

# A Late Helladic IIB Pottery Deposit from the Ano Englianos Ridge at Pylos in Western Messenia

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**Abstract:** This paper presents the results of the preliminary study of a recently excavated LH IIB pottery assemblage from the Ano Englianos ridge at Pylos in western Messenia. The deposit comes from Trench 5Z and its six extensions, situated northeast of Carl Blegen's Main Building, and was uncovered during the archaeological investigations associated with the construction of the new roof over the Palace of Nestor. The material fills a gap in the local sequence and reveals significant information on pottery consumption trends at Pylos during the crucial transition from the early to the late formative stage of Mycenaean palatial society. Specifically, our analysis suggests that the ceramics from the 5Z deposit may represent the remains from feasting activities, which occurred during a late stage of LH IIB, and highlights the importance of Messenian and Minoan cultural traditions in the gradual formation process of Mycenaean Pylos. If corroborated through future research, these conclusions raise the possibility that LH IIB may have been a key phase for the elaboration and performance of those feasting practices, which constitute a distinctive feature of the Pylian social space during the final Mycenaean Palatial period.

**Keywords:** Mycenaean Pylos, cultural formation processes, feasting activities, ceramic analysis, relative chronology

This paper presents the results of the preliminary study of a recently excavated LH IIB pottery deposit from the Ano Englianos ridge at Pylos in western Messenia. This context was uncovered during the archaeological investigations associated with the construction of the new roof over the Palace of Nestor.<sup>4</sup> More specifically, the assemblage comes from Trench 5Z and its six extensions (Fig. 1), located only a few metres northeast of Rooms 33 and 34 of the so-called Main Building unearthed during Carl Blegen's excavations at the site.<sup>5</sup>

The formation processes of the cultural deposits from Trench 5Z are currently still under study and, for this reason, only a few basic data can be provided here. The LH IIB assemblage that constitutes the focus of this contribution is the latest component of a LH IIB horizon, which is stratified below LH IIIA1 levels and above fills dating to LH I and LH IIA. These LH I, LH IIA, and LH IIB deposits are ceramically pure, except for two intrusive sherds from the uppermost levels in Extension 3 (53Z; Fig. 1). These fragments date to the post-Bronze Age period and at the moment the reason for their presence remains unclear.

The LH IIB deposit discussed here may represent the filling of a pit or a natural depression. This context is of key importance for our understanding of local ceramic developments for two reasons. First, these materials fill a gap in the local sequence, as LH IIB pottery from Pylos was previously known mostly from tombs.<sup>6</sup> Second, the LH IIB deposit from Trench 5Z reveals a significant amount of new information on pottery consumption trends and cultural trajectories in the area of Pylos at the crucial transition from the early to the late formative stage of Mycenaean palatial society.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> See Karapanagiotou et al., this volume.

<sup>5</sup> Blegen – Rawson 1966, 43–235. For the exact location, see Karapanagiotou et al., this volume.

<sup>6</sup> Blegen et al. 1973, 175, 196, 201, 205, figs. 234.16, 249.1, 250.8, 260.12; RMDP, 308, 324, fig. 108.

<sup>7</sup> See Davis – Stocker 2016; Stocker – Davis 2017; Davis – Stocker 2018.

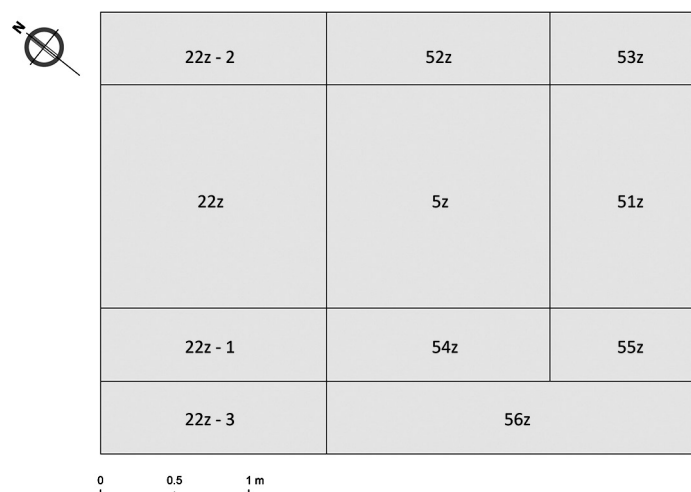


Fig. 1: Excavation grid showing the location of Trench 5Z and all extensions, 51Z to 56Z (D. Nenova, courtesy of the Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati)

The presentation of the evidence is subdivided into three sections, which focus on the following subjects: (a) classification and technology; (b) function and typology; and (c) discussion and concluding remarks. The quantitative information provided in the following sections includes a representative sample of the whole assemblage, namely the finds from Extension 3, which currently offers the clearest stratigraphic sequence. These data reflect similar trends to those that characterise the entire deposit.

S. V. – S. R. S. – E. M.

### Classification and Technology

Based on macroscopic analysis, the vast majority of the early Late Bronze Age materials from Trench 5Z were produced locally (over 98% in the representative sample from Extension 3). This element provides a great opportunity to assess the ceramic assemblage of Pylos in terms of fabric groups, decorative treatments, class distribution, and manufacturing techniques.

In terms of fabrics, the materials from the LH IIB deposit from Trench 5Z have been broken down into two broad groups, respectively termed ‘fine’ and ‘coarse’. Fine vessels are characterised by the occurrence of non-plastic inclusions no larger than 2 mm, a ‘fine’ to ‘medium’ density of non-plastic inclusions in the paste (1–10% ratio of inclusions to matrix), and a well- to moderately sorted texture (Fig. 2.1–11). On the other hand, coarse vessels are typified by non-plastic inclusions larger than 2 mm, a ‘medium’ to ‘very coarse’ density of non-plastic inclusions in the paste (7–50% ratio of inclusions to matrix), and a moderately to poorly sorted texture (Fig. 2.12–14). Both groups are usually soft to medium in terms of hardness.<sup>8</sup>

When fabrics and decorative treatments are combined, the pottery from the LH IIB deposit from Trench 5Z can be subdivided into three broad groups (Tab. 1): Fine Painted, Fine Plain, and Coarse Plain ceramics. The terms ‘painted’ and ‘plain’ correspond to a large extent to the definitions provided by Oliver Dickinson for the LH I–II materials from Nichoria.<sup>9</sup> The only difference is that, in addition to unpainted pottery, in our system the word ‘plain’ also designates

<sup>8</sup> For a description of the methodology for fabric analysis, see Moody et al. 2003; Vitale et al. 2017, 255–260, chapter by J. E. Morrison and S. Vitale. Future macroscopic fabric analysis at Pylos will certainly result in further subdivisions of these two broad groups. This is especially true for coarse pottery, which appears to contain a wide range of subgroups.

<sup>9</sup> Dickinson 1992, 472.

