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Article in *Hesperia* · July 2006

DOI: 10.2972/hesp.75.2.177

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THE LH IIIB–LH IIIC TRANSITION ON THE MYCENAEAN MAINLAND

CERAMIC PHASES AND TERMINOLOGY

*To my son Sante, who has helped me
with his beautiful smiles*

ABSTRACT

In this article the author reconsiders the transition from Late Helladic IIIB to Late Helladic IIIC on the Greek mainland and proposes an alternative ceramic phasing based on quantitative changes in chronologically sensitive indicators. The later part of LH IIIB (traditional LH IIIB2) is divided into LH IIIB2 Early and LH IIIB2 Late. These phases are followed by an initial stage of LH IIIC, preferably termed “LH IIIC Phase 1,” as suggested by Rutter in 1977, rather than “Transitional LH IIIB2–LH IIIC Early,” as recently proposed by Mountjoy.

The ceramic transition from Late Helladic (LH) IIIB to LH IIIC has been the subject of much discussion.¹ In recent years, the publication of new ceramic and stratigraphic evidence has improved our knowledge of this period and provided us with finer criteria for making chronological determinations.² This evidence has, however, given rise to controversy on matters of terminology and ceramic phasing.³ These issues are important not merely because of their chronological implications, but also because of their historical implications relating to the collapse of the Mycenaean palace centers. The aim of the present paper is to reconsider the ceramic transition from LH IIIB to LH IIIC and to suggest a relative chronology of the most important pottery groups of this period.

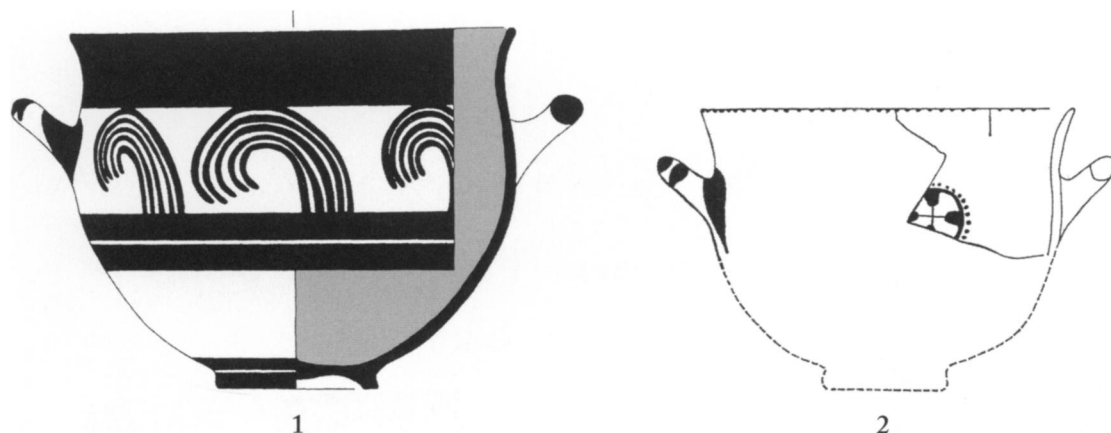
1. I would particularly like to thank my teacher, Mario Benzi, who constantly and generously helped me in the course of my research, and Jeremy Rutter, who gave me an infinite number of suggestions to improve my work. I am also grateful to Katie Demakopoulou, Joseph Maran, *Hesperia's* editor, Tracey Cullen, and the journal's anonymous referees for their very useful comments on the manuscript of this article. Additional thanks are due to Elizabeth

French for sharing her unpublished article from the SCIEM conference held in Vienna in 2003 (French, forthcoming) and for her helpful remarks on the Citadel House area. Finally, I would like to thank the British School at Athens, the Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, the University of Minnesota Press, the Verlag Marie Leidorf GmbH, E. B. French, B. Frizell, P. A. Mountjoy, C. W. Shelmerdine, E. S.

Sherratt, G. Walberg, and K. A. Wardle for permission to reproduce previously illustrated material.

2. Schönfeld 1988; Iakovidis 1989, 1998; Shelmerdine 1992; Mountjoy 1995, 1997, 1999a, 1999b; Walberg 1998; Andrikou 1999; Gauss 2000, 2003; Demakopoulou 2003; Adrymi-Sismani 2003; French, forthcoming.

3. Demakopoulou 2003, pp. 90–91; Rutter 2003, p. 194.



The presentation of a site-by-site review of the evidence should be prefaced by a brief overview of previous chronological schemas. LH III B was originally left undivided by Furumark.⁴ After the excavations at Tiryns and Mycenae in the 1950s, however, a later stage of LH III B with different ceramic characteristics from those of the Zygouries “Potter’s Shop” was recognized. As a result, LH III B was divided into LH III B1 and LH III B2.⁵ LH III B2 was identified by the presence of Group B and Rosette deep bowls. The Group B bowl has a 3-cm-wide rim band and a monochrome interior (Fig. 1:1); the Rosette bowl has a dotted rim, multi-splashed handles, and is decorated on each side with a single sea anemone FM 27 (Fig. 1:2) or lozenge FM 73. Another notable feature of LH III B2 is the absence of the decorated kylix FS 258, which was the most characteristic shape of the preceding LH III B1.

Since the time of this basic division of LH III B, further excavations and studies have provided evidence for additional subdivisions of both LH III B1 and LH III B2 at Tiryns and Mycenae.⁶ Mountjoy has recently defined a new ceramic phase called Transitional LH III B2–LH III C Early, identified mainly by the presence of three types of deep bowls.⁷ According to Mountjoy, Type 1 (hereafter, TT 1) “is the Group A deep bowl found in LH III B2 and LH III C Early but with the bell shape and flaring rim of the LH III C Early type” (Fig. 2:1, 2). Type 2 (hereafter, TT 2) “is a large bowl with a knobbed or short everted rim instead of the usual lipless rim and, sometimes, a slightly incurving upper body” (Fig. 2:3, 4). Type 3 (hereafter, TT 3) “is a carinated type with a straight upper body giving rise to a slight carination on the belly” (Fig. 2:5).⁸

Other characteristic features of the Transitional Phase include the following: (1) deep bowls with a thin band on the rim and another wider band just below (hereafter, stemmed bowl rim banding; Fig. 2:6); (2) TT 1 deep bowls with a narrow band on the rim and a second narrow band just

Figure 1. (1) Group B deep bowl with a 3-cm-wide rim band from the Citadel House at Mycenae; (2) Rosette bowl with a dotted rim and multi-splashed handles from the Causeway Deposit, level C at Mycenae. Scale 1:3. After Mountjoy 1999a, p. 151, fig. 39:295; Wardle 1973, p. 315, fig. 10:56. Reproduced with permission of the British School at Athens.

Figure 2 (opposite). (1) TT 1 deep bowl from the Palace of Nestor at Pylos; (2) TT 1 deep bowl with a narrow band on the rim, and a second narrow band just below, from trench P VI–V at Korakou; (3) TT 2 deep bowl with a knobbed rim from the Menelaion; (4) TT 2 deep bowl with an everted rim from the Palace of Nestor; (5) TT 3 deep bowl from the Menelaion; (6) Transitional deep bowl with the stemmed bowl rim banding from Sykea; (7) deep bowl with Group B decorative system, but with a medium band at the rim, from Area K at Korakou. Scale 1:3. After Mountjoy 1999a, p. 227, fig. 72:156, 162; p. 280, fig. 94:160, 162; p. 281, fig. 95:177; p. 351, fig. 120:114, 117

4. Furumark 1941a, pp. 522–541.

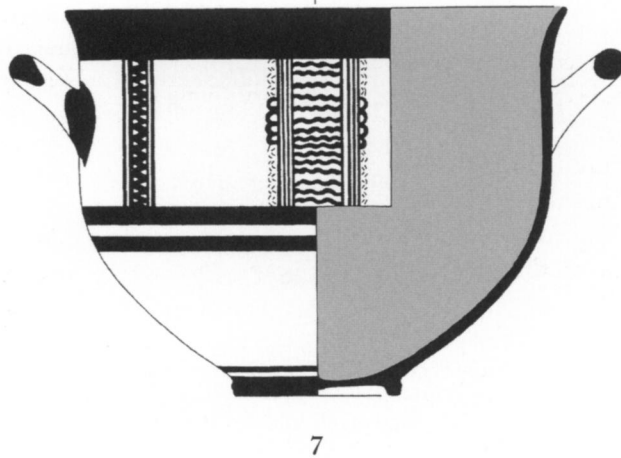
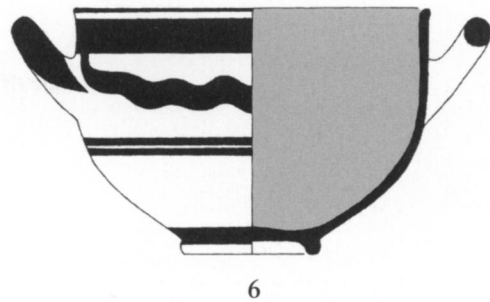
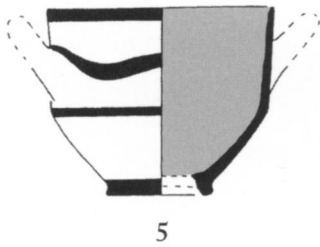
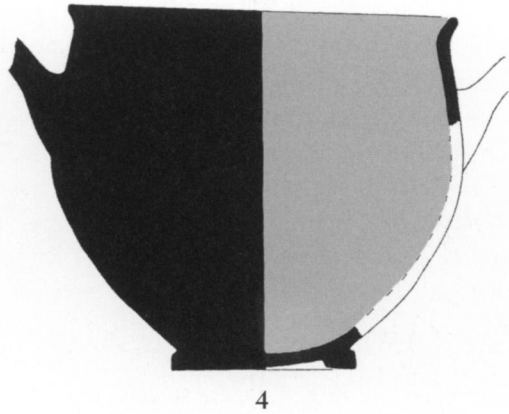
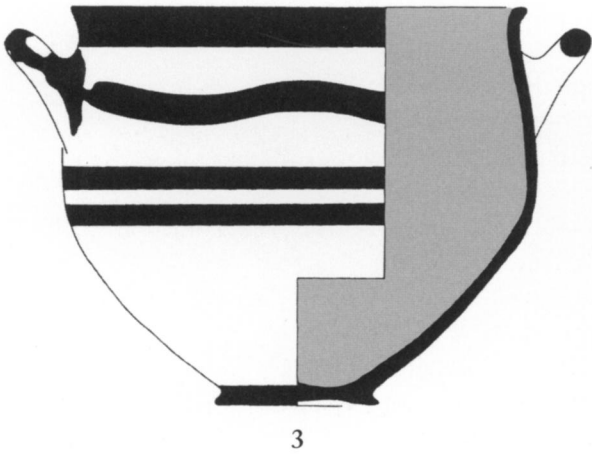
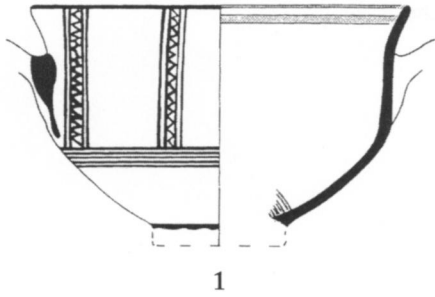
5. Schachermeyr 1962, pp. 221–222; Verdelis, French, and French 1966; French 1969; Wardle 1973.

6. Kilian 1988b, p. 118; Mountjoy

1999a, p. 32; 1999b, p. 514.

7. Mountjoy 1995; 1997; 1999a, pp. 36–38.

8. Mountjoy 1997, p. 111; see also Mountjoy 1999a, p. 37.



below (Fig. 2:2); (3) deep bowls with the Group B decorative system, but with a medium band at the rim (LH IIIB2 Group B deep bowls having a 3-cm-wide rim band; Fig. 2:7); (4) the widespread use of the wavy band decoration, especially on deep and stemmed bowls (Fig. 2:3, 5, 6). In addition to these features, which are considered characteristic of the Transitional Phase, typical LH IIIB2 and early LH IIIC shapes are often found.⁹

According to Mountjoy, the Transitional Phase predates early LH IIIC pottery from Lefkandi Ia and Mycenae (= Rutter's LH IIIC Phase 2).¹⁰ It is not clear, however, if the Transitional Phase postdates the destruction levels traditionally assigned to the end of LH IIIB2 at Mycenae and Tiryns, or if it must be regarded as a stylistic phase bridging the last palatial and the first postpalatial periods.¹¹

The following discussion of the most significant pottery groups of late LH IIIB and earliest LH IIIC may help to clarify the chronology of these periods.

