteristics as its predecessor. Both habitation levels have therefore been interpreted as two

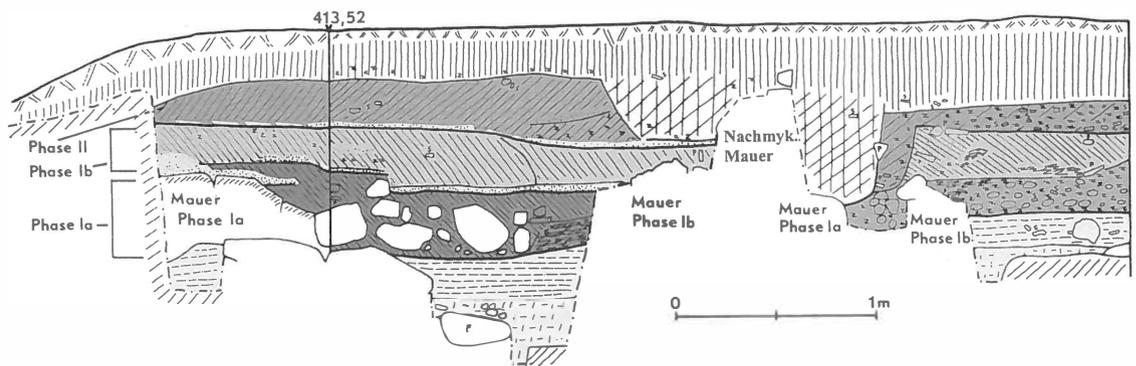


Fig. 1 Aigeira, acropolis: Stratigraphy of Trench II 3
(Pencil drawing: E. Alram-Stern and M. Strohschneider. Ink drawing: E. Held)

goes without saying that stratified settlement evidence from the region itself is preferable for defining the LH III C pottery chronology of Achaia.

⁵ After the preliminary report (DEGER-JALKOTZY – ALRAM STERN 1985) was published, further material study was suspended until 1996 for several reasons. With the financial support by INSTAP studies were then resumed, and since 1999 continued within the framework of the special project group “The Synchronisation of Civilisations in the Eastern Mediterranean in the 2nd Millennium BC” (SCIEM 2000) at the Austrian Academy of Sciences. The *Aigeira Publication Project* will publish the final report of the excavations of the Mycenaean settlement on the plateau of the hilltop. For a report on the first results of recent studies and of the reinvestigation of earlier works see DEGER-JALKOTZY 2003. For the evidence of pre-Mycenaean habitation at Aigeira see ALRAM-STERN 2001. – ALRAM-STERN 2003.

phases of one settlement period. The first, i.e. lower one, was called Phase Ia, the second one Phase Ib. Both were destroyed by conflagrations. The deep destruction debris of Phase Ib was then overlaid by the floors of a third stratum which differed from the preceding levels by settlement layout and pottery style. For this reason it has been called Phase II. This settlement, too, was ended by a fire, to which a characteristic grey ash layer bears witness. No further habitation levels were preserved above the remains of Phase II. The top layers contained unstratified pottery of LH III C Late, Early Iron Age and later periods.

As far as chronology is concerned, in our first report we defined Phases Ia and Ib as LH III C Early, while the pottery of Phase II was classified as LH III C Middle (DEGER-JALKOTZY – ALRAM-STERN 1985). Meanwhile the international state of research into Mycenaean pottery has been enriched by publications of new finds and material studies. Moreover, Dr. P. Mountjoy has recently revised the chronology of several LH III C settlements (*RMDP*, 38–58 and table II), as well as of Aigeira Phase II (*IBID.*, 399). A reinvestigation of the pottery material from Aigeira therefore seemed advisable. Particular efforts have been made to differentiate some clearly stratified and unmixed pottery deposits of Phase Ia from the abundant pottery remains of Phase Ib. The same endeavours have been devoted to defining unmixed deposits from the ash-grey layer which is the hallmark of Phase II. This latter task has been rendered difficult by the fact that any floors which may have once sealed the remains of Phase II had been destroyed by subsequent settlement (see *supra*). Moreover, the grey destruction layer itself is quite thin in places and may have been contaminated by intrusions. For this reason we are only left with a few deposits which can be unambiguously attributed to Phase II. Such deposits were found on the floors of Phase II. They were covered by the grey ashes of the destruction debris.

MYCENAEAN POTTERY OF SETTLEMENT PHASE IA

Very little has remained of the pottery of the earliest settlement Phase Ia, probably due to a levelling of the site before the buildings of Phase Ib were laid out. For the most part it is not possible to tell the remains of these two settlement phases apart (DEGER-JALKOTZY – ALRAM-STERN 1985, 398–401). Nor is it possible to separate them by pottery classification, since the pottery of both phases exhibits many similarities so that it has been considered to represent one chronological Phase I (DEGER-JALKOTZY – ALRAM-STERN 1985, 411–418, figs. 14–16). It is only at a few findspots that deposits of Phase Ia could clearly be separated from those of Phase Ib. Three such loci have been shown by E. ALRAM-STERN in this volume. Their pottery deposits will be discussed herewith.

In Phase Ia the central part of the plateau was occupied by the so-called half-timbered house (DEGER-JALKOTZY – ALRAM-STERN 1985, 398–401). After its destruction a potter's kiln was set into the ruin in Phase Ib (DEGER-JALKOTZY – ALRAM-STERN 1985, fig. 11).⁶ However, in the corners of the ruin small patches of the Phase Ia floor and the debris above it were found below the level of Phase Ib (ALRAM-STERN this volume). Two of the Phase Ia pottery deposits under discussion come from there. A third and more substantial deposit of Phase Ia was found in the "room with the fire-place" of a building south of the half-timbered house (DEGER-JALKOTZY – ALRAM-STERN 1985, 400 f. – ALRAM-STERN this volume).

The chronological setting of the pottery of these deposits is clearly LH III C Early.

⁶ The potter's kiln will be studied and published by E. Alram-Stern.

Apart from the non-Mycenaean “Handmade Burnished Ware” (DEGER-JALKOTZY 1977. – DEGER-JALKOTZY 2003), they comprise LH III C shapes such as the collar-necked jar (Fig. 2:13: unpainted coarse, wheel-made kitchen ware); the bell-shaped deep bowl FS 284 predominantly of the monochrome type⁷ (Fig. 2:9–10); Group A deep bowls (Fig. 2:3) mostly with monochrome interiors (Fig. 2:5–6); the semiglobular cup FS 215 with monochrome interior, medium wide band at the lip and a band along the back of the handle (Fig. 2:2); the bowl FS 295 with horizontal handles and linear decoration; the large spouted basin FS 294 (Fig. 2:11. – DEGER-JALKOTZY – ALRAM-STERN 1985, fig. 15:3). Carinated kylikes FS 267 are all monochrome (Fig. 2:12), while conical kylikes FS 274 with slightly everted rim are all plain (for a Phase Ia example see DEGER-JALKOTZY – ALRAM-STERN 1985, fig. 15:8).

Closed shapes may already display rims with a slightly hollowed lip. A large amphoroid jar has a short and wide, slightly flaring neck, flattened rim and horizontal handles⁸ (Fig. 2:14; for a Phase Ib specimen cf. DEGER-JALKOTZY – ALRAM-STERN 1985, fig. 16:1). Similar shapes occur among LH III C Early at Tiryns (PODZUWEIT 1992, chapter “Sonderformen”). Moreover, the jar of Fig. 2:14 and the ovoid jar of Fig. 2:15 give evidence to the fact that the characteristic reddish-brown or brown, hard fabrics which were a hallmark of Achaian pottery (see *infra*, p. 64) were already produced at the very beginning of the LH III C settlement sequence at Aigeira.

As has been said, monochrome vessels predominate among the deep bowls FS 284. Deep bowls of Group A with plain interiors (Fig. 2:3) are extremely rare.⁹ More frequently they are painted monochrome inside (Fig. 2:5–6). The exteriors of Group A bowls carry circumcurrent patterns (panels: Fig. 2:3 [DEGER-JALKOTZY – ALRAM-STERN 1985, fig. 23:1]; zigzag: Fig. 2:6; tricurved arch: Fig. 2:5) or metope patterns (a very small sherd from Phase Ia is not illustrated here; the fragment in DEGER-JALKOTZY – ALRAM-STERN 1985, fig. 14:4 is of Phase Ib). Clearly this decorative system was a continuation of the LH III pottery tradition. The same is true of shallow cups FS 220 which were, as a rule, unpainted (Fig. 2:1).¹⁰ However, deep bowls of Group B (as defined by *MDP*, 129–131) and Rosette bowls – both hallmarks of LH III B2 pottery – had left no traces in the pottery of Phase Ia.