	Vessel Count	%
Fine Painted	26	2.0%
Fine Plain	967	74.8%
Coarse Plain	300	23.2%
Total	1293	100.0%

Tab. 1: Distribution of pottery groups in the LH IIB deposit from Trench 5Z (based on the representative sample from Extension 3, Levels 13–20)

	Vessel Count	%
Fine Painted	26	2.6%
Fine Plain	967	97.4%
Total	993	100.0%

Tab. 2: Distribution of fine pottery groups in the LH IIB deposit from Trench 5Z (based on the representative sample from Extension 3, Levels 13–20)

		LH IIB*	LH IIA**	LH I***
Matt-Painted	Vessel Count	1	4	8
	%	3.8%	22.2%	44.5%
Mycenaean Lustrous Decorated	Vessel Count	24	9	6
	%	92.3%	50.0%	33.3%
Minoanising Painted	Vessel Count	–	4	4
	%	–	22.2%	22.2%
Minoan Painted Imports	Vessel Count	1	1	–
	%	3.8%	5.6%	–
Total	Vessel Count	26	18	18
	%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

\* Levels 13–20; \*\* Levels 21–23; \*\*\* Levels 24–25

Tab. 3: Distribution of Fine Painted pottery classes in the LH I, LH IIA, and LH IIB deposits from Trench 5Z (based on the representative sample from Extension 3)

those vessels, the exterior surface of which was originally entirely covered by a thin wash layer. These specimens, which roughly match Dickinson's "washy coated" category, are not particularly common and are extremely difficult to separate from one of our two main subgroups of plain pottery (see below) because of the poor preservation of vessel surfaces. For these reasons, dividing 'washy coated' from plain pottery would be, in our case, not only arbitrary for the assessment of individual sherds, but also misleading from a statistical viewpoint.

Fine Painted ceramics are uncommon in the 5Z deposit. In the sample from Extension 3, they represent 2.0% of the entire assemblage and 2.6% of the fine pottery fraction (Tabs. 1–2). Within Fine Painted ceramics, Mycenaean Lustrous Decorated pottery is the most prominent component, while other classes, such as matt-painted pottery and imported Minoan pottery appear on a limited scale (Tab. 3).

Within the Fine Plain pottery group, the most common classes are Fine Pale (FP; Fig. 2.3–7) and Fine Dark (FD; Fig. 2.8–11) ceramics (Tabs. 4–6). Besides unpainted vessels, FD ceramics also include specimens that would have been labelled as "washy coated" by Dickinson at Nichoria (see above; Fig. 2.9–11). In addition to the colour distinction, which reflects differences in both fabrics and firing conditions, FP and FD ceramics are characterised by several other discrepancies (Tab. 5).

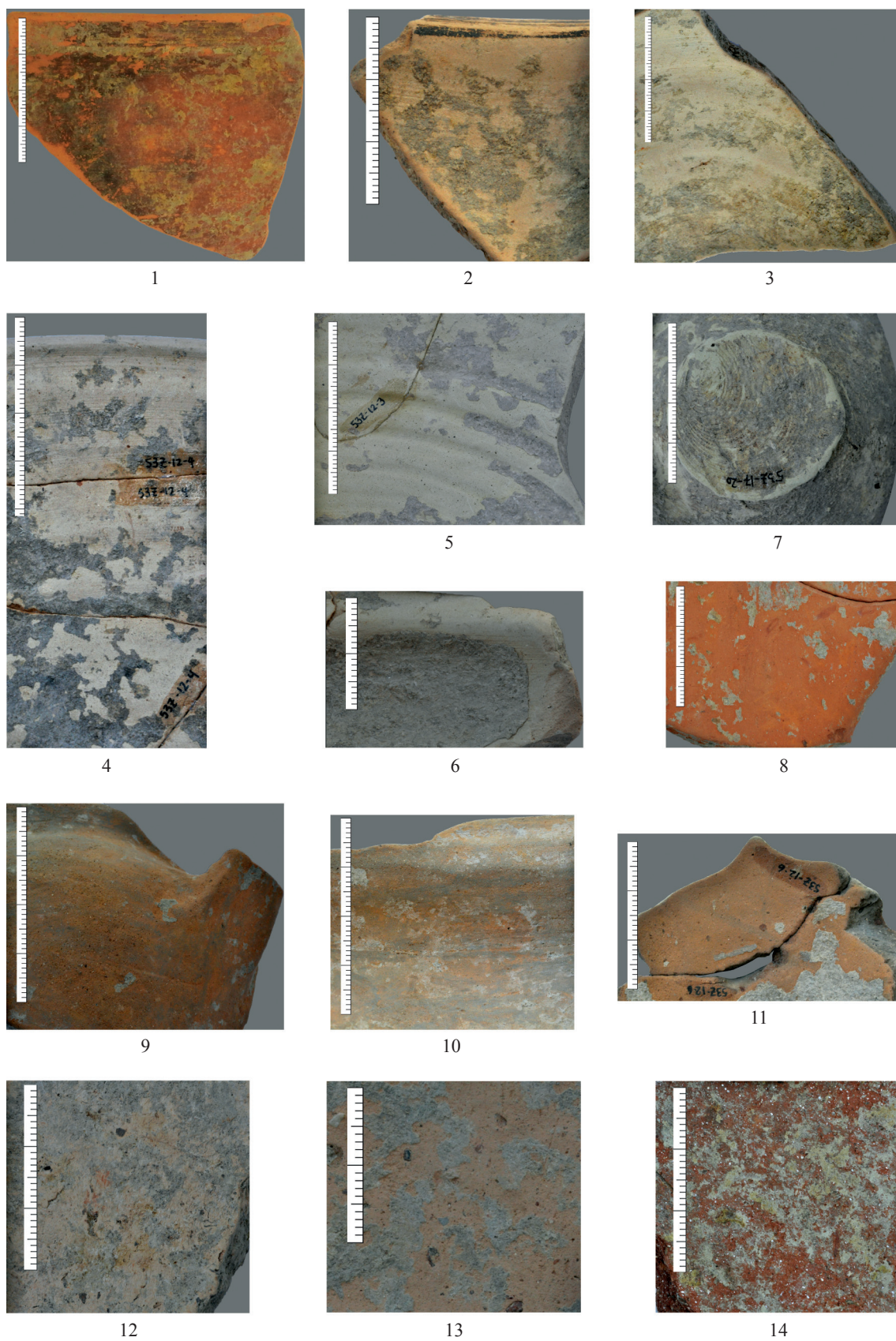


Fig. 2: Fabric and manufacturing details of the vessels from the LH IIB deposit in Trench 5Z (courtesy of the Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati)

Fine Pale	FP	Fine Plain
Fine Dark	FD	
Yellow Minyan	YM	
Yellow Slipped	YS	
Dark Burnished	DB	
Coarse Unburnished	CUB	Coarse Plain
Coarse Burnished	CB	
Coarse Red Micaceous (Possible Kytheran Imports)	CRM	