ARGOLID

TIRYNS

At Tiryns, LH IIIB has been stratigraphically divided into four successive phases, the Early, Middle, Developed, and Final.¹² The stratified floor deposits of this long sequence are dated according to the assumption that pottery styles go through three successive stages: (1) an initial stage where innovative elements begin to be produced on a small scale, (2) a floruit, which represents the peak of production, (3) a fading, when a style slowly disappears. As a result, the periods of production of different styles may overlap and closed floor deposits may contain features of different styles. In this situation, closed floor deposits are dated on the basis of the ceramic types that constitute the majority of the sample. The presence of single or isolated features associated with innovative and fading stages of stylistic development must not be considered decisive for dating purposes.¹³

Two successive horizons from the closing decades of the 13th century B.C. have been recognized in the Tiryns *Unterburg*. The first one ended with some damage to several buildings at the close of LH IIIB Developed. Although a few decorated kylikes FS 258 are still present,¹⁴ pottery from this phase corresponds to classical LH IIIB2.¹⁵ The second horizon ended in an earthquake at the end of LH IIIB Final. The bulk of the pottery from the LH IIIB Final levels is still LH IIIB2,¹⁶ but some early LH IIIC stylistic features have already begun to appear on a small scale.¹⁷ They include semiglobular cups FS 215 (Fig. 3:1, 2), Group A

9. Mountjoy 1997, pp. 112–116; 1999a, pp. 37–38, 153, 226.

10. Mountjoy 1999a, p. 32, table 2.

11. In two studies, Mountjoy states that her Transitional Phase postdates the destruction levels traditionally assigned to the end of LH IIIB2 at Mycenae and Tiryns (Mountjoy 1997, p. 110; 1999a, pp. 36, 75). In another

study, however, she assigns to her Transitional Phase the LH IIIB Final contexts from Tiryns, which are simply those complexes representing the final palace destruction (1999b, p. 514).

12. Kilian 1988b, pp. 117–118, fig. 3.

13. Schönfeld 1988, pp. 156, 208–210; Kilian 1988b, p. 118; cf. also

R. Jung in Rutter et al. 2003, p. 252.

14. Schönfeld 1988, p. 189, n. 184.

15. Kilian 1988b, p. 118.

16. Podzuweit 1979, pp. 412–418, figs. 35–36; 1981, pp. 195–204, figs. 48–49, 53.

17. Kilian 1988b, p. 121, fig. 3.

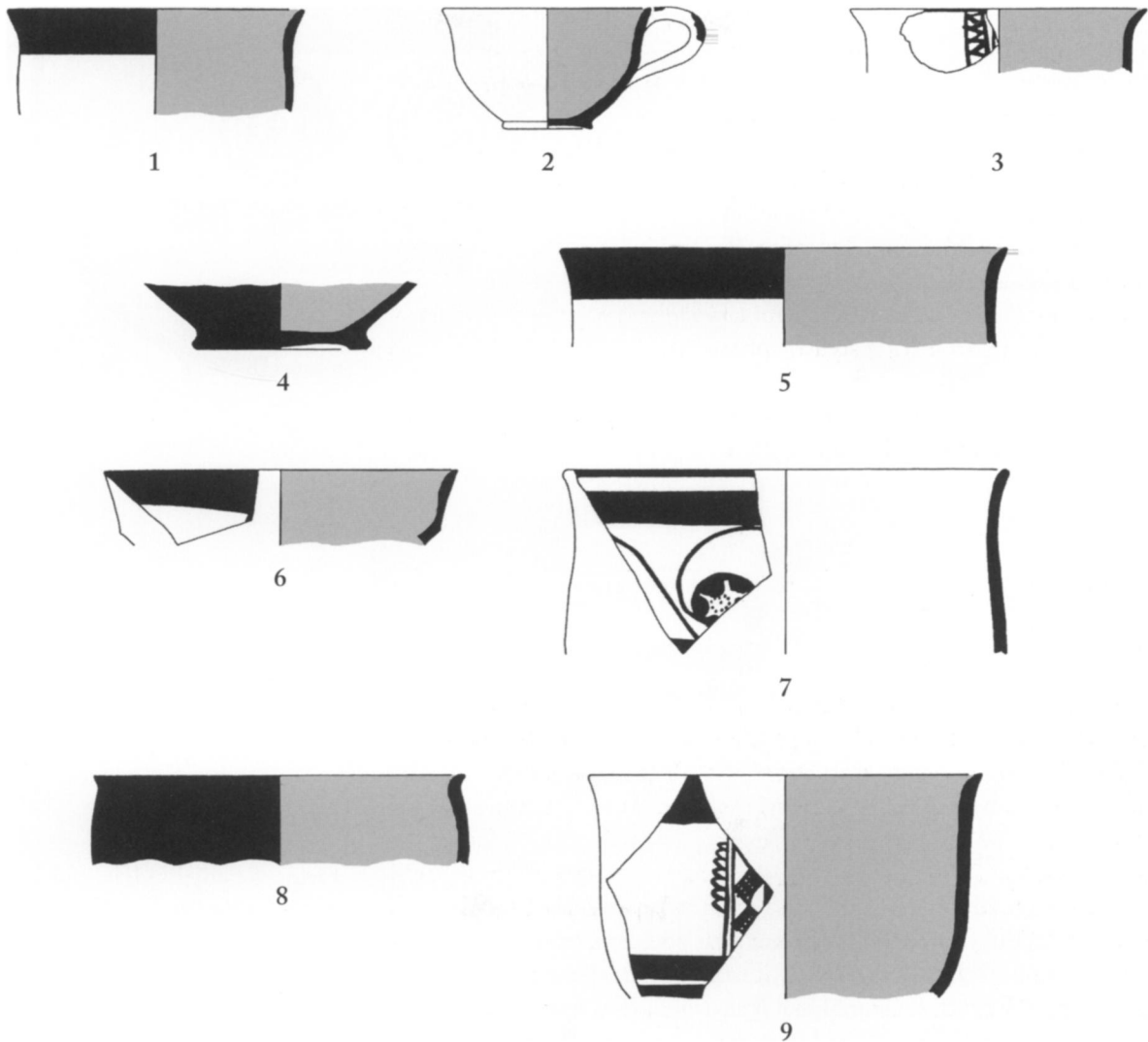


Figure 3. Early LH IIIC and Transitional features in the LH IIIB Final pottery from the *Unterburg* at Tiryns. Scale 1:3. After Podzuweit 1979, p. 414, fig. 35:5, 11; p. 415, fig. 36:1, 3, 5; Podzuweit 1981, p. 197, fig. 49:7; p. 200, fig. 53:4, 7, 8

deep bowls with monochrome interiors (hereafter, Group A/B; Fig. 3:3), monochrome deep bowls (Fig. 3:4), and lip-band deep bowls (Fig. 3:5); there is also a carinated kylix FS 267 with banded rim and monochrome interior (Fig. 3:6). Some shapes assigned by Mountjoy to her Transitional Phase are present. They include a TT 1 deep bowl with the stemmed bowl rim banding (Fig. 3:7), a monochrome TT 2 deep bowl (Fig. 3:8), and a deep bowl with the Group B decorative system, but with a medium band at the rim (Fig. 3:9). Mountjoy has assigned Tiryns LH IIIB Final either to LH IIIB2 or to her Transitional Phase.¹⁸

Before the appearance of typical early LH IIIC levels, the *Unterburg* went through another short phase (*Übergangshorizont SH IIIB/C*) characterized by poor, temporary buildings. Pottery from these buildings shows continuity with LH IIIB2 as well as the appearance of new elements.¹⁹ According to Mountjoy, the presence of monochrome and TT 2 deep bowls places this material in her Transitional Phase.²⁰ The pottery ascribed to the *Übergangshorizont SH IIIB/C*²¹ does not, however, represent a closed deposit with ceramic material found in situ.²² As a result, its chronological significance must be considered limited.

18. Mountjoy 1999a, p. 74, n. 190; 1999b, p. 514.

19. Podzuweit 1979, pp. 412–413; 1981, pp. 204–205, fig. 54.

20. Mountjoy 1997, p. 117; 1999a, pp. 36, 75.

21. Podzuweit 1981, pp. 204–205, fig. 54.

22. J. J. Maran (pers. comm. 2004).

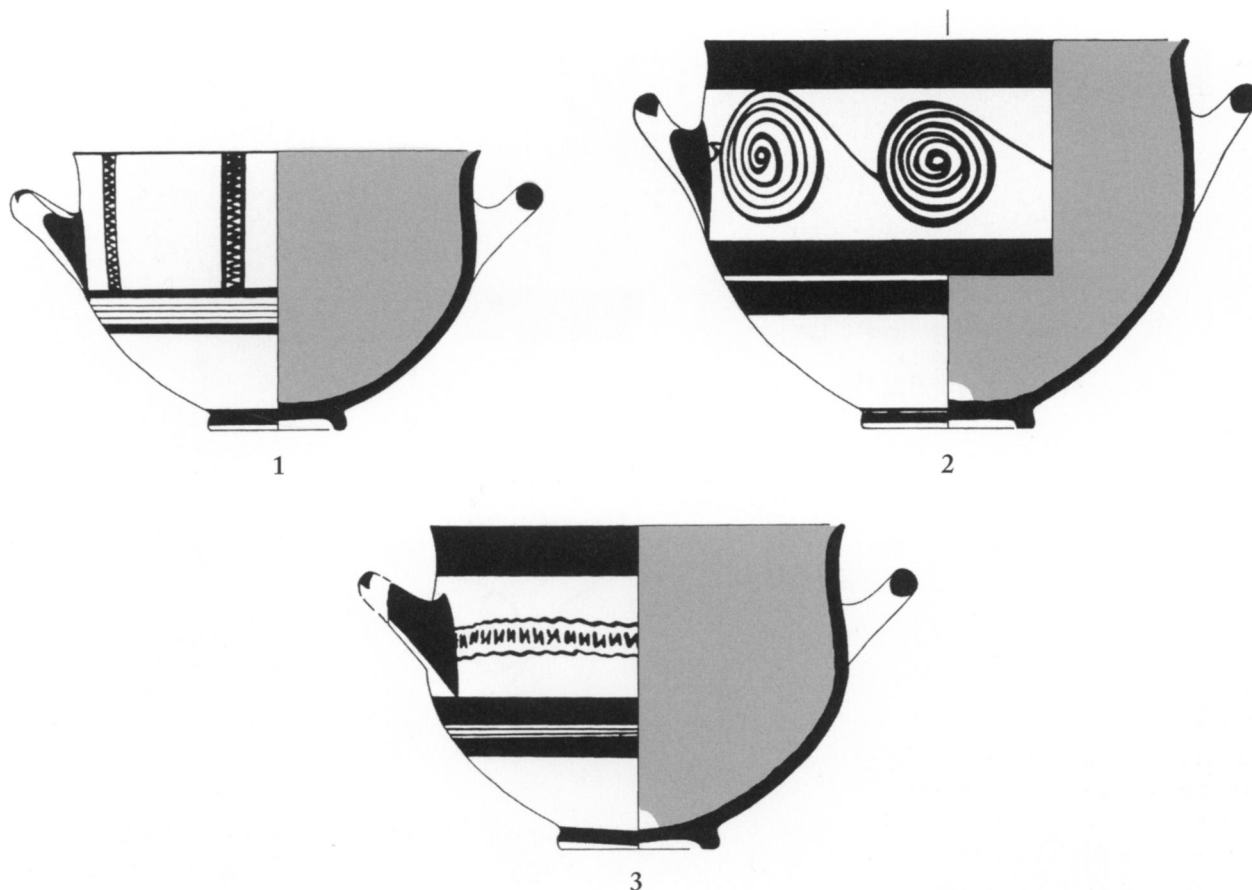


Figure 4. Early LH IIIIC and Transitional features in the LH IIIB Middle pottery from Tiryns.

Scale 1:3. After Kilian 1988a, p. 118, fig. 13:1–3

Another important deposit from Tiryns is the so-called *Epichosis*.²³ It contains four pottery groups of different style and date, referred to respectively as *Epichosis* I, IIa, IIb, and III.²⁴ The *Epichosis* IIb comprises a great deal of typical LH IIIIB2 material, but it also includes a few early LH IIIIC elements, such as Group A/B and lip-band deep bowls.²⁵ The wavy band decoration is already attested.²⁶ Some Group B deep bowls have a medium band at the rim.²⁷ One specimen has a reserved circle on the interior base, a feature which, according to Mountjoy, begins in the Transitional Phase.²⁸ The *Epichosis* IIb, however, like the *Übergangshorizont SH IIIIB/C*, cannot be considered a closed group.²⁹

It is worth noting that a few early LH IIIIC and Transitional stylistic features are attested at Tiryns beginning in LH IIIIB Middle. They are the rounded alabastron FS 86, the Rosette bowl with three handle splashes, the Group A/B deep bowl (Fig. 4:1), the TT 2 deep bowl (Fig. 4:2), and the deep bowl with the Group B decorative system, but with a medium band at the rim and a reserved circle on the interior base (Fig. 4:3).³⁰

23. Verdélis, French, and French 1966; Voigtländer 2003.

24. Voigtländer 2003, pp. 29–32.

25. Voigtländer 2003, pp. 95–96, nos. Si 132a, 142–144, pls. 68, 69, 129, 130.

26. Voigtländer 2003, p. 73, nos. SW 2–7, pls. 49, 109.

27. Voigtländer 2003, pp. 87–90, nos. Si 24–25, 39, 44–45, 49, 61, 64, pls. 61, 63, 64, 123, 124, 126.

28. Voigtländer 2003, p. 88,

no. Si 38, pls. 62, 124.

