FROM THE WEST CEMETERY AT ISTHMIA

(Plates 81–87)

THE good Solinus noted that the Isthmian festival, interrupted by Kypselos, was resumed by the Corinthians in what transposes to 580 B.C.: hoc spectaculum per Cypselum tyrannum intermissum Corinthis olympiade quadragesima nona solemnitati pristinae reddiderunt (Solinus, VII, 14; cf. R.E., s.v. Isthmia, 2248, 52 ff., and Eusebius [Schöne], II, pp. 94-95). For Kypselos we have the magnificent perirhanterion discovered by Oscar Broneer in 1958.¹ For the Corinthians we have the earliest burials in the West Cemetery which served the sanctuary community of the period. The temple of Poseidon lies at the east end of the village of Kyras Vrysi (Fig. 1), the Cemetery at the west end where the main street branches, one fork making for Ancient Corinth via Hexamilia, the other for the National Road which it attains at the point where, about midway between the Corinthian Canal and the new city of Corinth, that increasingly busy artery cuts the Hexamilion, the wall of late Antiquity which ran across the Isthmus from Gulf to Gulf. Evidence for the earliest burials in this Cemetery is the group of fragments of an Attic komast cup by the KY Painter (580-570 B.C.) found in the summer of 1967 by workmen digging a ditch for a water line.² This water-line ditch led in the late summer of 1967 to a rescue operation in which both writers participated, and that to a large-scale excavation in the spring of 1968.³ In all some 119 burials have been uncovered. Most were burials of the sixth and fifth centuries B.C., a few of the fourth, nothing later.

For the consideration of our friend we have selected a group of vases associated with Grave I-37, which seems to date in the second quarter of the sixth century.

Grave I-37 (Fig. 2, Pl. 81). A sarcophagus burial with remains of stucco on the rim. Orientation approximately east-west. Inner dimensions: L. 1.74, W. 0.53, H. 0.42, Th. wall 0.075.⁴

The cover-slab was in place, but badly cracked, allowing fill and sherds to sift through into the sarcophagus. Near the north corner of the west end of the cover a

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² Ἀρχ. Δελτ., XXIII, 1968, Χρονικά, pp. 142-143.
³ Ἀρχ. Δελτ., loc. cit.; idem, XXIV, 1969, Χρονικά, p. 119, there called Lambrou Cemetery—
a name now abandoned.
⁴ All dimensions are metric; the m. is everywhere omitted. For drawings we are grateful to
the following: for Figure 1 to E. Papanis and David C. Wilson; for Figure 2 to William B.
Dinsmoor, Jr., and to John C. Garner, Jr.; for Figure 3 to Diane Peck; and for Figures 4 and 5
to Jean Carpenter. Without the efficient help of Jeanne Marty Peppers we should hardly have been
able to prepare this study in time. To her too our thanks are due.
Fig. 2. West Cemetery, Sections I and II.
piece in the shape of a shallow V was missing, but the slab was otherwise complete. No skeleton was found.

Resting on the broken cover-slab were fragments of a considerable number of vases, apparently crushed in situ (Pl. 82, a). The fifteen restored vases from this location included four pyxides, six skyphoi, one kohon, two broad-bottomed oinochoai and two banded kylikes of komast shape. Against the south side of the cover-slab and slightly below the level of its top was another small deposit of vases, all fragmentary, including three skyphoi and one pyxis (with its lid). Of these only the pyxis (No. 11) was sufficiently complete to be mended and restored.

Immediately north of the west end of the sarcophagus, evidently in situ, stood a large broad-bottomed trefoil oinochoe with figured decoration, broken, but complete (with its lid), the lip just below the level of the top of the cover-slab (Pl. 82, b).

Inside the grave, at its west end (Pl. 83, a), were two banded kylikes of komast shape and one tripod pyxis (Pl. 83, b). One kylix was intact, the other slightly chipped at the rim. The pyxis was cracked, but complete.