Tab. 4: Abbreviations for Fine Plain and Coarse Plain pottery classes from Pylos

	Colour Range (From Lighter to Darker Ends)		Size of Non-Plastic Inclusions	Density of Non-Plastic Inclusions	Texture	Hardness	Forming Technique Preferences	Typological Range
FP	Pink to Very Pale Brown	7.5YR 7.5/3 to 10YR 7.5/4	Fine $\leq 2$ mm	Fine to Medium: 1–10% ratio of inclusions to matrix	Well	Soft to Medium (usually harder than FD)	Coil-built and Wheel Fashioned + Wheel-Turned	Minoan + Mycenaean
	Pale Yellow to Light Grey	2.5Y 8/3 to 5Y 7.5/2		But mostly Medium-Fine: 2–5% ratio of inclusions to matrix				
FD	Light Red to Reddish Yellow	2.5YR 6.5/8 to 5YR 6.5/8 (but more orange)	Fine $\leq 2$ mm	Fine to Medium: 1–10% ratio of inclusions to matrix	Well to Moderate	Soft to Medium (usually softer than FP)	Fully Handmade + Coil-built and Wheel Fashioned + Wheel-Turned	Local + Minoan + Mycenaean
	Reddish Yellow/Strong Brown to Grey	7.5YR 5.5/6 to Gley 1 5.5/N						

Tab. 5: Diagnostic features of FP and FD pottery classes from Pylos

FP ceramics have a better texture and are harder than FD ceramics. The majority of FP vessels are coil-built and wheel-fashioned or wheel-turned (Fig. 2.3–7), while FD vessels (Fig. 2.8–11) can be fully handmade, coil-built and wheel-fashioned, or wheel-turned.<sup>10</sup> Finally, FP pottery

<sup>10</sup> For the terminology, see Courty – Roux 1995; Choleva 2012. However, for vessels showing evidence of wheel marks but no obvious traces of hand-building techniques, the authors prefer the more neutral term ‘wheel-turned’ to the term ‘wheel-thrown’. Traces of hand-building techniques may be intentionally removed by the potter. For this reason, based solely on macroscopic analysis, it is not possible to establish with certainty if the dearth of these technological marks implies that a given vase was actually ‘wheel-thrown’ or ‘coil-built and wheel-fashioned,’ although the latter possibility seems more likely.

prominently if not exclusively includes shapes of Minoan and Mycenaean origin,<sup>11</sup> while FD pottery includes shapes of Minoan and Mycenaean origin, as well as shapes that are connected with MH local traditions. A link with pre-Mycenaean local traditions also characterises the other two Fine Plain classes represented in the LH IIB deposit from Trench 5Z, i.e. Yellow Minyan (YM) and Yellow Slipped (YS) ceramics. In contrast with FD pottery, however, YM and YS ceramics are attested in very limited quantities (Tabs. 4, 6).<sup>12</sup>

Within the Coarse Plain pottery group (Tabs. 4, 7), three classes were defined: Coarse Unburnished (CUB; Fig. 2.12–13), Coarse Burnished (CB), and Coarse Red Micaceous (CRM; Fig. 2.14). CUB pottery is significantly more widespread than CB pottery. The numbers presented in this study, however, are biased by the poor preservation of vessel surfaces, a factor that significantly affects the proportions and contributes to the overrepresentation of the former over the latter. CRM pottery is an imported class (Fig. 2.14), possibly from the island of Kythera, and it is attested in a limited quantity.<sup>13</sup>

A comparison with the lower levels of Trench 5Z indicates that the LH IIB assemblage described above is characterised by four significant changes from the previous phases (Tabs. 3, 8–9). First, during LH I and LH IIA, Fine Painted pottery is respectively roughly five and three times more common than in LH IIB. Second, there is a consistent decrease in FD ceramics from LH I to LH IIB and a rapid growth of FP ceramics from LH IIA to LH IIB. Third, while matt-painted and Minoanising painted vessels were a significant component of the local assemblage during LH I and LH IIA, they either disappear or become residual at Pylos during LH IIB. Fourth, the gradual decrease in these two decorated classes is accompanied by a consistent increase in Mycenaean Lustrous Decorated pottery.

The presence of Minoanising painted and matt-painted vessels during LH I and LH IIA can be considered as a continuation of earlier components of the Pylian pottery assemblage into the early Late Bronze Age period, as both classes are represented in MH contexts at the site.<sup>14</sup> Obviously, while the former reflects Cretan cultural influence, the latter is connected to broader mainland potting traditions. In terms of forming technique, the shift from matt-painted to Mycenaean lustrous decorated pottery as the most common decorated ceramic class (Tab. 3) has similar implications as that from FD to FP in the Fine Plain fraction. In fact, while matt-painted pottery is, in the majority of cases, fully handmade, Mycenaean Lustrous Decorated pottery is mostly coil-built and wheel-fashioned or wheel-turned (Fig. 2.1–2).

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<sup>11</sup> FP pottery is the dominant class in the Pylian assemblage during the final phases of the Palace of Nestor and describes the thousands of tableware vessels stored in ‘Pantries’ 18–22 (Blegen – Rawson 1966, 119–134, 350–418). The materials from these rooms have recently been re-studied by Julie Hruby, based on an ‘indigenous’ or ‘emic’ typological approach (Hruby 2006; Hruby 2010; Hruby 2011; Hruby 2013; Hruby 2014). Hruby’s approach has great benefits for understanding the function of the assemblage from the Pantries in the wider context of Pylian ancient society. Her methodology, however, requires a large, mostly contemporaneous, and well-preserved body of materials, possibly supplemented by the evidence provided by written sources (see Hruby 2010, 197–198). These ideal contextual conditions, unfortunately, do not apply to the materials from Trench 5Z and for this reason a more traditional ‘etic’ approach is utilised in the present study.

<sup>12</sup> For pre-Mycenaean pottery traditions in the broader area of the Palace of Nestor see Stocker 2003, 360–401, figs. 15–26; Davis – Stocker 2010, 103–104; Stocker – Davis 2014, 242–243; Davis – Stocker 2015.

<sup>13</sup> Kiriati 2010 (with previous bibliography). Possible Kytheran imports manufactured in fabrics similar to that of CRM vessels have been reported from many southern Peloponnesian sites, such as Nichoria, the Menelaion, Ayios Stephanos, and Ayios Vasileios (Rutter – Rutter 1976, 58, no. 972, fig. 32; Dickinson 1992, 480, 525–527, nos. P3177, P3224, P3274, figs. 9.5, 9.7, 9.10; Zerner 2008, 206–208; Catling 2009, 438–439, no. AB81, fig. 259; Kardamaki 2017, 103–104, figs. 4.36, 7.116–118).

<sup>14</sup> Davis – Stocker 2010; Stocker – Davis 2014, 242–243; Davis – Stocker 2016, 636.