29. Voigtländer 2003, pp. 7–12.

30. Schönfeld 1988, pp. 177, 195, fig. 6:11, 20, fig. 10:5; Kilian 1988a, pp. 114, 118, fig. 13:1–3.

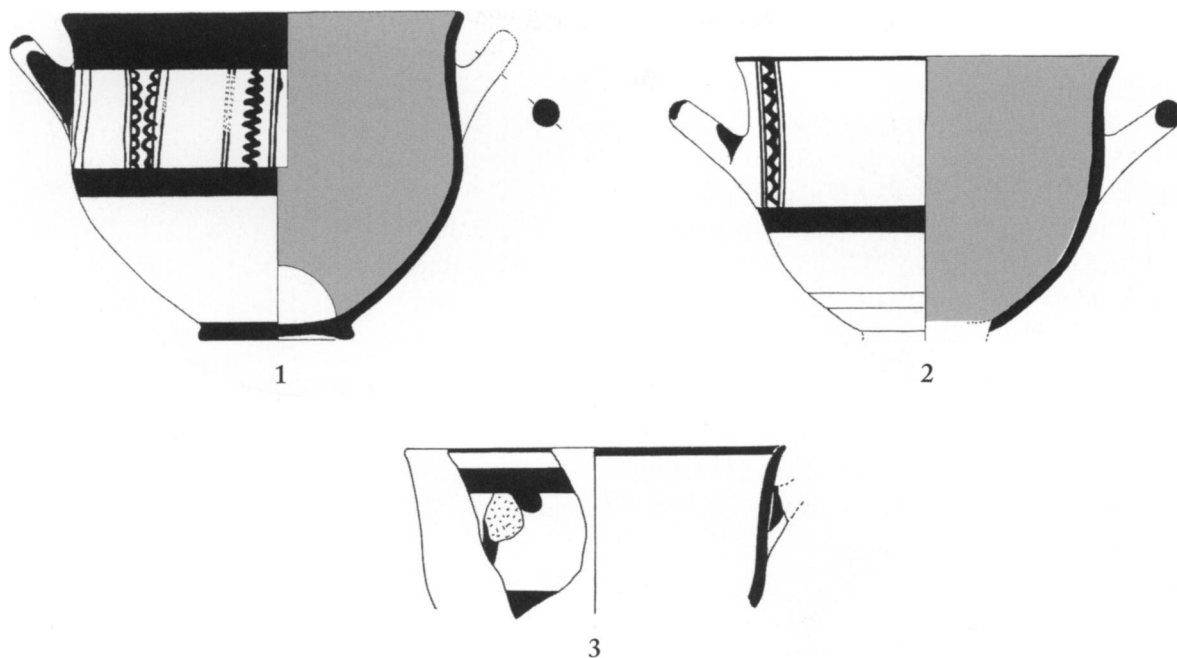


Figure 5. (1) Deep bowl with a reserved circle on the interior base from the West Gate area at Midea; (2, 3) early LH IIIC and Transitional features in the LH IIIB2 pottery from the Lower Terraces, room II at Midea. Scale 1:3. After Demakopoulou 2003, p. 82, fig. 5:3; Walberg 1998, pls. 79:446, 81:492

MIDEA

Several floor deposits were sealed by a great destruction in the West Gate area and the southwest slope.³¹ The pottery from this destruction has been assigned by Mountjoy to her Transitional Phase.³² The bulk of the material is clearly LH IIIB2, but a few early LH IIIC shapes are present. They include rounded alabastra FS 86, a straight-sided legged alabastron FS 99, monochrome (or partly coated) kylikes FS 267 and FS 274, along with Group A/B, lip-band, linear, and monochrome deep bowls. Transitional features consist of deep bowls with the stemmed bowl rim banding. Deep bowls with a reserved circle on the interior base are also present (Fig. 5:1).³³ According to Demakopoulou, the West Gate area and the southwest slope were destroyed in late LH IIIB2 when, at least in the Argolid, some early LH IIIC stylistic features had already appeared; she rules out the possibility that the pottery belongs to Mountjoy's Transitional Phase.³⁴

LH IIIB2 material has also been recovered from the area of the Lower Terraces.³⁵ The sealed floor deposit from room II already displays some early LH IIIC and Transitional stylistic features.³⁶ These are represented by two sherds from Group A/B deep bowls (Fig. 5:2) and a TT 1 deep bowl with the stemmed bowl rim banding (Fig. 5:3).³⁷ The patterned kylix FS 258

31. Demakopoulou and Divari-Valakou 1997, 2004; Demakopoulou 2003.

32. Mountjoy 1997, p. 117; 1999a, pp. 36, 75.

33. Demakopoulou 2003, pp. 81–90, figs. 5–9, 12; Demakopoulou and Divari-Valakou 2004, pp. 10, 18, figs. 7, 37.

34. Demakopoulou 2003, pp. 90–

91. There are no carinated cups FS 240 from late LH IIIB2 contexts at Midea.

In fact, the rim sherd originally assigned to this shape by the excavator (Demakopoulou and Divari-Valakou 1997, p. 18, fig. 18) belongs to a carinated kylix FS 267 (K. Demakopoulou, pers. comm. 2004).

35. Walberg 1998.

36. Walberg 1998, pp. 80–81.

37. Walberg 1998, pp. 206, 209, nos. 446, 492–493, pls. 79, 81. For other TT 1 deep bowls from the Lower Terraces, cf. Walberg 1998, pp. 203, 205, nos. 401–403, 427, 432, pl. 78:401–403, pl. 79:427, 432.

is still present. Two deep bowls with the Group B decorative system, but with a medium band at the rim, are attested in other LH IIIB2 contexts from the Lower Terraces.³⁸

Walberg has equated the material from the Lower Terraces with Tiryns LH IIIB Middle and Mycenae LH IIIB2.³⁹ The Mycenae equivalent for Tiryns LH IIIB Middle, however, is not LH IIIB2 but LH IIIB Mid (see below).⁴⁰ The pottery from the Lower Terraces seems indeed to be later than this date. In Tiryns LH IIIB Middle levels the patterned kylix FS 258 (the most characteristic shape of LH IIIB1) is at its floruit (represented by 27 specimens), while LH IIIB2 elements, such as Group B and Rosette deep bowls, are attested in lesser numbers (10 and 14 specimens, respectively).⁴¹ In the stratified material from the Lower Terraces, however, there are 2 patterned kylikes FS 258 versus 12 Group B and 10 Rosette deep bowls.⁴² This would suggest a LH IIIB Developed/LH IIIB2 date for the pottery so far published from the Lower Terraces.

MYCENAE

In the Citadel House area, pottery with LH IIIB2 features first appears at the very end of phase VII and typifies phase VIII. Pottery from the horizon at the end of phase VII bridges LH IIIB1 and LH IIIB2; it is called LH IIIB Mid.⁴³ Pottery from the destruction horizon at the end of phase VIII was originally dated to the end of LH IIIB2,⁴⁴ but it is now attributed to Mountjoy's Transitional Phase by British archaeologists.⁴⁵ Floor deposits from the destruction at the end of phase VIII are, however, extremely small, and no definitive judgment can be made.⁴⁶

The only Phase VIII pottery group from the Citadel House area that is published in detail is the large deposit of debris known as the Causeway Deposit (levels C–D).⁴⁷ This deposit contained many LH IIIB2 shapes, including a high percentage of Group B deep bowls with 3-cm-wide rim bands and Rosette bowls with multi-splashed handles.⁴⁸ Only two sherds show Transitional or early LH IIIC stylistic features. They include a lip-band deep bowl and a deep bowl with the Group B decorative system, but with a medium band at the rim (Fig. 6:1). Two Group B deep bowls, each with a reserved circle on the interior base, are also present.⁴⁹

A similar situation is represented in the pottery from the upper levels of the Perseia W trench L.⁵⁰ Here, along with hundreds of LH IIIB2 shapes,⁵¹ 20 lip-band deep bowls also occur (Fig. 6:2).⁵² French considers these vessels slightly later than the rest of the material.⁵³ This conclusion is said to be supported by the stratigraphic results of the work at

38. Walberg 1998, pp. 209–210, nos. 495, 508, pl. 81.

39. Walberg 1998, p. 177; 1999, p. 158.

40. Cf. Mountjoy 1999a, p. 32; 1999b, p. 514.

41. Schönfeld 1988, pp. 153, 155, 185–208, table 1.

42. Walberg 1998, pp. 125–127,

figs. 2–5. More generally, there are 24 LH IIIB2 versus 8 LH IIIB1 shapes in the closed deposits from the Lower Terraces.

43. French 1998, p. 3; forthcoming.

44. Taylour 1981, pp. 10, 22.

45. French, forthcoming.

46. French, forthcoming.

47. Wardle 1973.

48. Wardle 1973, p. 305, fig. 4; p. 320, fig. 13:a.

49. Wardle 1973, pp. 315, 317, 328, 330, nos. 65, 76, 83, 186, fig. 11, pls. 58:b, 59:b.

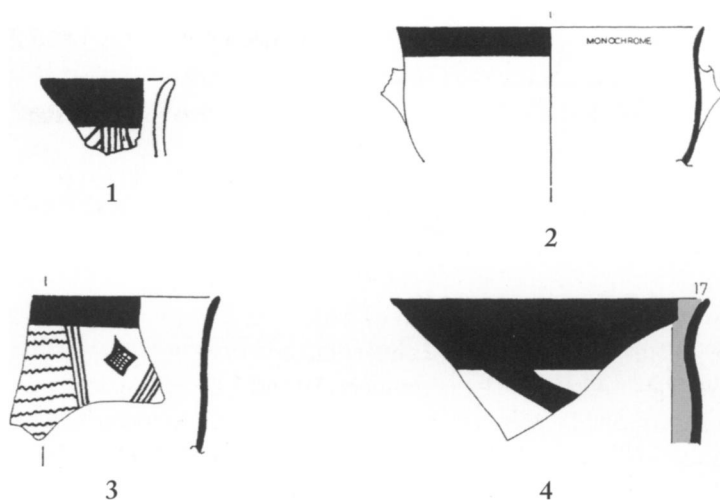
50. French 1969.

51. French 1969, p. 93.

52. French 1969, p. 75, fig. 11:3.

53. French 1969, pp. 72, 75, 87.

Figure 6. (1) Deep bowl with Group B decorative system, but with a medium band at the rim, from the Causeway Deposit, level C at Mycenae; (2, 3) early LH IIIC and Transitional features in the pottery from the upper levels of the Perseia W trench L at Mycenae; (4) Group B deep bowl with wavy band decoration from Mycenae. All vessels have monochrome interiors. Scale 1:3. After Wardle 1973, p. 316, fig. 11:76; French 1969, p. 82, fig. 7:1; p. 85, fig. 11:3; Mountjoy and Ponting 2000, p. 160, fig. 11:153. Reproduced with permission of the British School at Athens.



