The Cyclades and the Dodecanese During the Post-Palatial Period:

Heterogeneous Developments of a Homogeneous Culture

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Introduction

The fall of the palaces on the Greek mainland at the end of the LH IIIB phase, and of the Hittite empire roughly at the same time, introduced new political, social and economic conditions across the Aegean. In the 12th and early 11th c B.C. (LH IIIC phase) several islands flourished, resulting in new common pottery styles, more tombs and an increase in offerings deposited within them. This was attributed either to newcomers from the Greek mainland fleeing the destroyed palaces, or as an outcome of a series of major destructions (Desborough 1964; Mee 1988, 57; Iakovidis 1995, 216; Kanta 1998, 40). A mass exodus of people, resulting in their migration to the Aegean islands en route to Cyprus, has been hypothesized. The cultural highpoint which the Aegean islands experienced during this period was believed to have been the outcome of this process. In order to understand this region during the post-palatial phase, it is necessary to provide a thorough analysis of the broader LH IIIC period in the southern Aegean islands (Figure 1). Thus the available evidence from the Cyclades and the Dodecanese will be presented and discussed within their contemporary contexts. Regional characteristics will be sought in order to determine the similarities and differences within this area in regard to different types of data, such as pottery, fortifications, burial practices and settlement patterns. This analysis will highlight the strong regionalism and differing developments attested in the southern Aegean islands during the LH IIIC period, phenomena that cannot support the existence of the 12th c. B.C. “koine” once advocated by scholarship.
I. Thoughts About the Present Definition of the 12th c. B.C. “koine” Across the Aegean

The “Little Mycenaean Koine”, defined by Desborough (1964, 228), was in fact a result of common cultural expressions and developments that were found in coastal and insular locations during the 12th c. B.C. (LH IIIC). Geographically, these developments are known from Euboea, Attica, the eastern coast of the Peloponnese, the Cyclades, the Dodecanese, and the north-eastern Aegean islands up to Chios (Figure 1). The settlement at Xeropolis (Lefkandi) on Euboea, the extensive chamber-tomb cemetery of Perati in Attica, the cemeteries and the settlements of Naxos, the cemeteries of Kos and Rhodes and the settlement at Emporio on Chios spatially defined this cultural koine - a term based on ceramics and minor arts - while the coastline of Asia Minor, the islands of the east and north Aegean and the Sporades do not share these features and developments.

The Mycenaean Aegean, however, is not as homogenous as the word “koine” might suggest. Historically, the conditions of the “Mycenaeanization” of each island are associated with strong local phenomena, as shown by the rich LH IIIA-C Early cemetery at Psara with its purely Mycenaean offerings (Philaniotou 2006; Mountjoy 1999, 1156). This is perhaps also suggested by the contemporary evidence from Hephaestia (Coluccia, this volume) and the Koukonisi islet at Moudros Bay on Lemnos (Boulotis 2001, 30; personal communication), reflecting strong Mycenaean influence. The discovery of a Mycenaean settlement at the gulf of Gera in Lesvos (Archontidou 2006; 2009, 937 fig. 28) and surface LH IIIB-C finds at Imbros (Guzowska and Yasur-Landau 1999; Andreou and Andreou 2002, 82-3; Matsas 2006, 102 fig. 116) signal a similar phenomenon of the spreading of mainlanders towards both large and small islands in the remote Aegean, perhaps as stations for the occupation or peaceful invasion of the north-west coast of Asia Minor. This is a type of contact that “Epic Mycenaean Archaeology” would prefer to see occur two centuries later, in the form of the coordinated and aggressive campaign of a “Trojan War”.

This period is actually very much connected with the historical fate of the key-post region of the Troad (Aslan; Hnila – Chabot Aslan this volume); it is not clear however what the relation was between the North-eastern Aegean islands and their
péraia, that is, the mainland coastline opposite them (Ozgünel 1996, 123-46; Maner this volume). The foundation of Emporio (Hood 1982; Mountjoy 1999, 1147-55) is traditionally interpreted as a settlement of Mycenaean newcomers from the Mainland, but even if this is the case, the islands do not necessarily represent the eastern border of the Mycenaean empire. The selective presence of the Mycenaean in the North-eastern Aegean islands seems to depend on the ratio of the benefits of this advantageous area to the strategies of interests developed by their settlers (Mountjoy 1999, 1146, 1156).

Troy seems to have been a focal point of such interests, perhaps the centre of an “East Aegean Koine”, as Mountjoy (1997a; 1997b; 1999, 50; Mommsen et al. 2001) has shown. Important Mycenaean finds of the 12th c. B.C. come from Pitane (Ozgünel 1996, 136:4; Mountjoy 1997a; 1997b) and Bedemgediği (Mountjoy 2005, 424-5 pl. XCVI-IIc; Meriç this volume), on the Ionian coast, the latter providing evidence of local pictorial pottery production with strong iconographic affinities to Kos and Kynos, a port-town on the east Greek Mainland coast (Dakoronia 1990; 2006; 2009, 278-80 figs 452-6).

Miletus (Mallwitz 1960, 67-76 pl. 76; Schiering κ.ά 1960, 15-38, 43-53, pl. 6-18; Schachermeyr 1980, 151; Ozgünel 1996, 130-40; Niemeier 1998) and Iasos (Schachermeyr 1980, 151 pl. 27d; Benzi 1987, 29-34) are 12th c. B.C. settlements of pure Mycenaean character, but the known cemeteries from this and earlier periods, such as Panaztepe (Ersoy 1988, 82; Ozgünel 1996, 43:5-6, 49:16-17), Cömlekçi and Müskebi (Boysal 1969; 1969a; Ozgünel 1996, 129; Ersoy 1988, 81) in Karia simply reflect occasional contact or commercial interests with the Mycenaeans of the Aegean. The coast Asia Minor thus seems to share the same non-uniformity as the East Aegean islands.

Additionally, there is a significant difference, or rather a differentiation in the perception, of the current Aegean “koine”. The LM IIIC period on the island of Crete should now either be considered a dynamic participant in this “koine”, or instead be considered an independent “Cretan koine”. However, from the point of view of historical processes, Crete does not appear to claim such autonomy as, during the 120 years of this period, it was characterized by the ceramic homogeneity of the “Fringed Style”, and its settlements can be classified as “refuge and threatened”, “of
uninterrupted continuity and thriving”, “newly founded”, etc. (Nowicki 2000, passim; Prent 2005, 105-26).