The kraters of Aigeira Ia and Ib are generally of the base-ringed type FS 282, with incurving upper body, slanting, everted rim (cf. DEGER-JALKOTZY – ALRAM-STERN 1985, fig. 15:1), and monochrome insides. The Phase Ia deposits under discussion also produced two fragments of pictorial kraters (Fig. 2:7–8). The delicate drawing of two quadrupeds with striped legs (Fig. 2:7) as well as the spotted design of a bird (?) (Fig. 2:8)¹¹ may well have had a LH III B pedigree. A fragment with plain interior and a whorl-shell motif outside (Fig. 2:4) was found together with a large strap handle which

⁷ There is also one monochrome example of the “Transitional LH III B2–III C Early deep bowl type 2” of *RMDP*, 37.

⁸ This vessel may perhaps offer an earlier version of the shape represented by a LH III C Late jar from Delphi for which Mountjoy (*RMDP*, 785 no. 265, fig. 310) was unable to find a parallel.

⁹ The limited pieces of Group A bowls with plain interiors or with a band on the inside below the rim may be suspected to derive from Phase Ia contexts (DEGER-JALKOTZY – ALRAM-STERN 1985, 414). However, at least one fragment (unpublished) clearly derives from a Phase Ib context.

¹⁰ Several such cups were found in the three Phase Ia deposits under discussion. Another specimen of this type was found deposited as an offering at the foundations of a building of Phase Ib (DEGER-JALKOTZY – ALRAM-STERN 1985, 404, fig. 15:4).

¹¹ Spotted parts of a man’s or an animal’s anatomy occur on pictorial vases e.g. at Tiryns cf. SLENCZKA 1974, pls. 8:2a (LH III B2); 8:2b (LH III B); 15:1a–c (LH III B2); 15:1d–g (out of context); 25:2a–b (out of context).

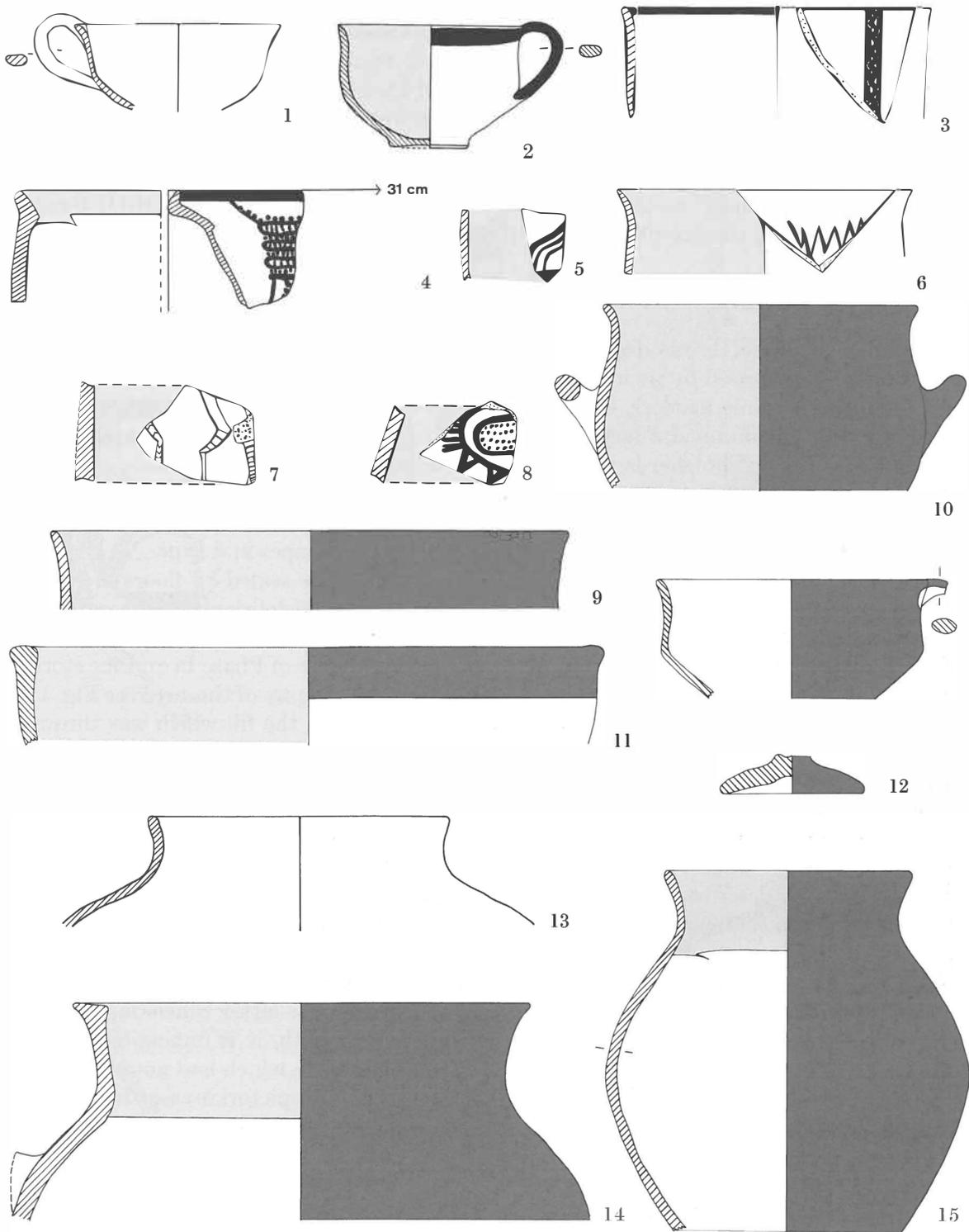


Fig. 2 Aigeira, acropolis: Pottery of Settlement Phase Ia, scale 1:3

(Pencil drawings: E. Alram-Stern, A. Bächle, E. Humer, Chr. Schauer, K. Schodl. Ink drawings: E. Held)

secures its identification as a krater FS 9. In view of the lustrous slip and the glossy paint, this piece may have been, indeed, of LH III B date. Otherwise this type is extremely rare at Aigeira.

In summary it may be said that the pottery of Phase Ia already exhibits all characteristics of the LH III C Early pottery from Aigeira which will be discussed further below p. 64–66: A striking preference for vessels with monochrome paint or linear decoration; the use of the hard, brownish-red (or reddish-brown) fabric which was a typical feature of the pottery of Achaia; continuity of shapes and decorative elements of a LH III B pottery tradition with the exception of Group B deep bowls and Rosette bowls.¹²

MYCENAEAN POTTERY OF SETTLEMENT PHASE IB

The debris of Phase Ib was deep, reaching down to 0.50 m. Covering the entire settlement and characterised by its intense rusty red colour with black patches of burnt timber and other organic matters, this layer testifies to a violent destruction of the settlement by fire. It contained a large amount of burnt building material and small finds. From the masses of potsherds which were buried in this layer many vessels could be restored or, at least, reconstructed in drawing. Some were even complete.

Under these premises it has been possible to define a sufficiently large number of unmixed deposits which offer a wide repertoire of pottery shapes and types.

The material (Figs. 3–4) comes from deposits which were sealed by floors of Phase II. One group (Figs. 3:1,3; 4:4,9) has been chosen from the debris of the storerooms (ALRAM-STERN this volume), a second group (Figs. 3:2,5; 4:6) from the debris which covered the courtyard between the ruin of the half-timbered house of Phase Ia and the storehouse east of it (ALRAM-STERN this volume. – For the stratigraphy of this area see Fig. 1). A third group (Figs. 3:4,6; 4:1–3,5,7–8) has been taken from the fill which was thrown into the potter's kiln¹³ when the area was levelled before the structures of the subsequent settlement were laid out (see also further below).

The main characteristics of the pottery of Phase Ib have been presented by DEGER-JALKOTZY – ALRAM-STERN 1985, 411–418. The vases illustrated (IBID., figs. 14; 15:1–7,9; 16) come from unmixed Phase Ib deposits; some, in fact, come from the same areas as the three groups described above. This repertoire of shapes, decorative systems and fabrics has also been commented upon by Mountjoy (*RMDP*, 416–424). We therefore confine ourselves to adding some further evidence and observations made during our recent study.

Although the pottery of Phase Ia and Phase Ib is extremely similar in character, many more shapes and decorative elements are attested for the latter. Since this may be due to the preservation of the destruction debris of Phase Ib, it is impossible to tell whether new shapes and types may have occurred in Phase Ib which had not existed in Phase Ia. However, to the present state of material study no pictorial vases have been attested for Phase Ib.

¹² For a discussion of pieces which may have actually dated from LH III B (such as the FS 9 fragment mentioned above) see *infra*, p. 65.

¹³ See *supra*, p. 55. – Between the kiln's combustion chamber and the firing pit the ground sloped down for ca. 0.30 m. In order to equalise this difference in elevation the kiln and the surrounding area were filled with masses of sherds from kitchen pots and finer wares of various sorts. Many fragments of this fill join together, and several vessels could be restored. Presumably this fill was made up from pots which had been kept in a storeroom and destroyed in the course of the catastrophe of Phase Ib. (This view appears to be supported by fine vessels such as the amphoriskos, the alabastron, and the small stirrup jar of DEGER-JALKOTZY – ALRAM-STERN 1985, fig. 16:4–5,7 which were found in the clay bins and pithoi of a storeroom which mainly contained grains and figs. It may be assumed that the pots had fallen down from shelves).

