DAIS

THE AEGEAN FEAST

Proceedings of the 12th International Aegean Conference /
12e Rencontre égéenne internationale
University of Melbourne, Centre for Classics and Archaeology, 25-29 March 2008

Edited by Louise A. HITCHCOCK, Robert LAFFINEUR and Janice CROWLEY
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface and Acknowledgments vii
Abbreviations ix

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS**

Yannis HAMILAKIS  
*Time, Performance, and the Production of a Mnemonic Record: From Feasting to an Archaeology of Eating and Drinking* 3

**I. FEASTS FOR THE GODS: FEASTING PRACTICES AND RELIGIOUS ASPECTS**

Jennifer WILSON  
*What Were the Women Doing While the Men Were Eating and Drinking? The Evidence of the Frescoes* 23

Anna SIMANDIRAKI  
*The Minoan Body as a Feast* 29

Bernice JONES  
*Anthropomorphic Vessels at the Feast: Evidence for Dress or Ornament?* 39

Brent DAVIS  
*Libation and the Minoan Feast* 47

David COLLARD  
*Possible Alternatives to Alcohol: The Contextual Analysis of Poppy-shaped Fugs from Cyprus and the Aegean* 57

Dora CONSTANTINIDIS  
*From Fields to Feasts: Interpreting Aegean Architecture and Iconography in Relation to Feast Preparations* 65

Janice L. CROWLEY  

Helène WHITTAKER  
*The Role of Drinking in Religious Ritual in the Mycenaean Period* 89

Elizabeth SHANK  
*Decorated Dining Halls* 97

Gullög NORDQUIST  
*Feasting: Participation and Performance* 105
TABLE OF CONTENTS

II. FEASTS FOR THE HUMANS: COOKING, FOOD AND WINE

Sarah P. MORRIS
Wine and Water in the Bronze Age: Fermenting, Mixing and Serving Vessels 113

Thomas M. BROGAN and Andrew J. KOH
Feasting at Machlos? New Evidence for Wine Production, Storage and Consumption from a Bronze Age Harbor Town on Crete 125

Rachel FOX
Tastes, Smells and Spaces: Sensory Perceptions and Mycenaean Palatial Feasting 133

Bartłomiej LIS
Cooked Food in the Mycenaean Feast – Evidence from the Cooking Pots 141

Julie HRUBY
You Are How You Eat: Mycenaean Class and Cuisine 151

IIIa. FEASTS IN THE AEgeAN LANDSCAPE: THE EVIDENCE FROM CRETE

Philip P. BETANCOURT, David S. REESE, Louise L. VERSTEGEN, and Susan C. FERRENCE
Feasts for the Dead: Evidence from the Ossuary at Hagios Charalambos 161

Luca GIРЕLLA
Feasts in ‘transition’? An overview of feasting practices during MM III in Crete 167

Loeta TYREE, Athanasia KANTA and Harriet Lewis ROBINSON
Evidence for Ritual Eating and Drinking: A View from Skotino Cave 179

Judith REID
Dinnertime at Kato Zakro 187

Jan DRIESSEN, Alexandre FARNOUX and Charlotte LANGOHR
Favissac. Feasting Pits in LM III 197

Quentin LETESSON and Jan DRIESSEN
From ‘Party’ to ‘Ritual’ to ‘Ruin’ in Minoan Crete: The Spatial Context of Feasting 207

IIIb. FEASTS IN THE AEgeAN LANDSCAPE: THE EVIDENCE FROM THE MAINLAND

Jennifer O’NEILL
Utility and Metaphor: The Design of The House of Tiles at Lerna 217

Kim S. SHELTON
Drinking, Toasting, Consumption and Libation: Late Helladic IIIA Pottery and a Cup for Every Occasion 221

Salvatore VITALE
Ritual Drinking and Eating at LH IIIA2 Early Mitrou, East Lokris. Evidence for Mycenaean Feasting Activities? 229

Gisela WALBERG and David S. REESE
Feasting at Midea 239
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## IV. IMAGES OF THE FEAST: ICONOGRAPHY

**Ingo PINI**  
Are there any Representations of Feasting in the Aegean Bronze Age?  
249

**Fritz BLAKOLMER**  
Processions in Aegean Iconography II: Who are the Participants?  
257

**Susan C. FERRENCE**  
Is There Iconography of the Minoan Feast?  
269

**Marcia NUGENT**  
Picturing the Feast – Recipes as Art. Botanic Motifs of the Late Bronze Age Cycladic Islands  
277

## V. FEASTS ABROAD: COMPARATIVE EVIDENCE FROM THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

**Jennifer M. WEBB** and **David FRANKEL**  
Fine Ware Ceramics, Consumption and Commensality:  
Mechanisms of Horizontal and Vertical Integration in Early Bronze Age Cyprus  
287

**Kathryn O. ERIKSSON**  
Feasting as Part of the Multiculturalism of Late Bronze Age Cyprus  
297

**Alison SOUTH**  
Feasting in Cyprus: a View from Kalavasos  
309

**Louise A. HITCHCOCK**  
Architectures of Feasting  
317

**Karen Polinger FOSTER**  
A Taste for the Exotic  
327

**Ann E. KILLEBREW** and **Justin LEV-TOV**  
Early Iron Age Feasting and Cuisine: an Indicator of Philistine-Aegean Connectivity?  
339