The issue here is not to define the most accurate or the least derogatory (for some regions) term. Apart from the geographical facet, the formation of the components of a “koine” seeks to determine the political and historical aspects of the demarcated area, in other words the constitution of its societies and their coordinated route in time. However, examining the few material remains from the 12th c., as well as reports of national-tribal formations that dominated several centuries later (such as the territories mentioned in the Catalogue of Ships in the Iliad), these coordinated routes can hardly be traced. According to them, there should not be any Mycenaean remains in the Cyclades at all.

II. The LH IIIC Cyclades: A Survey

The earlier need of scholarship to view the Cyclades as a homogeneous island territory of the central Aegean, which historically and culturally depended on the political formations / estates of Mycenaean Mainland Greece (due mostly to their absence from the Homeric List of Ships [Polychronakou-Sgouritsa 1988] but also because of the modern perception of them as a geographical insular entity) can no longer be considered seriously (Vlachopoulos 1999; Barber 2010, 165-7).

However, even if our knowledge of the LBA Cyclades has matured sufficiently (Figure 1), and the Mycenaean scholarly profile of the larger islands can be more securely sketched, ironically very few excavations have been carried out over the past twenty years and even less data has been published. With the exception of the Sanctuary at Phykalopi (Renfrew 1985) and the cemeteries of Naxos (Kardara 1977; Vlachopoulos 2006), no other material from the LH IIIC Cyclades has been fully published and the major LH IIIC settlements of Grotta, Naxos and Koukounaries, Paros have been only summarily presented (Vlachopoulos 1999, 2002a; 2002b; Schillardi 1992; 1995; Koehl 1984).

Nowadays, most of the key-points of Desborough’s 12th c. B.C. “koine” have been strengthened by the limited, but useful, surface archaeological material from minor locations, such as Ellinika on Kimolos and Monolithos on Thera. Elsewhere however,
recent research has presented a quite different, less “koine”, picture for the period of interest (especially mid-LH IIIC) at sites such as Koukounaries at Paros and elsewhere, where synchronizations leave this “koine” outside, as it is evident during that time at Siphnos (Ayios Andreas and Tis Baronas to Froudi) and perhaps at Tenos.

II.1. Topography and Chronology of LH IIIC Settlements, Cult Places and Cemeteries

One could claim that Mycenaean culture and influence began to appear across the Aegean at the time when the first tholos tombs in the islands were built. Indeed, this Helladic type of tomb is found in the Cyclades (Naxos-Ghosti, Mykonos-Aggelika, Tenos-Ayia Thekla), the Dodecanese (city of Kos) and the East Aegean islands (Psara-Archontiki) only after the LH IIIA period, that is the 14th c. B.C. (Figure 1). Local peculiarities in their architecture and the different times of their construction (across at least two centuries) reflect the existence of local ruling classes in the islands, an elite that needed to express its superiority through monumentality, even if the character of the finds in these tombs is far from royal.

The LH IIIC Early phase is poorly documented in the Cyclades, possibly because of its short duration (Mountjoy 1999, 863). However, it is adequately represented during the last period of use of the LH IIIB tholos tomb at Ayia Thekla on Tenos (Despinis 1979; Philaniotou 2006). During this period a mansion was founded on the naturally fortified rock hill of Koukounaries which overlooks the bay of Naoussa, which lies opposite the Naxian coast but it is invisible from Grotta, above strong built terraces which also functioned as a defensive wall, according to the excavator (Schilardi 1984; 1992; 1995). The building (Mountjoy 2008, 474 fig. 42.8) was destroyed by fire a short time after its foundation in the LH IIIC Middle developed phase. An organised attack by a hostile group, which has been proposed by the excavator D. Schilardi, does not explain why valuable artifacts (such as ivories and bronzes) were found in the ruins along with dead people and animals; this scenario is more similar to a severe earthquake than a hostile event. A short-lived and modest reoccupation of Koukounaries is also dated to the LH IIIC Late phase. No chamber tomb cemetery is reported from the site; however the three rectangular
built chamber tombs that were found looted may belong to this settlement (Schilardi 1987, 236-40; Mountjoy 1999, 932; Papadimitriou 2001, 138-40 fig. 63).

Recent study of the Bronze Age ceramic material from Kastro, Paroikia did not produce any Mycenaean finds (Vlachopoulos forthcoming; contra Desborough 1964, 148), disproving that Paros’ historical capital was the major diachronical center of the island.

The Mycenaean town of Grotta was founded on the north coast of Naxos town, above a very disturbed habitation horizon of Late Neolithic-Middle Cycladic date (Hadjianastasiou 1989). This flourishing settlement existed throughout LH IIIA and dramatically declined in LH IIIB period (Cosmopoulos 2004). However, the lack of stratigraphy and the difficult conditions under which the excavations of the late 1950’s and the 1960’s-70’s were conducted did not allow further documentation which might shed light on the diachronic use of this prosperous community. Grotta thrived during the LBA thanks to its two adjoining ports, which communicated through a man-made channel which cut off the Palatia promontory from the coast. The (then) islet of Palatia, as pottery from beneath the archaic temple of Apollo showed, was never abandoned and may have functioned as a natural protection against the strong north winds as well as other threats from the open sea.

The foundation of Grotta in the early 14th c. B.C. may have initiated an era of direct collaboration between the island and the mainland. The prevalence of mainland type, good quality pottery of that period on Grotta (Cosmopoulos 1998; 2004) portrays the internationalization of Naxos, belying the need for a tyrant or for an operation aimed at occupying the island. Several examples of grey wheel-made Minyan ware found isolated from the main (non-stratified) bulk of pottery from Grotta reflects an earlier, MBA/MH influence on the island around the middle of the second millennium (it should be noted that Minyan pottery has not been reported elsewhere except the island of Kea).