The majority, if not all pottery of Phase Ib seems to have consisted of local products. This is suggested by the existence of a potter's kiln, as well as by the results of first scientific analyses of pottery samples.¹⁴

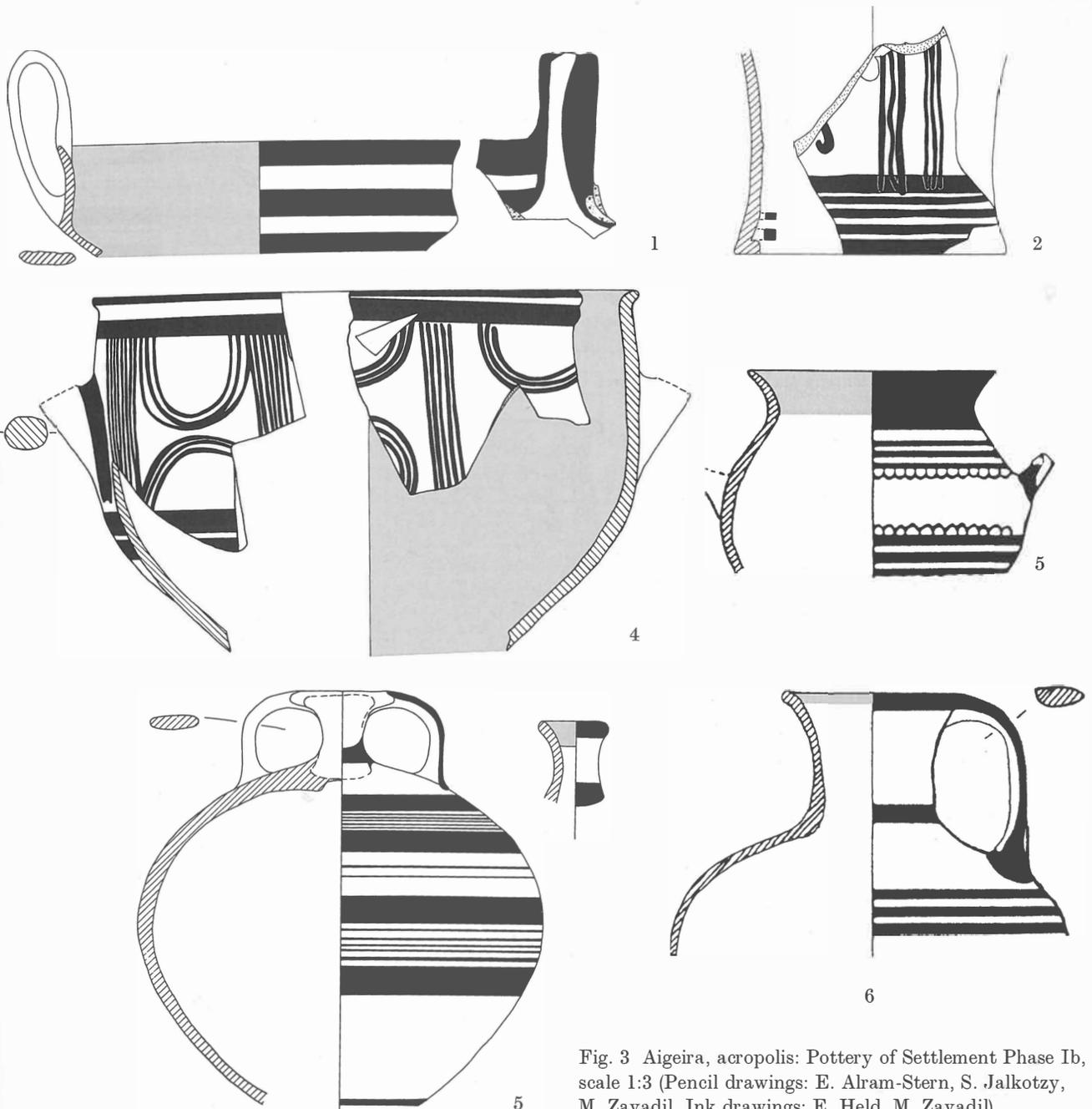


Fig. 3 Aigeira, acropolis: Pottery of Settlement Phase Ib, scale 1:3 (Pencil drawings: E. Alram-Stern, S. Jalkotzy, M. Zavadil. Ink drawings: E. Held, M. Zavadil)

¹⁴ Personal communication with Dr. R. Sauer of the Dept. of Archaeometry at the University of Applied Arts, Vienna, who is carrying out a program of both petrographical thin section analyses and heavy mineral analyses of the pottery from Aigeira. According to Dr. Sauer, who has also explored the potential local ceramic raw materials in the vicinity of the site, it is highly probable that the omnipresent calcareous shale at Aigeira provided the raw material for the Mycenaean fabrics of the site. By contrast, the handmade wares found at Aigeira – prehistoric as well as LH III C Handmade Burnished Ware – were also locally made, but their raw material was completely different from that used for Mycenaean wares (SAUER in: DEGER-JALKOTZY 2003).

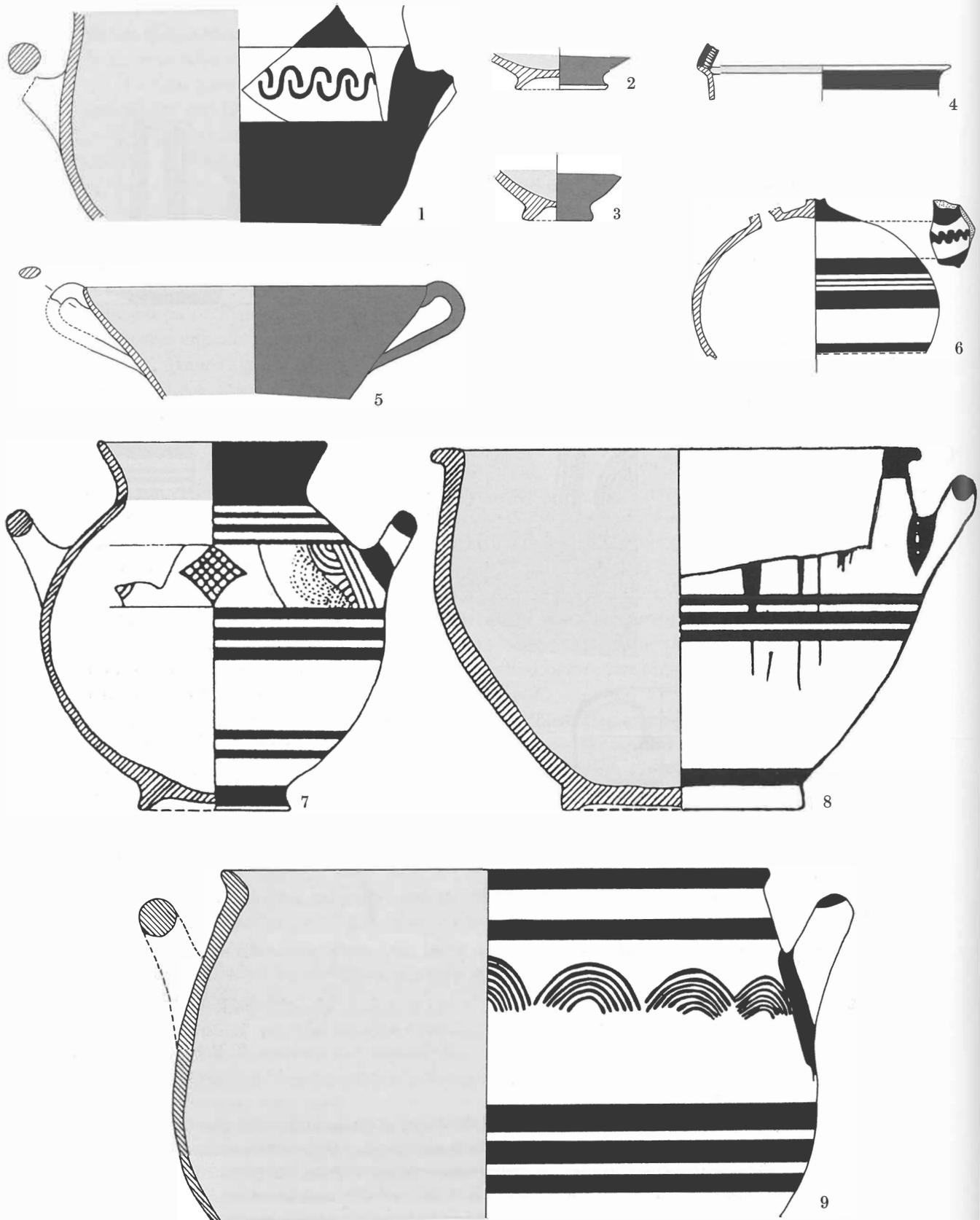


Fig. 4 Aigeira, acropolis: Pottery of Settlement Phase Ib, scale 1:3
 (Pencil drawings: E. Alram-Stern, S. Jalkotzy, E. Humer, K. Schodl. Ink drawings: E. Held)

Several vessels carrying distinct patterns have been restored from sherds which were found scattered all over the site. The banded carinated bowl (DEGER-JALKOTZY – ALRAM-STERN 1985, fig. 15:2), for example, can now be classified as a large specimen of FS 240 (Fig. 3:1), since its handle was found deposited at some distance from the bowl.¹⁵ The krater of Fig. 4:9, found in a storeroom in the western part of the plateau, has been complemented by sherds found in the Phase Ib debris of the southern central part. Clearly this distribution of vase fragments indicates that the debris of Phase Ib was levelled before the subsequent settlement was laid out.