**Aren M. MAEIR**  
Aegean Feasting and other Indo-European Elements in the Philistine Household  
347

**Assaf YASUR-LANDAU**  
Hard to Handle: Aspects of Organization in Aegean and Near Eastern Feasts  
353

## VI. FEASTS IN THE TEXTS: THE WRITTEN RECORD

**John G. YOUNGER**  
Food Rations and Portions in Cretan Hieroglyphic Documents  
361

**Ioannis FAPPAS**  
The Use of Perfumed Oils during Feasting Activities:  
A Comparison of Mycenaean and Near Eastern Written Sources  
367

**Stavroura NIKOLOUDIS**  
Bulls and Belonging: Another Look at PY Cn 3  
377

**Thomas G. PALAIMA**  
The Significance of Mycenaean Words Relating to Meals, Meal Rituals, and Food  
383
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vassilis P. PETRAKIS</td>
<td>Eke-ra-wo z wa-na-ka: The Implications of a Probable Non-Identification for Mycenaean Feasting and Politics</td>
<td>391</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cynthia W. SHELMERDINE</td>
<td>Host and Guest at a Mycenaean Feast</td>
<td>401</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jörg WEILHARTNER</td>
<td>Some Observations on the Commodities in the Linear B Tablets Referring to Sacrificial Banquets</td>
<td>411</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas G. PALAIMA</td>
<td>A New Linear B Inscription from the Land Down Under: AUS HO(ME) Bo 2008</td>
<td>429</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RITUAL DRINKING AND EATING AT LH IIIA2 EARLY MITROU, EAST LOKRIS. EVIDENCE FOR MYCENAEAN FEASTING ACTIVITIES?

Mitrou is a tidal islet situated in the North Eubocean Gulf, within the area known as East Lokris (Pl. XI.1a). The site has already been the focus of four seasons of excavations (2004-2007), carried out by A. Van de Moortel and E. Zahou, directors of the Mitrou Archaeological Project, a joint undertaking of the University of Tennessee and the 14th Ephorate of Classical and Prehistoric Antiquities at Lamia.

The investigations have revealed an extraordinarily long occupational sequence, covering the entire Bronze Age and Early Iron Age periods (Pl. XI.1b). The aim of this paper is to present evidence for ritual drinking and eating activities at Mitrou during the Late Helladic (LH) IIIA2 Early phase. Particular attention will be devoted to two interesting deposits that were brought to light in Trenches LL 784-785 and Trenches LM-LN 784 respectively.

The LH IIIA2 Early Phase at Mitrou

The best evidence for the LH IIIA2 Early phase at Mitrou comes from the northeastern excavation area of the site (Pl. XI.1b). The most important structure uncovered thus far is Building D with its circa 1 meter wide walls, constructed of roughly rectangular limestone blocks. The next important edifice is Building F. It is separated from Building D by a 3 meter wide pebbled street and is characterized, in its southern sector, by the presence of a possible staircase delineated by Walls 31, 32, and 85. Further to the west, two internal architectural spaces belonging to the same LH IIIA2 Early horizon are outlined by Walls 17-18 and Walls 19-20 respectively. Given their proximity to the east façade of Building F and their similar elevation, these, walls may very well have been part of the same structure. However, this possibility must remain mere speculation until the area between Walls 18 and 85, that lies beyond the current boundaries of the excavation, has been investigated.

The LH IIIA2 Early phase was brought to a close by a major catastrophe, followed by an evident decrease in building activity during LH IIIA2 Late. This event, perhaps the outcome of an earthquake, resulted in the destruction and abandonment of large quantities of whole or restorable vessels. The LH IIIA2 Early ceramics from Mitrou present a significant number of affinities with contemporary deposits from Tsoungiza and Nichoria. As shown in Pl. XL, these

I would like to particularly thank Aleydis Van de Moortel and Eleni Zahou for allowing me to present here some of the materials from their excavations at Mitrou; additional acknowledgements are due to the following colleagues, for their constant support during my periods of study at Mitrou and/or their useful comments on the manuscript of this paper: Aleydis Van de Moortel, Jeremy Rutter, Patrick Thomas, Mario Benzi, Giampaolo Grazziadi, Giuliana Bianco, Bartek Lis, Rena Veropoulos, and Stepan Ruckl; a final thank you goes to Teresa Hancock for providing me with many suggestions on the structure of the article and for revising the English text.


2 In Trench LN 785, the LH IIIA2 Early destruction caused three large blocks of Wall 51 to slant and some of the wall’s large stones to fall on the pebble surface immediately to the east. The destruction also separated Wall 51 from its lime plaster floors, so that neither of them were found attached to the wall.

