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Pottery as sign of cultural encounters: The case of Handmade Burnished and Grey Ware in Khania

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The Late Bronze Age was a world of interaction in which people and things moved around, particularly in the Eastern Mediterranean basin. As people encountered one another, ideas, thoughts and values were occasionally exchanged followed by cultural changes and the creation of new material expressions. The Minoan harbour town of Khania serves as a good example of cultural encounters at the end of the Aegean Bronze Age. Its location on the northwest coast of Crete was favourable for seagoing travels. A number of objects discovered in the city bear witness to overseas connections with the mainland as well as with Egypt, Italy, Cyprus, and the Levant.

In this article I will explore cultural meetings and external impacts/influences on this harbour city by examining two pottery types which have often been associated with the last and tumultuous phases of the Late Bronze Age and the movements of people of western origin; Handmade Burnished Ware and Grey Ware.⁴ I will question how these items were used in their new cultural contexts and whether they were primarily used in everyday household activities, or in what could be identified as non-domestic contexts like ritual ones. Did their presence have any impact on the local pottery production?

After providing a short background including historical and theoretical frameworks for these questions and an introduction to the HMB and GW pottery, this paper will focus on a case study followed by a discussion. Most of the HBW and GW pottery from Khania dates to the LM IIIB: 2 period; I will therefore focus on this phase.⁵

^{1.} Gosden 2004, 2012, 13.

^{2.} Andreadaki-Vlasaki 2010, 519, points out that as Khania is located opposite the Peloponnese, sailors could only travel from the mainland to Khania by following the currents.

^{3.} Hallager and Hallager 2003; Andreadaki-Vlazaki 2010.

^{4.} Deger-Jalkotzy 2008, 385.

^{5.} Only a few HMBW sherds comes from the previous LM IIIB:1 layer, 26 sherds were found in the LM IIIC. Hallager 2003, 254.

Maritime contacts in the Late Bronze Age

The Eastern Mediterranean experienced a period of intense contact in the Late Bronze Age, largely conducted through maritime enterprises. The capability to construct ships that were capable of open-water voyages as well as the ability to sail them partly explains why seaborne activity increased during this phase.⁶ In practice, this meant being able to sail for several days out of sight of land as in the case of the route from Crete to Egypt, a journey that would have lasted about five days. These open sea travels may also have involved sailing at night.⁷

Large quantities of different wares were now circulating in the Mediterranean through far-reaching networks. Long distance commerce included trading of raw materials as well as manufactured objects. Two examples of sea borne trade in the Late Bronze Age are the famous ship wrecks of the Uluburun and the Cape Gelidonya which were discovered off the coast of Turkey. The wrecks date from around 1300 BC and 1200 BC respectively and contain the remains of their cargoes which give a close picture of what was traded at the time. The smaller ship, the Cape Gelidonya, contained mostly bun ingots, bronze tools and copper oxhide ingots – it appears to have been collecting metal junk for reuse. The Uluburun ship contained at least fifteen tons of cargo, the main part of which seems to have been metal including ten tons of raw copper. Other items included ivory and wooden works, personal items, ship equipment, weapons, tools, and jewellery to name but a few. Although much is still uncertain in terms of ports of call, final destinations and the ownership of the boat, there are several indicators which suggest that the ship sailed to the Aegean from the east.

Excavation reports from a large number of sites throughout the Mediterranean record objects that bear witness to these travels and meetings. The Aegean-style frescoes discovered at Tell el-Dab'a (ancient Avaris) in Egypt and the depictions

^{6.} Berg 2007, 403; Casson 1995; Kristiansen 2013; Manning & Huhlin 2005; Mee 2008; Wachsmann 1998. For Minoans in the Central, Eastern and Northern Aegean as well as different aspects like trade, thalassocracy and so forth, see Macdonald, Hallager and Niemeier 2009. See also Mediterranean Crossroads 2007, Antoniadou and Pace (eds.) for different topics related to maritime interaction in the Mediterranean during the Bronze Age with a special focus on movement and change. See Broodbank 2000 for maritime communication in the EBA and Alberti 2013, 22-43, for the MBA. On harbors of the Bronze Age see Oleson and Hohlfelder 2011, 809-812.

^{7.} Berg 2007, 387-415.

^{8.} van Wijngaarden 2012, 61-62. See Leriou 2011, 262-263, on Aegean and Cypriot trade in the Late Bronze Age.

^{9.} Another ship wreck, the so-called Iria wreck discovered in the Gulf of Argos, also dates from the 13th century. Wachsmann 1998; Burns 2010, 291-304; Cline 2014.

in Theban tombs of Cretan envoys carrying merchandise are examples of close contact between Crete and the Eastern Mediterranean. ¹⁰ Knowledge about how trade was organised is still limited, particularly concerning private tradesmen versus state organised trade, although scholars generally agree that there was low volume trading of luxury goods which moved between elites as well as larger scale bulk trade directed at "larger communities". Objects that do not fit in either of these categories might indicate, as suggested by Steel, that sailors procured personal items on their voyages. ¹¹

One of the major changes regarding Aegean trade appears to have started in the LM IIIA period when trade with Italy, Sardinia and Sicily increased. According to Betancourt, discoveries of the Aegean weight system on these sites indicates the importance of trade between the regions. Pottery from Crete and from the Peloponnese has been found at the subsequent LM IIIB period sites in Northern Calabria and on Sardinia. According to Watrous this development was related to the on-going insecure political situation in the Eastern Mediterranean which saw the Hittite kingdom and Egypt fighting over the Levant and culminating in the battle of Ouadesh *c.* 1275 BC. 14

Perhaps most significantly, the end of the Late Bronze Age is characterized by a great instability which included the movements of different groups of people, most

^{10.} Beside the Aegean style frescoes in Egypt, discoveries of frescoes have been made at sites in the Near East at the palace of Tell Kabri, Quatna and at Alalakh; Chapin 2010, 229; Bietak 1995, 49-89; Wachsmann 2011, 202-204.