The repertoire of open shapes can now be complemented by the mug FS 226. The specimen shown in Fig. 3:2 compares well with LH III C Early mugs found at Perati (IAKOVIDIS 1969–70, vol. 3, pls. 102:276; 100:410). Kraters FS 282 may now have square rims (Fig. 4:8), even if the type with a markedly incurving upper body and slanting rim known from Phase Ia remains more popular. Conical kylikes FS 274 may have straight lipless sides or incurving rims. They generally remain unpainted, but there are a few monochrome specimens (Fig. 4:5). Linearly decorated deep bowls with monochrome interiors are present,¹⁶ but they are by far outnumbered by the monochrome versions of FS 284. Similarly to deep bowls from Lefkandi Ib (POPHAM – MILBURN 1971, pl. 51:1) the latter occasionally have a reserved base (Fig. 4:2).

The most frequent large closed shapes – amphora (with horizontal, as well as with vertical handles), hydria, jug – are predominantly decorated with bands. The shoulders are occasionally decorated with a tassel pattern. The vessels are mostly of a globular, globular-conical, or slightly biconical shape and always beautifully proportioned (cf. Fig. 3:6. – DEGER-JALKOTZY – ALRAM-STERN 1985, fig. 16:1–3). Hollowed rims may now appear more accentuated, but still remain a small minority. Of course, all shapes also occur with monochrome paint and/or in the characteristic reddish-brown material mentioned above.

Medium-size stirrup jars may differ from the “dumpy wide-based” shapes as defined by Mountjoy (*RMDP*, 421) and as represented e.g. by a small specimen from Aigeira (DEGER-JALKOTZY – ALRAM-STERN 1985, fig. 16:4). Due to their low false necks and spouts, vases like those of Fig. 3:5 and Fig. 4:6 appear as extremely bellied. The largest diameter is placed right at the middle of the vessel and more or less equals its height. The banding of fine line groups alternating with broad bands down the body, too, differs from the Achaian type as defined by Mountjoy (*IBID.*). It is closer to the banding systems of the eastern Peloponnese and Attica (cf. *MDP*, figs. 154:1; 180:1), and may be viewed as a continuation of LH III B conventions. Stirrup jars of this kind are still found within the repertoire of Phase II at Aigeira (DEGER-JALKOTZY – ALRAM-STERN 1985, fig. 19:4).

Motifs and designs of patterned decorated vessels are mostly circumcurrent, such as running spirals, zigzag, N-pattern, quirk, isolated semicircles between triglyphs, tri-curved arch, flower 18C, whorl-shell, and ivy-leaf (Figs. 3:3–4; 4:1,6. – DEGER-JALKOTZY – ALRAM-STERN 1985, figs. 14–15; 23:1,5). Panel and metope combinations of deep bowls and kraters resemble those of LH III B1 rather than those of LH III B2 as differenti-

¹⁵ FS 240 is now represented at Aigeira by a banded and by a monochrome version (DEGER-JALKOTZY 1982), while the vessel shown in DEGER-JALKOTZY – ALRAM-STERN 1985, fig. 15:7 is solidly painted above the carination. Some bowls have a brilliant red, others a dark paint. All are monochrome inside. – FS 240 has, as yet, not been attested for Aigeira Ia but this may be due to the paucity of material relating to this settlement phase.

¹⁶ With this type the linear decoration of exteriors seems to have been confined to medium wide or deep rim-bands and one band below the handle zone. However, further study may alter this preliminary impression.

ated by Mountjoy (*MDP*, 121 f.). As in Phase Ia, Group B and Rosette bowls are not represented. It therefore seems as if the LH III C pottery of Aigeira was based upon a tradition of LH III B pottery making which had not followed the LH III B2 stylistic developments of the Argolid.¹⁷

Due perhaps to the same reason, it is sometimes difficult to tell where the dividing line comes at Aigeira between large deep bowls, stemmed bowls, and small kraters. Neither the shapes of the bowls nor the banding systems at the rims and below the decorative zones keep to the conventions which had been established during LH III B. The large bowl of Fig. 3:3 should be called a ring-based krater on account of its rim diameter of 0.27 m¹⁸ and the width of the decorative zone, although the moulding of the rim and the two bands below the decorative zone seem to suggest a stemmed bowl. Similar ambiguities remain about bowl fragments with a fat rounded lip (DEGER-JALKOTZY – ALRAM-STERN 1985, fig. 14:2), or with a thickened rim¹⁹ (IBID., fig. 14:9). Their monochrome insides would not preclude an identification as stemmed bowls since they may have been a local feature. In fact, one LH III B specimen from Korakou, too, had a monochrome inside (RUTTER 1974, fig. 18:24). Broad rim-bands at the outside (which at Aigeira never reach down to the minimum of 0.03 m of Group B deep bowls) may also have been a local feature,²⁰ unless they were borrowed from the linear bowls of LH III C Early. Be that as it may: the combinations of rim mouldings, bowl shapes, width of decorative zones, and banding systems vary to such a degree that any identification of a fragment as stemmed bowl may remain doubtful, unless a bowl fragment can be unambiguously attributed to one of the few FS 305 stems preserved in the debris of Phase Ib. Skyphoi and small kraters are mainly differentiated by size and by the shaping of the rim.

Several pieces which seem to diverge from the general character of the pottery of Phase Ib may perhaps prove to be of chronological importance. There are e.g. two monochrome deep bowls with narrow decorative zones (Fig. 4:1. – DEGER-JALKOTZY – ALRAM-STERN 1985, fig. 14:7), which, on the one hand, carry patterns (antithetic spirals, quirk) which were popular in LH III C Early. On the other hand, these bowls seem to anticipate a type which at Tiryns does not appear before LH III C Advanced (PODZUWEIT 1992, chapter “Monochromer Skyphos”) and which is generally taken as being indicative of LH III C Late. Two amphoriskoi kept in the Patras Museum and decorated like the bowls under discussion (one, in fact, with a quirk pattern in the narrow decorative zone) have been dated by P. A. Mountjoy to LH III C Middle (*RMDP*, 425 nos. 88–89, fig. 149) with reference to a close parallel of LH III C Middle from Mycenae (*RMDP*, 160 f. no. 325, fig. 42).²¹ The two bowls under discussion were the only specimens of this type

¹⁷ The bowl of Fig. 4:4 which complies with the “Schale mit ausladendem Rand” (PODZUWEIT 1978, fig. 32:8. – PODZUWEIT 1979, 423, fig. 38:11) seems to be an exemption to the rule. The shape was created in the Argolid in LH III B2 and lasted into LH III C Early. In fact, the fine pale buff fabric, the glossy brown paint and the dainty drawing of the rim decoration of our bowl suggest that it was imported from the Argolid, presumably in LH III C Early.

¹⁸ Rim diameters of kraters at Aigeira Phase Ib range around 0.32 m.

¹⁹ For a comparable FS 305 rim fragment cf. RUTTER 1974, fig. 13:22.

²⁰ Stemmed bowls with a single deep rim-band from LH III B deposits at Korakou cf. RUTTER 1974, figs. 3:11; 13:22; 18:17,22.

²¹ Two deep bowls from Pylos and Ayios Kosmas (Attica) decorated in an analogous manner have been dated by P. A. Mountjoy to her Transitional LH III B2–III C Early phase (*RMDP*, 310, 352 no. 116, fig. 120; 560 no. 292, fig. 205). In these cases reference is made to an amphoriskos from Ayios Stephanos dated to LH III C Early (IBID., 282, 283 no. 180, fig. 95). This vase, however, is not dissimilar to the LH III C Middle amphoriskoi just mentioned from Achaia and from Mycenae.

found in Phase Ib. It is therefore difficult to argue for a local idiosyncrasy. Perhaps these two pieces may be viewed rather as already transgressing the chronological limits of Phase Ib (see further below, pp. 67, 72 f.).