3 M.K. DABNEY, P. HALSTEAD, and P. THOMAS, “Mycenaean Feasting on Tsoungiza at Ancient Nemea.” in The Mycenaean Feast, 202-211, especially 208-211; C.W. SHELMDINE. “Late Helladic IIIA2-IIIB2 Pottery,”
similarities are not only limited to the range of the attested shapes, but include also some of the possible defining features of the pottery phase as a whole. Indeed, the new materials from Mitrou allow a definite confirmation of the previously uncertain existence of LH IIIA2 Early as a separate chronological horizon.4

The Deposit from Trenches LL 784-785

The deposit from Trenches LL 784-785 was brought to light within the room delineated by Walls 17 and 18 (Pl. XLIIIa-b). It comprises a considerable amount of shells, 35 inventoried pottery shapes, and other finds that have not been studied yet, including two stone pounders (Pl. XLIId-c), a rosette button (Pl. XLIIIc), three spindle whorls (Pl. XLIIIf), and some animal bones. Unfortunately, because of the property limits of the excavation, only the eastern sector of the room has been explored. Nevertheless, the combined study of the stratigraphy and the main characteristics of the shells and the pottery provide us with a consistent interpretation of the architectural history and functional connotation of the context.

The terminus post quem for the construction of the room outlined by Walls 17 and 18 is LH IIIB. Some time in LH IIIA2 Early, medium-sized rocks fell from Wall 17 during a dramatic event which caused the final abandonment of the structure and created the deposit of shells and vessels. This event was accompanied by fire, as is evidenced by the heavy burning marks on the pottery, as well as on the sediment in and around it. The average to minimal degree of erosion of the surface of the shells and the fresh appearance of the ceramic assemblage suggest that these materials were quickly sealed under the earth, probably as a result of the fire destruction. The stylistic features of the pottery match the defining characteristics of LH IIIA2 Early as outlined in Pl. XL, firmly dating the whole context to this phase. The destruction deposit was later disturbed by recurring grave digging activity in advanced LH IIIC and/or Protogeometric (PG), which is well documented in and around Trenches LL 784-785 (cf. the presence of Middle PG Cist Grave 4, immediately to the north of Wall 17). As a consequence of the disturbance, only some of the vessels from the LH IIIA2 Early deposit were actually found on the floor of the room. In fact, most of the sherds that mended into whole pots were recovered circa 10-20 cm above the floor level and some fragments were scattered even north of Wall 17, i.e. outside the room delineated by Walls 17 and 18. There were, however, a rather high number of joins throughout the units of the floor and those overlying and surrounding them, confirming the common origin of the strata. The disturbance also allowed later material to penetrate into some of the main units of the LH IIIA2 Early deposit and even underneath the floor level of the room. In sharp contrast to the LH IIIA2 Early pottery and shells, the intrusive later sherds, belonging to advanced LH IIIC or PG times, are scanty and exhibit a heavily worn state of preservation.

The pottery recovered inside the room delineated by Walls 17 and 18 includes a restricted number of shapes, falling into five functional categories. The largest consists of eighteen vases related to drinking and eating activities, such as mixing, ladling, and eating/drinking itself. This group includes: three kraters FS 7 and 281 (Pl. XLIVa-b), two dippers FS 236 (Pl. XLVic), four cups FS 204, 238, and 240 (Pl. XLIVd-g), one goblet FS 254 (Pl. XLIVh), one shallow angular bowl FS 295 (Pl. XLIVi), and seven kylikes, five belonging to the rounded types FS 264 (Pl. XLIVj; Pl. XLVa) and 266 (Pl. XLVb), a small specimen with high-swung handles (Pl. XLVc), and a peculiar three-handled example (Pl. XLVd). The next largest category is

in W.A. MCDONALD and N.C. WILKIE (eds), Excavations at Nichoria in Southwest Greece II. The Bronze Age Occupation (1992) 495-505, 538-542. Unfortunately not much can be said about the relationship between the LH IIIA2 Early deposits from Mitrou and those from Ayios Stephanos, since the pottery from the latter site is still largely unpublished, cf. P.A. MOUNTJOY, Regional Mycenaean Decorated Pottery (1999) 28, 250.

4 LH IIIA2 Early was originally identified by A. Furumark, cf. A. FURUMARK, Mycenaean Pottery. Analysis and Classification I (1941) 510-511. However, due to the lack of stratified settlement contexts from the Greek mainland, the existence of this phase as a separate chronological horizon remained uncertain until recently, cf. E.B. FRENCH, "Late Helladic IIIA 2 Pottery from Mycenae," BSA 60 (1965) 160-163; MOUNTJOY (supra n. 3) 28-29.
comprised of vases normally connected to cooking activities, including two cooking jugs FS 65 and/or amphorae FS 66/67 (Pl. XLVc-f), two medium-coarse dippers FS 236 (Pl. XLVg-h), and one brazier FS 312 (Pl. XLVI). Vases designed for storage consist of two small piriform jars FS 44 (Pl. XLVla-b), also suitable for pouring, and two straight-sided alabastra FS 94 (Pl. XLVlc-d). The list is completed by six kylix feet (Pl. XLVle-g), possibly reused as lids, and by two miniature vessels, reproducing a stirrup jug FS 151 (Pl. XLVIIh) and a conical open shape for drinking (Pl. XLVIIi).

The vessels under discussion are generally plain or very simply decorated. In fact, of the inventoried vases, 26 out of 35 are unpainted and patterned vessels are limited to five specimens. Of the eighteen vessels related to drinking/eating activities, only a single specimen, one of the kraters FS 7, is patterned; two are monochrome, the goblet FS 254 and one of the kylikes FS 264; the remaining fifteen are unpainted.