### Function and Typology

The largest component of the LH IIB ceramic assemblage from Trench 5Z consists of fine tableware (Tab. 10). Within this category, eating/drinking/mixing vessels represent 85.8% of recognised shapes from Extension 3 (Tab. 11). This exceptionally high number is partially due to the significant proportion of unidentifiable sherds caused by the poor preservation of vessel surfaces (Tab. 12). Nevertheless, it demonstrates that eating/drinking/mixing vessels were a prominent component of the original assemblage.

The most common eating/drinking shape is the goblet (Tabs. 13–14). Fine Painted goblets can be patterned (FS 254; Fig. 3.1–3), linear (FS 263/270; Fig. 3.4), or monochrome (FS 263/270; Fig. 2.1; Fig. 3.5). Attested motifs include rock pattern (FM 32; Fig. 3.1–2) and ogival canopy (FM 13; Fig. 3.3). The so-called Ephyraean goblet is absent. This fact is not surprising, as this type is currently not attested at Pylos and is generally uncommon in the southern Peloponnese, where it occurs on a low scale at Kakovatos, Iklaina, Nichoria, and the Menelaion and is altogether missing at Ayios Stephanos and Ayios Vasileios.<sup>15</sup> The majority of Fine Plain goblets (Tab. 14) are manufactured in the FP class (Fig. 3.6–9) and consist of rim-handled and high-swung-handled specimens that compare well with Mycenaean standard types (FS 263/270). These vessels occur in a wide range of dimensions, including oversized specimens (Fig. 3.7), which were presumably used for the shared consumption of alcoholic substances and/or for mixing purposes as small kraters. FD goblets are also well-represented. Some specimens are similar to Mycenaean standard types (FS 263/270; Fig. 3.10–12). One of the FD goblets from Extension 3, on the other hand, has the handle attached on the shoulder, rather than on the rim (FS 268; Fig. 3.13). This type has parallels at Nichoria, Malthi, and Iklaina and thus may reflect Messenian preferences.<sup>16</sup>

Another common drinking vessel in the LH IIB deposit from Trench 5Z is the conical cup (Tab. 14; FS 204), a shape with a long history on Minoan Crete (Fig. 4.1–7).<sup>17</sup> The conical cups from Trench 5Z occur in a variety of subtypes and dimensions, which also include oversized specimens. Of the 59 conical cups identified in the materials from Extension 3, 57 are manufactured in the FP class, while only two are classified as FD (Tab. 14).

Although significantly less common than goblets and conical cups, the occurrence of one-handled kylikes with a rounded (Fig. 4.8) or carinated (FS 267; Fig. 4.9) bowl and two-handled conical bowls is also worth mentioning (Tab. 14). One-handled kylikes are uncommon before LH IIIA1 and thus represent the most advanced feature of the LH IIB assemblage from Trench 5Z in terms of both function and style.<sup>18</sup> The two-handled conical bowl is a Pylian shape. The body profile resembles that of Mycenaean basins, but the size is intermediate between that of

<sup>15</sup> For Kakovatos, see the papers of Eder – Hadzi-Spiliopoulou, de Vreé and Huber et al., this volume. For Iklaina, see Cosmopoulos 2018, 34, pl. 65. For Nichoria, see Dickinson 1992, 482–484, 526, nos. P3235–P3236; 528, no. P3326; 532–533, nos. P3482, P3512, P3536, figs. 9.11, 9.23, pls. 9.17, 9.19, 9.40, 9.43, 9.48. For the Menelaion, see Catling 2009, 96, 102–103, 109, 121, 123, 127, 130, 133, 159, 167, 209, 344, nos. III1, VII15–16, AB7–9, 12, 14, 16, 41, NS38–39, 41, 43, NW4, PD4, I7, PH17, ST40, WE5, WN39, WS35, figs. 107, 122, 124, 135, 161, 165, 173, 178, 183, 206, 220, 254–255. For Ayios Stephanos, see RMDP, 261. For Ayios Vasileios, see Kardamaki 2017, 108; Vasilogamvrou et al., this volume.

<sup>16</sup> Valmin 1938, 310, 312, pls. 18.26, 19.63; Dickinson 1992, 478, 486, 528, nos. P3303, P3341; 530, nos. P3394–P3395, P3398; 532, nos. P3471, P3487, figs. 9.9, 9.12, 9.15, 9.19, 9.22; Cosmopoulos 2018, 23, 47, 50, 55, 57, 61, P2967, P3242, P3319, P3359, P3662, P3698, P3789, P4637, figs. 10, 20–21, 24–25, 28. Shoulder-handled goblets appear in Arne Furumark's classification as FS 268. Furumark's list, however, only includes specimens from Malthi in Messenia.

<sup>17</sup> Gillis 1990; Wiener 2011 (with previous bibliography).

<sup>18</sup> The authors would like to thank Jeremy B. Rutter for drawing their attention to the potential chronological significance of this shape. Based on the materials from the so-called Group G at Tsoungiza, Rutter has established that one-handled carinated kylikes (FS 267) can be used to distinguish between an earlier and a later stage of the LH IIB ceramic phase (Rutter 2020, 713–714). The evidence from the 5Z deposit at Pylos suggests that one-handled kylikes with a rounded body may be utilised for the same purpose. On carinated kylikes (FS 267), see also Thomas 2011b.