The grave does not appear to have been robbed, or interfered with in any way. The only opening in the cover-slab which could conceivably allow a probe was the shallow V-shaped break at the west end, but the vases found inside the sarcophagus lay immediately below this and were undisturbed. That the cover-slab, though cracked, had not been moved was apparent from the presence in situ of the vases originally placed there. These were squashed either at the time of burial or later, being insufficiently protected by the shallow fill above, but the coherent position of their fragments is sufficient evidence that they are in fact in situ.

Both the large oinochoe set close against the northwest corner of Grave I-37 and also the vases resting immediately on the cover-slab are outside offerings placed at the tomb. With the latter belong the fragmentary vases found against the sarcophagus' south side. They were clearly not in situ when found, but originally stood with the others on the top of the slab, perhaps too near the edge. While the sarcophagus was being covered with earth, they were knocked off by the falling fill and broken, the fragments being pressed down and against the side wall. Since these outside offerings were in place when the tomb was covered, they must of course be considered as forming one group with the vases placed inside the tomb itself.

CATALOGUE

SKYPHOI

All are Corinthian. All were found outside the grave on the cover-slab under a thin fill and, like the other vases found in the position, they are badly broken and weathered. Nos. 1, 2, and 3

5 For outside offerings in the very similar North Cemetery at Corinth see Hazel Palmer, *Corinth, XIII, The North Cemetery*, Princeton, 1964, p. 85. Our indebtedness to Miss Palmer in what follows will be obvious. We join C. W. J. and Mary Eliot (*Hesperia, XXXVII, 1968*, p. 345, note 2) in expressing our admiration and thankfulness for her excellent work.
are identical in size and similar in decoration; they (and No. 4) are of pinkish buff clay, well made, but with relatively thick walls. Nos. 5 and 6 are of thinner fabric and of different clay (5, a yellowish buff; 6, a greenish white).

1. IPG-68-117. Black-glazed skyphos. Pl. 84.
   H. 0.064, D. 0.10, D. of foot 0.06. Black glaze (in part reddish brown) inside and out. On exterior two stripes below handles and two above reserved band at base, both sets overrun by background black. Outer side of foot black and brownish, inner side red. Black circle on bottom.
   Broken and mended; one handle and part of one side restored in plaster.

   H. 0.066, D. 0.10, D. of foot 0.058. Black glaze (in part reddish brown) inside and out. On outside are two stripes below handles and two above reserved band at base, both sets overrun by background black. Outside of foot black and brownish, inner side red. On bottom, three concentric circles, all black.
   Mended, handles and two fragments of body missing.

   H. 0.065, D. 0.098, D. of foot 0.06. Black glaze (in part reddish brown) inside and out. Two stripes below handles and two above reserved band at base, both sets overrun by background black. A great part of the lowest stripe is red, presumably the intended color for all. Outside of foot black and brownish, inner side red. On bottom, three concentric circles, all black.
   Mended with missing fragments of rim restored in plaster.

4. IPG-68-103. Black-glazed skyphos with rays. Pl. 84.
   H. 0.067, D. 0.104, D. of foot 0.06. Black glaze (in part reddish and brownish) inside and out. Outside, two stripes below handles and two above ray-zone at base, both sets overrun by background black. Small traces of red on upper pair. Outer side of foot black and brownish, inner side red. On bottom, three concentric circles, all black.
   Mended with one handle and part of one side restored in plaster.

5. IPG-68-194. Black-glazed skyphos with rays. Pl. 84.
   H. 0.08, D. 0.114, D. of foot 0.06. Badly worn black glaze inside and out. On exterior carelessly applied red stripe at top of ray-zone (rays reddish brown). Outside of foot black, inside reserved. On bottom at least two concentric circles, reddish.
   Mended with part of one handle and parts of body restored in plaster.
   Fragments of a twin (IPG-68-271) to this skyphos were among the pieces in the fill beside the south side of the grave (see p. 404, above).

The preceding skyphoi, in their proportions and in what remains of their decoration, are like those of group ii in Miss Palmer's classification (Corinth, XIII, pp. 106-108 and fig. 11), which are there dated in the second quarter of the sixth century.