The same may be true of the amphoriskos FS 59 of Fig. 4:7. Different from the dumpy and wide-mouthed Achaian type as described by Mountjoy (*RMDP*, 417 f.) and illustrated for Aigeira in Fig. 3:4 (cf. also DEGER-JALKOTZY – ALRAM-STERN 1985, fig. 16:5), this vase is very well proportioned. The body is globular, the neck narrower and sharply everted from the shoulder, and the handles are set just above the belly. Moreover the vase is not decorated in a circumcurrent manner. Each side has a “window”, showing between the handles a central motif flanked by a composite pattern of triglyphs and concentric arcs. The shape of the vessel, as well as its decorative syntax and the complex pattern of concentric arcs suggest a date of LH III C Middle/Developed rather than III C Early. An amphoriskos from T. 43 (Phase II) at Perati provides a good parallel (IAKOVIDIS 1969–70, vol. 3, pl. 112:461).

A third example is provided by the krater of Fig. 4:9. The shape is typical of Phase Ib. The decorative scheme, however, – dense concentric semicircles (or rather arcs) floating high up in the decorative zone – is unusual. Circumcurrent patterns do not commonly occur with kraters of LH III C Early, unless they consist of spirals.²² At Tiryns, kraters carrying circumcurrent patterns only occur during the later stages of LH III C (PODZUWEIT 1992, chapter “Kratere”). This explains perhaps why the decorative motif of Fig. 4:9 only recurs on two vases from Aigeira Phase II (cf. infra). Moreover Mycenaean pottery painting tends to apply concentric semicircles, arcs and triangles to horizontal or vertical lines. Deep bowls occasionally exhibit isolated semicircles, floating in the middle of the decorative zone (cf. e.g. *RMDP*, 556 no. 264, fig. 202 [Athens, Fountain House, LH III B2]; 779 no. 213, fig. 305 [Delphi, LH III C Early]). More frequently such motifs are found with Minoan vases of LM III B (Late) and LM III C (cf. *Late Minoan III Pottery*, e.g. 309, fig. 10c,i; 317, fig. 26g; 352, fig. 18:45. – cf. also HALLAGER this volume, fig. 1g). They may perhaps be added to the convergencies between Minoan and Mycenaean pottery of LH III C Early to which Professor Rutter has drawn our attention (RUTTER this volume). In fact, it may well be LM III C Crete where parallels for the decoration of the krater Fig. 4:9 ought to be sought. Dense concentric semicircles floating in the upper part of the decorative zone of a deep bowl from the Kastro at Kavousi (MOOK – COULSON 1997, 362, fig. 37:150) compare well with our krater Fig. 4:9, and equally with the shoulder decoration of a large closed vessel from Aigeira Phase II (unpublished). Similarly to the latter, the shoulder of a large closed vase from Kastelli Pediada was decorated with floating dense and fringed concentric semicircles (RETHEMIOTAKIS 1997, 319, fig. 28e). The fringed version of the motif, in turn, compares well with the dotted dense semicircles floating in the decorative zone of a krater from a well-defined Phase II deposit of Aigeira (Fig. 6:9). – As far as chronology is concerned, the deep bowl fragment from Kavousi was found in a LM III C Late context (MOOK – COULSON 1997, 353–357). The context of the Kastelli Pediada fragment was dated by the excavator to LM III C Middle (RETHEMIOTAKIS 1997, 325). Other scholars, however, assign it to LM III C Early (cf. KANTA this volume). Be that as it may: Since the preceding settlement phase has also been dated to LM III C Early, Phase II of Kastelli Pediada may have already approached the transition to LM III C Middle. – As to the krater of Fig. 4:9 from Aigeira, it may be regarded as a forerunner of a pot-

²² It is perhaps for this reason that the quirk decoration of a LH III C Early krater from Delphi is divided into two zones separated by a horizontal band, cf. *RMDP*, fig. 304:193.

tery element of Phase II.²³ Cretan parallels of its decorative scheme range between LM III C Early and Late.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ON THE POTTERY OF PHASE IA AND PHASE IB AT AIGEIRA

The most conspicuous feature of the pottery of Aigeira Ia and Ib is the marked preference for monochrome surfaces (DEGER-JALKOTZY – ALRAM-STERN 1985, 414), which is attested right from the beginning of the settlement in Phase Ia. Among the deep bowls FS 284 – the most popular open shape at Aigeira – the monochrome type already predominates in Phase Ia. Deep bowls of Group A generally have monochrome interiors, and the same is true of most kraters.

Monochrome carinated kylikes were the rule in Phase Ia (Fig. 2:12), as well as in Phase Ib (DEGER-JALKOTZY – ALRAM-STERN 1985, fig. 15:9). Large closed vessels, too, were covered with monochrome paint (Figs. 2:14–15). It is therefore important to realise that vases from Achaia should not be dated to a later stage of LH III C merely on account of a dark coating of larger parts of the surface. Vases which are entirely or partly covered with monochrome paint were already produced in Achaia in LH III C Early.

Another very characteristic feature of Achaian pottery right from the beginning of the settlement sequence at Aigeira is represented by a pottery class of reddish-brown or brownish, very hard fabric of high quality. Vessels of this class are often entirely or partly covered with a black paint that can be smeary, as well as lustrous or even of a metallic gloss (DEGER-JALKOTZY – ALRAM-STERN 1985, 411 f.). The range of shapes comprises large storage jars, amphorae, hydriae, large stirrup jars, kraters, and large basins. Less frequently the fabric was used for small shapes such as deep bowls (DEGER-JALKOTZY – ALRAM-STERN 1985, fig. 14:1). In other provinces of Greece vases of this fabric immediately stand out as imports from Achaia (DEGER-JALKOTZY – ALRAM-STERN 1985, 411).

It is difficult to tell whether the striking tendency towards monochrome surfaces of vases had already marked the pottery of LH III B in Achaia. Most of the material comes from tombs, where closed shapes with patterned decoration seem to have been preferred for burial gifts. It is only from Teichos Dymaion that some amount of settlement material has been published (see n. 2). Monochrome deep bowls from that site have been dated to LH III C (PAPADOPOULOS 1979, 114 f. – *RMDP*, 439: LH III C Late). Many fragments of decorated deep bowls FS 284 have been illustrated (MASTROKOSTAS 1966b. – MASTROKOSTAS 1966c. – MASTROKOSTAS 1967a. – MASTROKOSTAS 1967b), but no information is given on their interiors. Eight deep bowls of Group A which have been restored, and some of which are on show in the Patras Museum, have been described as having plain interiors, two examples with an extra band below the rim (PAPADOPOULOS 1979, 112). Together with a few sherds which have been assigned to Group B deep bowls (*IBID.*), these vases could be either of LH III B or of LH III C date (*RMDP*, 416). Pottery finds from the Chalandritsa region²⁴ and from Patras-Pagona (supra n. 2) which I have been able to see in the storerooms at Patras, exhibit a great

²³ The Phase Ib provenance of the vase is beyond any doubt because its sherds were collected from various find-spots of the debris of this settlement phase (cf. supra, p. 61).

²⁴ Due to the kindness of the former ephor of the Patras Ephoria, Prof. Dr. I. Papapostolou, I was allowed to see some boxes containing pottery from old excavations at Chalandritsa (cf. PAPADOPOULOS 1979, 29) in 1975. For the new excavations at Chalandritsa see supra n. 2.

similarity to the pottery from Aigeira. This is true of the shapes and fabrics, as well as of the streaky monochrome paint on a high percentage of the vessels. However, stratigraphic evidence has to be awaited until it can be decided whether the monochrome vases from the Chalandritsa and the Patras regions are of LH III B or of LH III C date. Mountjoy (*RMDP*, 412, 415 f.), however, has drawn attention to some LH III A2 and LH III B monochrome vases which would have had a patterned decoration in the east and north-east Peloponnese. A monochrome krater from Katarraktis-Drakotrypa, too, belongs to LH III B (PAPADOPOULOS 1979, 109). Monochrome coating of vases may thus have been a feature which was rooted in the pottery tradition of Achaia (see also PAPADOPOULOS 1978, 130).

Yet another characteristic feature of the pottery of Phases Ia and Ib of Aigeira appears from vases with pattern decoration. Their types and patterns seem to continue a tradition of LH III B, except for the LH III B2 developments of the palatial workshops particularly of the Argolid (see *supra*, pp. 56, 62). There are also some pottery fragments which may actually date from LH III B (DEGER-JALKOTZY – ALRAM-STERN 1985, 417 f.). Fragments of kylikes FS 258B²⁵ (DEGER-JALKOTZY – ALRAM-STERN 1985, fig. 23:3–4²⁶), of kraters FS 9 (Fig. 2:4) and of fine stirrup jars (DEGER-JALKOTZY – ALRAM-STERN 1985, fig. 23:7–8) stand out because of their slip of higher quality and by lustrous paint. Shapes and types again seem to hark back to a developed phase of LH III B1 (= LH III B Middle in terms of SCHACHERMEYR 1976, 266 and SCHÖNFELD 1988) rather than to LH III B2 in terms of the palatial workshops of the Argolid and elsewhere. In this respect Aigeira seems to differ from Teichos Dymaion, where, according to Mountjoy (*RMDP*, 35 f.) and Sherratt (SHERRATT 1980, 183) deep bowls of Group B did exist, dated by the former authoress to LH III B, by the latter to LH III C Early. Both authoresses agree upon a LH III C Early date of the only Rosette bowl fragment found at Teichos Dymaion. The evidence of Aigeira therefore seems to agree with that of Korakou in the neighbouring province of Corinthia, where the decisive features of Argive LH III B2 were “hardly recognisable” during LH III B and had no impact upon the pottery of LH III C (RUTTER 1974, 82, 129, 274–280, 467).²⁷ According to Schachermeyr (SCHACHERMEYR 1976, 261–266) and Sherratt (SHERRATT 1980) this was also true of other regional or peripheral sites. However, while the LH III B background of the LH III C Early pottery from Aigeira may have been comparable to that of such sites and particularly of Korakou, it has to be kept in mind that the LH III C pottery from Aigeira was also bound up with the western parts of Achaia by its marked tendency towards monochrome surfaces and by the frequent use of the characteristic hard reddish-brown fabrics.