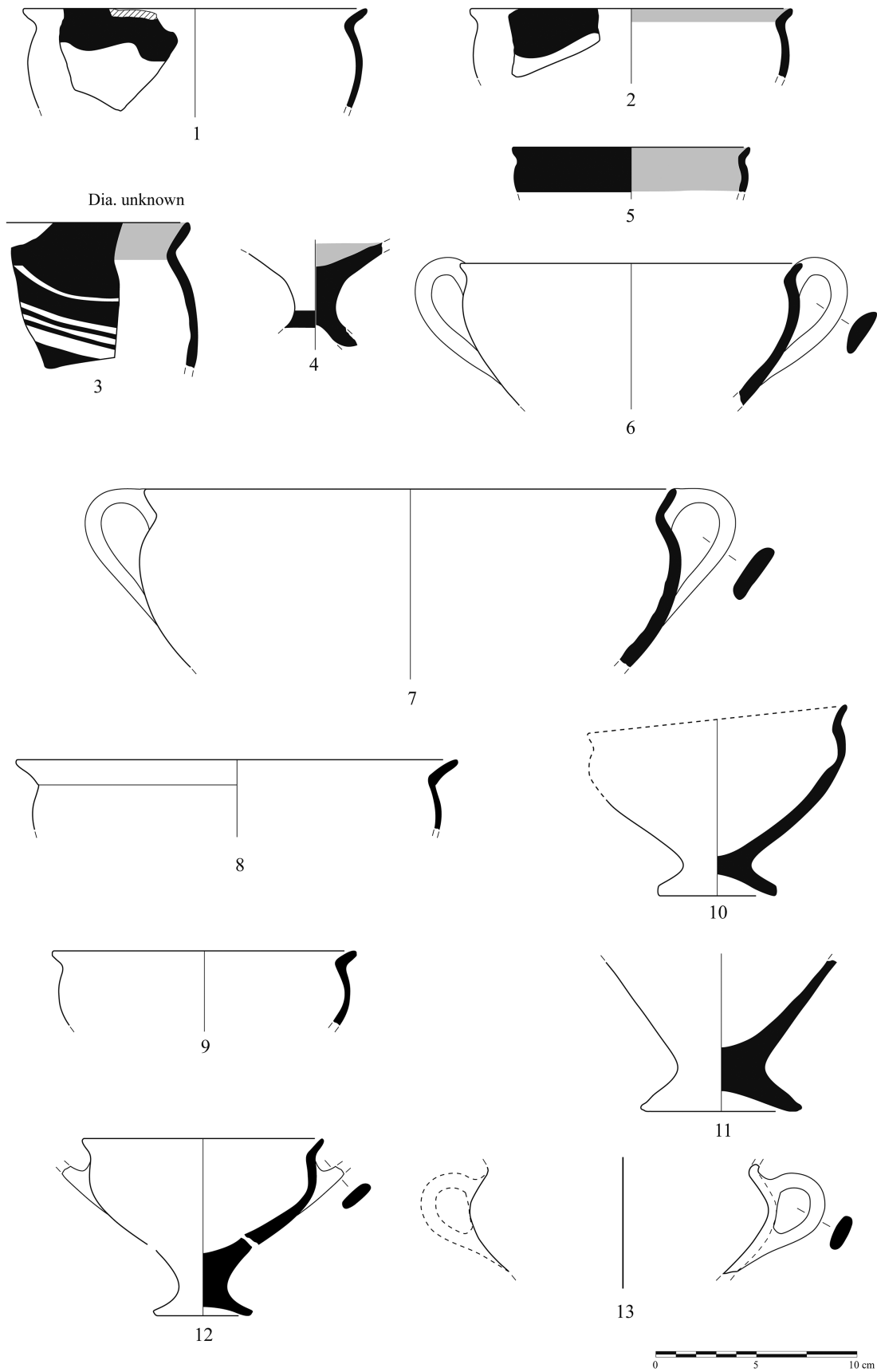


Fig. 3: Selected vessels from the LH IIB deposit in Trench 5Z (T. Ross, courtesy of the Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati)



	Vessel Count	%
FP	556	57.5%
FD	401	41.4%
YM	3	0.3%
YS	6	0.6%
Unidentified	1	0.1%
Total	967	100.0%

Tab. 6: Distribution of Fine Plain pottery classes in the LH IIB deposit from Trench 5Z (based on the representative sample from Extension 3, Levels 13–20)

	Vessel Count	%
CUB	281	93.7%
CB	18	6.0%
CRM (Possible Kytheran Imports)	1	0.3%
Total	300	100.0%

Tab. 7: Distribution of Coarse Plain pottery classes in the LH IIB deposit from Trench 5Z (based on the representative sample from Extension 3, Levels 13–20)

		LH IIB*	LH IIA**	LH I***
Fine Painted	Vessel Count	26	18	18
	%	2.6%	9.7%	11.5%
Fine Plain	Vessel Count	967	167	138
	%	97.4%	90.3%	88.5%
Total	Vessel Count	993	185	156
	%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

\* Levels 13–20; \*\* Levels 21–23; \*\*\* Levels 24–25

Tab. 8: Distribution of Fine Painted and Fine Plain pottery groups in the LH I, LH IIA, and LH IIB deposits from Trench 5Z (based on the representative sample from Extension 3)

Mycenaean basins and that of Mycenaean shallow angular bowls (FS 295). Two-handled conical bowls become more frequent at Pylos after LH IIB and are well represented in the LH IIIC Early destruction deposit from the Palace of Nestor.<sup>19</sup> Other Fine Plain drinking/eating vessels from the representative sample in Extension 3 include a saucer (FS 237), two miscellaneous cups/goblets, and 15 goblets/one-handed kylikes (FS 263/267/270). A few additional Fine Plain fragments from dippers (FS 236), basins (Fig. 4.10), and miscellaneous closed shapes may have been used respectively for ladling, mixing, and serving purposes. Finally, the function of the Fine Plain fragments assigned to miscellaneous open shapes remains uncertain.

The second largest functional component of the LH IIB deposit from Trench 5Z is represented by CUB and CB cooking pottery (Tab. 10). Identified shapes consist of cooking jugs/amphorae (FS 65/66), tripods (FS 320; Fig. 4.11–12), and miscellaneous jars (Tab. 15). Tripod cooking pots include specimens with an in-curving upper body that may represent a Messenian preference, as they also occur at Nichoria and Iklaina.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup> See Blegen – Rawson 1966, 355, Shape 1 (smaller end of the possible size range), figs. 349–350.

<sup>20</sup> See Dickinson 1992, 488; Martin 1992, 494, nos. P3637–P3638, fig. 9.35; Gulizio – Shelmerdine 2017, 34–36, figs. 4.8–10.

		LH IIB*	LH IIA**	LH I***
FP	Vessel Count	556	46	–
	%	57.5%	27.5%	–
FD	Vessel Count	401	121	126
	%	41.4%	72.5%	91.3%
YM	Vessel Count	3	–	6
	%	0.3%	–	4.3%
YS	Vessel Count	6	–	–
	%	0.6%	–	–
DB	Vessel Count	–	–	2
	%	–	–	1.4%
Minoanising Plain	Vessel Count	–	–	1
	%	–	–	0.7%
Misc. Imports	Vessel Count	–	–	3
	%	–	–	2.2%
Unidentified	Vessel Count	1	–	–
	%	0.1%	–	–
Total	Vessel Count	967	167	138
	%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

\* Levels 13–20; \*\* Levels 21–23; \*\*\* Levels 24–25

Tab. 9: Distribution of Fine Plain pottery classes in the LH I, LH IIA, and LH IIB deposits from Trench 5Z (based on the representative sample from Extension 3)

	Table-ware	Cooking	Storage	Utilitarian	Storage/Utilitarian	Ritual/Cultic	Total of Vessel Count	%
Fine Painted	25	–	1	–	–	–	26	2.0%
Fine Plain	961	–	1	3	–	2	967	74.8%
Coarse Plain	0	211	22	2	65	–	300	23.2%
Total of Vessel Count	986	211	24	5	65	2	1293	100.0%
%	76.3%	16.3%	1.9%	0.4%	5.0%	0.2%	100.0%	

Tab. 10: Distribution of functional categories in the LH IIB deposit from Trench 5Z (based on the representative sample from Extension 3, Levels 13–20)