6. IPG-68-123. Skyphos with figured decoration. Pl. 84.
   H. 0.071, D. 0.103, D. of foot 0.049. Glaze on interior black to reddish, badly worn. On the rim, faint traces of a frieze of vertical stripes. Around the body, an animal frieze with two framing stripes above and two below. Rays at base. Outside of foot black, traces of red on inner side; bottom reserved, with two concentric circles in black.
   In the animal frieze there is use of incision.
   The creatures themselves have all but vanished. One, at least, seems to have been a sphinx.
   Mended, part of the handle and about half the rim restored in plaster.
The elements of the decoration are like those of *Corinth*, XIII, p. 176, 147-2, pl. 83, from a grave of late Middle Corinthian date. The state of preservation of No. 6 makes closer comparison impossible.

In the fill beside the grave (see p. 404, above) were found pieces of two skyphoi (IPG-68-272) making a trio with No. 6. Both skyphoi are identical in fabric with No. 6, and fragments preserving parts of the decoration show the same rays, the same proportion of pattern to frieze, and in the frieze the same combination of silhouette and incision.

**Pyxides**

7. IPG-68-125. Tripod pyxis with pattern decoration.  
Pl. 85.

H. 0.057, H. with lid 0.09, D. 0.095. Buff clay. Projecting rim, with two fine grooves. Lid rising gently to a conical knob, concave on top. Reddish brown band below rim outside, all around bowl; sides of bowl plain. Above each foot a reserved panel framed in vertical zigzags between pairs of vertical lines (in one instance the zigzag is replaced by a herringbone). On each foot a horizontal dotted band between two other horizontals.

Lid: fragments of lid restored. Groups of concentric circles: at periphery four brown stripes, in middle zone a red band framed by brown stripes, towards handle a single and wider brown stripe. Reddish brown on sides of knob, band on top, with reserved center.

Both pyxis and lid broken and mended; small parts of both are missing, in the latter restored in plaster.

For tripod pyxides see *Corinth*, XIII, p. 116. No. 7 is close in shape and syntax of decoration to 173-3, presumably early in the second quarter of the sixth century (*ibid.*, pp. 191-192, pl. 27).

8. IPG-68-101. Tripod pyxis (no lid), white style.  
Pl. 85.

H. 0.048, D. 0.079. Buff clay. Wide, slightly projecting molded rim. Black glaze on rim inside and out. Trace of one black band around the bowl above start of supports and of two horizontal bands on the feet. Traces of black on vertical sides of feet.

Unbroken.

Pl. 85.

H. 0.049, D. 0.096. Very light clay with greenish tinge, smooth texture. Box lower and wider than the boxes of Nos. 7 and 8 above. The rim is thick and molded. Traces of black glaze on upper edge and outside of rim; horizontal band around body below rim. Coming down from this to the feet, vertical black bands framing reserved panels on the supports which are apparently bounded at the bottom by dotted bands in black between black stripes, all very much abraded. Traces of black on vertical sides of feet.

Broken and mended, but complete.

This pyxis was one of the three vases found inside the tomb, where it had evidently been placed without a lid. It is very similar to *Corinth*, XIII, p. 186, 159-13, pl. 24, of the first quarter of the sixth century.

Pl. 85.

H. (with lid) 0.103, D. 0.115, D. of foot 0.072, D. of lid 0.075. Reddish buff clay; rather rough surface texture. Lid flat, with squat, conical, convex-topped knob. Band of red glaze on top surface of rim. Shoulder: zone of red tongues with two red stripes above and two below. Lower part of body: a wide band of solid red with one red stripe above and one below. Exterior of foot glazed. Underside: red band around inside of foot, red circle on bottom.

Lid: red on and around knob. Around perimeter, zone of red tongues between two pairs of concentric rings (as on shoulder).

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Mended, one-third to one-half missing.
The shape is like that of *Corinth*, XIII, p. 181, 156-11, pl. 20, from a Middle Corinthian grave. The decoration of No. 10 is simpler.
For pyxides with convex sides see *ibid.*, pp. 115-116.