Sometime in the LH IIIC Early phase another settlement was built at Grotta, directly above the LH IIIA-B settlement but following a different orientation and a less sophisticated town-planning system. This settlement was protected by a fortification wall with a stone-built foundation and a mud-brick superstructure (Lambrinoudakis & Philaniotou-Hadjianastasiou 2001, 160 figs. 2, 3; Vlachopoulos
a type documented nowhere else in the Cyclades (Vlachopoulos 1999), although there are possible parallels at Thebes, Cyprus and the East (Aravantinos 1988; Lambrinoudakis & Philaniotou-Hadjianastasiou 2001). The wall reached the harbour installations, which today are submerged along the northern coast of Grotta. Its excavated section bordered independent workshop zones of the settlement, where local pictorial pottery was produced and possibly displayed and sold (Vlachopoulos 1999c). The strong Cycladic tradition of naturalism is the most important feature of Naxian pottery, including human figures and octopus, fish, birds, quadrupeds and floral motifs in its pictorial repertoire. Attica, Crete and the Dodecanese (Kos and possibly Rhodes) are among the island’s best importers of decorated pottery, particularly stirrup jars, whereas Naxian pottery seems to have a rather passive role in 12th c. B.C. Aegean trade, with only one possible export to Kimolos (Vlachopoulos 1996, 337-47).

Grotta’s Town II thrived for 120 years, through LH IIIC Middle and Late period, and its pottery (“Grotta phase pottery”) displayed local characteristics as well as some artistic novelties (Vlachopoulos 2003a, b). The cemeteries of Naxos, which expanded into the adjacent hills of Aplomata and Kamini, were used from the LH IIIC Middle Advanced period, in concordance with the Grotta II settlement. The dead were accompanied by rich funerary offerings such as pictorial pottery, bronze weapons, jewellery (mostly made of gold), seals (heirlooms from the 14th-13th c. B.C.) and tools which suggest activities such as horse keeping, fishing and weaving (Kardara 1977; Vlachopoulos 2006).

Very little of Naxos’ Mycenaean past is preserved in the countryside. LH IIIC and PG decorated pottery was collected from the lower terraces of the Genissis hill, located 5 km east of the Naxos town, at the valley of Eggares (Vlachopoulos 1996, 79 fig. 1), which probably belonged to the long-living agricultural community of this fertile zone. Some Late Mycenaean pottery (kylikes, skyphoi, conical cups) was found in the foundation level of the Geometric-Archaic temple at Yria, which lies in the heart of Livadi, the island’s major fertile plain (Lambrinoudakis 1992, 205 fig. 5, p. 215; Vlachopoulos 1999, 81). The thorough excavation of the sanctuary brought to light an “undisturbed” Mycenaean (LH IIIA2-C) phase connected with open-air cult activity documented by a stone lekane and sherds of large amphorae and hydriae around it, clay beads and unfired astragals (Simantoni-Bournia 2002, 270). The
sanctuary at Yria (possibly dedicated to the worship of Dionysos) testify to “conscious cult continuity from Mycenaean to Geometric times” (Lambrinoudakis 1992, 215).

On the east coast of the island, a destroyed (farm?) house was excavated in 1968 at the site of Karvounolakkoi; in the floor there was a cist tomb for a child (?) burial (Vlachopoulos 1996, 79 fig. 8-10). A vaulted rectangular built tomb was excavated close to this site at Lygaridia, where a LH IIIC feeding bottle was found (Vlachopoulos 1996, 79, 83 fig. 11 pl. 121). Systematic excavation of the Zas Cave, in the mountainous core of Naxos, did not yield any clear Mycenaean phase, except for a very few LH IIIA-B(?) sherds which show temporary use of the cave (Zachos pers. comm.).

Thus, during Mycenaean times, the island of Naxos demonstrated strong topographic correlations with the sites of later –PG– habitation and cult. Grotta was used as an organized cist-tomb cemetery in PG times, which gradually transformed into a cult place in honour of the ancestors; its nuclear settlement should therefore lie very close, most probably on the hill of Kastro.

On Siphnos, two major settlements are known so far. The acropolis of Ayios Andreas occupies a hill overlooking the east coast of the island. Its fortified settlement was founded in LH IIIB (Televantou 2001, 208) and inhabited until LH IIIC Early, as shown by the pottery published to date (Mountjoy 1999, 887-8; Televantou 2000, 116). No Close Style or any other evidence of LH IIIC Middle and Late pottery has been found, while a continuous habitation into the PG has been suggested for the site. Rectangular buildings have been preserved on the surface of the steep rocky, naturally defended, acropolis of ‘tis Baronas to Froudi’, above the protected coast of Vathy (Papadopoulou 2009, 989-90 fig. 42-4), and homogeneous LH IIIC Middle advanced and Late pottery indicate a date in the mid-late 12th and early 11th c. B.C. (Vlachopoulos 2008, 490 fig. 43.22;). Buildings lie on the west and south sloping terraces of the settlement, and a central road seems to function as the major axis of its town-planning. A “periteichisma” (wall enclosure) has been suggested around these houses (Papadopoulou 2009, 989). Most of the pottery is monochrome black-glazed, with the bell-shaped skyphos FS 284 comprising the majority of the surface sherds. The two settlements belong to diametrically opposite
models of habitation, with the latter apparently of defensive character and much later in date. ‘Tis Baronas to Froudi’ is the only known LH IIIC known site in the Cyclades that meets the criteria of a ‘refugee’ settlement; that is, a naturally protected remote site with restricted access, ample views of the sea with a safe anchorage, access to water and enough territory for cultivation and animal husbandry. The historical events that lie behind the foundation of the site are hard to know; however, one cannot exclude the possibility that this settlement was founded by the inhabitants of Ayios Andreas, who moved there for protection from systematic raids or attacks.

Monolithos seems to have been an important settlement of the south Cyclades in the Last Mycenaean period, establishing the vital role that Thera played in the intra-Aegean exchange routes (Vlachopoulos 2007; 2008, 479-80 figs. 43.1-3). The settlement extends to the foothills of an isolated crag, the only rocky promontory on the east coast of post-eruption Thera. Surface pottery of very good quality dates mostly to LH IIIC, with very few sherds dating to LH IIIB2, suggesting a flourishing settlement (Doumas and Warren 1979). The pictorial pottery has strong parallels with Melos and Naxos, the East Aegean and other centres of the post-palatial world. This location seems to have been one of the nodal points of the South Cyclades between the 13th and 12th c. B.C., connected to a dense commercial network within the Aegean and beyond.

The sanctuaries at Ayia Irini on Kea (Caskey 1984; Mountjoy 1999, 864; 2008, 475-6) and Phylakopi on Melos (Renfrew 1985; Mountjoy 1999, 889; 2008, 474) continued in use during the LH IIIC period, when they developed into traditional cult places, but there is no evidence of any contemporary use of their settlements.