The remaining portion of CUB, CB, and CRM ceramics from the LH IIB deposit in Trench 5Z can be assigned to storage, utilitarian, and storage/utilitarian vessels (Tabs. 7, 10, 16). Among the materials from Extension 3, identified storage shapes include pithoi (Fig. 4.13), while utilitarian vessels include a single CUB bowl. Storage/utilitarian vessels include all CUB, CB, and CRM non-cooking pottery fragments that could not be safely assigned to the storage or utilitarian function. Finally, a quantitatively small, but interesting component of the LH IIB assemblage from Trench 5Z consists of ritual/cultic vessels (Tab. 10), which usually appear in the form of diminutive goblets (Fig. 4.14). These goblets are the direct predecessors of the many miniature kylikes with high-swung handles (cf. FS 273) discovered by Blegen in the destruction layers of the Palace of Nestor.<sup>21</sup> In addition to pottery, other ritual/cultic objects from the LH IIB deposit in Trench 5Z include fragments from painted offering tables.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Blegen – Rawson 1966, 366, Shape 26, figs. 359–360. On the ritual/cultic function of diminutive kylikes, see Dabney et al. 2004, 203, 210–211; Stocker – Davis 2004, 190–191. On the ritual/cultic function of diminutive vessels in general see Vitale 2008, 231–232, pl. 41, tab. 2; Vitale 2012a, 411, pl. 95c; Vitale 2012b, 1149–1150, fig. 4, tab. 1.

<sup>22</sup> See Egan, this volume.

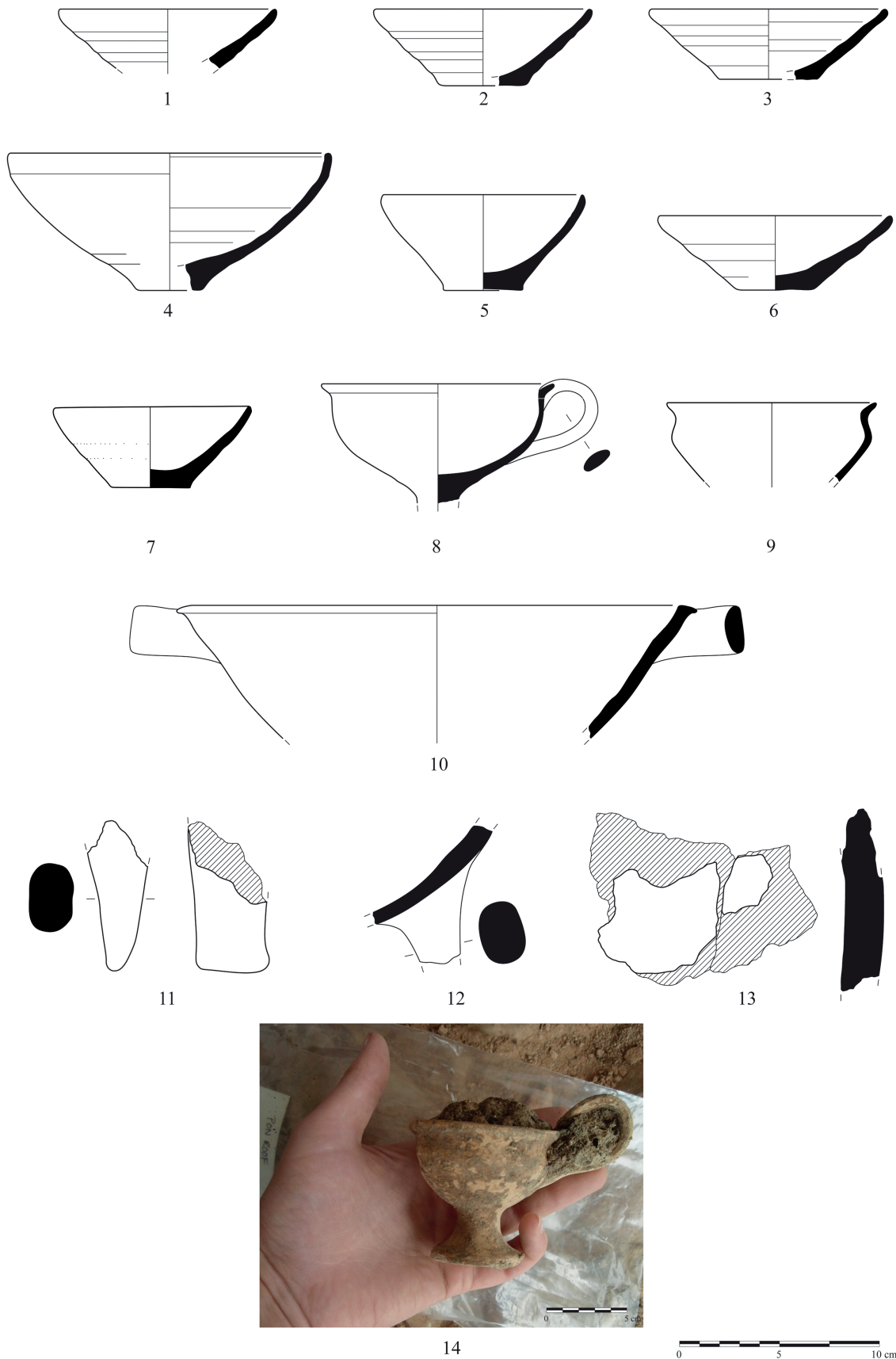


Fig. 4: Selected vessels from the LH IIB deposit in Trench 5Z (1–13: T. Ross, courtesy of the Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati; 14: courtesy of the Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati)

	Eating/Drinking/Mixing	Ladling	Serving (Misc. Closed Shapes)	Specific Function Uncertain (Misc. Open Shapes)	Total of Vessel Count	%
Fine Painted	13	–	5	6	24*	10.3%
Fine Plain	187	2	10	10	209*	89.7%
Total of Vessel Count	200	2	15	16	233*	100.0%
%	85.8%	0.9%	6.4%	6.9%	100.0%	

\* Unidentified shapes are excluded from these counts

Tab. 11: Distribution of functional subcategories in Fine Painted and Fine Plain tableware ceramics in the LH IIB deposit from Trench 5Z (based on the representative sample from Extension 3, Levels 13–20)

	Identified	Unidentified	Total of Vessel Count	%
Fine Painted	24	2	26	2.6%
Fine Plain	209	758	967	97.4%
Total of Vessel Count	233	760	993	100.0%
%	23.5%	76.5%	100.0%	

Tab. 12: Distribution of identified and unidentified shapes in Fine Painted and Fine Plain ceramics in the LH IIB deposit from Trench 5Z (based on the representative sample from Extension 3, Levels 13–20)

	Cup/Goblet	Goblet FS 254	Goblet FS 263/270	Goblet FS 263	Miscellaneous Goblets	Two-Handled Conical Bowl	Misc. Open Shapes	Misc. Closed Shapes	Total of Vessel Count	%
Ogival Canopy (FM 13)	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	4.2%
Rock Pattern (FM 32)	–	3	–	–	–	–	–	–	3	12.5%
Unidentified	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	1	4.2%
Linear	1	–	1	1	–	–	2	2	7	29.2%
Monochrome	2	–	2	–	1	1	4	2	12	50.0%
Total of Vessel Count	3	4	3	1	1	1	6	5	24	100.0%
%	12.5%	16.7%	12.5%	4.2%	4.2%	4.2%	25.0%	20.8%	100.0%	
		37.6%								
Monochrome Interior	2	–	3	1	1	1	4	–	12	50.0%