Some of the represented forms are of particular interest here. They include the two miniature vessels, the three-handled kylix, the kantharos cups FS 240, and the small kylix with high-swung handles. Many scholars have shown that miniature vessels often had a special ritual or cultic connotation, while the remaining three shapes appear to be rare both at Mitrou and in the rest of the Mycenaean mainland. The contemporary occurrence of these forms deserves a more in-depth discussion. The following is a functional and contextual analysis of the aforementioned shapes during the late formative, full palatial, and earliest postpalatial periods (LH IIIA2 Early to LH IIIC Phases 1-3).5

Miniature stirrup jug and conical open shape (Pl. XLVIIh-i). Due to their extremely small size, these vessels could not have had any ordinary practical function. The occurrence of miniature pouring and/or drinking shapes is well documented in contexts related to Mycenaean feasting activities (cf. Pl. XLla). In fact, diminutive bowls, kylikes, dippers, and amphorae are found in Rooms no. 6-7, 18, 20, and 60 of the Palace of Pylos and a diminutive kylix occurs in the EU 9 deposit from Tsoungiza.6 Miniature shapes, reproducing jugs, rhyta, dippers, askoi, kylikes, cups, and bowls, are also widely attested in other Mycenaean contexts where there is evidence for ritualized eating and drinking activities in a wider cultic framework. It will be sufficient to cite only some of the most important sites and contexts, such as Room A in the sanctuary at Methana,7 the Cult Center at Mycenae,8 the Shrine and the West Gate areas at Midea,9 Room B in the West Shrine of the sanctuary at Phylakopi (Phases 1b-2a), and

---


7 E. KONSOLAKI-VANNOPOLOU, “New Evidence for the Practice of Liotharios in the Aegean Bronze Age,” in POTNA, 213, pl. LVVII.


Room 117 in the Unterberg at Tiryns. The function of miniature vessels in all of these contexts may have been to symbolically refer to some of the ritual activities performed in the related buildings. Alternatively, some of them could have been used to administer unusual drinkable substances, possibly even strong alcoholic and/or hallucinogenic ones. If this was the case at Mitrou, the miniature sturrup jug could have been employed for storing and pouring such substances, while the conical open shape may have been a convenient means to measure the exact quantity that had to be poured.

Three-handled kylix (Pl. XLVd). There is no known parallel for this shape at Mitrou or elsewhere in the Mycenaean world in the period between LH IIIA2 Early and LH IIIC Phases 1-3. However, it may be significant to the present discussion that a three-handled cup FS 233 was recovered in Room XXXII of House G at Asine, dating to LH IIIC Phase 5. The presence of the third handle in the kylix from Mitrou cannot be explained in terms of mere practical use. Instead, it may very well allude to the shared consumption of wine between two or more people, a practice obviously related to communal drinking activities. Elsewhere, especially in feasting contexts, this practice is revealed by the occurrence of oversized pots, as recently underlined by M.K. Dabney, P. Halstead, and P. Thomas (cf. Pl. XLIa).

Kantharos cup FS 240 (Pl. XLIVf-g). At Mitrou, this type is not represented in any other context. Because of the peculiar shape of the high-slung handles, easily recognizable in the sherd material, this fact is significant. In the rest of the Mycenaean world, kantharos cups are attested, but seem to be sporadic (cf. Pl. XLIa). The only specimen recovered in situ in an ordinary settlement context comes from the LH IIIB1 House of the Sphinxes at Mycenae. Indeed, most of the finds are related to special contexts. Seven specimens were found at the Palace of Pylos in Rooms no. 18 and 60, which have been interpreted by many authors as two pantries containing pottery assemblages used in feasting activities. Three examples have been brought to light in the LH IIIB2 Temple at Mycenae and an additional specimen was found in the cult area exposed in the Unterberg at Tiryns. Finally, another kantharos cup has been recently recovered from Room A at Methana, in an area where feasts were performed in a wider cultic context.

The fact that the kantharos cup may have been used in ritualized drinking activities is indirectly confirmed by a miniature example found in Area S6 of the Cult Center at Mycenae.

---


11 Cf., among the others, R. HÄGG, "State and Religion in Mycenaean Greece," in POLITIEA, 38:2-39:1; DEMAKOPOULOU and DIVARI-VALAKOPOULOU (supra n. 9) 188; KONSOLAKI-YANNOPOLIOU (supra n. 7) 218; STOCKER and DAVIS (supra n. 6) 190.

12 O. FRÖDIN and A.W. PERSSON, Asine. Results of the Swedish Excavation 1922-30 (1998); R. HÄGG, "The House Sanctuary at Asine Revisited," in Sanctuaries and Cults, 95, fig. 2, no. FS. Three-handled goblets were also found in the East Basement of the Granary at Mycenae, dating to LH IIIC Phase 4, cf. A.J.B. WACE, "Excavations at Mycenae," BSA 25 (1929) 55, pl. Xla-e. However, the functional connotation of this building is not altogether clear, cf. E.B. FRENCH, Mycenae. Agamemnon's Capital (2002) 76-79.

