THE LH IIIB–LH IIIC TRANSITION ON THE MYCENAEN 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. 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. This evidence has, however, given rise to controversy on matters of terminology and ceramic phasing. 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.

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The presentation of a site-by-site review of the evidence should be prefaced by a brief overview of previous chronological schemas. LH IIIB was originally left undivided by Furumark. After the excavations at Tiryns and Mycenae in the 1950s, however, a later stage of LH IIIB with different ceramic characteristics from those of the Zygouries “Potter’s Shop” was recognized. As a result, LH IIIB was divided into LH IIIB1 and LH IIIB2. LH IIIB2 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 IIIB2 is the absence of the decorated kylix FS 258, which was the most characteristic shape of the preceding LH IIIB1.

Since the time of this basic division of LH IIIB, further excavations and studies have provided evidence for additional subdivisions of both LH IIIB1 and LH IIIB2 at Tiryns and Mycenae. Mountjoy has recently defined a new ceramic phase called Transitional LH IIIB2–LH IIIC Early, identified mainly by the presence of three types of deep bowls. According to Mountjoy, Type 1 (hereafter, TT 1) “is the Group A deep bowl found in LH IIIB2 and LH IIIC Early but with the bell shape and flaring rim of the LH IIIC 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).

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 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.
THE LH IIIB–LH IIIC TRANSITION

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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 addi-
tion 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 cen-
tury 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

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).
R. Jung in Rutter et al. 2003, p. 252.
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/C21 does not, however, represent a closed deposit with ceramic material found in situ.22 As a result, its chronological significance must be considered limited.
Another important deposit from Tiryns is the so-called *Epichosis*. It contains four pottery groups of different style and date, referred to respectively as *Epichosis* I, IIa, IIIb, and III. The *Epichosis* IIIb comprises a great deal of typical LH IIIB2 material, but it also includes a few early LH IIIC elements, such as Group A/B and lip-band deep bowls. The wavy band decoration is already attested. Some Group B deep bowls have a medium band at the rim. One specimen has a reserved circle on the interior base, a feature which, according to Mountjoy, begins in the Transitional Phase. The *Epichosis* IIIb, however, like the Übergangshorizont SH IIIB/C, cannot be considered a closed group.

It is worth noting that a few early LH IIIC and Transitional stylistic features are attested at Tiryns beginning in LH IIIB 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).
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

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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.
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.40

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

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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.
44. Taylour 1981, pp. 10, 22.
45. French, forthcoming.
46. French, forthcoming.
48. Wardle 1973, p. 305, fig. 4; p. 320, fig. 13a.
52. French 1969, p. 75, fig. 11:3.
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

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


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, 6a, 8, 8a, 14, 15, 17–19; A 1–3, 13/1–5, 15, 21–24) and 12 (21.5%) to early LH IIIA (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 nondiagnostic (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 IIIA 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 IIIA 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 IIIIC 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). 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).

CORINTHIA

Korakou

The pottery from trench P VI–V has been assigned to LH IIIIC Phase 1 by Rutter and to the Transitional Phase by Mountjoy. 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. 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. 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.

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

ACHAIA

Teichos Dymaion

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

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).


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.

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.


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.

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77. Mastrokostas 1967, p. 131, pl. 164:a, middle row, left and center, pl. 164:b, top row, second from right.
78. Mastrokostas 1967, p. 130, pl. 164:a, top right.
82. Sherratt 1980, pp. 188–189, fig. 8:1–4.
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 9. Early LH IIIC 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.


MESSENGA

Nichoria

The latest LH III material from Nichoria has been dated either to LH IIIB2 or to Mountjoy’s Transitional Phase. 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 1bc, 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. 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).
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. 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 T T 2 deep bowl (Fig. 9:6), are present. 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, the end of LH IIIB, a transitional LH IIIB–IIIC phase, or LH IIIC. 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.

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." 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." 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. 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

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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.
96. Palace of Nestor I, p. 421.
room in the palace shows traces of new floors above the destruction layer produced by the great catastrophe.  

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.

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. 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. 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. Rutter dates the material to very late in LH IIIA/B, contemporary with the “Archive Complex” discussed below, while Mountjoy has assigned it to LH IIIB2 or to her Transitional Phase. 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.

A deposit with LH IIIB2 material comes from a trial trench at Pindarou 29. 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.

99. Popham has suggested that some of the pottery from room 46 might have been wrongly assigned in the potsherd (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.


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.


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


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

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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
Linear B Archive in Pelopidou Street; there are also good stratigraphic reasons to consider both deposits as more or less contemporary.\(^\text{112}\)

**GLA**

A considerable quantity of LH IIIB pottery was recovered during the 1955–1961 and 1981–1991 excavations at Glä.\(^\text{113}\) Several stratified sealed contexts may be used to date the final destruction of the site. They have yielded Group B,\(^\text{114}\) Group A, and monochrome deep bowls.\(^\text{115}\) 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.\(^\text{116}\) Iakovidis has assigned the destruction to advanced, but not final, LH IIIB.\(^\text{117}\) 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.\(^\text{118}\) Furumark attributed the group to early LH IIIC, while Alín assigned it to late LH IIIB. Mountjoy has recently dated the deposit to her Transitional Phase.\(^\text{119}\) 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.\(^\text{120}\) 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.\(^\text{121}\) Deep

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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).


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


118. Goldman 1931, pp. 68, 189–190, figs. 77, 263.

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


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

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). Some specimens have the Group B decorative system, but with a medium band at the rim (Fig. 12:2). 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. This deposit contained a straight-sided alabastron FS 98, which is an early LH IIIC feature. The last use of the stairway is assigned by Gauss to Rutter’s LH IIIC Phase 1. 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.