^{11.} In contrast to the Aegean, Cyprus and the Southern Levant, textual documents from Syria and Mesopotamia show that an intricate trading system existed in which both private traders as well as the state were involved during the 2nd millennium, Steel 2012, 122, 138-142. For an overview on LBA trade see Steel 2012. From the so-called Amarna Letters found in Egypt, dating to the reign of Amenhotep III and Akhenaten it appears that Egyptian traders were much more limited compared to the tradesmen in the Near East, and that the Pharaohs had control over trade to a greater extent, Mee 2008, 378-379.

^{12.} Betancourt 2008, 222. The major part of the Aegean style pottery discovered in Italy was locally made, Mee 2008; 380. See Hallager 1985a on the relations between Crete and Italy in the LBA.

^{13.} Betancourt 2008, 222; Mee 2008, 380; Watrous 1992, 182-183. Metal artefacts from Italy have been found in Crete, although most of these appear to have come from the central part of the island. The earliest finds, daggers and fibulae, date to the 13th century, Hallager 1985, 296.

^{14.} Watrous 1992, 182-183. Mee 2008, 377, nevertheless states that trade continued to thrive for a while.

often referred to as the "Sea Peoples", around the coasts of the Mediterranean. ¹⁵ Little evidence of habitation exists on Crete from the LM IIIB2 period in some of the large coastal settlements. Several sites were already established that would subsequently be used as "refuge" locations in the following LM IIIC period. ¹⁶ As for the mainland, this marks the end of the Mycenaean palatial period when the palace system, including the palaces, were destroyed. ¹⁷

Intercultural contacts and its material expression

The use of pottery as a point of departure for examining cultural encounters in Khania will be based on the discussion of materiality which has taken place in recent years. Material culture is no longer understood as a collection of lifeless objects, their active role in people's lives is instead acknowledged. As objects have their own agency that can affect the construction of the social world as well as interfaces between people to differing degrees. Yet, the relationship between people and things is all but simple and straightforward, and as objects can move around during their lifecycle they can also change and/or be given additional meanings depending on the context.¹⁸

The harbour town Khania appears to have functioned as a node of long-distance trade during the Late Bronze Age, as such it worked as a mediator for encounters. People from various social and ethnic backgrounds would have met each other here; sailors, merchants, and artisans as well as curious locals in circumstances that most likely involved constant mediation between different groups regarding identity, ideas and values. ¹⁹ The outcome of these intercultural meetings may have had an effect on the economy but also on socio-political and cultural life. This could have involved functional innovations and technologies such as new architectural features, improvements in ship construction or different pottery

^{15.} The so-called Sea Peoples consisted of several ethnic groups of which some appear to have been seaborne. Ramses III claimed that he had managed to hold them back in two major battles that were later depicted on the walls of his grave temple at Medinet Habu, near modern Luxor. Wachsmann 1998, 163; Deger-Jalkotzy 2008, 387-415; Leriou 2011, 251-253. See Artzy 1997, 1-16, for further discussion. See also Dickinson 2010, 483-490, for a general discussion on the Late Bronze Age collapse. See Cline 2014 for a thorough discussion on the theme.

^{16.} Several sites that were to be used as "refuge" locations in the following LM IIIC period were already established. Hallager 2010, 157.

^{17.} Deger-Jalkotzy 2008, 387.

^{18.} Meskell 2005; Maran and Stockhammer 2012; Steel 2012.

^{19.} Hallager and McGeorge 1992; Maran 2012, 121; Panagiotopoulos 2012, 54. See also Falck 2003, for discussions on harbours and hybridity.

shapes as well as the exchange of ideas, beliefs and knowledge that may well have led to the amalgamation of new and traditional social practices. However, as Maran points out, even though port-cities could serve as melting pots for people of different origins, both of local and non-local, there is the danger of interpreting harbour towns too simplistically and giving the so-called "foreigners" too much credit by not acknowledging the heterogeneity that exists in societies in general. Moreover, the degree to which certain aspects were taken on board could vary between various groups for a number of reasons. There would certainly have been a difference between those coming to a new place for the first time and the non-locals who had lived there for a while. There could be countless reactions to an unfamiliar culture, some individuals and/or groups might have been more prone to assimilate new material culture, ideas and values, whether they belonged to the foreigners or indigenous peoples.²⁰ Either way, meetings would have had an effect on people some way or other, irrespective of reactions.²¹

How these processes could have worked and in what different ways they could have been reflected in the material world has gained attention among scholars over the last decade. ²² Societies in which intense cultural contact was conducted, like harbour towns, should be understood as "dynamic" and changeable but also as heterogenic ²³ with the birth of new material expressions. ²⁴

A number of factors like personal preferences and local traditions are involved and come into play when considering how and why people assimilate aspects of a new culture. By looking at objects as types of a material connected with various social meaning that, besides the practical, can be used to reinforce identities and/ or be used for symbolic reasons, we may understand these changes and how they operated. The meaning of the objects is linked to social relationships and practices as we use them to express identity, materialize symbolic values and build relationships. Objects can also form the conduct of people collectively. Through the material world people can express their place in the social world and objects can therefore act as an intermediate. In other words, things, as well as people, have agency.²⁵

With regard to prehistoric societies, like the Minoan, we know that some parts had direct or indirect contact with the world outside Crete. Why certain objects and ideas seem to have been accepted is interesting. As pointed out by Philips,

^{20.} Maran 2012, 121.