13 DABNEY, HALSTEAD, and THOMAS (supra n. 3) 203 (criterion no. 6).

14 E. WACE in E.L. BENNETT, The Mycenaean Tablets II (1958) 11-12, fig. 54, bottom right; E.B. FRENCH, "Pottery from LH IIIB1 Destruction Contexts of Mycenae," BSA 62 (1967) 175; I. TOURNAVITOU, The Ivory Houses at Mycenae (BSA Suppl. 24, 1995) 86, 290-292. Two additional specimens, with sharper carination, were recovered in funerary contexts from Tomb XVIII at Prosymna and Tomb 523 at Mycenae. They are dated to LH IIIA1 and LH IIIA2 respectively, cf. A.J.B. WACE, Chamer Tombs at Mycenae (1992) 37, no. 7a, pl. XX; C.W. BLEGAN, Prosymna. The Helladic Settlement Preceding the Argive Heraeum (1993) 57-68, 434, no. 218, fig. 110; K. SHELDON, The Late Helladic Pottery from Prosymna (1996) 45, 197, 284.

15 BLEGAN and RAWSON (supra n. 6) 363, Shape no. 19, figs. 355-356.


17 MOORE and TAYLOR (supra n. 8) 93, nos. 68-1410, 1413, 1426, fig. 13; KILIAN and PODZUWEIT (supra n. 10) 422, fig. 41, no. 2.


19 FRENCH and TAYLOR (supra n. 8) 345, no. 66-668 (CD).
Based on contextual evidence, E. Konsolaki has convincingly suggested that the kantharos cup recovered in the sanctuary at Methana may have been used for libations. At least in theory, this could also have been true for the specimens from Mitrou.

**Small kylix with high-swing handles** (Pl. XLVc). At first sight, this form may seem to be related to the type known as FS 272. However, the specimen from Mitrou is almost half of the average size of standard FS 272 kylikes. Indeed, its dimensions and the outline profile of its bowl are almost identical to those of the kantharos cups, the only difference being the presence of a short stem instead of a flat base. The distribution of this type of small kylix is once again concentrated in special ritual contexts, where it is often found together with kantharos cups. Known examples come from the Temple at Mycenae, the cult area in the Unterburg at Tiryns, and possibly Room A in the sanctuary at Methana (cf. Pl. XL1a).

Indirect confirmation that the small kylix with high-swing handles may have been used in special drinking activities comes from Tsoungiza, Mycenae, and Pylos, where diminutive examples have been found in deposits related to feasting or cultic activities. Small kylikes with high-swing handles may have been used to perform libations, as in the case of the kantharos cup, and/or for toasting, as is suggested by the presence of the stem.

Two more shapes from the room outlined by Walls 17 and 18, although not uncommon in ordinary settlement contexts, have been associated with ritual activities. In fact, according to A.D. Moore, the brazier FS 312 may have been used, at least in certain instances, in rituals related to fumigation or the burning of incense, while the straight-sided alabastron FS 94, a suitable container for honey, has been connected by Konsolaki to libation rituals in the sanctuary of Methana (Pl. XLVI; Pl. XLVIc-d).

The characteristics of the shells recovered within the room outlined by Walls 17 and 18 are summarized in Pl. XLIIb. When the minimum number of individuals is taken into account, at least 77.2% of the assemblage consists of food debris, which is an unusually elevated concentration at Mitrou. Of this 77.2%, a high number of the mollusks, circa 50.4%, must be considered uncommon food because of their rarity at the site and in the rest of the Mycenaean mainland. One of the attested species, the *Spondylus gaederopus* (Spiny oyster), is particularly interesting for two reasons: (a) it is rather difficult to collect and thus it may have been regarded as a highly appreciated food; (b) when eaten out of season, it can have hallucinogenic effects. 18.5% of the assemblage is composed of *Murex* shells. However, it is worth noting that at least 1/3 of them were found intact, an indication that they may have been used, at least partly, for food purposes. So far, this is the only assemblage containing intact *Murex* shells at Mitrou. Their consumption as food must be regarded as quite uncommon. Finally, 4.3% of the shells account for “curiosities,” again representing an unusually high number in relation to Mitrou’s standards. Some of these shells are known to have had special symbolic meanings. For example, due to its shape, the *Luria lurida* (Cowry) was often used to allude to the vagina, while the *Comus mediterraneus* (Comus) and *Haliotis tuberculata* (Abalone) were commonly utilized to

---

20 KONSOŁAKI-YANNOPOULOU (supra n. 7) 215.
21 FURUMARK (supra n. 4) 681-682.
22 MOORE and TAYLOR (supra n. 8) 92-93, nos. 68-1412, 1416, 1421, fig. 12; KILIAN and PODZUWEIT (supra n. 10) 422, fig. 41, no. 1; KONSOŁAKI-YANNOPOULOU (supra n. 7) 213.
23 STOCKER and DAVIS (supra n. 6) 188, 190, figs. 7, 9; DABNEY, HALSTEAD, and THOMAS (supra n. 9) 210-211, fig. 6; FRENCH and TAYLOR (supra n. 8) 429, no. 69-401 (CD).
24 MOORE and TAYLOR (supra n. 8) 85-86; KONSOŁAKI-YANNOPOULOU (supra n. 7) 215.
25 Information provided here results from personal communication with R. Veropoulos (University of Thessaloniki), who is currently examining the shells recovered from Mitrou. I thank Veropoulos for sharing with me so many details of her ongoing study.
make necklaces. A likely explanation for their presence in this context is that they may have been part of the decoration of the room and/or part of the personal adornment of the people frequenting the building.