Mycenae.⁵⁴ As noted above, however, a deep bowl of the same type has been found in a clear LH IIIB2 layer in the Causeway Deposit (level D). It is likely, therefore, that the lip-band deep bowls were contemporary with the LH IIIB2 pottery.⁵⁵ It is also worth noting that the upper levels of the Perseia W trench L contained some deep bowls with the Group B decorative system, but with a medium band at the rim (Fig. 6:3), as well as TT 1 deep bowls with the stemmed bowl rim banding.⁵⁶

Also in the Perseia W trench L, but at a lower level (0.95–1.20 m below the surface), various groups of relatively complete domestic pots were found. Several vessels were closely associated with fallen blocks from the so-called Great Poros Wall.⁵⁷ This material dates to LH IIIB2. A Rosette bowl with multi-splashed handles is present,⁵⁸ but the patterned kylix FS 258 is absent. There are no early LH IIIC or Transitional features.⁵⁹

Two other LH IIIB2 vases from Mycenae are of interest here. The first one comes from the Cult Area; it is a straight-sided alabastron FS 98, a shape usually assigned to the beginning of LH IIIC. The second one is a Group B deep bowl from the collection at the British School at Athens; it is decorated with a wavy band, showing that this motif was already used during LH IIIB2 (Fig. 6:4).⁶⁰

ASINE

Some LH IIIB pottery has been recovered from trench E in the Barbouna area at Asine. This material does not come from a closed deposit,⁶¹ but a few sherds may be stylistically assigned to LH IIIB2. A TT 1 deep bowl with the stemmed bowl rim banding (Fig. 7:1) and two TT 2 deep bowls

54. French 1969, p. 87, n. 33.

55. Cf. Vanschoonwinkel 1991, p. 58.

56. French 1969, pp. 75, 82, fig. 7:1, 7, pl. 19:b 11.

57. Tylour 1955, pp. 212–214, esp. p. 213; French 1969, p. 72.

58. Tylour 1955, p. 227, no. 38.

59. Tylour 1955, pp. 225–229, nos. 24–63.

60. Mountjoy 1999a, p. 145; Mountjoy and Ponting 2000, pp. 160–161, no. 153, fig. 11:153.

61. Frizell 1978, p. 90.

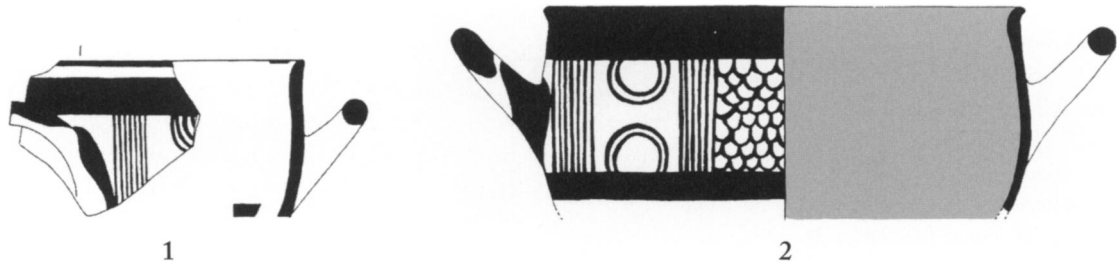


Figure 7. Transitional features in the pottery from trench E at Asine.

Scale 1:3. After Frizell 1978, p. 81, fig. 66:109; p. 84, fig. 70:112

are also present (Fig. 7:2).⁶² Nothing in this deposit may be considered later than LH IIIB2.

IRIA

The pottery from the destruction of a building complex in the *Oberer Schnitt*⁶³ displays LH IIIB2 features as well as a certain number of early LH IIIC and Transitional shapes. The material breaks down into two separate but homogeneous groups. The first group was deposited all at once in a *bothros* after the destruction of the complex. The other comes from one of the rooms of the complex, “the Annex,” which was abandoned after the destruction. Mountjoy regards all of this material, which can be considered as a unit, as the type assemblage of her Transitional Phase.⁶⁴

A quantitative analysis of the pottery shows that LH IIIB2 features considerably outnumber those of early LH IIIC.⁶⁵ Typical LH IIIB2 shapes include Group B deep bowls, Rosette bowls, Group A deep bowls with linear interior, and stemmed bowls FS 305 with filled style decoration. Other LH IIIB shapes are the straight-sided alabastron FS 94, the narrow-necked jug FS 120, the globular stirrup jar FS 171/173, and the strainer jug FS 155.⁶⁶ Early LH IIIC features include three collar-necked jars FS 63, four semiglobular cups FS 215, one lip-band deep bowl, and one Group A/B deep bowl (no. B 7).⁶⁷ Transitional elements include a TT 1 deep bowl with the stemmed bowl rim banding (no. A 5), two TT 2 deep bowls (nos. A 7, 12), a deep bowl with the Group B decorative system, but with a medium band at the rim (no. B 5), and the occurrence of the wavy band decoration.

Döhl dated the whole group to early LH IIIC. Rutter initially supported a transitional LH IIIB–IIIC date, but he later dated the deposit to

62. Frizell 1978, pp. 81–84, nos. 109, 110, 112, figs. 66, 70.

63. Döhl 1973.

64. Mountjoy 1997, p. 117; 1999a, pp. 36, 75.

65. Among the vases from the Iria building complex, 24 (42.8%) are stylistically assignable to LH IIIB (Döhl 1973, pp. 144–147, 169, 171–173, nos. B 3, 4, 6, 6a, 8, 8a, 14, 15, 17–19; A 1–3, 13/1–5, 15, 21–24) and 12 (21.5%) to early LH IIIC (Döhl 1973, pp. 144–146, 169–170, 172, nos. B 1, 2, 7, 9–11, 11a, 11b, 12; A 4, 10, 19). The remaining 20 vases

(35.7%) may be categorized as non-diagnostic (Döhl 1973, pp. 144, 146–147, 169–172, nos. B 5, 13, 14a, 14b, 16; A 5–9, 11, 12, 13/6, 13/7, 14/1, 14/2, 16–18, 20). They include vases that may belong to LH IIIB as well as to early LH IIIC and features regarded by Mountjoy as characteristic of her Transitional Phase. Transitional features must be considered nondiagnostic because they occur in both LH IIIB and early LH IIIC contexts (cf. below).

66. Furumark dated this shape to LH IIIC1 (Furumark 1941a, pp. 608–609). The strainer jug FS 155 is already

present, however, at Prosymna in a LH IIIB1 context (Blegen 1937, pp. 123–128, no. 721, fig. 292) and at Midea in a stratified LH IIIB2 floor level (Walberg 1998, p. 196, no. 284, pl. 73). Another LH IIIB2 specimen comes from Mycenae (Mylonas-Shear 1987, p. 107, no. 131, pl. 30).

67. According to Mountjoy, early LH IIIC elements also include an early version of the small jug FS 111. The juglet from Iria, however, is not a canonical FS 111. Döhl considers it similar to FS 112–114; cf. Döhl 1973, p. 147, no. B 16, fig. 12, pl. 65:4.

his earliest LH IIIC phase (i.e., LH IIIC Phase 1).⁶⁸ As we have seen, all the early LH IIIC and Transitional elements present in the Iria deposit already occur in the LH IIIB Final levels at Tiryns and in the late LH IIIB2 pottery from Midea. The only exception is the collar-necked jar FS 63, but this shape is documented in a LH IIIB2 context at Thebes (cf. below, p. 191, trial trench at Pindarou 29).⁶⁹

CORINTHIA

KORAKOU

The pottery from trench P VI–V has been assigned to LH IIIC Phase 1 by Rutter and to the Transitional Phase by Mountjoy.⁷⁰ The material comes from a fill below three stratified LH IIIC floors. It lacks canonical LH IIIB2 features, such as Group B and Rosette deep bowls.⁷¹ In contrast, early LH IIIC elements are much in evidence. They include a lip-band and a monochrome semiglobular cup FS 215, a linear deep bowl with monochrome interior, a monochrome deep bowl with a reserved base, a Group A/B deep bowl, and the use of carelessly drawn antithetical spirals. There are also a TT 1 deep bowl with two narrow bands in the rim zone (Fig. 2:2) and a linear TT 2 deep bowl.⁷² Although the carinated cup FS 240 and the linear angular bowl FS 295 are not yet present, the prevalence of early LH IIIC indicators and the absence of typical LH IIIB2 features suggest that the pottery from trench P VI–V postdates LH IIIB Final at Tiryns and late LH IIIB2 at Midea.⁷³

It is also worth noting that a few TT 1 and Group A/B deep bowls are already attested in LH IIIB1 at Korakou.⁷⁴

ACHAIA

TEICHOS DYMAION

At present the occurrence of pottery with LH IIIB2 features in Achaia is limited to Teichos Dymaion.⁷⁵ Sherratt states that this pottery is “of a kind similar to that of LH IIIB2 in the Argolid.”⁷⁶ The material includes Rosette bowls as well as Group A and B deep bowls and the use of filled

68. Döhl 1973, p. 192; Rutter 1974a, pp. 304–308; Rutter 1977, pp. 1–2.

69. Demakopoulou 1979, p. 433, pl. 284:α; cf. also Mountjoy 1999a, p. 678.

70. Rutter 1974a, pp. 147–166, figs. 39–51; Rutter 1977, pp. 1–2; Mountjoy 1997, p. 118; Mountjoy 1999a, pp. 36, 200.

71. Rutter (1974a) suggested that Group B and Rosette deep bowls were not produced at Korakou and were only rarely imported in the Corinthia. This conclusion now needs some revision.

Recent excavations at Tsoungiza have produced a stratified LH IIIB2 deposit including Group B and Rosette deep bowls (Wright et al. 1990, p. 638). Moreover, though scanty, Group B deep bowls are also present at Korakou (Rutter 1974a, pp. 464–466; Mountjoy 1999a, p. 224, no. 145, fig. 71. It is likely, therefore, that the rarity of LH IIIB2 shapes at this site simply means that LH IIIB2 deposits at Korakou have not yet been excavated or that Korakou was not widely inhabited during LH IIIB2 (cf. Rutter 1974a, pp. 465–466).

72. Rutter 1974a, pp. 147, 151, 155, 158–160, nos. 3, 4, 16, 18, 20, figs. 39:5, 6; 41:1, 2; 42:3, 13; 44:6, 8, 13; 46; 48; 2003, p. 199, fig. 12:3.

73. Rutter 1977, pp. 1–2. LH IIIB shapes are limited to three dippers FS 236 (Rutter 1974a, pp. 147, 154, nos. 2, 12, 13, figs. 42:2, 44:2, 3).

74. Rutter 1974a, pp. 46, 58, 71, 408, nos. 56, 91, 131, figs. 6:12, 13:10, 18:15.

75. Mastrokostas 1967, esp. pp. 130–132.

76. Sherratt 1980, p. 182.

style decoration. Other typical LH IIIB2 shapes are the piriform jar FS 48, the narrow-necked jug FS 121, and the globular stirrup jar FS 173 with flowers on the shoulder and zigzag on the belly. Motifs employed on Group B deep bowls are spirals with cross-hatched fill and isolated semi-circles FM 43.⁷⁷ The use of the “ladder” pattern may represent a local idiosyncrasy.⁷⁸ There are also some shapes usually regarded as early LH IIIC, such as monochrome cups, a monochrome carinated cup FS 240, and monochrome deep bowls.⁷⁹

Unfortunately, the material from Teichos Dymaion is still awaiting final publication and the stratigraphy of the site needs to be clarified.⁸⁰ The presence of the carinated cup suggests that the LH IIIB2 pottery could be mixed with later material.

LAKONIA

MENELAION

LH IIIB2 deposits were found on the North Hill, in the Menelaion proper (in the Dawkins' House area and in a fill near the later shrine of Helen and Menelaos), and on the Aetos Hill.⁸¹ This pottery, which is still largely unpublished, seems similar to that of LH IIIB Final from Tiryns. It includes examples of Group B and Rosette deep bowls as well as early LH IIIC and Transitional elements, such as deep bowls with a wavy band (Fig. 8:1), Group A/B, linear (Fig. 8:2), and monochrome deep bowls.⁸²

Other unpublished contexts from the site are assigned by Mountjoy to her Transitional Phase.⁸³ They contain monochrome, linear, TT 2 and TT 3 deep bowls (Fig. 2:3, 5). The wavy band is the favorite motif (Fig. 2:3, 5). Since no Group B or Rosette deep bowls are mentioned, it is likely that this material postdates LH IIIB Final at Tiryns and late LH IIIB2 at Midea.

AYIOS STEPHANOS

Some of the material recovered from Ayios Stephanos is assigned by Mountjoy to her Transitional Phase.⁸⁴ Apart from a few sherds previously attributed to LH IIIB by Taylour,⁸⁵ this pottery, which is largely unpublished, comes from a deep wash level in Area Epsilon, where it was found mixed with later LH IIIC material. Pottery assigned to the Transitional Phase by Mountjoy includes Group A/B and TT 2 deep bowls, one with linear decoration. There is also a TT 1 deep bowl with the stemmed bowl rim banding. No Group B or Rosette deep bowls are mentioned.⁸⁶ The use of the wavy band decoration is attested.

77. Mastrokostas 1967, p. 131, pl. 164:α, middle row, left and center, pl. 164:β, top row, second from right.

78. Mastrokostas 1967, p. 130, pl. 164:α, top right.

79. Mastrokostas 1967, pp. 131–133, pl. 171:γ, left.

80. Sherratt 1980, p. 183; Vanschoonwinkel 1991, p. 102; Mountjoy

1999a, p. 402, n. 243.