^{21.} Steel 2012.

^{22.} Gosden 2004; Steel 2012; Maran and Stockhammer 2012.

^{23.} Maran and Stockhammer 2012. For examples in the Argolid in the 13th and 12th century BC, see Maran 2004, 11-30.

^{24.} Hodder 2012; Jung 2012; Knapp 2012.

^{25.} Steel 2012, 6-7; van Winjgaarden 2012, 61; see also Meskell 2005.

"the recipient culture must have been exposed to far more potential influences than it actually embraced". 26 Moreover, influences and transformations did not involve the whole society simultaneously, but instead operated in various ways and at various levels and varied over time and according to context. There were probably a number of reasons why some objects were integrated and some were not.²⁷ The same type of object might have had a variety of meanings depending on the recipient and therefore may have departed from its original meaning. The intrinsic value, moreover, could have been lost on the way or for some reason rejected. Misunderstandings of the original significance may have taken place, or, it may well be that the receiver was aware of the original meaning but nevertheless chose to accept only those aspects that were of interest. The choice and liking of the individual must also be taken into consideration – not all foreign features were adopted or even open for adoption by everyone: local tradition as well as the intrinsic conservatism of people could at times have been too strong. Just as people are selective today, people in ancient times probably were too, and the remains we find may be the results of individual preferences in at least some of the instances.²⁸

Handmade Burnished Ware and Grey Ware

The so-called Handmade Burnished Ware (HMBW), sometimes also referred to as Barbarian Ware, appears in the Eastern Mediterranean in the 13th - 12th centuries BC, particularly in the Aegean area.²⁹ The earliest occurrence in the Aegean is at Khania and Tiryns and dates to the 13th century BC. Thus the introduction of the ware in the LM/H IIIB:2 is limited to Western Crete and the Argolid.³⁰ In the following LH IIIC period the amount of handmade pottery increases, and it is found in almost all early LH IIIC settlements on the Greek mainland, at several sites in Crete, in Cyprus as well on the Anatolian and Levantine coasts. At the same time, the number of HMBW at Khania is reduced. Several areas have been put forward as the provenance of the pottery; the Northern Balkans, Northwest Greece, Southeast Europe and both sides of the Adriatic Sea. Whether the makers of this pottery had something to do with the demise of the Mycenaean palaces has also

^{26.} Philips 2005, 39.

^{27.} Clarke 2005, 137-139. For a discussion on the impact of trade on Late Cypriote society see Antoniadou 2005, 66-77.

^{28.} Philips 2005, 39-45.

^{29.} French 1998,39-51; Lis 2009, Iacono 2013, 60-79.

^{30.} Deger-Jalkotzy 2008, 395; Iacono 2013, 63; Rutter 2012, 82. According to Iacono 2013, 63, however, one sherd has been found in Nichoria and one vessel in Athens from the LM IIIB:2 period.

been a matter of discussion. Other finds that originated in the west (Italy, the north-western Balkan and Central Europe) and appear in the Aegean in the postpalatial period are the flange-hilted sword of the Naue II type, and the violin-bow-shaped fibula.³¹ The Naue II sword became the standard in the Mediterranean at the end of the Bronze Age. Due to their western origin, in combination with the appearance in postpalatial contexts, scholars have dedicated much attention to these finds.³²

Although the hand-made pottery has gained a high degree of attention, the actual amount retrieved from each site is generally low. Usually it does not surpass 1% of the total amount of sherds found in the settlements.³³ Given the fact that it most likely did not meet the demands of an Aegean population who were used to Minoan and Mycenaean pottery it has often come to be associated with foreigners.³⁴ The pottery comes in a variety of shapes including cooking pots, bowls, cups and jars. Open shapes are the most common types in Khania and Lefkandi whereas closed vessels for cooking and storage, are found alongside open vessels, like carinated cups, in the rest of the Aegean. The pottery is usually burnished and most often of poor craftsmanship. Typical for the ware is its "momentary character", and that when it lasted for a longer period, the quantity quickly drops off.³⁵ According to Jung, the HMBW is of South Italian Recent Bronze Age type, and features typological similarities between the handmade so-called *impasto* pottery.³⁶ Nevertheless, even if an Italian origin is plausible for the HMBW, most pottery of this type is locally made at the sites where it has been found.³⁷

Another ware with affinities to pottery from the south of Italy is Grey Ware, a pottery type that is often found together with Handmade Burnished Ware. The former is, however, found in much smaller numbers than the latter. ³⁸ Grey Ware appears to have been rather uncommon in Italy as a type of a handmade pottery. According to Hallager, Grey Ware is restricted to Lipari and the Gulf of Taranto. It was discovered together with Minoan and Mycenaean sherds at Broglio di Trebisacce. ³⁹

^{31.} Deger-Jalkotzy 2008, 389, 395.