II.2 Synchronisms in the Cyclades during the Post-Palatial Period

The LH IIIC Early phase is documented at Ayia Thekla by several examples of Helladic type Linear Style (Despinis 1979; Philaniotou 2006; Mountjoy 1999, 930) and scant material from Amorgos (Mountjoy 1999, 964 fig. 393.9-10). The mansion at Koukounaries (Schilardi 1992, 634; 1995, 484, 488) was destroyed in LH IIIC Middle developed (Vlachopoulos 2008, 480), as shown by the pottery that has been published so far (Koehl 1984; Mountjoy 1999, 932–7, fig. 381). The decoration is
linear and demonstrates Helladic inspiration, if not manufacture, as do the very few pictorial sherds. The limited reoccupation of Koukounaries is dated to LH IIIC Late, and its pottery shows strong similarities to the ‘Grotta Phase’ (Koehl 1984, 204 fig. 10b; Deger-Jalkotzy 1998, 108; Mountjoy 1999, 937). A reoccupation is also attested for Ayios Andreas (Televantou 2001; Mountjoy 2008, 474), where most important is the date of the fortification wall and the continuity.

Amorgos and Kimolos have yielded only surface finds, or what was left from looted chamber tombs. A sherd from a tomb at Xylokeratidi on Amorgos depicts a highly stylized ship of LH IIIC Middle-Late date, but it is not yet possible to determine where the vase was made (Marangou 2002, 20 fig. 30). Vases of the same date from Amorgos show an Argive origin and have parallels in Attica (Mountjoy 1999, 964). Mycenaean domestic pottery recently found in rescue excavations of the nearby settlement at Katapola (Marangou, pers. comm.) can be safely connected with the settlement of this cemetery. Pottery from the looted cemetery of Ellinika on Kimolos (Polychronakou-Sgouritsa 1994–5, 10) dates to LH IIIC Middle advanced and some sherds display similarities to the ‘Grotta Phase’ Naxian workshop (Vlachopoulos 2008, 490 fig. 43.23), especially a stirrup jar fragment of the Octopus style.

It has been shown elsewhere that in the Cyclades the stratified pottery of Koukounaries, Phylakopi and Ayia Irini belongs to different phases of LH IIIC (Vlachopoulos 1999; 2008), and nowhere, except Naxos, have sufficient examples of the Octopus and Close styles been found, which would allow for chronological inferences about the emergence and diffusion of these styles in the Cyclades to be drawn. The LH IIIC Middle and Late ‘Grotta Phase’ pottery of Naxos, with its distinct Close and Pictorial style, has parallels on both the Greek mainland and Crete, but not in the Cyclades (Vlachopoulos 2003; 2008), whereas the few intra-Cycladic similarities mostly rely on the monochrome or linear wares that monopolize the last decades of the post-palatial period. From the historical point of view, it is important to emphasize that the LH IIIC pottery material of Naxos does not facilitate chronological synchronisms, especially with its neighbouring islands.

The study of pottery from Delos has shown that the settlement was not occupied during the LH IIIC period (A. Farnoux, pers. comm.). Pottery from Kea and Melos
displayed mainly Helladic and local features. Kea belonged geographically and culturally to the sphere of influence of Attica and Euboea, whereas Melos showed mainland influence as well as significant local peculiarities. The influence of the Greek mainland seems more intense in the little-known pottery from Koukounaries on Paros, and the number of imports greater; however some Minoan elements can be observed (Koehl 1984).

The Pictorial style appears with variable frequency and quality. On Paros and Melos, examples of pictorial pottery are few and not distinctive, and only a few sherds from Kimolos show notable similarities with Naxos and the Dodecanese (Vlachopoulos 2008, 490). The Close style of mainland Greece does not seem to have been adopted by the islands, who instead used more idiosyncratic creations. Consequently, in the Cyclades, there is no uniform picture among the islands during the LH IIIC period. The pottery suggests not only a lack of chronological and stylistic synchronisms between the assemblages, but that each island was also open to different influences. Overall, the heterogeneous picture of the central Aegean during LH IIIC is at odds with the picture of the ‘Small Mycenaean Koine’ proposed by Desborough in the 1960s, a term that can no longer be applied to the diverse picture which is emerging for each island in the Cyclades.

During the 13th and 12th c., new walls were constructed in many Cycladic settlements, or older ones were extended and reinforced. As shown elsewhere, the walled settlements of Grotta, Ayia Irini, Koukounaries, Phylakopi and Ayios Andreas on Siphnos differ in their location as well as in the method of wall construction and the dates of their building (Vlachopoulos 1999a, 82; 2003a; Barber 2010, 167). The acropolis of Ayios Andreas was founded in LH IIIB and was inhabited until LH IIIC Early, as shown by the pottery published to date (Televantou 2000; 2001; Mountjoy 2008, 474). Recent excavations at Xombourgo, Tenos connect the foundation of the massive defensive wall -dated “between the late LBA and the PG period (Kourou 2002, 255)- with several Submycenaean sherds (Kourou pers. comm.). These facts refute the possibility that these works were part of a wider defence plan for the islands in the face of a common threat, and certainly the lack of contemporaneity argues against the theory of a simultaneous establishment of ‘refugee’ settlements in the Cyclades (Vlachopoulos 1999, 83; Barber 2010, 167). On Siphnos, however, the naturally defended acropolis at ‘tis Baronas to Froudi’ dates to the advanced LH IIIC
phase (Papadopoulou 2009, 209; Vlachopoulos 2008, 490-1), and it may have been founded by people who temporarily moved there from elsewhere on the island in search of a secure site, since the settlement seems to have been abandoned soon afterwards.

Although there were no doubt concerns for security, the lack of evidence for violent and simultaneous catastrophes in the settlements of the Cyclades suggests that LH IIIC was a peaceful period for the Aegean, and no common external threat existed. However, the iconography of some LH IIIC pictorial vases from Grotta - following the fashion of their Mainland originals - portray males in procession or in duel (Vlachopoulos 2003, 498, 511 fig. 21; 2009; Papadopoulos 2009, 73 fig. 9.5), suggesting a ‘heroic’ repertoire that might reflect war activities. The same conclusion could be drawn from the three so-called ‘warrior burials’ of the Naxian cemeteries.