\* One unidentified tableware shape is excluded from these counts

Tab. 13: Correlation between Fine Painted tableware shapes and decorative motifs in the LH IIB deposit from Trench 5Z (based on the representative sample from Extension 3, Levels 13–20)



	Cooking Jug/Amphora FS 65/6	Tripod Cooking Pot FS 320	Misc. Cooking Jars	Total of Vessel Count	%
Rims	–	2	–	2	0.9%
Handles	2	–	9	11	5.2%
Bases	–	–	3	3	1.4%
Legs	–	2	–	2	0.9%
Body Sherds	–	–	193	193	91.5%
Total	2	4	205	211	100.0%
%	0.9%	1.9%	97.2%	100.0%	
CUB	2	4	191	197	93.4%
CB	–	–	14	14	6.6%
Total of Vessel Count	2	4	205	211	100.0%

Tab. 15: Distribution of Coarse Plain cooking pottery shapes in the LH IIB deposit from Trench 5Z (based on the representative sample from Extension 3, Levels 13–20)

	Prithos	Utilitarian Bowl	Misc. Storage/ Utilitarian Pots	Total of Vessel Count	%
Rims	1	–	–	1	1.1%
Handles	–	–	1	1	1.1%
Bases	1	–	1	2	2.3%
Body Sherds	20	1	63	84	95.5%
Total	22	1	65	88	100.0%
%	25.0%	1.1%	73.9%	100.0%	
CUB	20	1	63	84	95.5%
CB	2	–	2	4	4.5%
Total of Vessel Count	22	1	65	88	100.0%

\* One unidentified CRM utilitarian shape is excluded from these counts

Tab. 16: Distribution of Coarse Plain storage, utilitarian, and storage/utilitarian shapes in the LH IIB deposit from Trench 5Z (based on the representative sample from extension 3, Levels 13–20)

This brief typological and functional analysis allows a first chronological and contextual evaluation of the 5Z deposit within the broader context of Greek mainland regional and supra-regional cultural trajectories. As far as chronology is concerned, the occurrence of one-handled kylikes with a rounded or carinated body (Fig. 4.8–9) suggests that the deposit from Trench 5Z should be assigned to a late stage of LH IIB. More specifically, the pottery from Trench 5Z likely post-dates relevant materials from Nichoria (latest LH II deposits), Asine (Stratum 3 in Room F), and Korakou (Levels V–VII of the East Alley stratification), where this shape is absent.<sup>23</sup> The same advanced stage of LH IIB as that represented in Trench 5Z at Pylos may be identified at the Mene-laion (Post Hole Deposit in Grid H25 and construction phases of Mansion 1 and Aetos Building B), Tiryns (Lower Town, House D1), Tsoungiza (Group G), Ayia Irini (end of Period VIIc), and possibly Ayios Vasileios (Trench I18α/β, final use of Floor 5, construction of Walls 42 and 71, and construction of Floor 4).<sup>24</sup>

As far as context is concerned, the LH IIB deposit from Trench 5Z is characterised by three main functional features. These include the prominence of fine tableware eating and drinking vessels, the presence of oversized specimens for shared consumption of food and drink, and the occurrence of ritual/cultic vases. Two additional elements, concerning decorative treatments and shape distribution, can also shed light on the function of the LH IIB deposit from Trench 5Z. The first one is the extraordinarily high proportion of plain and simply decorated vessels (Tabs. 1, 8, 13), with linear and monochrome painting making up almost 80% of the Fine Painted sample from Extension 3 (Tab. 13). The second element is the relatively narrow range of shapes represented (Tabs. 13–16).

Taken together, the abovementioned characteristics of the 5Z deposit match five of the six criteria considered indicative of feasting assemblages according to Mary Dabney, Paul Halstead, and Patrick M. Thomas.<sup>25</sup> The connection with communal eating and drinking activities is also supported by the presence of mendable vessels.<sup>26</sup> This feature may suggest that some of the pottery from the LH IIB deposit was discarded in a single filling event of the pit or natural depression located in Trench 5Z, shortly after a feasting episode.

S. V.

### Discussion and Concluding Remarks

The full publication of the material from Trench 5Z will certainly provide additional information about this context and contribute to a refined comprehension of its overall significance. Nevertheless, the data presented in this paper already have some important implications for our understanding of pottery developments and cultural trajectories at Pylos during the early Late Bronze Age period.

The LH IIB deposit from Trench 5Z is characterised by the simultaneous occurrence of shapes connected to Mycenaean, Messenian, and Minoan potting traditions. These components are not equally distributed within the assemblage, but all played an important part in the elaboration of

<sup>23</sup> Dickinson 1972, 106–112, pls. 32–34; Frizell 1980, 60, 65, nos. 233–253, figs. 11–12, pl. 4; Dickinson 1992, 469–473, 480–488, 525–534, figs. 9.7–9.23.

<sup>24</sup> Gercke et al. 1975, 18–26, nos. 43–51, fig. 7, pls. 24–29; Hershenson 1998, 163–164; Catling 2009, 27–32, 120–122, 204–207, nos. N23, 25, PH18–38, figs. 125, 161–162, pl. 81d–e; Schofield 2011, 82, 95–96, 163–165, 168, 185–187, nos. 1074–1095, 2515–2533, 2536–2540, pls. 58, 82–83; Kardamaki 2017, 84–104, figs. 2–5, 6.72–82. This subdivision conforms to the second and third subphases of LH IIB recognised by Rutter during the study of relevant materials from Tsoungiza (see Rutter 2020, 712–716), but includes several additions to Rutter's original list of sites.

<sup>25</sup> Dabney et al. 2004, 203. See also Thomas 2011a. The only feasting criterion not matched by the LH IIB deposit in Trench 5Z is a high proportion of closed shapes, including vessels for food preparation. In the sample from Extension 3, cooking pottery represents 16.3% of the total assemblage, a figure that corresponds to the normal incidence of this class in standard Mycenaean settlement deposits (see Thomas 2005, 457–460, tab. 2; Thomas 2011a, 183–186, tab. 2; Vitale 2013, 124, tab. 2).

<sup>26</sup> Dabney et al. 2004, 204–205.

the local identity. The representative sample from Extension 3 indicates that the Mycenaean element was largely prevalent in the ceramic record. This fact is particularly evident in the drinking/eating vessel repertoire, as demonstrated by the prominence of patterned, linear, and monochrome goblets (FS 254/263/270) in the Fine Painted fraction and the combined widespread incidence of FP goblets (FS 263/270) and one-handled kylikes (FS 267) in the Fine Plain fraction (Tabs. 3, 13–14). The Mycenaean repertoire of Pylos exhibits some interesting peculiarities, such as the occurrence of FP two-handled conical bowls and the absence of the Ephyraean goblet (FS 254). The former may reflect site-specific trends, while the latter may follow regional preferences with parallels at other major sites in the southern Peloponnese.