At the end of this overview, the main characteristics of the deposit can be summarized as follows: (a) the composition of the ceramic assemblage from Trenches LL 784-785 reveals an emphasis on drinking/eating and cooking shapes. Particularly noteworthy is the presence of three kraters, a number that appears remarkably high in relation to the size of the room and that would be, in any case, unusual for an ordinary domestic context; (b) this pottery deposit exhibits a restricted range of shapes and a limited amount of elaborated decoration, two features that have been recently associated to communal drinking and eating, especially relating to feasting activities; (c) the ceramic assemblage and the shells from Trenches LL 784-785 demonstrate a significant number of special and/or uncommon characteristics, suggesting ritual and symbolic connotations.

Discussion of the Evidence from Trenches LL 784-785

The data presented above strongly suggests that special drinking and eating activities, possibly including toasting and libations, took place, during LH IIIA2 Early, in the building to which the room delineated by Walls 17 and 18 belonged. However, a more precise interpretation of the evidence is complicated by the fact that the room has been only partially excavated. In fact, from a formal point of view, what type of ritual drinking and eating activities were exactly performed inside it? Can they, in some way, be included in the cultural behaviors of feasting? In order to answer this question, the complex issue of how to define feasting must be briefly addressed. So far, there is no generally accepted definition of this practice. Nevertheless, most authors seem to agree on the following ideas and criteria: (a) the term feasting implies the sharing between two or more people of special foods and/or drinks; (b) feasts are performed to mark and celebrate special purposes or occasions; (c) feasts usually have a ritualized component.

As a result, it may be tentatively proposed that, in order to recognize traces of feasting activities in the archaeological record, the following evidence should be present: (a) unusual food and/or drink remains; (b) special vessels indicating the performance of eating or drinking out of the ordinary; (c) special vessels and/or objects that may have a ritual connotation.

If these criteria are accepted, the materials recovered from the room outlined by Walls 17 and 18 may be, at least in theory, connected to feasting activities. On the other hand, this deposit is considerably different, especially in its size, from the feasting contexts recovered at Tsoungiza and Pylos, which were related to massive festivals sponsored by palatial centers.

Recent studies, however, have convincingly suggested that, besides these impressive gatherings, small-scale Mycenaean feasts were performed in the frame of sacrificial rituals within a wider religious context. These feasts would confer "cosmological and ideological powers on few individuals, through the participation in an intense, embodied, transcendental experience."

---


28 DABNEY, HALSTEAD, and THOMAS (supra n. 3) 203 (criteria no. 1 and 5).


30 STOCKER and DAVIS (supra n. 6) 179-195; BENDALL (supra n. 6) 105-135; DABNEY, HALSTEAD, and THOMAS (supra n. 3), especially 212-214; HRUBY (supra n. 16).

31 HAMILAKIS and KONSOLOKIS (supra n. 18) 135.
While the occurrence of this specific cultural behavior has been demonstrated by Y. Hamilakis and Konstantaki in the case of the sanctuary of Methana, J.C. Wright has suggested the possibility that similar feasting rituals might have regularly taken place in religious centers.32

As shown by P1. XLIIa, in terms of possible special shapes, the LL 784-785 deposit from Mitrou has its best parallels in the cult contexts recovered at Mycenae, Tiryns, and Methana. In the excavated portion of the room delineated by Walls 17 and 18, no specialized cultic furniture or equipment has been brought to light. However, the possibility that the area to which the room belonged was related to animal sacrifices and religious activities is suggested by two important pieces of evidence: (a) in Trench LL 786, a few meters to the north of Wall 17, an external occupation surface, adorning the LH IIIA2 Early room formed by Walls 19 and 20, was found littered with burnt animal remains, including jawbones and teeth. Interestingly, one of the units excavated on top of this surface had some pottery fragments that joined with the LH IIIA2 Early deposit from Trenches LL 784-785; (b) fragments from at least two animal figurines, including two heads and two horn sherds, were also found in Trench LL 786, in another unit which had joins with the LH IIIA2 Early deposit from Trenches LL 784-785 (P1. XLVIf).

The Deposit from Trenches LM-LN 784

Additional evidence that communal eating and drinking activities may have taken place in the northeastern excavation area of the site is provided by another interesting deposit brought to light in the southern sector of Building F, between Walls 31, 32, and 85. The study of this context is still in progress, but it seems appropriate to provide a brief account of its main characteristics, because of their potential importance to the present discussion. So far, the recovered materials include 35 inventoryed pottery pieces, all stylistically assignable to LH IIIA2 Early (cf. P1. XL), two loom weights, an obsidian arrowhead, carbonized seed remains, animal bones, and shells. A small amount of advanced LH IIC and PG sherds were found together with the earlier material. Their occurrence is due to the presence of Cist Graves 32, 35, and 38, that were dug into Wall 32 toward the end of the LH IIIC period or slightly later.