These richly furnished male burials at Kamini (Tomb A and a pyra next to Tomb Δ) and Aplomata (Tomb A) with Naue II swords, spearheads and other bronze, silver and gold kterismata parallel typical examples of the so-called Warrior Graves of the LH IIIC Aegean (Deger-Jalkotzy 2006). The exceptional open-air interment of a richly buried “warrior” into a thick ash layer of animal sacrifices at Kamini (Pyra next to Tomb Δ) adds weight to the argument that the gradual formulation of burial rites in honour of distinguished members of the local elite developed in the mid-late 12th c. B.C. Such funerary rituals possibly concluded with communal meals and dances, as a unique representation on a strainer hydria suggests (Vlachopoulos 1996, 99-100, 189-96 fig. 39.e, dr. 24, col. pl. 8). Strainer jugs and hydrias were found in shallow pits around the chamber tombs of the Kamini mound, pointing to the regular enactment of open-air libations during or after the burials (Vlachopoulos 1996, 99).

There is little doubt that rituals for the distinguished deceased of Naxian society demonstrate the pronounced role of an elite-class which emerged gradually during the LH IIIC period. The interment of its members, accompanied by impressive armoury and other insignia dignitatis, might however reflect demonstration of the dead’s social status rather than actual war activity or a generalized spirit of hostility.

After the fall of the mainland palaces, and apparently due to the influx of newcomers to the islands, the 12th c. B.C. Aegean communities that gradually developed were searching for a new political system among the hierarchies of the
local clans. Naxos, being prosperous and self-sufficient, seems to have developed a local ruling class, the members of which shared principles and qualities that are to be encountered some generations later as the heroic ethos of the Homeric epos.

The harbour-city of Grotta, equipped with a minimal but functioning town-planning system and with its workshops systematically operating along the fortification wall, must have been a major node of sea-faring activity in the 12th c. B.C. Aegean. The major settlement of Naxos, with the adjoining chamber tomb clusters of Aplomata and Kamini, which can be associated with two local elite clans, are the best example of the “Mycenaean city-state model” of the LH IIIC period in the Aegean.

III. The LH IIIC Dodecanese

Most of the available evidence for the Dodecanese is related to the burial tradition, which was conspicuous during the entire LH IIB-LH IIIC period. The number of cemeteries and tombs allows a broader analysis, as well as a diachronic overview of the continuity or discontinuity of the local mortuary practices from the palatial to the post-palatial Mycenaean period (Figure 1).

During the LH IIIC period in the Dodecanese, the two largest cemeteries, Ialysos on Rhodes and Eleona and Langada on Kos, became even larger. More tombs were used and consequently more pots and small finds were deposited in them. Furthermore, a significant number of abandoned LH IIIA chamber tombs, as well as two tholos tombs from Kos, were re-used in the LH IIIC phase (Benzi 1982, 325-33; 1992, 225, 227; Cavanagh and Mee 1978, 36-8; Georgiadis 2003, 68-9, 71, 74; 2009a, 98; Bosnakis 2006, 341 fig. 525). These changes were considered the main evidence in support of the hypothesis of fleeing migrants from the Greek mainland. This could explain the process of hellenization on Cyprus, where some of the mainland migrants finally settled, and date it to the 12th c. B.C. It could also provide an ethnic identity or provenance for the Philistines in Syria-Palestine and even confirm the Homeric tradition of the Nostoi of the epic heroes.

This narrative is very appealing as it could potentially answer many issues, but the way population movement occurred (Georgiadis 2004, 62-6; 2009a, 97-8), and
the character of the LH IIIC evidence in the Dodecanese is far more complicated (Georgiadis 2003, 113-4). A major hindrance to the migration hypothesis is the continuity of older burial traditions with no significant change from the regionalism already seen in the LH IIIA-B phase. The main characteristics of this regionalism are the shared orientation of chamber tombs within cemeteries (Georgiadis 2003, 108; Gallou and Georgiadis 2006; 2006-7), the increasingly frequent and in some cases dominant practice of secondary treatment of the bodies, and the accompanied offerings and rituals (Georgiadis 2003, 107-9). Thus, it appears that an ancestor status was ascribed to the deceased, with special importance and reverence given to the local landscape. This was an amalgamation of introduced mainland social and burial practices and regional ideas and beliefs, producing new locally meaningful symbolisms (Georgiadis 2003, 111). At the same time, variations and regional characteristics were also present, especially between Rhodes and Kos. This can be seen in the landscape focus (such as the importance of plains and streams on Rhodes versus that of plains and the sea on Kos), the burial offerings which accompanied the deceased, as well as the construction of tholos tombs on Kos and their absence on Rhodes.

In almost all cases, the LH IIIC cemeteries were already in use during the LH IIIA-B period. The orientation of the tombs remained unaltered, as did the practices and rituals, which were the same as in the palatial phase (Georgiadis 2003, 114). Thus, the burial tradition in the Dodecanese retained the same regional characteristics and symbolic significance as before. Although there were some new trends in the type of pots deposited as offerings, such as the decrease in the use of drinking vessels in comparison to the previous periods, overall there are no important changes (Georgiadis 2003, 89, 91, 93, 94). The appearance of pits within chamber tombs is a phenomenon attested in only a few cases at Ialysos in the Dodecanese, following a LH IIIC pattern, which has parallels at Perati (Georgiadis 2003, 78; 2009a, 95; Iakovidis 1970, 14-5). The most significant new element was the adoption of cremation, with eight or nine examples at Ialysos and one at Eleona and Langada. Nonetheless, this is not a new phenomenon in this region, as sporadic cremations were already recovered in the LH IIIA2 phase; rather it argues for the intensification of an older practice (Georgiadis 2003, 77, 79, 81-2; 2009a, 95).

III.1. Pottery
Chemical analysis of pots from Ialysos and Pylona revealed different manufacturing trends during the LH IIIA-B and LH IIIC phases. In the earlier period the vast majority of pots deposited in the tombs had a mainland provenance, mainly from the Argolid, and very few were locally produced (Jones 1986, 501-8; Jones and Mee 1978; Karantzali and Ponting 2000, 232; Ponting and Karantzali 2001, 107; Karantzali 2009, 273-4). However, recent analysis of LH IIIA-B pottery from the settlement of Trianda, to which the Ialysos cemetery belongs, revealed that everyday pots were locally produced and fewer were imported (Karantzali 2003, 517; 2009, 358, 363-4; Marketou et al. 2006, 31-2, 48-50). This situation can also be seen at Serrayia (Jones 1986, 508-9), suggesting a similar pattern in the production and consumption of pottery at settlements in the Dodecanese. It appears that on Rhodes the better quality imported wares from the mainland were purposefully used and perhaps even reserved, primarily in a mortuary context. For the latter period the analyses from the Rhodian cemeteries have shown that the vast majority pots were locally or regionally produced (Jones 1986, 501-8; Jones and Mee 1978; Karantzali and Ponting 2000, 232; Ponting and Karantzali 2001, 107). Thus in the post-palatial period only a few pots were imported and deposited within the tombs, in contrast to LH IIIA-B practices.