It has been suggested that the survival of LH III B pieces as mentioned above should be interpreted as evidence for a LH III B settlement on the “acropolis” of Aigeira (*RMDP*, 399). However, differently from Lefkandi, where, despite the terracing and levellings which had cut away the LH III B settlement (POPHAM – SACKETT 1968, 5), the existence of LH III B structures and levels was clearly attested (POPHAM – MILBURN 1971, 346), no such evidence was found at Aigeira. Moreover, the reinves-

²⁵ *Pace RMDP*, 399 n. 205 this type did survive into LH III C, cf. PODZUWEIT 1981, 208. – PODZUWEIT 1992, chapter “Kylikes”. The pieces from Aigeira, however, may be dated to LH III B on account of their excellent quality.

²⁶ These two pieces were found in mixed Phase Ia and Phase Ib deposits. The same appears to apply to a few other, unpublished fragments of this type, but their contexts require reinvestigation. In any case, this type did not occur among the pottery finds of Phase II.

tigation of the pre-Mycenaean finds has revealed that the “acropolis” of Aigeira was not inhabited continuously, since the prehistoric pottery was of Late and Final Neolithic, EH I, and EH III/MH I date. Between these periods there seem to have been centuries when the hill appears not to have been inhabited (ALRAM-STERN 2003). There were certainly no Mycenaean finds earlier than the few LH III B pieces mentioned above. In fact, the extremely steep access, particularly to the top of the hill (see SCHACHERMEYR 1980, 52), and a walking distance from the nearest water supply of more than half an hour do not render the site attractive for habitation. It rather seems that it was only chosen in times of unrest and insecurity. The period which followed after the catastrophes at the end of the 13th century B.C. was certainly a case in point. It may be added that the two chamber tombs of the “dormitory type” from Derveni-Lykovouni (or: Psila Alonia) were certainly related to the settlement on the “acropolis” of Aigeira (SCHACHERMEYR 1976, 158). The burial gifts were dated to LH III B–C by the excavator (VERDELIS 1959, 11 f.), and a leaf-shaped bow fibula also points to a LH III C date. A few potsherds left from the excavation were doubtlessly made of the same fabric as the LH III C pottery from the settlement.

Unless the reinvestigation of the settlement remains on the terraces below the plateau on the hilltop (first analysed by SCHACHERMEYR 1976, 156 f.) produces evidence for a settlement earlier than LH III C, we prefer our own interpretation of the history of the site (DEGER-JALKOTZY – ALRAM-STERN 1985, 418, 424–426): The few LH III B vases attested at Aigeira may have been brought by the builders of Phase Ia who had chosen this place for habitation in LH III C Early, presumably for reasons of security. These people may have come from another site in the vicinity, the existence of which is suggested by the LH III A2 and III B finds said to have come from a tomb in Aigeira (ÅSTRÖM 1965), and which may have been situated more favourably at a lower elevation and nearer to the coast. It cannot even be excluded that settlers had come from farther afield. However, the north-eastern Peloponnese, the Argolid, and Attica seem to be precluded on evidence of the predominantly monochrome surfaces of vases at Aigeira.²⁸ It may be added that the terracotta figurines found at Aigeira have been shown to exhibit affinities with coroplastic products of Laconia rather than of the Argolid (ALRAM-STERN 1987). As a matter of fact, Sherratt and Mountjoy (SHERRATT 1980. – *RMDP*) have claimed that the LH III B pottery of several regions of the Peloponnese such as Laconia, Messenia, Boeotia, and Euboea already exhibited a certain tendency towards monochrome surfaces in LH III B. Achaia may well have been another pottery province where a predilection for monochrome vases had prevailed much earlier than LH III C (see *supra*). However, the origins of LH III C vase painting at Aigeira will only be understood when a sufficient quantity of comparative material from LH III B and LH III C settlement sites of Achaia is available. Until then we prefer to think that the top of the hill at Aigeira was settled in LH III C Early by people from a neighbouring site.²⁹

²⁷ One very small sherd from the LH III B East Alley deposit attributed by RUTTER 1974, 73, fig. 18:24 to a stemmed bowl has now been re-classified by Mountjoy (*RMDP*, 224 no. 145, fig. 71) as a Group B bowl.

²⁸ According to Rutter (RUTTER 1974, 93 f.) the LH III B East Alley deposit at Korakou only contained a few monochrome vessels. Monochrome insides of open shapes were rather rare, too (*IBID.*, 78–88). At Tiryns a few monochrome deep bowls which made their appearance in LH III B2 (PODZUWEIT 1981, 199, fig. 49:7) remained a small minority. Even in the mature phases of LH III C Early monochrome vases were far less common in the Corinthia and in the Argolid than at Aigeira.

²⁹ For the transfer of coastal sites to the hills and mountains of Achaia in LH III C see also PAPA-DOPOULOS 1979, 175.

CHRONOLOGY AND SYNCHRONISMS OF PHASE I POTTERY OF AIGEIRA

Phases Ia and Ib have been dated to LH III C Early (DEGER-JALKOTZY – ALRAM-STERN 1985, 417), since the pottery of both settlement phases exhibits the general features of that period. The presence of the bowl FS 295 in deposits of Aigeira Ia indicates that the site did not belong to the earliest stage of LH III C Early resp. to Mountjoy's "Transitional LH III B2–III C Early" phase (*RMDP*, 36–38). It may have existed during Phase 2 of J. B. Rutter's chronological scheme, i.e. contemporaneously with Lefkandi Ia, with House P Floor 3 of the settlement at Korakou, and with the first phase of the Tiryns NW sequence (RUTTER 1977. – PODZUWEIT 1978, 471–495). However, probably due to the very limited remains of Phase Ia, the pottery of this phase cannot be told apart from that of Phase Ib which certainly belonged to Rutter's Phase 3 (RUTTER 1977). Despite local idiosyncrasies and an adherence to a certain pottery tradition of Achaia, Aigeira Ib had pottery characteristics in common with Korakou (House P Floors 3 and 2), Delphi,³⁰ Perati, and in particular with Lefkandi Ib. Obviously the geographical situation of Aigeira was favourable to contacts with the eastern regions and Phokis. Parallels with Argive sites remain rather general.

Our dating of Phases Ia and Ib of Aigeira to LH III C Early has therefore met with general acceptance. However, the revision of the Lefkandi Ib chronology by Mountjoy (*RMDP*, 30–40, 713–716) may have an effect on the chronology of Aigeira, too. For good reasons Dr. Mountjoy assigned the pottery of Lefkandi 2a to LH III C Middle/Advanced. This leaves Lefkandi Ib to LH III C Early (Phase 3 in the scheme of RUTTER 1977) and LH III C Middle/Developed (cf. *RMDP*, 39 table II). Some features, which according to Mountjoy (*RMDP*, 713–716) indicate a LH III C Middle/Developed chronology of Lefkandi Ib also occur in the deposits of Aigeira Ib: Monochrome deep bowls with reserved base (cf. Fig. 4:2. – POPHAM – MILBURN 1971, pl. 51:1); monochrome conical kylikes (cf. Fig. 4:5. – *RMDP*, fig. 274:73); monochrome carinated bowls FS 240 (cf. supra n. 15). Additionally we refer again to the vessels which seem to belong to LH III C Middle rather than to LH III C Early (Fig. 4:1,7,9). In a similar manner monochrome deep bowls with raised ring-bases (Fig. 4:3) seem to anticipate those of Phase II (Fig. 6:7–8). However, the revised chronology of Aigeira Phase Ib of LH III C Early and Middle/Developed which will be suggested below p. 72 f. should be treated as tentative as long as the material is still under study.

POTTERY DEPOSITS OF PHASE II³¹

The layout of the settlement of Phase II was completely different from the previous ones. A large building with several rooms covered the central part of the plateau which had been occupied first by the half-timbered house of Phase Ia, and subsequently by the potter's kiln, two courtyards and a store-house of Phase Ib (cf. supra, pp. 55, 58). It may be called "House of the Krater with Fringed Decoration" after a very large krater (Fig. 7) which was found in the destruction debris above its floor. South of this house another building was situated which also had several rooms. In the north-western edge of the plateau the remains of a circuit wall, and at its foundations, a votive offering con-

³⁰ Parallels between the materials from Aigeira Ib and Delphi have been observed by Mountjoy (*RMDP*, 424).