^{32.} Iacono 2013, 61-62.

^{33.} There are a few sites at which the sherds exceed 1 %, such as Troy and Mitrou which instead have 2,5 % handmade pottery, Lis 2009, 152-153. There are three distinctive groups of handmade pottery according to Lis; Handmade Burnished Ware, West Anatolian Handmade Pottery and Handmade Domestic pottery.

^{34.} Hallager, 1985a, 304; Deger-Jalkotzy 2008, 395.

^{35.} Lis 2009, 152.

^{36.} Jung 2012, 109.

^{37.} Lis 2009, 154.

^{38.} Jung 2012, 109.

^{39.} Hallager 1985, 303.

The settlement of Khania in the Late Bronze Age

As initially mentioned, the settlement of Khania-*Kydonia* lies on the northwest coast of Crete. On the Kastelli hill, east of the Old Harbour, excavations have revealed an area of 550m² in which five buildings, parts of two streets and an open area have been discovered. Amongst the particularly interesting finds is the unique Master Impression, discovered during excavations in 1985 in a pit in Building 1.⁴⁰ Other finds of importance include the Linear B tablets, found in a LM IIIB context. On one of these tablets the handwriting closely resembles that of "scribe 115" from Knossos, which is very interesting since it could suggest that the same scribe might have worked at both Khania and Knossos.⁴¹

Khania was occupied throughout the Bronze Age. A number of conspicuous features in the architecture are dated to the Neopalatial period such as ashlar facades, fresco paintings, columns, pillars, pier-and-door partitions which were found in what at first appeared to be private buildings attributed to the elite. More finds of this character, together with discoveries of cult and ceremonial places have caused the excavators to suggest that some of the extensive building complex in the settlement could in fact have been part of a palace structure.⁴²

In the LM II-IIIA2 period Khania probably functioned as one of the so-called "second-order centres" on the island where a local elite known as "Collectors" administered herds of sheep for the palace at Knossos. The centralized administration at Knossos at this time used the Linear B script written on clay tablets, thousands of which have been discovered in the Knossos palace as records. These tablets tell us about an economy where sheep breeding and textile production seem to have been the main concern. *Kydonia* (*ku-do-ni-ja*), i.e. Minoan Khania, was probably one of these six centres mentioned in the texts. It is interesting that Khania seems to have benefitted from a fairly high degree of independence in relation to the Knossian administration.⁴³

In the LM IIIB period, Khania had grown into a maritime centre with an extensive overseas trading network reflected in the ceramic goods which were imported and exported.⁴⁴ The town, which reached its highest level of urban development at this time and became one of the most important centres on the island, was characterized by large-scale architectural structures and elite tomb

^{40.} Hallager 1985b; Andreadaki-Vlasaki 2002.

^{41.} Hallager, Vlasaki, and Hallager, 1992; Hallager and Vlasaki 1997.

^{42.} Andreadaki-Vlasaki 2010; Hallager 2010,151-153.

^{43.} Preston 2008, 313-314. For a general overview of the LM II-IIIA see Hallager 2010, 153-155. For further discussion on how the administration was managed in the Mycenaean Late Bronze Age, see Shelmerdine and Bennet 2008, 289-309.

^{44.} Preston 2008, 318.

constructions.⁴⁵ This development is interesting since the island in general experienced a declining climate with a decreasing level of trade with the Eastern Mediterranean, a change most likely connected to the growth of Mycenaean contact with the Levant and Egypt. 46 The local fine ware production from the "Kydonian" workshop was exported to other sites on the island as well as to the Greek mainland, Cyprus, the Cyclades, Italy and Sardinia. 47 Finds of Handmade Burnished Ware in the settlement indicate additional connections with the latter areas. Relations with the Greek mainland, in particular the Argolid and Boeotia, seem to have been especially close at this time and there are several indications of a Mycenaean presence in the LM IIIB period according to the excavators. 48 The Linear B tablets, as mentioned above, were discovered in Building 1. Circular hearths with strong parallels to the mainland counterpart were found in the same building along with six figurines. At least five of the figurines were imports from the mainland or made in the Mycenaean style. The excavators believe that this, together with the placement of them i.e. close to a door or to a hearth, strongly speaks for a Mycenaean presence in the building.⁴⁹ According to Andreadaki-Vlasaki⁵⁰ the evidence given by the archaeological material, together with the skeletal remains, appears to imply a mixture of a native and non-native population co-existing in the city.

Khania was characterized by decline in terms of outside contact in the LM IIIC period. There is no evidence of an administration or that large buildings would have been in use. Sometime during this phase the town was abandoned like many other coastal sites on the island. However, there are no signs of destruction and many of the rooms were found empty.⁵¹

^{45.} Andreadaki-Vlasaki 2010, 518-528.

^{46.} Wallace 2010.

^{47.} Hallager and Hallager 2003.

^{48.} Hallager and Hallager 2003; Andreadaki-Vlasaki 2010.

^{49.} Hallager 2003, 191, 287.

^{50.} Andreadaki-Vlasaki 2010, 524-525. The settlement of Khania covers the whole of the Bronze Age, however, the discovered tombs date mostly to the LM IIIA and B periods. See also Hallager and McGeorge 1992 for the examination of the LM III burials in Khania.