Most of the LH IIIA2 Early deposit was found concentrated between Walls 31 and 32 (P1. XLVIIa-b). The pottery had a generally fresh appearance and many cross-joins were observed throughout the related units. However, no more than nine ceramic shapes could be mended into complete or restorable pots. Moreover, only small patches of the original floor were found in this area and the relationship between the pottery and the floor itself could not be determined with absolute certainty. For these reasons, it is preferable to consider the deposit under discussion as dumped rather than in situ material. The fair homogeneity and the date of the ceramics suggest that it represents a very short time span and that it was thrown in its final findspot soon after the LH IIIA2 Early destruction of Building F. The good state of preservation of the pottery, shells, and bones implies that none of these materials were exposed to major factors of wear after being dumped between Walls 31, 32 and 85. In fact, a new partly plastered floor was built at a higher level sealing the deposit and the southern sector of Building F continued to be in use in the course of the succeeding LH IIIA2 Late phase (P1. XLVIIc).

The main distinctive feature of the deposit seems to be the rather high percentage of cooking pots, representing thirteen of the 35 inventoryed ceramic pieces. These include a large almost complete tripod FS 320 (P1. XLVIIa), a fragment that may belong to another tripod FS 320 or an amphora FS 66/67 (P1. XLVIIb), several base or rim sherds from ten jugs FS 65 and/or amphorae FS 66/67 (P1. XLVIIc), and a rim from a brazier FS 312. The rest of the inventoryed ceramic material contains three goblets FS 254, two kraters FS 7, eight kylikes FS 264 and 267, three medium-coarse storage vessels, and six additional fragments that could not be assigned with precision to any specific shape, although some of them may belong to

amphoras and/or jugs. All of these shapes are unpainted except for one of the kylikes FS 264, that is monochrome. The LH IIIA2 Early deposit from Trenches LM-LN 784 contained also many edible shells, including the Spondylus gaederopus. The most interesting discovery, however, was the partly articulated skeleton of a two to three month old piglet.

The concentration of food debris, cooking and storage vessels may imply that meals on a larger than ordinary domestic scale were prepared in the vicinity. This, in turn, raises an intriguing question. Is it possible that the materials dumped in the southern sector of Building F represent discarded remains of the ritual eating and drinking activities carried out in the nearby room delineated by Walls 17 and 18? A similar hypothesis, if correct, would explain the otherwise puzzling presence of the piglet skeleton in the deposit from Trenches LM-LN 784. In fact, the association between juvenile pigs and Mycenaean animal sacrifices in connection to religious feasts has been noted already in the case of the Sanctuary of Methana.

Conclusions and Historical Implications

A more comprehensive study of the bones recovered thus far at Mitrou and further excavations will possibly clarify whether the ritual eating and drinking activities performed in the northeastern excavation area of the site may actually be recognized as a particular form of feasting, perhaps similar to that identified by Hamilakis and Konsolaki. Nevertheless, the evidence presented above already carries some important historical implications. Apart from confirming the existence of this previously elusive ceramic phase, the occurrence of LH IIIA2 Early pottery in East Lokris sheds further light on the nature of the Mycenaean ceramic koinè and its beginnings, raising new questions about how typological developments were communicated throughout the larger area within which this koinè flourished. Moreover, the formal characteristics of the special assemblage from Trenches LL 784-785 show that, already in the early 14th century B.C., people from Mitrou were beginning to adopt some of the distinctive elements and behaviors typifying the Mycenaean culture in the central regions of the Greek mainland.
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Pl. XL  LH IIIA2 Early deposits. General characteristics.
Pl. XLIa  Distribution of possible ritual shapes in Mycenaean special drinking and eating contexts (LH IIIA2-LH IIIC Phases 1-3).
Pl. XLIb  Absolute number of identified specimens (NISP), minimum number of individuals (MNI), and density of NISP and MNI per 1m² (R. Veropoulos). 
Pl. XLIIa  Map of Central Greece including the most important Mycenaean sites in the area (B. Lás).
Pl. XLIIb  Mitrou 2007 site plan, northeastern excavation area (G. Bianco).
Pl. XLIIa  The LL 784-785 deposit during the excavation, from south (W. Burke).
Pl. XLIIb  Trench LL 785, drawing of west baulk (G. Bianco).
Pl. XLIIIsc  The LL 784-785 deposit: stone pounders (W. Burke).
Pl. XLIIIc  The LL 784-785 deposit: rossette button (J. Pfaff-A. Caputo).
Pl. XLIIIc  The LL 784-785 deposit: spindle whorl (J. Pfaff-A. Caputo).
Pl. XLIVa  The LL 784-785 deposit: unpainted krater FS 7 (T. Ross).
Pl. XLIVb  The LL 784-785 deposit: patterned krater FS 7 (B. Konnemann-A. Caputo).
Pl. XLIVc  The LL 784-785 deposit: unpainted dipper FS 236 (B. Konnemann-A. Caputo).
Pl. XLIVd  The LL 784-785 deposit: unpainted conical cup FS 204 (T. Ross).
Pl. XLIVe  The LL 784-785 deposit: unpainted cup with high-swung handle FS 238 (T. Ross).
Pl. XLIVf-g  The LL 784-785 deposit: unpainted kantharos cups FS 240 (T. Ross; B. Konnemann-A. Caputo).
Pl. XLIVa  The LL 784-785 deposit: unpainted kylix FS 264 (T. Ross).
Pl. XLIVb  The LL 784-785 deposit: unpainted kylix FS 266 (T. Ross).
Pl. XLIVc  The LL 784-785 deposit: unpainted small kylix with high-swung handles (T. Ross).
Pl. XLIVd  The LL 784-785 deposit: unpainted three-handled kylix (T. Ross).
Pl. XLVi  The LL 784-785 deposit: brazier FS 312 (B. Konnemann-A. Caputo).
Pl. XLVic-d  The LL 784-785 deposit: patterned straight-sided alabastra FS 94 (T. Ross).
Pl. XLVid-f  The LL 784-785 deposit: unpainted kylix feet, possibly reused as lids (T. Ross-A. Caputo).
Pl. XLVig  The LL 784-785 deposit: monochrome kylix foot, possibly reused as a lid (T. Ross).
Pl. XLVih  The LL 784-785 deposit: unpainted miniature surrup jug (T. Ross).
Pl. XLVii  The LL 784-785 deposit: unpainted miniature conical open shape (T. Ross).
Pl. XLVIIIa  Trench LN 784: the deposit found between Walls 31 and 32, from south (T. Dabney).
Pl. XLVIIIa  Trench LN 784: the deposit found between Walls 31 and 32, from northeast (T. Dabney).
Pl. XLVIIc  Trench LN 784, drawing of west baulk (G. Bianco).
Pl. XLVIIIa  The LM-LN 784 deposit: tripod cooking pot FS 320 (B. Konnemann-A. Caputo).