81. Catling 1974–1979, 1981; Catling and Catling 1981, p. 72; Vanschoonwinkel 1991, pp. 82–84.

82. Sherratt 1980, pp. 188–189, fig. 8:1–4.

83. Mountjoy 1997, p. 123; 1999a, pp. 36, 251, figs. 94, 95.

84. Mountjoy 1997, p. 123; 1999a,

pp. 36, 251, figs. 94, 95.

85. Taylour 1972, esp. pp. 249–251.

86. This is chronologically significant because the Group B deep bowl is present in the LH IIIB2 material from Ayios Stephanos (Mountjoy 1999a, p. 279, no. 155, fig. 93).

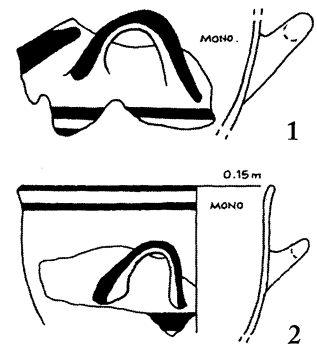


Figure 8. Early LH IIIC and Transitional features in the LH IIIB2 pottery from the Menelaion. Both deep bowls have monochrome interiors. Scale 1:3. After Sherratt 1980, p. 188, fig. 8:1, 3. Reproduced with permission of the British School at Athens.

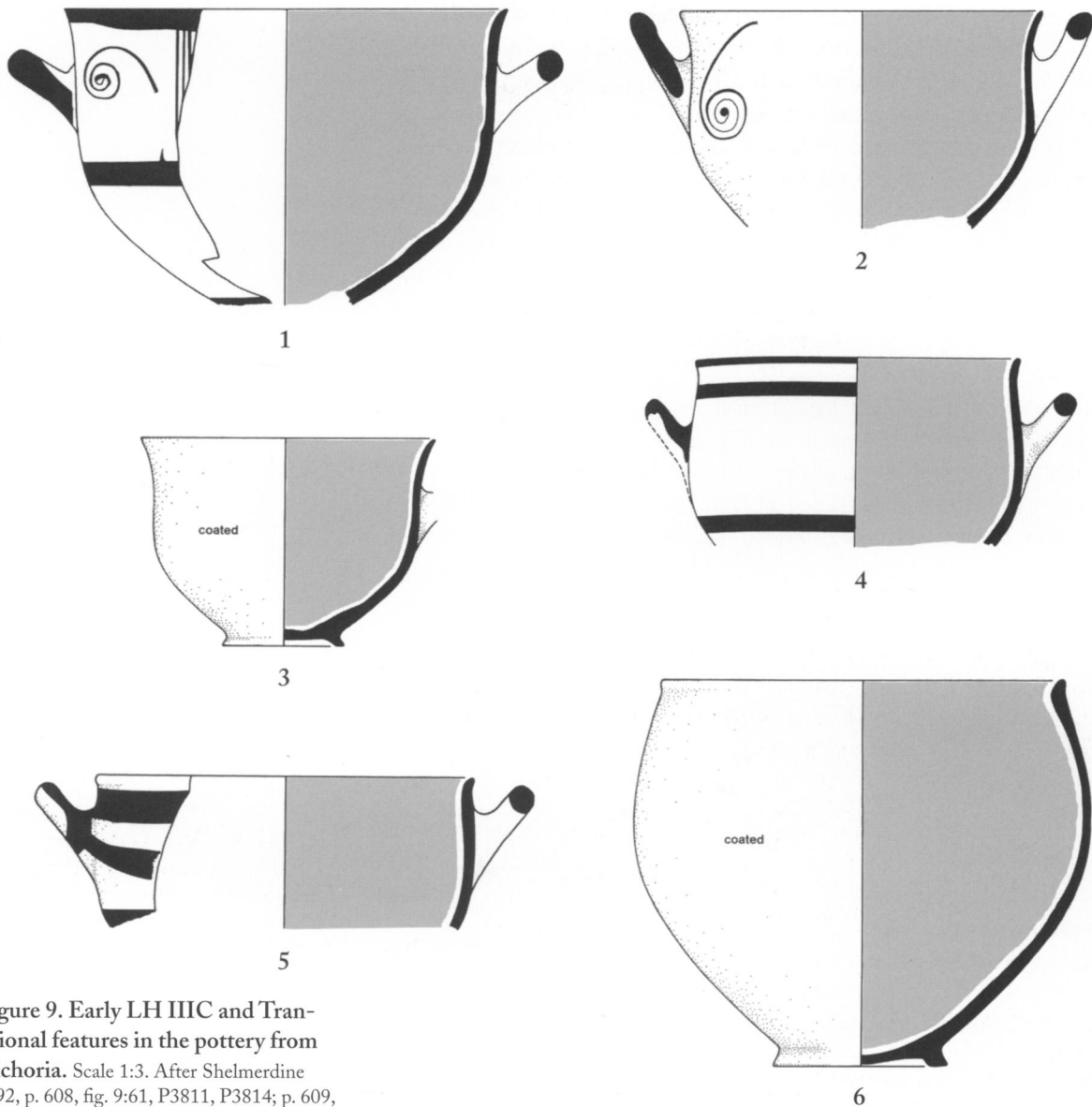


Figure 9. Early LH III C and Transitional features in the pottery from Nichoria. Scale 1:3. After Shelmerdine 1992, p. 608, fig. 9:61, P3811, P3814; p. 609, fig. 9:62, P3813, P3815, P3816, P3819. Copyright 1992 by the Regents of the University of Minnesota.

MESSENA

NICHORIA

The latest LH III material from Nichoria has been dated either to LH III B2 or to Mountjoy's Transitional Phase.⁸⁷ It belongs to two separate but homogeneous groups. One comes from a dump in Area IV SW (trench L23, top level 6). The other, from Area II (trench K25 Ibc, level 2), consists of debris laid down when the area was cleared for later building; it was mixed with earlier Mycenaean and Byzantine material.

A fragment with monochrome interior and a wide panel design has been identified as part of a Group B deep bowl. Two body sherds (nos. P3809 and P3812) may belong either to this shape or to the stemmed bowl FS 305.⁸⁸ Another bowl (no. P3811) has a monochrome interior, a thick band at the rim, handles with one single large splash instead of three, and one medium band on the belly instead of two (Fig. 9:1). It

87. McDonald 1972, pp. 258–260; 1975, pp. 112–114; Sherratt 1980, p. 190; Shelmerdine 1992, pp. 508–517; Mountjoy 1997, p. 124; 1999a, pp. 34, 309.

88. Shelmerdine 1992, p. 513.

is decorated with a wide panel design flanked by a stemmed spiral. Although this vessel is not a Group B deep bowl, its decoration recalls the LH IIIB2 filled style. Rosette bowls are lacking.⁸⁹ Few early LH IIIC shapes are present. They include a Group A/B (Fig. 9:2), a monochrome (Fig. 9:3), and a linear deep bowl with monochrome interior (Fig. 9:4). Transitional features, such as the use of the wavy band decoration (Fig. 9:5) and a monochrome TT 2 deep bowl (Fig. 9:6), are present.⁹⁰ This pottery is similar to the LH IIIB2 material from the Menelaion and to Tiryns LH IIIB Final.

Pylos

The pottery from the destruction layer of the Palace of Nestor is difficult to date because patterned vessels are few and many shapes are clearly local products. The destruction of the palace has been variously dated to the first half of LH IIIB,⁹¹ the end of LH IIIB,⁹² a transitional LH IIIB–IIIC phase,⁹³ or LH IIIC.⁹⁴ It has also been suggested that some of the vessels with LH IIIC character belong to a reoccupation of the palace after a great LH IIIB or LH IIIB–IIIC catastrophe.⁹⁵

Blegen concluded that the palace was destroyed “at a time when pottery of Mycenaean IIIC was beginning to be made and to displace the wares of IIIB.”⁹⁶ Popham has recently dated the destruction to early LH IIIB, assigning the latest pottery to a reoccupation phase in advanced LH IIIC or the early Iron Age. An early LH IIIB date “would account for the very few decorated deep bowls and near-conical kylikes. It would also explain the heavily weighted LH IIIA character of a great deal of the pottery both decorated and plain.”⁹⁷ Mountjoy assigns all the material from the destruction level to her Transitional Phase and, like Blegen, rules out a LH IIIC reoccupation of the palace.

A date in early LH IIIB seems unlikely. It is true that patterned deep bowls are few, but it must be emphasized that at Pylos, patterned pottery forms only a small percentage of the entire assemblage. Furthermore, Pylos deep bowls clearly look later than early LH IIIB because they include monochrome (Fig. 2:4) and dark ground examples and a specimen reminiscent of Group B.⁹⁸ Another good argument against an early LH IIIB date is the absence of the decorated kylix FS 258.

Moreover, the theory of a reoccupation phase in advanced LH IIIC or the early Iron Age is not supported by the stratigraphic evidence. No

89. For other LH IIIB2 shapes, cf. Shelmerdine 1992, pp. 545–546, nos. P3805, P3808, P3820, P3832, P3841, P3843–3844, fig. 9:60, 63, 64, 66.

90. No. P3819 is assigned by Shelmerdine to the stemmed bowl FS 305, but it might belong to a TT 2 deep bowl (Mountjoy 1997, p. 124, n. 84; 1999a, p. 343).

91. Warren (1975, p. 134) dates the

destruction to “mid-LH IIIB or a little later,” and Popham (1991) dates it to early LH IIIB.

92. Desborough 1968, p. 1075; Hope Simpson and Dickinson 1979, p. 127; Sherratt 1980, p. 188; Cosmetico 1999.

93. *Palace of Nestor* I, p. 421; Cassola Guida 1996, p. 694; Mountjoy 1997; 1999a, pp. 36, 309–311.

94. Åström in Desborough 1968,

p. 1091; Hiller as cited in Mountjoy 1997, p. 109, n. 6.

95. Popham 1991; Cassola Guida 1996; Cosmetico 1999, pp. 240–242; Carington-Smith 1999.

96. *Palace of Nestor* I, p. 421.

97. Popham 1991, p. 322.

98. *Palace of Nestor* I, pp. 397–398, nos. 593, 594, 677, 1172, fig. 385:593, 594, 677, 1172.

room in the palace shows traces of new floors above the destruction layer produced by the great catastrophe.⁹⁹

As shown by Mountjoy, the decorated pottery from the palace indeed displays several early LH IIIC and Transitional features. These include three belly-handled amphoras FS 58, one collar-necked jar, 18 linear jugs FS 111, one TT 1 deep bowl with the stemmed bowl rim banding, four TT 2 deep bowls (Fig. 2:4), and two TT 3 deep bowls. Group B and Rosette deep bowls are lacking.¹⁰⁰

The TT 3 deep bowl is a local south Peloponnesian type not found elsewhere. Its occurrence is concentrated in Lakonia and Messenia and may be the result of Minoan influence.¹⁰¹ It is found at the Menelaion and at Pylos, where early LH IIIC and Transitional features are common, but the most characteristic shapes of LH IIIB2 are lacking. The TT 3 deep bowl is absent at Nichoria, however, while the Group B deep bowl is present.

BOIOTIA

THEBES

Several deposits at Thebes have been assigned to the second half of LH IIIB.¹⁰² One Group B deep bowl comes from the Jewellery Workshop at Oidipodos 14 (room B, floor level and destruction debris). Since the pottery includes four patterned kylikes FS 258, Symeonoglou dates the deposit to the very end of LH IIIB1, though he does not exclude the possibility of a later date.¹⁰³ Rutter dates the material to very late in LH IIIB, contemporary with the “Archive Complex” discussed below, while Mountjoy has assigned it to LH IIIB2 or to her Transitional Phase.¹⁰⁴ Symeonoglou’s dating seems most likely to be correct. The pottery from Oidipodos 14 should be contemporary with Tiryns LH IIIB Middle and Mycenae LH IIIB Mid because LH IIIB1 and LH IIIB2 elements occur together, but the patterned kylix FS 258 is more common than the Group B deep bowl. A TT 1 deep bowl with two narrow bands at the rim and three Group A/B deep bowls are also present.¹⁰⁵

A deposit with LH IIIB2 material comes from a trial trench at Pindarou 29.¹⁰⁶ This deposit yielded sherds from Group B and Rosette deep bowls, a large collar-necked jar FS 63, and a few Group A/B deep bowls. A similar situation occurs at Pelopidou–Antigonis, where sherds of Group B and monochrome deep bowls were found in a burned LH IIIB level.¹⁰⁷

99. Popham has suggested that some of the pottery from room 46 might have been wrongly assigned in the potshed (Popham 1991, p. 321), but Mountjoy has rejected this view with very good arguments (Mountjoy 1997, pp. 131–135; 1999a, p. 310). Cassola Guida and Cosmetico have tried to show some stratigraphic evidence of a reoccupation phase, but their argument has not been sufficiently developed

(Cassola Guida 1996, p. 696; Cosmetico 1999, pp. 240–242).