^{51.} Hallager and Hallager 2003. From this period, threats have been detected towards coastal settlements, many of which were trading centres. As a result, villagers abandoned their homes and moved further inland to the hilly or mountainous regions, where defence was easier. In this turbulent phase at least 109 new settlements were established in the remote uplands (McEnroe 2010).

The context of Handmade Burnished Ware and Grey Ware in Khania

Let us now take a look at the LM IIIB:2 settlement in the Agia Aikaterini Square. After its destruction by fire in LM IIIB:1, the settlement was rebuilt in LM IIIB:2. The rebuilding seems to have started immediately although only parts of the settlement were rebuilt while others were left in ruins. The site, which was extended towards the north and northwest, consisted of two or three buildings. Some of the rooms were abandoned while the so-called Rubbish Area North was extended. Overall, small modifications were made in the architecture.⁵² From the remains of the building, together with the large amount of pottery (nearly two and a half tons) and small finds, the excavators came to the conclusion that the settlement consisted of large and roomy buildings. The one-storey Building 1 measured at least 150m² with three larger rooms enclosed by smaller ones and a courtyard. Large-scale storage and/or handicraft in the settlement seems to have taken place outside the buildings, as shown by the finds of leather and woodworking. Traces of the metal industry were found in Courtyard A. Basketry as well as carpentry may also have been present. The buildings were more or less entirely constructed of stone and the interiors had walls coated with clay lining and plaster. Cooking activities only seem to have taken place in Room E where complete cooking vessels were discovered. The fact that there was only one place for cooking supports the possibility suggested by the excavators that Building 1 functioned as a single unit.53 Various activities could have taken place in the courtyard. There is little evidence, in contrast to the following LM IIIC period, for textile production or that any kind of handicraft was conducted inside the buildings. The chief industry in the settlement seems to have been the production of the Local Kydonian pottery. Besides the large amount of misfired Kydonian Ware fragments, a potter's wheel and two fragmentary examples together with a potter's rubbing tool denote the significance of the production. The Local Kydonian ware was exported to sites all over Crete, the mainland, the Cyclades, Cyprus and Sardinia.54

There is little evidence from the LM IIIB:2 period of a functioning administration. The worn fragment of a Linear B tablet (KH X 3) probably belonged to an earlier phase. However, the excavators point out that there is clear evidence that the script was still in use as the many Linear B inscriptions have been found on fragments of stirrups jars from securely dated LM IIIB:2 strata.⁵⁵

^{52.} Hallager and Hallager 2003, 22, 286.

^{53.} In the following LM IIIC period, fire areas and "cooking facilities" were abundant. Hallager and Hallager 2003, 286.

^{54.} Hallager and Hallager 2003.

^{55.} Hallager and Hallager 2003, 286-288.

Handmare Burnished Ware and Grey Ware in Khania

Ninety fragments of HMBW were found in the Agia Aikaterini Square in Khania. The fabric of these fragments is dark brown or reddish brown with a thick black core. The pottery is often fired greyish-black "to black all through". There are traces of burnishing tools on the surface. The fragments all come from open vessels of the *olla*, *scodella* and *ciotola* careneta type. There are three varieties of the *olla* type deep bowl for which clear parallels can be found in Southern Italy; two types with horizontal handles and one handle-less hole-mouthed type. The *olla* appears to have had no impact on local production. The carinated one-handled cup *ciotola* careneta, sometimes equipped with elaborated handles, was perhaps the most typical vessel of the sub-Appenine Late Bronze Age. This drinking cup, on the other hand, inspired similar looking wheelmade cups with high handles and linear decoration: so-called banded cups. The shallow convex cup, named *scodella*, which also has parallels in South Italy, is rare.⁵⁶

The main part of the Handmade Burnished Ware in Khania dates to the LM IIIB2 period. The fragments were discovered in three areas: six fragments come from Rooms E and A and Space D. Six fragments were found in the Courtyard area or the southeast area. Most of the fragments, 78 sherds, were found in the so-called Rubbish Area North, which will be discussed in detail later. Chemical analysis showed that the pottery was made locally ⁵⁷

Regarding Grey Ware, the 75 fragments found in the Agia Aikaterini Square belong to open vessels that are thin-walled and wheel-made. The surface is burnished and the clay dark grey. Four sherds were found in Room A, the Courtyard Area and Space A-D. The greater part, 78 fragments, came from the Rubbish Area North. The fragments all date to the LM IIIB:2, i.e. the same strata as the sherds of the HMBW type. As for the shapes, one fragment, a spout, comes from an unusual spouted cup. The fragment found in Space A-D, from another type of cup, is unusual according to Hallagers. The two sherds from the Courtyard Area belong to a carinated cup and a kylix. Only a few shapes were found in the Rubbish Area North: kylikes and two types of small cups of which the carinated cup is the most common. The Grey Ware shapes from Khania have no close counterparts in Crete, although parallels with these are found on the mainland and most of all in Italy.⁵⁸ B. Hallager points out that there are wheelmade Minoan /Mycenaean kylikes made in the Grey Ware

^{56.} Rutter 2012, 83-84. For a full description of the *olla* types see further Hallager and Hallager 2003, 253.

^{57.} Hallager and Hallager 2003, 253.