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. This deposit is very homogeneous and numerically remarkable, with approximately 80 complete or nearly complete pots. It comprises many early

123. Mountjoy 1999a, p. 771.
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.
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 IIIIC. It includes Group A/B, lip-band,135 and monochrome

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133. Gauss 2003, p. 94.
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.  

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. This material includes Group A and B deep bowls and a ring-based krater FS 281 decorated with spirals. 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." 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. Popham and Milburn 1971, pp. 346–347, fig. 8:4, pl. 50:1, top and bottom right; Sherratt 1980, pp. 186–187, fig. 7.
THESSALY

Dimini

Much interesting material has been recovered from a large complex formed by two buildings referred to as Megaron A and Megaron B. Many closed floor deposits come from the first temporary abandonment of Megaron A. They include several early LH IIIC features, such as lip-band semiglobular 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. Similar material also comes from the destruction of Megaron B.

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.

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 Unterburg) and Midea (Lower Terraces). The pottery from the Persea 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. 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

142. Adrymi-Sismani 2003, pp. 75–88, figs. 8, 9.
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).
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<td>Rounded alabastron FS 86</td>
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<td>Straight-sided alabastron FS 98</td>
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<td>Semiglobular cup FS 215</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group A/B deep bowl FS 284</td>
<td>x</td>
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<td>Rosette bowl, three handle splashes FS 284</td>
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<td>Linear deep bowl FS 284</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monochrome deep bowl FS 284</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>TT 1 deep bowl FS 284</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>TT 2 deep bowl FS 284</td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wavy band decoration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group B decorative system, medium band at rim, FS 284</td>
<td>x</td>
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<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Open shapes with a reserved circle on the interior base</td>
<td>x</td>
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* 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 IIIIB Final material from the Unterburg), Midea (West Gate area; southwest slope), and Glia (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 WV 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 IIIIB2 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 IIIIB. Second, although some early LH IIIC stylistic features have already appeared, LH IIIIB2 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 IIIIB2 Early at Tiryns (LH IIIIB 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 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 IIIIB2 Late, is now frequent.149 In the northern and

146. The only LH IIIIB2 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 IIIIB2 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 IIIIC (Popham 1984, p. 184, pl. 127a; Hallager and Hallager 2000, pp. 38, 47, 137–143, nos. 71–P 1349, 1350, 73–P 0480, pl. 48, 57:f, nos. 7, 8, and pl. 61:c, no. 2).
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<td>Gla, LH IIB2 final destruction</td>
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<td>MINOR DEPOSITS</td>
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<td>Midea, LH IIB2 material</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Athens, Acropolis Fountain, construction (and initial use?)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lefkandi, LH IIIB material</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>LH IIB2 EARLY</td>
<td>Tiryns, LH IIIB Developed material</td>
<td>Group B deep bowl, 3-cm-wide rim band FS 284</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Midea, Lower Terraces</td>
<td>Rosette bowl, multi-splashed handles FS 284</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mycenae, Perseia W trench L, 0.95–1.20 m below the surface*</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MINOR DEPOSIT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Asine, Barbouna area, trench E</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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 Taylour 1955, pp. 225–229.

**For a few examples from the Argolid, however, see n. 148.
### TABLE 3. SYSTEMS OF CERAMIC PHASING*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lefkandi</th>
<th>Rutter</th>
<th>Tiryns</th>
<th>Mycenae</th>
<th>Mountjoy-1</th>
<th>Mountjoy-2</th>
<th>Proposed Sequence</th>
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<tr>
<td>Phase Ib</td>
<td>LH IIIIC Phase 1</td>
<td>LH IIIIC Early</td>
<td>LH IIIIC Early</td>
<td>LH IIIIC Early</td>
<td>LH IIIIC Early</td>
<td>Rutter’s LH IIIIC Phase 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phase Ia</td>
<td>LH IIIIC Phase 2</td>
<td>LH IIIIC Early 1</td>
<td>Transitional LH IIIB2–LH IIIC Early</td>
<td>Transitional LH IIIB2–LH IIIC Early</td>
<td>Transitional LH IIIB2–LH IIIC Early</td>
<td>Rutter’s LH IIIIC Phase 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH IIIB</td>
<td>LH IIIIB2</td>
<td>LH IIIIB Final</td>
<td>LH IIIIB2</td>
<td>LH IIIIB2</td>
<td>LH IIIIB2 Late</td>
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<tr>
<td>LH IIIIB</td>
<td>LH IIIIB Developed</td>
<td>LH IIIIB2</td>
<td>LH IIIIB2</td>
<td>LH IIIIB2 Early</td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>


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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 IIIIB2 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 IIIIB2–LH IIIIC 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 IIIIB2 Late, corresponds to the destructions traditionally assigned to the end of LH IIIIB2,\(^{150}\) the later one post-dates such destructions and represents the initial stage of LH IIIIC.

This initial stage of LH IIIIC was first recognized in 1977 by Rutter, who called it LH IIIIC Phase 1. There are no good reasons to abandon this term in favor of Mountjoy’s Transitional LH IIIIB2–LH IIIIC Early.\(^{151}\) As suggested by Rutter, Mountjoy’s terminology is “potentially misleading.”\(^{152}\) Moreover, some of the defining characteristics of the Transitional Phase

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150. Transitional LH IIIIB2–LH IIIIC Early deposits that correspond to LH IIIIB2 Late include Tiryns (LH IIIIB 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 IIIIB2–LH IIIIC Early deposits that correspond to LH IIIIC 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

REFERENCES


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.


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