100. *Palace of Nestor* I, pp. 375–376 (shape no. 35), 385, 397–399, 412–413; Mountjoy 1999a, pp. 343–352, figs. 116–120.

101. Mountjoy 1999b, p. 512, n. 11.

102. Symeonoglou 1985, p. 60.

103. Symeonoglou 1973, pp. 19–22, pls. 18, 21, 22, figs. 29:1, nos. 5, 7; 32:2, 11; 33:8; Symeonoglou 1985,

pp. 231–233, site no. 4.

104. Rutter 1974b, p. 89; Mountjoy 1997, p. 123; 1999a, pp. 646, 679–680.

105. Symeonoglou 1973, pp. 19–20, pl. 18, fig. 29:1, nos. 2, 8, pl. 22, fig. 33:6, 7.

106. Demakopoulou 1979, p. 433, pl. 284; Symeonoglou 1985, p. 283, site no. 165.

107. Demakopoulou 1983.

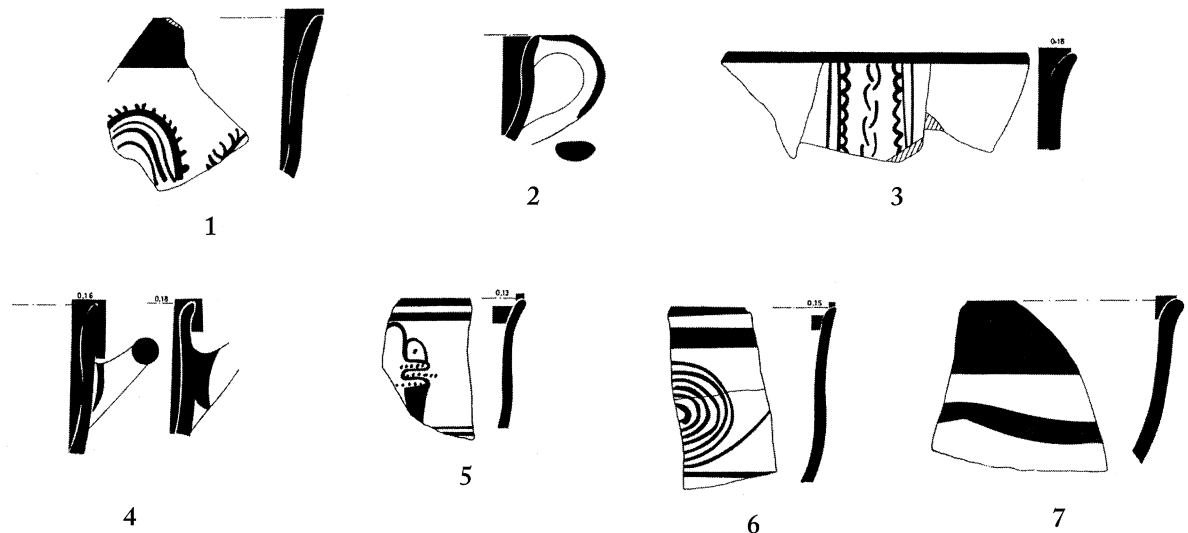


Figure 10. Early LH IIIC and Transitional features in the pottery from the Linear B Archive in Pelopidou Street at Thebes. Scale 1:3. After Andrikou 1999, p. 93, fig. II:3, 5; fig. II:34, 36–38, 43; p. 100, fig. II:54

Recent excavations have brought to light the destruction layer of what has been termed a “Linear B Archive” in Pelopidou Street.¹⁰⁸ The bulk of the pottery is clearly LH IIIB2. Group B deep bowls occur. The favorite motif on this shape is the running spiral FM 46. One specimen has a medium band at the rim, and its decoration may represent a local idiosyncrasy (Fig. 10:1). Some Rosette bowls with dotted rims and multi-splashed handles are also found. A few early LH IIIC elements are already present. They include lip-band semiglobular cups FS 215 (Fig. 10:2), Group A/B (Fig. 10:3), monochrome, and lip-band deep bowls (Fig. 10:4). TT 1 deep bowls with two narrow bands in the rim zone (Fig. 10:5) or with the stemmed bowl rim banding (Fig. 10:6) and the use of the wavy band decoration (Fig. 10:7) are also attested. Andrikou assigns the material to the end of LH IIIB2, contemporary with the LH IIIB Final deposits from the Tiryns *Unterburg*, and her dating seems convincing.¹⁰⁹

Another important pottery group comes from the destruction of the Archive Complex at the corner of Epameinondou and Metaxas Streets. The material is not easily datable because the bulk of it consists of large closed shapes, such as hydrias FS 128, amphoras FS 69, and storage stirrup jars FS 164. Deep bowls are few and not very diagnostic. Two of them belong to Group A, two are monochrome, and one is decorated with a fat wavy band. This vessel has been identified by Mountjoy as a TT 3 deep bowl, but the belly carination is not very apparent.¹¹⁰

Spyropoulos, followed by Rutter, dated the pottery to the end of LH IIIB2. Symeonoglou dates the deposit to LH IIIB1, and Mountjoy assigns it to her Transitional Phase.¹¹¹ From a stylistic point of view, there is nothing in the Archive Complex which postdates the pottery from the

108. Aravantinos 1996; Andrikou 1999.

109. Andrikou 1999, p. 86.

110. Spyropoulos and Chadwick 1975, esp. pp. 48–49, nos. 1–5, figs. 58, 61, 83, 85, 90; Symeonoglou 1985,

p. 291, site no. 196.

111. Spyropoulos and Chadwick 1975, pp. 53–55; Rutter 1974b, p. 89; Symeonoglou 1985, pp. 48, 291; Mountjoy 1997, pp. 120–123; 1999a, pp. 36–37, 647.

Linear B Archive in Pelopidou Street; there are also good stratigraphic reasons to consider both deposits as more or less contemporary.¹¹²

GLA

A considerable quantity of LH IIIB pottery was recovered during the 1955–1961 and 1981–1991 excavations at Gla.¹¹³ Several stratified sealed contexts may be used to date the final destruction of the site. They have yielded Group B,¹¹⁴ Group A, and monochrome deep bowls.¹¹⁵ In addition, a stemmed bowl FS 305 with filled style decoration, a TT 1 deep bowl with two thin bands in the rim zone, and a TT 2 deep bowl with a wavy band are also found.¹¹⁶ Iakovidis has assigned the destruction to advanced, but not final, LH IIIB.¹¹⁷ The occurrence of monochrome deep bowls and Transitional features, however, suggests a later date, contemporary with LH IIIB Final at Tiryns and late LH IIIB2 at Midea.

EUTRESIS

A small group of vases was found on the floor of House V.¹¹⁸ Furumark attributed the group to early LH IIIC, while Ålin assigned it to late LH IIIB. Mountjoy has recently dated the deposit to her Transitional Phase.¹¹⁹ Three vases are characteristic of LH IIIB. They include a plain conical spouted bowl FS 301, a stirrup jar FS 173 with flowers on the shoulder and vertical wavy lines on the belly, and a stemmed krater FS 9 with whorl shells FM 23 and lozenges FM 73. Three vessels are of types usually regarded as early LH IIIC. They include a straight-sided alabastron FS 98 and two semiglobular cups FS 215, one plain and one lip-banded with a monochrome interior. No Group B or Rosette deep bowls are present.

PHOCIS

DELPHI AND KRISA

Pottery of LH IIIB2 character was also locally produced in Phocis.¹²⁰ Group B deep bowls occur. At least one example of the Rosette bowl is attested at Krisa, though it could be an import from the Argolid.¹²¹ Deep

112. Above the destruction layer of the “Bathroom” and the “Third Room” a new floor was constructed at a higher level (Spyropoulos and Chadwick 1975, p. 20). The small deposit from this new floor comprised a lip-band cup FS 215 and two Group B deep bowls (Spyropoulos and Chadwick 1975, p. 43, fig. 114). This suggests that the destruction of the Archive Complex is not later than that of the Linear B Archive in Pelopidou Street, where Group B deep bowls and lip-band cups

are well represented (for a different point of view, cf. Andrikou 1999, p. 87, n. 44).

113. Iakovidis 1989, 1998.

114. Iakovidis 1998, pp. 58–59, fig. 44, pl. 40:α, no. 2.

115. Iakovidis 1998, p. 148.

116. Iakovidis 1989, pp. 31, 48, fig. 5:δ, fig. 10:β, γ, pl. 16:β, no. 234; 1998, pp. 111–112, pl. 61:β.

117. Iakovidis 1989, p. 258; 1998, p. 190.

118. Goldman 1931, pp. 68,

189–190, figs. 77, 263.

119. Furumark 1941b, p. 72; Ålin 1962, p. 123; Mountjoy 1997, p. 120; 1999a, pp. 36–37, 647.

120. For Delphi, cf. *Delphes* V.1, pp. 5–21; Lerat 1935, pp. 336–374; Amandry 1938, pp. 305–307; Müller 1992, pp. 458–473. For Krisa, cf. Jan-noray and van Effenterre 1938, pp. 135–147; Skorda 1992, pp. 44–46.

121. Mountjoy 1999a, p. 773, no. 169, fig. 302.

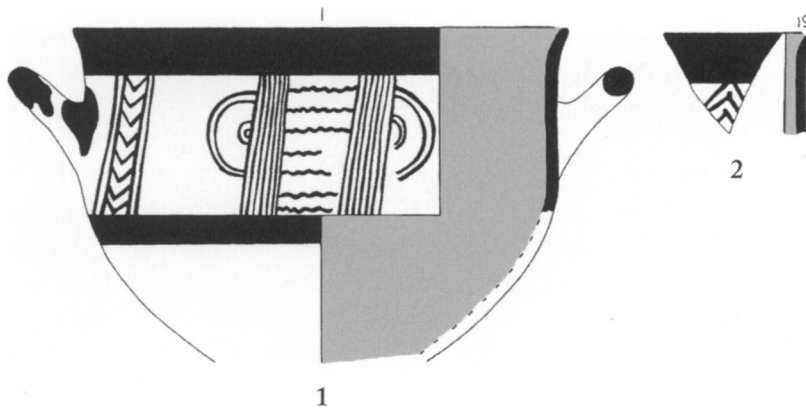


Figure 11. LH IIIB2 deep bowls with Group B decorative system, but with a medium band at the rim, from Delphi (1) and Krisa (2). Scale 1:3.

After Mountjoy 1999a, p. 772, fig. 302:155, 164

bowls with the Group B decorative system, but with a medium band at the rim, are present at Delphi (Fig. 11:1) and Krisa (Fig. 11:2).¹²² As Mountjoy notes, there are some idiosyncrasies, particularly in the locally produced Group B deep bowls. Transitional features appear on only a few LH IIIB2 sherds.¹²³

ATTICA

ATHENS

The only LH IIIB2 pottery found in Attica to date comes from Athens, where many fragments of Group B deep bowls were recovered from the Acropolis Fountain. These fragments are often decorated with motifs typical of the Group B shape, but their most characteristic feature seems to be the frequent occurrence of narrow zonal motifs (Fig. 12:1).¹²⁴ Some specimens have the Group B decorative system, but with a medium band at the rim (Fig. 12:2).¹²⁵ A deposit mentioned by Broneer as giving a terminus post quem for the construction of the stairway in the Acropolis Fountain is now dated by Gauss to approximately the end of LH IIIB2.¹²⁶ This deposit contained a straight-sided alabastron FS 98, which is an early LH IIIC feature.¹²⁷ The last use of the stairway is assigned by Gauss to Rutter's LH IIIC Phase 1.¹²⁸ It is not clear to which phase of the stairway the Group B deep bowls belong, but Gauss's table 1 shows that they are not present in the deposits assignable to its last use.¹²⁹

Another significant pottery group from the Acropolis consists of debris dumped on top of the Northeast Ascent. It is dated to LH IIIC Phase 1 by Rutter and Gauss and to the Transitional Phase by Mountjoy.¹³⁰ This deposit is very homogeneous and numerically remarkable, with approximately 80 complete or nearly complete pots. It comprises many early

122. Mountjoy 1999a, pp. 771–772, nos. 155, 164, fig. 302.

123. Mountjoy 1999a, p. 771.

124. Broneer 1939, pp. 363–364, figs. 40, 41b.

125. Mountjoy 1999a, pp. 555–556,

nos. 267, 268, fig. 202.

126. Gauss 2000, p. 175.

127. Broneer 1939, p. 346, n. 24.

128. Gauss 2000, p. 176; 2003, pp. 100–102.

129. Gauss 2003, p. 101.

130. For the excavation report, see Broneer 1933. For the date of the ceramics, see Rutter 1977, pp. 1–2; Gauss 2003, pp. 98–102; Mountjoy 1997, pp. 118–120; 1999a, pp. 36–37, 495.