^{58.} Hallager and Hallager 2003, 255-256.

style in Khania. She believes that these were made by Italians who had learnt about the potter's wheel and for some reason wanted to produce a mix of their own and local Minoan traditions. It could therefore have been produced for a specific market.⁵⁹

Rubbish Area North

It is time to take a look at the context of the HMBW and Grey Ware in Khania. As mentioned above, the main part of the HMBW and Grey Ware fragments were found in the Rubbish Area North (RAN) outside Buildings 1 and 2. This was the largest open area measuring about 150m² and consisted of dumps and pits of various sizes dug down to earlier Middle Minoan layers. 60 No architectural remains were discovered here. 61 The pits and dumps were dug at several levels and contained a number of different finds. Almost 1 ton of pottery representing 33% of the total amount of pottery retrieved from the LM IIIB:2-IIIC period was discovered in this area. 859 fragments of pottery were noted from the LM IIIB:2 period. Hallager points out that practically all known types were represented among these sherds, however, some shapes appeared in larger numbers; pithoi, bowls, kylikes and cups. Among the closed vessels, the stirrup jar was the only shape that was discovered in "some amounts". The number of small decorated stirrup jars were represented by an almost double quantity in comparison with the remaining deposits from the LM III:2 period. With regards to the non-local type of pottery, 91 % of the HMBW and Grey Ware were discovered in the RAN. Imports from Knossos constituted 38%, however, the Mycenaean ware was "only" represented by 13%.62

Besides pottery, pieces of obsidian were also discovered, although in small amounts as was the case for raw materials in general. Bronzes and stone tools were found in larger numbers. Small pieces of both painted and unpainted plaster fragments were also noted. Many of the small finds were all found well preserved; a fibula, an arrowhead and bronze fishing hooks as well as bone and bronze needles. Moreover, four completely preserved loom weights were also found along with *Murex* shells.⁶³

^{59.} Hallager 1985a, 303.

^{60.} This area was also in use in the following LM IIIC period. Hallager 2001, 175-179.

^{61.} Hallager and Hallager 2003, 128.

^{62.} Hallager 2001, 175-180; Hallager and Hallager 2003, 132, 140-141.

^{63.} Hallager 2001, 175-180.

In the so-called Central Dump in the RAN an important find of a large, possibly female figure was found (80-TC 023). According to Winbladh the terracotta was locally made in the Local Kydonian Workshop and of very high quality. The upper part of the figure's head appears to have been hand-made whereas the lower part was wheel-made. The height of the head is 0.107, and if it had been complete Winbladh estimates that its probable height would have been 0.15 or 0.16. Compared to other Minoan and Mycenaean figures the head usually constitutes one fifth or one sixth of the whole figure. This would mean, she concludes, that the total height of the Kydonian figure would most likely have been at least 0.75 m.⁶⁴ In addition there were fragments of figurines discovered in the RAN. Among these there was a figurine of possible PsiB type that had been locally made (73-TC 016),⁶⁵ and an animal figurine that had been imported from Mycenae.⁶⁶

Four fragments of a *rython* in the shape of a goat or a ram (*ovicaprid*) represent a unique find. The *rython* was made in the local Kydonian Workshop.⁶⁷ This could, according to Hallager, have been part of cult equipment.

Overall, finds that could also be identified as cult equipment included strainers, rhyta, figurines, stands and trick vases and were numerous in the RAN area. If they had been used as religious paraphernalia, they were most likely the "remains from offerings" conducted in the area. These objects, together with the fact that the pits and dumps in the RAN also contained animal bones, may indicate that there had been rituals in a close by sanctuary. This representation diverged from the average distribution in Khania. The caprids were represented by 48 % in the RAN compared to 62 % in the rest of the settlement, while deer constituted 13 % compared with 3 % in the settlement. Deer constituted as much as 28 % in one of the pits. Another small pit contained 43% from young caprids, which is exceptional and made Hallager speculate as to whether this could have been the remains of offerings. Pigs and cattle were found in the same quantity as elsewhere in Khania.

The large number of finds that were discovered in the RAN area constituted about one-third of the total amount of material from the LM IIIB2 deposits, but differed compared to the remaining finds from the settlement. At first it

^{64.} Winbladh 2003, 270; Hallager and Hallager 2003, 166-167; Driessen 2008, 200.

^{65.} Hallager and Hallager 2003, 172.

^{66.} Winbladh 2003: 270.

^{67.} Hallager, 2001b, 315-319.

^{68.} Hallager and Hallager 200, 287.

^{69.} The distribution of animals in LM II and III Khania is in accordance with many other settlements in the Bronze Age. Hallager 2001a. 176.

^{70.} Hallager 2001a, 176; Hallager and Hallager 2003, 137, 141, 145-146, 160, 167, 170, 174, 178.

was interpreted as a rubbish dump, but both the size and the contents made the excavators discuss the possibility that the area could instead have been a waste site for a sanctuary located nearby. Finds that are normally connected with cult contexts – such as figurines, both complete and fragmentary, strainers, stands and *rhyta*— were discovered here. The unusual number of deer found in the pits is also intriguing: they might have been used as sacrificial offerings.⁷¹ In addition, 90% of the HMBW and Grey Ware pottery from Khania was discovered here which poses the question of the significance and use of this pottery.