³¹ For stratigraphy and architectural remains of Phase II of Aigeira see DEGER-JALKOTZY – ALRAM-STERN 1985, 405–407. – ALRAM-STERN this volume.

sisting of three small vases were found (DEGER-JALKOTZY – ALRAM-STERN 1985, 407, fig. 20:2–4). The circuit wall, the buildings designed at a larger scale, and many fragments of large and copiously decorated kraters and closed vessels suggest that, at that time, Aigeira may be viewed as a local centre or as the residence of a local chief.

It has already been pointed out by ways of introduction (*supra*, p. 54) that the building activities of later periods and particularly of the Archaic era caused great damage to the Mycenaean levels of Phase II. No floors were preserved above the characteristic grey or reddish-grey ashy debris of Phase II. Indeed, at several locations this layer itself was greatly disturbed. Almost every deposit of Phase II contains later intrusions. Under these conditions we first adduced stylistic criteria for our classification of the pottery of Phase II (DEGER-JALKOTZY – ALRAM-STERN 1985, 418–422). During the recent material study we have been trying to sort out deposits which can be confidently assigned to Phase II. The material illustrated in Figs. 5–7 has been selected from three such find groups.

All three groups come from the “House of the Krater with Fringed Decoration” where sufficiently large parts of the floor were preserved in the central room. Three fragments (Fig. 5) have been chosen from a group of sherds which were picked up directly from the floor in the NW corner of this room. This group consists of sherds *inter alia* from monochrome deep bowls and (possibly) a stemmed bowl, as well as of a small unpainted dipper, all very much in the tradition of Phase Ib pottery. The same is true of several sherds from a large closed vessel (Fig. 5:2–3) displaying a feature which had also occurred with vases of Phase Ib (e.g. Fig. 4:8): The banded decoration was applied in a way that the paint trickled down over the surface of the vase. Since this trickling does not have an unaesthetic effect, it is difficult to decide whether it should be ascribed to the potter’s negligence or intention. The materials and shapes of the vases are excellent. In any case, several vessels both of Phase Ib and Phase II exhibit this particular feature, so it could not have been just an individual potter’s whim.

Differently from the pieces mentioned above, the fragment of a medium-size vessel (Fig. 5:1) is decorated in a manner which had not been known to the pottery of Phase Ib but which became popular in Phase II. The body of the vase is striped with evenly spaced bands. Unfortunately the lower part of the vessel is not preserved. However, even if it was not striped down to the bottom, it is clear that its decoration corresponds to

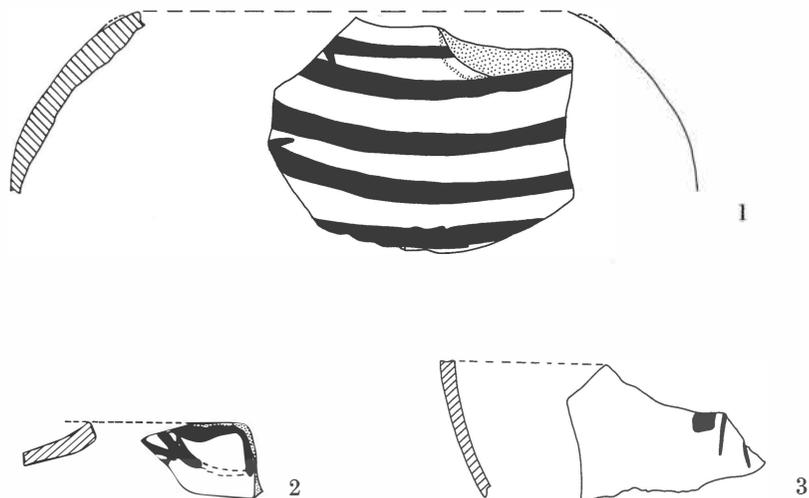


Fig. 5 Aigeira, acropolis: Floor deposit of Phase II, scale 1:3
(Pencil drawings: E. Alram-Stern, M. Zavadil. Ink drawings: E. Held)

a system which came to be a hallmark of Achaia after LH III C Early (PAPAZOGLOU-MANIOUDAKI 1994, 199).

The second deposit from the “House of the Krater with Fringed Decoration” was recovered from the ashes above the floor in the SW part of the central room. The debris there had a depth of ca. 0.25 m, and the sherds were completely buried in the grey ashes. The most interesting find was a large krater, after which the building has been named (Fig. 7). Its upper part could be almost completely restored, and the identification as FS 282 Type 3 in terms of *MDP*, 174, stands to reason. The shape had had its forerunners in Phase Ib (Fig. 4:8), and the monochrome paint of the lower exterior part of the vessel cannot be called a novelty in view of Phase Ib bowls (cf. Fig. 4:1) and monochrome kraters. It is the dense and elaborated decoration between the handles which sets this piece apart from the earlier specimens, and so does its size (0.40 m rim diameter). The decoration may be characterised as a composition of elements of which only the two-track antithetic loop pattern was an innovation. It first occurred in LH III C Advanced in the Argolid (PODZUWEIT 1981, 381. – PODZUWEIT 1992, chapter “Kratere”), and in Lefkandi 2b (POPHAM – MILBURN 1971, pl. 57:2), now dated to LH III C Late by Mountjoy (*RMDP*, 38). Otherwise triglyphs had been ubiquitous since LH III B, stacked triangles had occurred in Achaia in LH III A (*RMDP*, 411 no. 29, fig. 143) and LH III B (*RMDP*, 413 no. 39, fig. 145), and fringed concentric semicircles (PAPAZOGLOU-MANIOUDAKI 1994, fig. 12), even in a dense version (*RMDP*, 418 no. 55, fig. 146), had been used in Achaia in LH III C Early. It should be kept in mind that in Crete fringed motifs already became popular in LM III C Early (cf. KANTA this volume). In Achaia fringed and dotted patterns became increasingly popular during LH III C Middle (cf. PAPADOPOULOS 1978, e.g. fig. 69c–d. – *RMDP*, 425 no. 85, fig. 149) and III C Late (according to *RMDP*, 430–441 the bulk of material).³² Apart from a few more elaborately decorated vases (note also the fragment of a krater with a pattern of fringed ?triangles, Fig. 6:6), the sherd deposit connected with the krater Fig. 7 mainly contained material which was not very different from that of Phase Ib.

The same is true of the third deposit. It was found on the floor of the eastern part of the “House of the Krater with Fringed Decoration” which was situated above a storehouse of Phase Ib. Apart from fragments which demonstrated an almost unchanged continuity of the pottery of Phase Ib, there are several specimens which clearly exhibit some novel features. Fig. 6:1 represents one of the very few monochrome deep bowls with a reserved band at the interior rim. The fragments Fig. 6:4–5 demonstrate an increasing popularity of reserved bands on the insides and outsides of monochrome vessels. Fig. 6:3,7–8 shows that shapes known from LH III C Early may now have raised bases. As we have seen above, p. 67, such raised ring-bases had occasionally made an earlier appearance in Phase Ib. The elaborate decoration of the krater fragment Fig. 6:9 consists of dotted semicircles hanging down from the rim-band, and dotted dense semicircles set, in white paint, onto a dark belt floating in the decorative zone. This composite decoration incorporates motifs which had already occurred in Phase Ib (cf. also supra, p. 63). In this respect it may be compared to the krater of Fig. 7.

The large and very globular banded amphora Fig. 6:10 was found on a Phase II floor of the area west of the “House of the Krater with Fringed Decoration”. It exhibits the typical deep hollow rim of LH III C Middle.

³² PAPADOPOULOS 1979, 81 f. commented upon the fact that fringed and dotted patterns were quite rare in Achaia east of Aigion. The evidence of Aigeira seems to contradict this observation (Fig. 6:6,9. – SCHACHERMEYR 1976, fig. 40. – DEGER-JALKOTZY – ALRAM-STERN 1985, fig. 19:2).