Rhodes developed its own distinct workshop during the LH IIIC Early-Middle phase, when Cretan elements, mainly motifs, were used (Mountjoy 1999, 985-8, fig. 400). The most diagnostic shape and decoration was the Octopus style stirrup jar, which was both locally produced and imported. The Close style has also been recovered from the later phase of LH IIIC middle, imported from the Argolid. At the same time, two such examples from cemeteries in southern Rhodes were produced in local fabric, suggesting a local imitation of this style (Mountjoy 1998, 37; 1999, 989). The LH IIIC late pottery on Rhodes appears infrequently across the island. In the northern Dodecanese a common pottery tradition developed at Kos, Kalymnos and Astypalaia from the LH IIIC Early phase (Benzi 1993; Mountjoy 1998, 37; 1999, 1078, 1139). This style continued into the LH IIIC middle period, when its influence reached as far north as Chios. A Pictorial style was developed, with motifs including birds, fish, goats and humans recovered on amphoroid kraters, ring-based kraters, kalathoi, stirrups jars, strainer jugs and deep bowls (Mountjoy 1999, 1080, 1126-7, fig. 441). Octopus stirrup jars were also recovered in limited numbers at Eleona and
Langada, as well as Kalymnos, where they were both imported, mainly from Crete, as well as locally produced (Mountjoy 1999, 1115-6, 1134). The LH IIIC late phase is represented only at Kos, in the northern Dodecanese, by a few pots. Synchronisms, interactions, common elements and ideas are shared between the two regions, suggesting the close contact of these workshops, despite their distinct character.

### III.2. Regionalism: continuity and change

#### Cemeteries

The regional differences already shown in the palatial period in the Dodecanese continued in the LH IIIC phase, and new ones also appeared (Figure 1). On Kos, there was a decrease in the number of cemeteries used, whilst in the main cemetery of the island, i.e. Eleona and Langada, more tombs were used and more pots and small finds were placed in them. However, the trend in the increase of tombs and offerings in this cemetery develops steadily from LH IIIA. Moreover, the concentration of the LH IIIC cemeteries around Kos town could point towards nucleation in the eastern part of the island, where the main settlement was surrounded by smaller peripheral ones. Rhodes provides a more varied picture, with two trends showing a definite geographical differentiation, roughly north and south. In the south, during the LH IIIB and C phases, the number of cemeteries, tombs and pots deposited in them remained more or less the same. The overall image from south Rhodes is one of stability and continuity with an increased local pottery production. In the north however there was a clear decrease in the number of cemeteries used between the LH IIIB and C phases. Nonetheless, Ialysos grew larger than ever before, with more tombs used and far more offerings placed within them. This cemetery stands out both for the quantity of the burial goods, and for the wealth of the small finds. This development has been related to the nucleation of settlements in this part of the island. Some settlements-cemeteries were abandoned, possibly suggesting the movement of the population towards larger settlements like Ialysos. This could explain the appearance of a greater number of tombs, as well as the LH IIIC re-use of older LH IIIA2 ones. Thus, an internal, regional and small-distance migration could be proposed in order to explain the increased use of this cemetery.

#### Settlement Patterns
The LH IIIC settlement pattern in the Dodecanese remained fragmentary, as it had been during the previous LH phases. Across this region only a few settlements are known, whose identification is based on a handful of diagnostic LH III surface sherds. Our analysis is based on the continuity or discontinuity of the cemeteries whose related settlements would be expected to be in a radius of c. 1 km. On Karpathos the lack of LH IIIC evidence is surprising considering the mortuary tradition known from this island. This is especially true for Pigadia, which appears to be the main settlement of the island, where a number of tombs and vessels have been recovered. Furthermore, the unsystematic survey conducted by Melas (1985) has identified a number of MBA and LBA sites, but none belong to the LH IIIC phase. The only known settlement from this period was found at Poli on Kasos, a hill site located in a strategic area in the interior of the island, which was already established in the LH IIIB phase (Melas 1985, 49-50, 83). Even Trianda on Rhodes, the settlement to which the Ialysos cemetery belongs, does not provide any LH IIIC evidence. The LH III strata of this site are very disturbed, but no sherds appear to post-date the LH IIIB phase (Benzi 1988; Karantzali 2003; 2009). There are two possible interpretations of this scenario, in two different chronological periods. The first is that site was destroyed by either a single sudden or many smaller repeated alluvial activities sometime after the LH IIIC occupation, which destroyed the later remains and which could explain the lack of substantial architectural features. The second is that the destruction took place in a late phase of LH IIIB and after this event the settlement relocated to an area close by. This version could explain the total lack of any LH IIIC sherds, which would be expected to survive to some extent despite the destruction, and the continuity in use of Ialysos. The image of the LH IIIC settlement pattern on Rhodes is based entirely on the available cemetery data. On Astypalaia, the coastal cemetery was no longer in use by the LH IIIC phase, while the inland cemetery continued to be used during the LH IIIC Early period (Mountjoy 1999, 1138). The samples from this island are few and the assessment of Astypalaia can be very limited. On Kalymnos, sites at Perakastro, the Ayia Varvara cave and the Vathy cave continued to be used in LH IIIC with no hiatus (Benzi 1993; Hope Simpson 1981, 202; Hope Simpson and Lazenby 1962, 172; Levi 1925-6, 281; Maiuri 1928, 107; Sampson 1987, 123 pl. 28). The first is a settlement site, but the same cannot be said for the two caves, which may have had periodic use, and whose character remains unclear.
On Kos, Serrayia is the best-documented LH IIIC site, which has yielded pottery sherds from the settlement, but there are only limited architectural features (Morricone 1972-3; Vitale 2006). Recent results from the systematic survey of the Halasarna area have provided more data regarding this phase (Georgiadis 2005-6, 5, 12; forthcoming a). This region is located on the south coastal side of central Kos, and the survey revealed that small sites appeared on low hills around the fertile coastal plain. The identification of at least two of these sites is based on a limited number of diagnostic sherds, either one or two, suggesting that they probably represent small installations, such as farmsteads. A third site has been identified and belongs to this phase, but the recovered sherd could have come from a destroyed tomb. These sites seem to act as small satellite sites, with ancient Halasarna as their regional centre, not unlike the contemporary cemetery pattern which developed in eastern Kos. However, the fact that alluviation processes have covered the Halasarna plain, affecting our visibility and understanding of the development of the local LH III settlement pattern, needs to be taken under consideration. Nonetheless, the number of sites increased in this area during this period, unlike the situation in eastern Kos. Moreover, preliminary analysis of the pottery from ancient Halasarna argues for the existence of a LH IIIC phase at this settlement, which was substantial in size, and would have played a central role in this region.