Discussion

If we examine the degree of influence that HMBW and Grey Ware pottery had on the local pottery production in Khania, it is interesting to note that the open vessel of the type called *olla*, which is the larger of the two principal forms, appears to have had no influence on the native production; a fact already pointed out by Rutter. 72 On the other hand, the drinking cup, ciotola carenata, seems to have been the inspiration for the rather similar looking wheel-made high-handled cup, the so-called banded cup, painted with linear decoration.⁷³ Grey Ware inspired the creation of wheelmade Minoan/Myceanean kylikes in the Grey Ware style. Generally, it appears that drinking wares are more apt to be duplicated/produced in a foreign milieu than storage and transport vessels.⁷⁴ The jars and bowls of Sardinian origin discovered in the 13th century Kommos. for example, appear to have had very little impact or none at all on the local ceramic production.⁷⁵ As initially mentioned, Watrous has suggested the reason why the Aegean became involved in Western Mediterranean trading routes in the LM IIIA:2 period could have been because of the need for metals, as the resources in the east were reduced. He has further pointed to the possibility that the HMBW jars found in Kommos might have been used as containers for bronze scrap from Sardinia. Confirmation can be seen in the fact that similar jars found in Sardinia seem to have functioned as containers for this purpose.⁷⁶ Hallager has also argued that trade with the west could have been driven by the need for metal as Italy, particularly Sardinia, was rich in copper.⁷⁷

^{71.} Hallager 2001, 175-180; Hallager and Hallager 2003, 128, 286-287.

^{72.} Rutter 2012.

^{73.} Rutter 2012, 84.

^{74.} Rutter 2012, 83-85.

^{75.} Watrous 1992.

^{76.} Watrous 1992.

^{77.} Hallager 1985a, 304.

Iacono followed this line and proposed that the HMBW trade was associated with the trade of bronze objects of the so-called the Urnfield type. 78 This is a group of various bronze items of western origin that usually go under the name of Urnfield bronzes: spearheads, swords, fibulae and pins. 79 According to Iacono, the HMBW pottery did not have a high status in itself and it was instead the connection with the metal that made it exotic. The increase of HMBW in the LH IIIC period would therefore have been a "side effect" of the Urnfield bronzes becoming popular. His suggestion that this west-oriented trade allowed individuals of non-elite rank to work with metal trade on a smaller scale is, I think, highly possible due to the socio-political situation at the end of the Bronze Age. This would then have included the exchange of finished products or metal scraps, as appears to have been the case with the Cape Gelinonya ship. Although interesting, his discussion mainly centres on the LH IIIC period i.e. when the HMBW had almost disappeared at Khania. Nevertheless, we know that Khania evolved in the LM IIIA:2-IIIB:2 periods into a maritime node with extensive overseas contacts including Italy. Could the presence of pottery of an Italian type be the result of small-scale trade activity? In comparison with other sites in Crete that appear to have declined during this period, Khania prospered⁸⁰ and had acquired a position that might have been favourable for different groups to conduct maritime activity. It appears to have consisted of parallel systems that involved both major operations, small-scale enterprises and individual efforts.⁸¹

It has already been suggested by Hallager that the HMBW and GW in Khania could have belonged to a group of foreigners of Italian origin. 82 This is in accordance with the common opinion at the moment, i.e. that HMBW was most likely made by immigrants (when found in the Aegaean) 83 but that these groups were either large or dominant. 84 But can a foreign type of pottery be taken as evidence for the presence of non-local people? Is it reasonable to assume that this pottery, only 1% of the total amount retrieved, was associated with a new group of people living here? Anthropological studies indicate that practices connected to household activities like eating and drinking can be sustained in a new foreign context for "some time". Food, and all the activities that are linked to it like cultivation, preparation and consumption, can be used

^{78.} Icano 2013, 66.

^{79.} Sherrat 2012, 16.

^{80.} Preston 2008, 318.

^{81.} Manning and Huhlin 2005, 273 see also Petrarkis 2011, 214.

^{82.} Hallager 1985a, 293-305.

^{83.} Deger-Jalkotzy 2008, 395.

^{84.} Lis 2009, 155; Rutter 2012, 83-84.

as markers of group identity.⁸⁵ But at the same time this need not be the case, and it is problematic to link an ethnic group identity with material culture.⁸⁶

Could the presence of HMBW as well as GW in Khania instead be an indication that some of the locals in the town had adopted new ideas? It must be taken into consideration that parts of the population, living in Khania for generations, were involved in maritime activities and that this naturally affected them in various ways. As pointed out by Artzy⁸⁷, people living in port cities might have dedicated themselves to maritime trade activities which meant spending several months of the year at sea. A practice that would, on a regular basis, have entailed contact with different foreign milieus and exposure to new objects and traditions. On their return home, these sailors and/or tradesmen might then have introduced non-local objects and customs, perhaps initially only to their nearest kin, but at a later stage they could have spread further into society. Most likely a variety of goods were transmitted to different target groups, luxury goods, for example, which were probably not available to nonelite groups. Raw material would have been passed on to craftspeople whereas essential wares would have been intended for farmers and non-elite groups living in the city. It is highly possible that those engaged in different types of maritime activity also functioned as the transmitters of new ideas and objects in coastal communities. 88 The locally produced HMBW and GW pottery might perhaps have been the result of such an introduction.