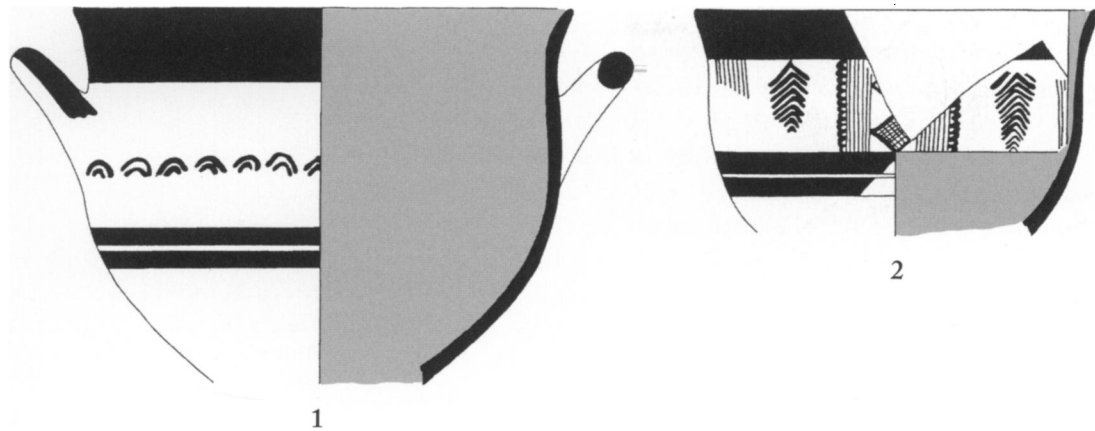


Figure 12. (1) Group B deep bowl with a narrow horizontal row of isolated semicircles from the Acropolis Fountain at Athens; (2) deep bowl with the Group B decorative system, but with a medium band at the rim, from the Acropolis Fountain at Athens. Scale 1:3. After Mountjoy 1999a, p. 555, fig. 202:264, 268

LH IIIC features, such as an amphoriskos FS 59 with a triple-stemmed multiple stem FM 19, a straight-sided alabastron FS 98, semiglobular cups FS 215, two spouted kraters FS 298 with wavy bands, as well as Group A/B, monochrome, lip-band, and linear deep bowls. Amphoras and jugs have slightly hollowed rims.¹³¹ No Group B or Rosette deep bowls are found, and general LH IIIB features seem to be very weak.¹³²

The evidence from Athens is of major importance. During the construction and possibly the initial use of the stairway in the Acropolis Fountain, Group B deep bowls are present along with early LH IIIC features. At the time of the last use of the stairway, contemporary with the pottery from the Northeast Ascent, early LH IIIC features become predominant and Group B deep bowls disappear. The carinated cup FS 240 and the linear angular bowl FS 295, which are present in the later early LH IIIC fill from the Acropolis Fountain,¹³³ are not yet found. This suggests that the pottery from the Northeast Ascent may represent a very early stage of LH IIIC, postdating LH IIIB Final at Tiryns and late LH IIIB2 at Midea, but earlier than LH IIIC deposits in which carinated cups FS 240 and linear angular bowls FS 295 are found.

THORIKOS

Most of the pottery from mine no. 3 has been assigned by Mountjoy to her Transitional Phase.¹³⁴ It was found mixed with a smaller group of later LH IIIC material, but it nevertheless represents a very significant assemblage.

Although LH IIIB shapes are present, the bulk of the material is typical of early LH IIIC. It includes Group A/B, lip-band,¹³⁵ and monochrome

131. Gauss 2003, pp. 100–101; Rutter 2003, p. 196, fig. 6:1.

132. For the absence of Group B and Rosette deep bowls, cf. Gauss 2003, pp. 100–101. For general LH IIIB features, cf. Broneer 1933, pp. 368, 370, figs. 39:b, 43:a, c.

133. Gauss 2003, p. 94.

134. Mountjoy 1995; 1997, pp. 118–120; 1999a, pp. 36–37, 495.

135. Three lip-band deep bowls have a deep rim band instead of the usual medium band (Mountjoy 1995, p. 209, nos. 78–80, fig. 7). Mountjoy has stated that this is a Transitional feature (1997, p. 112). The depth of

the lip band, however, is not a highly standardized feature. Later early LH IIIC lip-band deep bowls with a deep rim band are attested at Mycenae and Korakou (Wardle 1973, pp. 334–335, no. 227, fig. 21; Rutter 1974a, p. 167, no. 25, fig. 53:2).

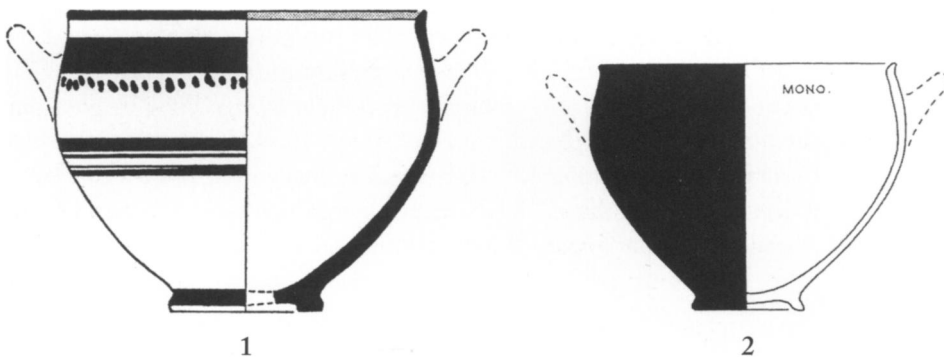
deep bowls, one having a reserved base, a feature found at Lefkandi Ib. Two deep bowls with vertical handles FS 289 also show late features. One is dark ground and one, with a band at the rim and sea anemone FM 27, has a good early LH IIIC parallel at Perati.¹³⁶ Semiglobular cups FS 215 with monochrome interior are also very well attested. Other early LH IIIC shapes are a linear conical kylix FS 274, a carinated kylix FS 267 with monochrome interior, and a straight-sided legged alabastron FS 99. The small piriform jar FS 48 has been replaced by its later version FS 49 or by the amphoriskos FS 59. All the large jugs are FS 106 rather than FS 105. Two TT 1 deep bowls with the stemmed bowl rim banding are also present.

This pottery, which stylistically postdates LH IIIB Final at Tiryns and late LH IIIB2 at Midea, seems to be contemporary with the material from the Northeast Ascent at Athens.

EUBOIA

LEFKANDI

Some LH IIIB pottery has been recovered from this site, but it does not come from sealed floor levels.¹³⁷ This material includes Group A and B deep bowls and a ring-based krater FS 281 decorated with spirals.¹³⁸ Some



early LH IIIC shapes are also already present. They include banded and monochrome deep bowls, along with a lip-band semiglobular cup with a shape that is “practically the same as those of early IIIC, though the fabric is finer.”¹³⁹ TT 1 deep bowls with the stemmed bowl rim banding (Fig. 13:1) and one monochrome TT 2 deep bowl are also found (Fig. 13:2).¹⁴⁰

136. Iakovidis 1969a, p. 458, no. 115; 1969b, pl. 136:στ' 115; 1970, p. 217.

137. Sackett et al. 1966, pp. 99–105; Popham and Milburn 1971, p. 346.

138. Sackett et al. 1966, p. 104, fig. 25:16, 17; Popham and Milburn

1971, pp. 346–347, fig. 8:5, pl. 50:1–3.

139. Popham and Milburn 1971, p. 346.

140. Popham and Milburn 1971, pp. 346–347, fig. 8:4, pl. 50:1, top and bottom right; Sherratt 1980, pp. 186–187, fig. 7.

Figure 13. LH IIIB pottery from Lefkandi. Scale 1:3. After Popham and Milburn 1971, p. 347, fig. 8:4; Sherratt 1980, p. 187, fig. 7. Reproduced with permission of the British School at Athens.

THESSALY

DIMINI

Much interesting material has been recovered from a large complex formed by two buildings referred to as Megaron A and Megaron B.¹⁴¹ Many closed floor deposits come from the first temporary abandonment of Megaron A. They include several early LH IIIC features, such as lip-band semi-globular cups FS 215 and Group A/B deep bowls. No Group B or Rosette deep bowls are mentioned. Adrymi-Sismani assigns this pottery to the very beginning of early LH IIIC.¹⁴² Similar material also comes from the destruction of Megaron B.¹⁴³

After Megaron A was abandoned by its original occupants, some of its rooms were reoccupied for a short time. The Mycenaean ceramic material from this latest phase is not different from that of the preceding period, but now, in addition to early LH IIIC pottery, there are also gray pseudo-Minyan ware vessels and handmade coarse wares.¹⁴⁴

CONCLUSIONS

The evidence presented above indicates that early LH IIIC and Transitional stylistic features already begin to appear on the Mycenaean mainland before the end of LH IIIB (Table 1). Therefore, the presence of such features in a deposit does not allow a clear distinction of LH IIIB2 from Transitional LH IIIB2–LH IIIC Early, as these terms are defined by Mountjoy.

The pottery groups examined in this article fall into three different ceramic phases, the first of which includes deposits assignable to an early stage of LH IIIB2. The most characteristic shapes of this phase are Group B deep bowls with a 3-cm-wide rim band and Rosette bowls with multi-splashed handles. The decorated kylix FS 258 may occasionally be present as a fading feature of the preceding period. Early LH IIIC stylistic features are limited to a few Group A/B deep bowls. Deep bowls with the Group B decorative system, but with a medium band at the rim, as well as TT 1 and TT 2 deep bowls, are already attested (Table 1). Sealed floor deposits from this phase come from Tiryns (LH IIIB Developed material from the *Unterbürg*) and Midea (Lower Terraces). The pottery from the Perseia W trench L (0.95–1.20 m below the surface) at Mycenae and the latest LH IIIB material from trench E at Asine should also be placed here.¹⁴⁵ I propose calling this ceramic phase LH IIIB2 Early (Tables 2 and 3). It postdates LH IIIB Middle at Tiryns and LH IIIB Mid at Mycenae.

The next recognizable ceramic phase corresponds to a late stage of LH IIIB2. In this phase, Group B deep bowls with a 3-cm-wide rim band and Rosette bowls with multi-splashed handles are still commonly found. LH IIIB2 vases are predominant but some new shapes, usually regarded as early LH IIIC, have appeared on a small scale. They include semiglobular cups FS 215, monochrome, lip-band, and linear deep bowls with

141. Adrymi-Sismani 2003.

142. Adrymi-Sismani 2003, pp. 75–88, figs. 8, 9.

143. Adrymi-Sismani 2003, pp. 88–98.

144. Adrymi-Sismani 2003, pp. 87–88.

145. A different point of view is expressed by Schönfeld, who assigns the material from trench E to Tiryns LH IIIB Early–Middle (Schönfeld 1988, pp. 163, 207–208, table 4).

TABLE 1. LH IIIC AND TRANSITIONAL FEATURES IN LH IIIB CONTEXTS*

FEATURES	LH IIIB1		LH IIIB2 EARLY				LH IIIB2 LATE									
	Tryns LH IIIB Middle Contexts	Korakon LH IIIB Material	Midea Lower Terraces	Asine Trench E	Delphi LH IIIB2 Material	Krisa LH IIIB2 Material	Mycenaean Causeway Levels C-D	Mycenaean Persia W Trench L, Upper Levels	Mycenaean Other LH IIIB2 Material	Melation LH IIIB2 Material	Thebes "Linear B Archive"	Thebes Pindaron 29 Trial Trench	Thebes Pelopidou-Antigonis	Gla Final Destruction	Athens Acropolis Fountain	Lefkandi LH IIIB Material
Collar-necked jar FS 63	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	×	—	—	—	—	—
Rounded alabastron FS 86	×	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Straight-sided alabastron FS 98	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	×	—	—	—	—	—	×	—	—
Semiglobular cup FS 215	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	×	—	—	—	—	×	—
Group A/B deep bowl FS 284	×	×	×	—	—	—	—	—	×	×	×	—	—	—	—	—
Rosette bowl, three handle splashes FS 284	×	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Lip-band deep bowl FS 284	—	—	—	—	—	—	×	—	—	×	—	—	—	—	?	—
Linear deep bowl FS 284	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	×	—	—	—	—	—	×	—
Monochrome deep bowl FS 284	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	×	—	×	×	—	×	—
TT 1 deep bowl FS 284	—	×	×	×	—	—	—	—	—	×	—	—	×	—	×	—
TT 2 deep bowl FS 284	×	—	—	×	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	×	—	×	—
Wavy band decoration	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	×	×	×	—	—	×	—	—	—
Group B decorative system, medium band at rim, FS 284	×	—	×	—	×	×	×	—	?	×	—	—	—	×	?	—
Open shapes with a reserved circle on the interior base	×	—	—	—	—	—	×	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

* Deposits assigned by Mountjoy to her Transitional Phase are not included.

monochrome interior. Transitional features are all represented except for the TT 3 deep bowl. The wavy band decoration on deep and stemmed bowls begins to appear (Table 1). Sealed floor deposits from this phase come from Tiryns (LH IIIB Final material from the *Unterburg*), Midea (West Gate area; southwest slope), and Gla (final destruction). Other significant assemblages that may be assigned to this late stage of LH IIIB2 come from Mycenae (Causeway Deposit, levels C-D; Perseia W trench L, upper levels), Iria (building complex in the *Oberer Schnitt*), Nichoria (Area IV SW, trench L23, top level 6; Area II, trench K25 Ibc, level 2), and Thebes (Linear B Archive and Archive Complex). Minor deposits that probably belong here are listed in Table 2.