Although the LH IIIC evidence from most of the islands is limited in many respects, there seems to be a preference for inland and more protected sites over coastal. This observation can be seen at Kasos, and could explain the continuity of habitation in southern Rhodes, the nucleation of northern Rhodes around larger sites, as well as the available picture at Astypalaia, the continuity of sites at Kalymnos, and the patterns which developed in eastern Kos and the Halasarna region. These areas reveal both continuity and limited changes. This continuity can be seen in inland areas such as southern Rhodes, Perakastro on Kalymnos and Armenochori on Astypalaia. New sites and/or developments were recovered from the rest of the regions discussed above. The overall picture might suggest new political, social and economic conditions during the LH IIIC period. However, the response was different according to regional determinants, needs and idiosyncrasies, for example in southern and northern Rhodes, and Kos. A focus on farming and animal herding at most of the settlements, leaving a fewer specialized coastal sites to
interact, as well as exchange and circulate products, could have been a new socio-economic strategy.

An additional factor for this preference in site location could have been a wider trend of cautionary measures against external and/or internal threats (Georgiadis forthcoming b). This hypothesis cannot be easily substantiated by the aforementioned evidence. However, already in the latter half of the LH IIIB period Hittite records referred to war activities in the coastal south-western Anatolia, while the Linear B tablets from Pylos indirectly confirmed this (Georgiadis 2009b, 32-33; forthcoming b). Battle scenes on both land and sea were also depicted on LH IIIC middle kraters from Koan and other South-eastern Aegean workshops. Related to this is the fortification wall at Kastro Palaiopyli, also on Kos, which was located in a mountainous inland area. Its construction could belong to either the LH IIIB or C phases, since the surface LH III sherds do not provide a clear date. Nevertheless, this wall would have been in use during the LH IIIC period. The combination of these elements is sufficient to propose that warfare appeared to be a major concern. It was described and depicted in records, art, fortification, the new location preferences for sites and the settlement pattern that developed.

IV. Regionalism in the Cyclades and the Dodecanese

Grotta, Trianda-Ialysos and Serrayia became important centres in the post-palatial phase, larger than ever before (Figure 1). These major settlements of Naxos, Rhodes and Kos respectively functioned as nexus in the renewed exchange networks of the LH IIIC period Aegean and the eastern Mediterranean. Part of the explanation for this is the fall of the mainland palaces and the decrease of their active participation in exchange. The diffusion of power and the political, social and economic shifts in the Greek mainland allowed smaller polities in the Aegean to benefit. At the same time, synchronisms, interactions and exchanges became evident between these sites, while close ties also existed to contemporary Crete and Attica. There are many similarities in certain pottery styles and decoration, both imported and locally produced, which suggests a close interaction (Vlachopoulos 1996, ch. 7). Furthermore, the frequency and similarity of gold and silver items within tombs is clear between these three sites, to which Perati could also be added. At the same
time, the cape Gelidonya and Iria shipwrecks underline the conditions and the
degree of exchange in this era, no matter which direction the ships were heading
(Bass 1967; Lolos 1999). They highlight the character of the inter-Aegean and intra-
Aegean exchange networks which existed in several areas across the eastern
Mediterranean even after the destruction of the palaces.

Certain objects from burial contexts stand out during this period, providing an
insight into local social structure and exchange. The bronze, silver and gold jewellery
were recovered from LH IIIC tombs in larger numbers than in previous periods
(Georgiadis 2003, 104; Vlachopoulos 2006, ch. 4). Earlier goods which were used as
heirlooms in the LH IIIC tombs of Naxos (such as jewellery, gold-sheet ornaments
and seals) included representations of bulls, lions and cult symbols, which point to
their emblematic function, as the symbolic dimension of these subjects is perhaps
related to the social status or office of the dead (Vlachopoulos 2006, 285-92, 305-16;
2008, 483). Furthermore, certain pottery types, such as Octopus-style stirrup jars,
duck vases and strainer jugs, are not deposited, or are extremely rare, in cemeteries
outside Grotta on Naxos (Vlachopoulos 2006, 99, 110, 126, 131, 150, 163) and Ialysos
on Rhodes (Georgiadis 2003, 96-7; 2009a, 96). Although on Kos the available LH
IIIC cemeteries are limited in number, Eleona and Langada may have had a similar
exclusivity in certain offerings. The presence of Octopus-style stirrup jars at
Perakastro on Kalymnos cannot be assessed due to the lack of any other known
contemporary cemetery on the island. Nonetheless, the exclusivity of precious items
and specific vessel types argues for the limited circulation of certain goods outside
these sites and the concentration of wealth in these large and rich central ports,
illustrating a clear settlement hierarchy. Social stratification also appears to be
expressed within the tombs, suggesting the development of powerful elite which
expressed its wealth through display in the funerary arena. Furthermore, these
characteristics suggest the ability of the elite to control circulation, as well as the
available resources and their production in these islands. Consequently they must
have played a vital role in the exchange networks that were active and maintained
during the LH IIIC period.

The emergence of a single major settlement on each island, operating as a
capital, and demonstrated on the larger of the Cyclades (Naxos) and the Dodecanese
(Rhodes, Kos), is of major historical importance (Vlachopoulos 1999, 80). Whether
we call it “nucleation of settlement” or “synoicism” (a term attributed to the legendary Attic hero Theseus who founded the city of Athens by unifying the komae of Attica), this formation demands a powerful political elite that can ensure the organization of the new “city”, but also presupposes large social consensus among the former populations of the islands and the newcomers of the 12th c. B.C., if any.