(Author's of photographs and drawings are reported in parentheses. In the case of multiple authors, the first name refers to the original illustrator and the second to the person who made the inking).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Features/Deposits*</th>
<th>Tsoungiza EU 9</th>
<th>Nichoria “LH IIIA2 Middle”</th>
<th>Mitrou LH IIIA2 Early</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kylix, rounded</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FS 256</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kylix/goblet as the most popular OS</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prevalence of rounded triangle rims for OSs</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patterned kylises on a low or relatively low scale only</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decoration extending below handles on CSs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kylix, rounded</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FS 257</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diagonal whorl-shell pattern FM 23</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES**</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amphora/Jug/Hydria</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conical cup</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FS 204</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semiglobular cup FS 214</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kylix, rounded FS 264</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kylix, rounded FS 266</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kylix, one-handed FS 267</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shallow angular bowl FS 295</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stemmed bowl</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FS 304</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Information regarding the ceramic materials from Tsoungiza and Nichoria refers to the following sources: SHELMERDINE (supra n 3) 495-503, 538-542, DABNEY, HALSTEAD, and THOMAS (supra n 3) 197-215; P. THOMAS (pers. comm. 2008).

Abbreviations: OS= Open shape; CS= Closed Shape.

** The decorative motif on P3656 is assigned by C. W. Shelmardine to the diagonal whorl-shell FM 23, cf. SHELMERDINE (supra n 3) 497, 538, fig. 9. no. 40 P3656, but this attribution seems very uncertain.
Table 2. Distribution of possible ritual shapes in Mycenaean special drinking and eating context (LH II A2-LH III C Phases i-3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Large finds related to Mycenaean oikos</th>
<th>Mycenaean</th>
<th>Drills and sets in recent Mycenaean public sites</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LB II A2 Early (1)</td>
<td>LB II A2 Early (2)</td>
<td>LB II A2 Early (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thesprotia</td>
<td>Pylos</td>
<td>Mycenae of LH II A2 &amp; LB III C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pelion, Io, &amp; Mt. Athos</td>
<td>Thessaly</td>
<td>Methana, Archaia,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katothostra e.g. FS 240</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small kylikes, high-stemmed handles</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Absolute number of identified specimens (NISP), minimum number of individuals (MNI), and density of NISP and MNI per 1m² (R. Veropoulos)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species - Use</th>
<th>NISP</th>
<th>NISP/m²</th>
<th>MNI</th>
<th>MNI/m²</th>
<th>Common name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ceratoderma glaucum</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>52.5</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>38.7</td>
<td>Common cockle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tapes decussans</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Claw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carithum vulgarum</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>Cerith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P. carinata</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Limpet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common food debris</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>(46.4%)</td>
<td>101.6</td>
<td>97 (53.7%)</td>
<td>54.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area notae</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>Notae notae</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donatia cornua</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>Wedge shell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ostrea edulis</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>Oyster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spaldingia gaudryns</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>Spaldingia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manaradion tubercul</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>Tubercled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncommon food debris</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>(33.7%)</td>
<td>73.2</td>
<td>38 (23.5%)</td>
<td>23.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murice branchi</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>Purple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murice prunulus</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>36.3</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>Murice gryph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purple dye / food debris</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>(17.6%)</td>
<td>38.2</td>
<td>36 (18.5%)</td>
<td>18.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oreodoxa eberhardi</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>Cockle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clam miliarum</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>Clam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nithola merothassa</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>Nithola</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luria lurida</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>Cowry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curtalitha</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>(2.3%)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>(4.3%)</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>216.9</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>101.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Abbreviations: LTA = Lower Terasos, Sharea Area, WGA = West Gune Area.