This ceramic phase may be called LH IIIB2 Late (Tables 2 and 3).¹⁴⁶ There are at least three good reasons for this choice. First, it includes contexts that represent, from a general historical and architectural point of view, the final phase of LH IIIB. Second, although some early LH IIIC stylistic features have already appeared, LH IIIB2 elements are still quantitatively dominant. Third, this phase comprises all the destruction deposits traditionally assigned to the end of LH IIIB2. It can be stratigraphically separated from the preceding LH IIIB2 Early at Tiryns (LH IIIB Developed versus Final).

The transition to early LH IIIC must be seen as a gradual process of differentiation from LH IIIB2 Late. During this process, early LH IIIC features, appearing on a small scale at the end of LH IIIB2, become increasingly common, while the most characteristic shapes of the preceding period decrease. The mature stage of early LH IIIC (= Rutter's LH IIIC Phases 2-3) begins when the fading features of LH IIIB2 have virtually disappeared and the repertoire of the new phase has already developed its own range of shapes and motifs. The deposits belonging to this period are identified by the presence of the carinated cup FS 240, the linear conical kylix FS 275, and the linear angular bowl FS 295.¹⁴⁷

The very beginning of LH IIIC, however, may be recognized in those deposits where LH IIIB fading elements are few and weak, while early LH IIIC features are much in evidence. In this phase, semiglobular cups FS 215, along with monochrome, lip-band, and linear deep bowls with monochrome interior, have become very common. Group B deep bowls with a 3-cm-wide rim band and Rosette bowls with multi-splashed handles have virtually disappeared.¹⁴⁸ The use of the wavy band decoration, which had begun in LH IIIB2 Late, is now frequent.¹⁴⁹ In the northern and

146. The only LH IIIB2 Late deposit which does not include Group B or Rosette deep bowls is that from the Archive Complex at Thebes. There are, however, good stylistic and stratigraphic reasons for considering this deposit contemporary with other LH IIIB2 Late assemblages from Thebes, where both Group B and Rosette deep bowls are attested (cf. above, n. 112).

147. Rutter 1977, pp. 2-3; Mountjoy 1999a, pp. 41-44.

148. Regarding Group B deep bowls, a few exceptions to this general pattern are attested in the Argolid. In fact, three early LH IIIC examples of this type are known from Tiryns. They do not belong to the very beginning of early LH IIIC, but to a slightly later stage (Podzuweit 1978, p. 474, fig. 30:10; 1979, p. 422, fig. 40:6; 1981,

p. 208, fig. 56:5). Cf. also French, forthcoming, fig. 2, for Mycenae.

149. A similar situation occurs on Crete, where bowls and cups with wavy band decoration are present at the end of LM IIIB and continue in early LM IIIC (Popham 1984, p. 184, pl. 127:a; Hallager and Hallager 2000, pp. 38, 47, 137-143, nos. 71-P 1349, 1350, 73-P 0480, pls. 48, 57:f, nos. 7, 8, and pl. 61:c, no. 2).

TABLE 2. RELATIVE CHRONOLOGY OF THE MOST IMPORTANT DEPOSITS EXAMINED

<i>Phasing</i>	<i>Deposits</i>	<i>Characteristic Shapes</i>	<i>Less Frequent Shapes</i>
	Korakou, trench P VI-V Pylos, Palace, destruction layer Athens, Northeast Ascent Thorikos, mine no. 3 Dimini, Megaron A, first abandonment Dimini, Megaron B, destruction	Semiglobular cup FS 215 Group A/B deep bowl FS 284 Lip-band deep bowl FS 284 Linear deep bowl FS 284 Monochrome deep bowl FS 284 TT 3 deep bowl FS 284 (southern Peloponnese only)	
LH IIIC PHASE 1	MINOR DEPOSITS Meneiaon, unpublished material assigned by Mountjoy to her Transitional phase Ayios Stephanos, unpublished material assigned by Mountjoy to her Transitional Phase Eutresis, House V Athens, Acropolis Fountain, last use	ABSENT Group B deep bowl, 3-cm-wide rim band FS 284** Rosette bowl, multi-splashed handles FS 284	
	Tiryns, LH IIIB Final material Midea, West Gate Area and Southwest Slope Mycenae, Causeway Deposit, levels C-D Mycenae, Perseia W trench L, upper levels* Iria, Building Complex in the <i>Oberer Schmitt</i> Nichoria, Area IV SW, trench L23, top level 6 Nichoria, Area II, trench K25 Ibc, level 2 Thebes, "Linear B Archive" Thebes, "Archive Complex" Gla, LH IIIB2 final destruction	Group B deep bowl, 3-cm-wide rim band FS 284 Rosette bowl, multi-splashed handles FS 284	Semiglobular cup FS 215 Group A/B deep bowl FS 284 Lip-band deep bowl FS 284 Linear deep bowl FS 284 Monochrome deep bowl FS 284
LH IIIB2 LATE	MINOR DEPOSITS Meneiaon, LH IIIB2 material Thebes, Pindarou 29, trial trench Thebes, Pelopidou-Antigonis, burned level Athens, Acropolis Fountain, construction (and initial use?) Lefkandi, LH IIIB material		
LH IIIB2 EARLY	Tiryns, LH IIIB Developed material Midea, Lower Terraces Mycenae, Perseia W trench L, 0.95-1.20 m below the surface* MINOR DEPOSIT Asine, Barbouna area, trench E	Group B deep bowl, 3-cm-wide rim band FS 284 Rosette bowl, multi-splashed handles FS 284	Group A/B deep bowl FS 284

Minor deposits include pottery groups with fewer than 25 specimens or contexts that are still largely unpublished.

*Mycenae, Perseia W trench L: for upper levels, see French 1969; for levels 0.95-1.20 m below the surface, see Taylor 1955, pp. 225-229.

**For a few examples from the Argolid, however, see n. 148.

TABLE 3. SYSTEMS OF CERAMIC PHASING*

<i>Lefkandi</i>	<i>Rutter</i>	<i>Tiryns</i>	<i>Mycenae</i>	<i>Mountjoy-1</i>	<i>Mountjoy-2</i>	<i>Proposed Sequence</i>
Phase Ib	LH IIIC Phase 3	LH IIIC Early	LH IIIC Early 2	LH IIIC Early	LH IIIC Early	Rutter's LH IIIC Phase 3
Phase Ia	LH IIIC Phase 2		LH IIIC Early 1			Rutter's LH IIIC Phase 2
	LH IIIC Phase 1	<i>Übergangshorizont SH IIIB/C</i>	Transitional LH IIIB2–LH IIIC Early	Transitional LH IIIB2– LH IIIC Early	Transitional LH IIIB2– LH IIIC Early	Rutter's LH IIIC Phase 1
LH IIIB	LH IIIB2	LH IIIB Final		LH IIIB2		LH IIIB2 Late
		LH IIIB Developed	LH IIIB2		LH IIIB2	LH IIIB2 Early

*References: *Lefkandi*: Popham and Milburn 1971; *Rutter*: Rutter 1977; *Tiryns*: Podzuweit 1981; *Mycenae*: French, forthcoming; *Mountjoy-1*: Mountjoy 1997; *Mountjoy-2*: Mountjoy 1999b.

central Mycenaean mainland, closed floor deposits from this phase come from Dimini (first abandonment of Megaron A; destruction of Megaron B) and Eutresis (small deposit on the floor of House V).

Other significant pottery groups of the same date come from Korakou (trench P VI–V), Athens (Northeast Ascent), and Thorikos (mine no. 3). Farther south, in Messenia and Lakonia, the same ceramic phase is represented at Pylos (floor deposits from the destruction of the Palace) and in the unpublished material from the Menelaion and Ayios Stephanos, which has been assigned by Mountjoy to her Transitional Phase. Here, the most characteristic shape of the period is the TT 3 deep bowl, a type of vessel that does not seem to be present in the preceding LH IIIB2 Late and is peculiar to the southern Peloponnese (Table 2).

It is clear from this discussion that the deposits assigned by Mountjoy to Transitional LH IIIB2–LH IIIC Early do not belong to a single ceramic phase, but rather to two separate and successive horizons. The earlier one, which I have proposed calling LH IIIB2 Late, corresponds to the destructions traditionally assigned to the end of LH IIIB2;¹⁵⁰ the later one post-dates such destructions and represents the initial stage of LH IIIC.

This initial stage of LH IIIC was first recognized in 1977 by Rutter, who called it LH IIIC Phase 1. There are no good reasons to abandon this term in favor of Mountjoy's Transitional LH IIIB2–LH IIIC Early.¹⁵¹ As suggested by Rutter, Mountjoy's terminology is "potentially misleading."¹⁵² Moreover, some of the defining characteristics of the Transitional Phase

150. Transitional LH IIIB2–LH IIIC Early deposits that correspond to LH IIIB2 Late include Tiryns (LH IIIB Final material), Midea (West Gate and southwest slope), Iria (building complex in the *Oberer Schnitt*), Nichoria (Area IV SW, trench L23, top

level 6; Area II, trench K25 Ibc, level 2), Thebes (Archive Complex).

151. Transitional LH IIIB2–LH IIIC Early deposits that correspond to LH IIIC Phase 1 include Korakou (trench P VI–V), Pylos (Palace, destruction layer), Athens (Northeast

Ascent), Thorikos (mine no. 3), Menelaion (unpublished material), Ayios Stephanos (unpublished material), Eutresis (House V).

152. Rutter 2003, p. 194; cf. also Gauss in Rutter et al. 2003, p. 253, n. 3.

are elusive. For example, deep bowls with bell shapes and flaring rims (i.e., TT 1 deep bowls) are commonly found in LH IIIB as well as in early LH IIIC, while TT 2 deep bowls are hardly distinguishable from stemmed bowls FS 305 if the lower body is not preserved.¹⁵³

LH IIIC Phase 1 can be separated from LH IIIB2 Late at Athens (LH IIIB2 Late pottery from the construction and possibly the initial use of the stairway in the Acropolis Fountain versus LH IIIC Phase 1 material from the last use of the stairway and from the Northeast Ascent) and probably at the Menelaion (LH IIIB2 Late contexts versus LH IIIC Phase 1 unpublished material assigned by Mountjoy to her Transitional Phase).

Some final remarks may be added on the distribution of LH IIIB2. In 1980, Sherratt stated that such pottery had a limited impact in the Mycenaean area as a whole.¹⁵⁴ Since Sherratt's admirable essay, however, new evidence has been brought to light. A good deal of LH IIIB2 pottery is known today from the Corinthia, Boiotia, and Phocis. The Rosette bowl, which was previously attested outside the Argolid only at Teichos Dymaion and the Menelaion,¹⁵⁵ is now known also from the Corinthia (Tsoungiza), Boiotia (Thebes), and Phocis (Krisa). Moreover, the occurrence of regional preferences in the decoration of some Group B deep bowls from Achaia, Boiotia, Phocis, and Attica implies that LH IIIB2 innovations were not only adopted in a large area of the Mycenaean mainland, but were also adapted for the local taste. This pattern suggests that, despite the troubled historical situation, a certain degree of cultural exchange was still taking place in the final phase of LH IIIB.¹⁵⁶

153. For example, the attribution to the TT 2 rather than to the stemmed bowl FS 305 of some sherds from Ayios Stephanos (Mountjoy 1999a, p. 279, nos. 163–165, fig. 94:163–165) seems uncertain; cf. also above, n. 90.

154. Sherratt 1980, p. 199.

155. Sherratt 1980, p. 200, table 1.

156. See also Mountjoy 1999a, pp. 35–36.

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Salvatore Vitale

UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI PISA

DIPARTIMENTO DI SCIENZE ARCHEOLOGICHE

VIA GALVANI 1

56100 PISA

ITALY

s.vitale@arch.unipi.it