The independent geographical and cultural character of the Aegean islands would not have favoured the development of collective economic and cultural systems of Helladic type after the fall of the palaces. The diversity in the material culture and the lack of synchronisms among the major Aegean centres show that each island followed its own course, dictated by local historical conditions. Each one had its own cycle of prosperity during the LH IIIC period and eventually came into contact with different political systems and forms of power. The conditions of affluence, prosperity and freedom provided by the dense network of interactions established the LH IIIC Aegean as an arena for exchange and competition than military confrontation (Vlachopoulos 2008, 491).

Although there is a clear prosperity on most islands, issues of security seem to have been important and affected the distribution of sites to some extent. On Kasos, southern Rhodes, Kos, Kalymnos, Astypalaia and Siphnos most, if not all, of the sites are located in the hinterland or in defensible areas. The frequency of coastal sites appears to decrease in comparison to the earlier phase, which can clearly be seen in northern Rhodes, but at the same time these settlements were larger than before, such as those at Grotta, Serrayia and Trianda. Fortification walls either continued in use from previous phases, or were constructed in LH IIIC, and examples have been recovered at Ayia Irini, Ayios Andreas, Phylakopi, Grotta, Koukounaries and Kastro Palaiopyli. The size, wealth, and role of Serrayia and Trianda in the LH IIIC maritime exchange network would be enough to suggest that these walls protected the settlements.

The depiction of warfare and naval battle scenes in LH IIIC Middle pottery (Papadopoulos 2009) indicate a concern with these matters, regardless of what form they may have taken, i.e. organised warfare and/or piratic activities; at the same time, this iconography echoes the emergence of flamboyant local pottery styles which
created a more ‘anthropocentric’ and relaxed repertoire, away from any palatial formality and uniformity in style.

IV. Conclusions

People do not equate to pots, and their broader socio-cultural context is of primary importance for understanding the conditions of each period. Although this belief is widely accepted, in practice it has not always been taken under serious consideration. This is clearly expressed in earlier scholarship which viewed the Cyclades and/or the Dodecanese as a homogeneous island territory of the Aegean. Furthermore, it has been seen historically and culturally as a dependent periphery of the political power exercised by the Mycenaean mainland. However, this is an oversimplified outlook, and, as outlined by the evidence above, cannot be supported. In fact, thorough analysis of the available data reveals that different social and economic conditions existed on each island. Although common elements are present, the regional character is quite evident, suggesting autonomous and independent ‘centres’ of cultural and political power, occasionally with smaller neighbouring islands comprising their ‘peripheries’.

The different types of settlement and/or cemetery development in the Aegean islands from the LH IIIB to the LH IIIC period strongly suggest a high degree of regionalism. At Karpathos and Kasos there is a rapid decrease in the number of sites, while a less conspicuous decrease can be seen on Melos and Astypalaia. Additionally, there is continuity and relative stability on Kea, Paros, Amorgos, southern Rhodes and Kalymnos, while in northern Rhodes a nucleation process can be seen, and in eastern and south-central Kos a nucleation with the appearance of small sites around a central one is also observed. Re-emergence is attested at Kimolos, Naxos shows a combination of continuity and re-emergence, and a considerable increase can be seen on Siphnos. Although these sites do not all have the same longevity, and may be synchronous only for a limited time and represent only settlements or cemeteries, this observation emphasizes the distinct regional changes which occurred. It should be stressed that different contemporary developments are known not only between neighbouring islands but even within large islands, as exemplified by the different trajectories of northern and southern Rhodes. These variations in response to the LH
IIIC political, social and economic conditions do not necessarily express the same concerns and can be interpreted in different ways.

A strong regionalism can thus be seen in the Aegean islands during the LH IIIC period. This is outlined in pottery production, settlement patterns and burials - in other words, in all the main categories of data from the 12th c. B.C. However, this should be seen as political fragmentation rather than cultural or social. These small insular polities developed in different ways and according to local idiosyncrasies in order to survive and often prosper within the post-palatial Aegean. They also participated actively within an extensive inter-Aegean and international exchange network that continued after the fall of the palatial economies. The LH IIIC period in the Aegean islands reveals both socio-cultural cohesion (homogeneity) and different political and historical developments (heterogeneity). This framework will allow for a better understanding of future in-depth regional analyses conducted in post-palatial Aegean islands.

IV. Addendum

A final note on the Submycenaean remains could be made since this appears differently in the Cyclades than in the Dodecanese and the Asia Minor coast.

To the exception of some sherds mentioned at Xombourgo, Tenos, and two individual, yet problematic, vases from Aplomata, Naxos (Desborough 1964, 151 pl. 15c) and Koukounaries, Paros (Schilardi 1984, 204; Mountjoy 1999, 932; 2008, 476) no Submycenaean material has ever been reported from the Cyclades (Figure 1). There are strong restrictions where Submycenaean is a distinct chronological phase or a pottery style with pronounced local characteristics, wherever it appears. Submycenaean needs further definition and stratigraphic verification, since this pottery style has not been found at Grotta where PG pottery is found mixed or immediately above Late LH IIIC strata. Its appearance in the Cyclades in nowhere clearly attested so far; for the individual vases ascribed to this style are found out of stratigraphical context.

As far as the Dodecanese is concerned the LH IIIC Late use of tombs is rather limited in both Rhodes and Kos. In the following period there are only two regions
that have yielded Submycenaean finds, the Halicarnassus peninsula, just east of Kos, where hybrid tholos tombs have been recovered (Boysal 1967), and the cemetery of cist graves at Ayia Agathi in south-eastern Rhodes (Zervaki 2011). Regionalism is still evident, but during this phase it seems to suggest a significant social divergence. In the first region the tombs retain the multiple burial character and the emphasis is still on the family and/or the clan, as was the case all along the LH III period. However, at Ayia Agathi the cist graves are a new phenomenon for Rhodes, arguing for a break with the older LH III burial tradition and a new social framework with a focus to the individual, possibly equally to death and in life. The Submycenaean practices at the Halicarnassus peninsula do not continue to the later times, while on Rhodes Ayia Agathi is the prelude of the burial traditions that will follow in the Protogeometric and Geometric periods.
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Figure 1. LH IIIC sites in the Aegean discussed in the text