Hallager has shown that from the LBA I/II period there was already evidence of Minoan pottery in Italy (Lipari and Vivara). ⁸⁹ Minoan pottery is also found at Broglio di Trebisacce, Scolgio del Tonno and Thapsos in the following periods. It appears that contact between these sites and Crete was more or less constant and was not limited to one region. In the LM IIIB and C periods, sites like Termitio in the south of Italy and Sardinia appear to have been new trading places. Moreover, pottery from the Kydonian workshop has also been identified in Sardinia, at Orosei and at Antigori. Whether the HMBW and Grey Ware in Khania had been brought in by a small group of Italians, was the outcome of intermarriage, or the result of sailors/tradesmen from Khania bringing home new ideas of pottery is perhaps of less importance since what it does signify is that individuals from both areas interacted with each other and had done so for

^{85.} Lucy 2005, 105.

^{86.} Jung 2012, 117.

^{87.} Artzy, 1997.

^{88.} Knapp 2005, 10.

^{89.} Hallager 1985a, 293-305.

many generations. The creation of a new drinking cup, inspired by the Italian style indicates that the encounters had a wider significance.⁹⁰

Here I believe that the context is important. The RAN where 90 % of the HMBW and Grey Ware pottery was discovered could, according to Hallager⁹¹, have functioned as a waste deposit for a sanctuary nearby due to the character of the finds. It is highly interesting that the largest amount of HMBW and Grev Ware from the settlements was deposited in pits in this area. However, were these depositions "only" waste from a possible sanctuary nearby? The practice of using pits or holes has a long tradition in the human history. The usage of pits and holes for ceremonial purposes, often with deliberately destroyed items, can be traced back to the Neolithic period in Crete. 92 Could the remains in the pits and dumps be deliberate depositions that were made after ceremonial or ritual gatherings? Dietler defines ritual feasts as "forms of public ritual activity centered around the communal consumption of food and drink".93 He further argues that feasts are not only intrinsically political but also work as an essential tool in political interactions, although he makes it clear that they are not just instruments of power or that they functioned solely as an arena for actions with political connotations. The focal point is eating and drinking in a communal setting. Even if a feast is defined as a ritual activity, this does not signify "highly elaborate ceremonies", nor do these gatherings need to be "sacred". What is significant is merely that they are emblematically different from every day activities. By drawing on examples from Africa, Dietler further points out that feasts could serve multifarious functions in societies with regard to social relations. They may serve as an important intersectional context where associations between individuals and groups from various levels of society meet in order to sustain social control. Both rituals and religious activities can be seen as an important seam in the community that bound people together and as a medium through which cultural identity and social strategies could be conveyed.⁹⁴

^{90.} Why the GW pottery was no longer being produced in the following LM IIIC period and why the HMBW almost disappeared in Khania is interesting given the fact that there was an increase of HBW elsewhere in the Aegean following this period (LH IIIC early). Perhaps it was connected to the ongoing insecure situation on the island when several of the coastal communities, in particular those involved in trade, were abandoned due to external threats. McEnroe 2010.

^{91.} Hallager, 2001.

^{92.} Driessen, Farnoux and Langohr 2008, 197-205.

^{93.} Dietler 2001, 67.

^{94.} Adams 2004, 30; Dietler 2001, 65-74; see also Borgna 2012, 135. The practice of consuming wine appears to have had a long tradition in Minoan Crete. On Aegean feasting activities see Borgna 2004, 247-279; 2012, 137-151.

Conclusion

The HMBW and GW pottery and its role in Khania have been at focus of this article. The relevance of the investigation lies in the fact that this pottery has often been associated with the movements of people from west to east at the end of Late Bronze Age, and interpreted by many scholars as an indication of a foreign, albeit small, group of people. No clear-cut answers have been provided, instead I hope that by looking at the pottery from the viewpoint of materiality and cultural encounters, the complexity of intercultural interactions and its material expressions have been demonstrated.

In comparison with the remaining assemblages of pottery from Khania, a few sherds of HMBW and GW pottery have been discovered. On the basis of this small sample it is problematic to draw any conclusions as to whether a foreign group of Italians lived here or not. One would perhaps expect to find more household pottery and an overall stronger impact on the local pottery. But, on the other hand, if we consider the fact that ongoing contact between Khania and Italy had been taking place since the LBA I/II it is not unlikely that by now, in the LM IIIB2 period, some people from Italy were well integrated into the society. That the Italian ware was locally made indicates this. But the fact that the pottery was locally made raises the question of *how* it was viewed during the LM IIIB2 period? Perhaps it was not regarded as foreign anymore.

As initially suggested, the context can help us understand how the pottery was used. The HMBW and GW pottery was almost exclusively discovered in the RAN area and did not spread in the settlement. Due to the interpretation of the RAN (see above) the pottery appears not to have been used in everyday household activities. This may signify that it was important enough to be selected and used in a context where different social interactions took place that could have involved food and beverages. As a maritime hub in the LM IIIB:2 period, at least parts of Khania's population would have been engaged in different types of seafaring activities that involved far-reaching contacts in the Mediterranean. This was an environment where connectivity by sea was essential. Meetings with new cultures probably took place on a regular basis. This connectivity also meant that sailors and merchants from other cultures from time to time stayed for longer or shorter periods in the town. In an environment of this kind, negotiation for different social positions and the creation of new relations between various individuals and/or groups must have been constant, but also one in which new hybrids were created as well as new material expressions. The consumption of food and beverages in a setting like this could have worked as an important platform for social encounters providing individuals and groups with the opportunity to express their identity and perhaps to form new alliances. It is in this setting of cultural intermingling that the new drinking cup, inspired

by the *ciotola carenata*, was created as well as the Minoan/Mycenaean kylikes in the Grey Ware style.

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