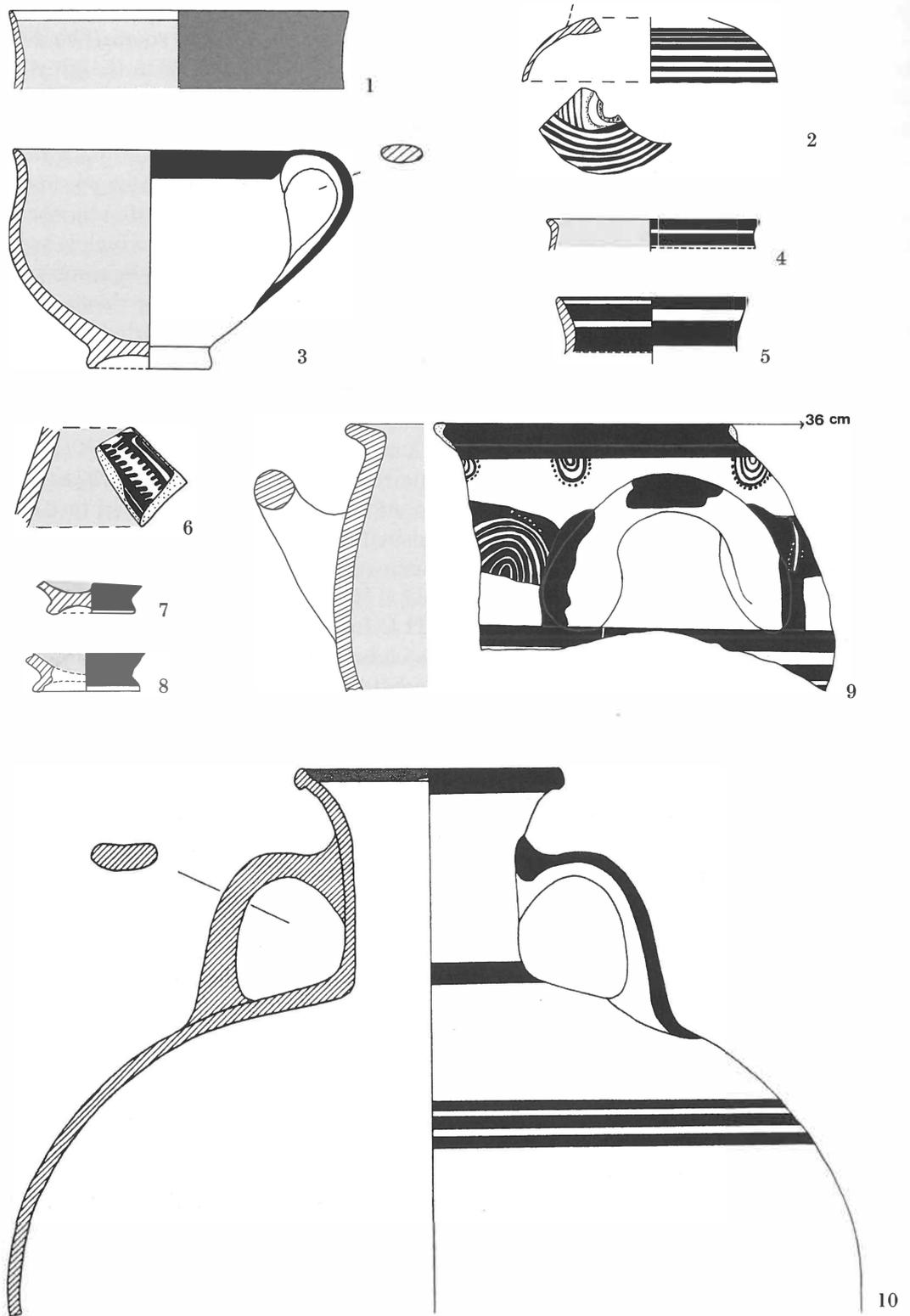


Fig. 6 Aigeira, acropolis: 1-9 Pottery from the grey ash layer above the Phase II floor of Trench II 3. - 10 Amphora from floor deposit of Phase II in Trench II 2, scale 1:3 (Pencil drawings: E. Alram-Stern, S. Jalkotzy, K. Schodl; Ink drawings: E. Held)



Fig. 7 Krater found in the grey ash layer above the Phase II floor or Trench II 3, diam. 40 cm
(Photograph: Th. Römer)

The Handmade Burnished Ware of Phase Ib no longer existed in Phase II. Handmade pottery found with contexts of Phase II was of a different character. Some pots of this ware were even thrown on the wheel (cf. DEGER-JALKOTZY – ALRAM-STERN 1985, 421 f.).

THE CHRONOLOGY OF PHASE II OF AIGEIRA

On the analogy of the elaborate pottery styles known from the centres of almost every province of LH III C Greece, and according to the state of pottery classification at the time, Aigeira II was dated by us in 1985 to LH III C Middle (DEGER-JALKOTZY – ALRAM STERN 1985, 418 f.). However, the chronology of Aigeira II has been doubted by Mountjoy (*RMDP*, 329, 439) who favours a date of LH III C Late. Since the same authoress accepts our dating of Phase Ib to LH III C Early, she suggests a settlement hiatus between Phase Ib and II.

Limited space prevents a lengthy discussion of Dr. Mountjoy's definitions of LH III C Middle and Late pottery from Achaia here, which, as she herself admits "should be treated with caution" (*RMDP*, 402). The obstacles to establishing a chronological framework for Achaia in LH III C have been hinted at by ways of introduction. On the other hand it is of considerable historical interest as to whether Achaia reached a pinnacle of prosperity at the same time (i.e. in LH III C Middle) when most other Mycenaean provinces flourished, or at a time when many other regions already underwent a period of decline. However, these matters should be discussed at a special workshop devoted to LH III C Middle and Late.

As far as Aigeira is concerned, Fig. 1 illustrates the stratigraphy of the area from which the deposits came which have been treated in this paper. This stratigraphy stands for the entire site. Indeed, if there had been a habitation gap between the settlements Ib and II, one should expect humus soil to have accumulated during a period (LH III C Developed and Advanced) which cannot have been of short duration. Moreover, these sediments should be, at least at some locations, discernible between the layers of Phase Ib and II. However, as just shown in Fig. 1, the strata of Phase II all over the site were directly superimposed on the destruction debris of Phase Ib. There were no intermediate deposits. One could hypothesise that the builders of Aigeira II carefully removed all surface deposits until they reached the debris of Phase Ib. However, such a hypothesis requires a reasonable explanation for the fact that the destruction layer of Phase Ib was levelled out and masses of sherds from smashed pots were thrown into the potter's kiln and the courtyard around it (cf. *supra*, p. 58). It would have certainly been easier to level the site by using all surface material. Moreover, as Dr. Alram-Stern kindly pointed out to me, in case of a habitation gap the pottery material of Phase Ib ought to contain sherds which had been weathered by the exposure to erosion on the surface of the site.³³ Yet differently from the pottery found in the top layers at Aigeira, the pottery of Phase Ib does show signs of exposure to a catastrophic fire but no signs of exposure to surface erosion.

Instead of operating with the hypothesis of a settlement hiatus we would prefer a revision of the chronology of Aigeira. Dr. Mountjoy's reassessment of the chronology of Lefkandi Ib, and of several other sites in the wake of it (*RMDP*, 38–40) has brought it home to us that the four-partite phasing of LH III C in the Argolid may apply to other regions too. The late Christian Podzuweit kept insisting that at Tiryns there were more changes in the ceramic repertoire between LH III C Developed and Advanced than between LH III C Advanced and Late (PODZUWEIT 1983. – PODZUWEIT 1988. – PODZUWEIT 1992). The same may well have been true of Achaia. Personally I do not see any necessity for dating the pottery from the deposits of Aigeira II (Figs. 5–7) to LH III C Late. Everyday shapes and types already known from Phase Ib now exhibit reserved bands, raised ring-bases and pointed rims of monochrome bowls. Some of these elements had already made their first appearances with the pottery of Phase Ib. The real difference between Phases Ib and II pottery lay in the fact that in Aigeira II the pottery tradition of LH III B definitely came to a close. Moreover, Phase II witnessed the development of an elaborate syntax of pottery painting which integrated old motifs and new patterns into an innovative regional style. As we shall hopefully be able to show at the next Vienna workshop, Aigeira has produced a considerable number of copiously decorated vases of LH III C Middle and Late which seem to incorporate ideas which may have come from various provinces of the Aegean, even if the influence of western Achaia was undeniable. Aigeira II thus qualifies for LH III C Advanced in terms of the Argolid, or for Phase 4b in the chronological scheme of RUTTER 1977. On the other hand the pottery of Aigeira Ib contained elements which, with regard of Lefkandi Ib, have been assigned to LH III C Middle/Developed by Mountjoy (*RMDP*, 38).

Summing up, we propose a tentative date of LH III C Early (Phase 3) and LH III C Middle/Developed for Aigeira Ib. This date would establish a synchronism between the settlement at Aigeira and the Warrior Tomb of Krini (PAPAZOGLU-MANIOUDAKI 1994). For Aigeira II we propose a date of LH III C Middle/Advanced. It may have lasted into

³³ Many sherds of the prehistoric pottery from Aigeira are worn from exposure to surface erosion during the long intermittent periods between the prehistoric occupations of the site, cf. ALRAM-STERN 2001. – ALRAM-STERN 2003.

LH III C Late but further investigation of the unstratified material belonging to this period is required.

P. A. Mountjoy aptly observed that in Achaia, LH III C Late was a period of wealth and prosperity. There are no signs that the region declined during the final stages of the Mycenaean period and Submycenaean. However, in our view, the evidence of the floor deposits of Aigeira II suggests that Achaia's pinnacle of achievements was already reached in LH III C Advanced and lasted into LH III C Late.

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