A comparison between the LH IIB deposit and the earlier levels from Trench 5Z indicates that the prominence of the Mycenaean cultural component was not a sudden phenomenon, but rather the result of a linear process, which characterised pottery developments at Pylos during the early Late Bronze Age period. Besides the growth of the Mycenaean element, this trend implied a gradual decrease in the classes connected to MH local potting traditions, the majority of which either disappeared or became residual during LH IIB. The only exception to this tendency is represented by FD pottery, which still constituted an important component of the assemblage of Pylos during this phase (41.4% in the representative sample from Extension 3).

In addition to FD pottery, the continuation in limited quantities of pre-Mycenaean Messenian potting traditions during LH IIB is also demonstrated by the presence of specific vessel types, such as the shoulder-handled goblet (FS 268) and the tripod with in-curving upper body (FS 320) that have good parallels at Malthi, Nichoria, and Iklaina.

The presence of conical cups and Minoan imported pottery in the deposit from Trench 5Z demonstrates the occurrence of elements of Cretan origin in the pottery assemblage at Pylos during the final stages of LH IIB. Although these features are not prominent in the ceramic record, the importance of the Minoan component in the gradual formation processes of Mycenaean Pylos should not be overlooked.<sup>27</sup> In addition to the impact of Minoan and Minoanising pottery productions, throughout the early Late Bronze Age period, Cretan features played a significant role in the site's architecture and precious objects of possible Cretan manufacture formed an important part of the material assemblage of Pylos.<sup>28</sup>

Previous studies have suggested that the formation of a Mycenaean culture is “the result of a process, whereby specific regional traditions achieved supra-regional prominence and were gradually elevated to a status as the dominant styles” by the political elite.<sup>29</sup> The evidence from the 5Z deposit may indicate that at Pylos the process of Mycenaeanisation of the local ceramic assemblage came to fruition during the final stages of LH IIB through the cultural synthesis of a diverse range of potting traditions.

Feasting has been regarded as a decisive factor for the development, display, and endorsement of Mycenaean cultural practices in the social arenas of early Late Bronze Age Greece.<sup>30</sup> In this respect, the possibility that the LH IIB deposit from Trench 5Z derives from communal eating and drinking activities is fascinating. This hypothesis, currently based on the typological and functional characteristics of the ceramic assemblage, awaits further support from other components of the study of this context, such as the results of microbotanical residue analysis of vessels and the examination of zooarchaeological remains.

It is widely accepted that the authorities in control of the LH IIIB–LH IIIC Early Mycenaean Palace of Nestor sponsored large-scale feasting events on a regular basis and feasting has been understood as a major political institution in the Pylian kingdom.<sup>31</sup> These ceremonies had different

<sup>27</sup> See Rutter 2005, 22–28; Davis 2010, 682–683.

<sup>28</sup> Davis – Stocker 2015; Davis – Stocker 2016; Stocker – Davis 2017; Nelson 2017, 349–366; Davis – Stocker 2018.

<sup>29</sup> Davis – Bennet 1999, 114.

<sup>30</sup> Wright 2004, 136.

<sup>31</sup> Graham 1967; Säflund 1980; McCallum 1987; Isaakidou et al. 2002; Bendall 2004; Stocker – Davis 2004; Halstead – Isaakidou 2004; Wright 2004; Hruby 2006; Hruby 2008; Lis 2008a; Lis 2008b.



levels of social inclusion and exclusion of guests, which were promoted through the use and manipulation of natural landscapes and built spaces. If corroborated through future research, the feasting function of the 5Z deposit raises the possibility that LH IIB may have been not only the formative stage of the ceramic repertoire of Mycenaean Pylos, but also a key phase for the elaboration and performance of those feasting practices, which constitute a distinctive feature of the Pylian social space during the Palatial period.

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## Illustrations

Fig. 1: Excavation grid showing the location of Trench 5Z and all extensions (D. Nenova, courtesy of the Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati)

Fig. 2: Fabric and manufacturing details of the vessels from the LH IIB deposit in Trench 5Z (courtesy of the Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati)

Fig. 3: Selected vessels from the LH IIB deposit in Trench 5Z (T. Ross, courtesy of the Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati)

Fig. 4: Selected vessels from the LH IIB deposit in Trench 5Z (1–13: T. Ross, courtesy of the Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati; 14: courtesy of the Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati)

## Tables

Tab. 1: Distribution of pottery groups in the LH IIB deposit from Trench 5Z (based on the representative sample from Extension 3, Levels 13–20)

Tab. 2: Distribution of fine pottery groups in the LH IIB deposit from Trench 5Z (based on the representative sample from Extension 3, Levels 13–20)

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Tab. 6: Distribution of Fine Plain pottery classes in the LH IIB deposit from Trench 5Z (based on the representative sample from Extension 3, Levels 13–20)

Tab. 7: Distribution of Coarse Plain pottery classes in the LH IIB deposit from Trench 5Z (based on the representative sample from Extension 3, Levels 13–20)

Tab. 8: Distribution of Fine Painted and Fine Plain pottery groups in the LH I, LH IIA, and LH IIB deposits from Trench 5Z (based on the representative sample from Extension 3)

Tab. 9: Distribution of Fine Plain pottery classes in the LH I, LH IIA, and LH IIB deposits from Trench 5Z (based on the representative sample from Extension 3)

Tab. 10: Distribution of functional categories in the LH IIB deposit from Trench 5Z (based on the representative sample from Extension 3, Levels 13–20)

Tab. 11: Distribution of functional subcategories in Fine Painted and Fine Plain tableware ceramics in the LH IIB deposit from Trench 5Z (based on the representative sample from Extension 3, Levels 13–20)

Tab. 12: Distribution of identified and unidentified shapes in Fine Painted and Fine Plain ceramics in the LH IIB deposit from Trench 5Z (based on the representative sample from Extension 3, Levels 13–20)

Tab. 13: Correlation between Fine Painted tableware shapes and decorative motifs in the LH IIB deposit from Trench 5Z (based on the representative sample from Extension 3, Levels 13–20)

Tab. 14: Distribution of Fine Plain tableware shapes in the LH IIB deposit from Trench 5Z (based on the representative sample from Extension 3, Levels 13–20)

Tab. 15: Distribution of Coarse Plain cooking pottery shapes in the LH IIB deposit from Trench 5Z (based on the representative sample from Extension 3, Levels 13–20)

Tab. 16: Distribution of Coarse Plain storage, utilitarian, and storage/utilitarian shapes in the LH IIB deposit from Trench 5Z (based on the representative sample from extension 3, Levels 13–20)