**FIG. 3. Grave I-37, No. 12. Scale 1:2.**

H. (with lid) 0.11, D. 0.147, D. of foot 0.087, D. of lid 0.106. Very light greenish gray clay, smooth surface texture. Lid almost flat, rising very slightly toward the center to a round, very flat, button handle (D. 0.031). Flat rim with traces of red glaze on the top surface. On shoulder: a zone of fine tongues, and below it a band of dots between two thick purple stripes. Lower part of body: a wide (0.014) band of dark color with four lines above it (the second and the fourth are purple) and four below (the first and third are purple). A line of glaze above the foot. Glaze on foot possibly purple. Underside: glaze on inside of foot; zone of neat perpendicular squiggles, ringed in its turn by a dotted band between tooled framing lines. Dog-tooth decoration on edge.
Mended, some parts restored in plaster.

12. IPG-68-207. Pattern pyxis with convex sides (with handles?), and fragmentary lid (not photographed). Fig. 3, Pl. 85.
H. (without lid) 0.136, D. 0.15, D. of foot 0.101, D. of lip 0.075. Reddish buff clay. The foot unusually high and flared. The mouth unusually narrow for this shape, with a high lip (0.014). Only four fragments of the lid...
were recovered. It fitted over the lip of the vase and was slightly domed (for a partial parallel cf. *Corinth*, XIII, pl. 23, 157-p, where the profile of the lid is a continuous curve between the sides and top while ours displays an angled articulation). The knob was not preserved. Wide parts of the shoulder are missing and it is possible that there were two handles set perpendicularly to the shoulder zone (as on *Corinth*, XIII, pl. 23, 157-p, above; compare also pl. 33, 224-6). Lip: black to brownish red inside and outside. Shoulder: a band of tongues, black preserved at their centers; below it a double-dotted band with two horizontal bands above and two below. Lower body: a wide (0.01-0.015) band of black glaze and just below it at the base a zone of pointed rays. Foot brownish red, with traces of black. Underside: plain.

The fabric and texture are excellent, but the pattern-work is less precise than that of the preceding vase.

Broken and mended; parts of body, rim, and foot restored in plaster.

**Fig. 4. Grave I-37, No. 14. Scale 1:2.**

**KYLIKES**

All four are Attic black-glazed cups of komast shape with banded decoration, similar to a series found in the North Cemetery in Corinth in graves dating from the second quarter of the sixth century and the beginning of the third quarter (*Corinth*, XIII, pp. 156-158: grave 199-1, pl. 27 and fig. 20; grave 200-2, pl. 31; grave 201-2, 201-3, pl. 31; grave 211-1, pl. 27; grave 213-5, pl. 32). Cups in the same style found at Athens are similarly dated (*The Athenian Agora, XII, Black and Plain Pottery*, Princeton, 1970, pp. 88-89, class of Athens 1104; nos. 378 to 383, pl. 18).

13. IPG-68-90. Pl. 86.

H. 0.075, D. 0.157, H. of foot 0.015, D. of foot 0.054. Interior: black with narrow reserved band below rim, which is black. Exterior: reserved lip, black stripe at articulation of lip and body, reserved handle-zone, body black with narrow reserved band part way down, exterior of foot black with reserved edge. Underside of foot: reserved except for black circle on inner edge of resting surface of foot and black nipple on underside of bowl.

Unbroken except for a chip out of rim restored partially in plaster.

14. IPG-68-91. Fig. 4, Pl. 86.

H. 0.072, D. 0.15 m., H. of foot 0.015, D. of foot 0.06. Interior, exterior, and underside: same as the above.

Unbroken.

Both of these cups were found inside the sarcophagus of Grave I-37, together with the Corinthian pyxis No. 9. Both cups are in good condition and of excellent quality. The lips are narrow and sharply offset, the handles are nearly horizontal, the bowls are deep and rounded, and the feet are low, flaring sharply from a narrow neck. Closely parallel in shape and
decoration is a kylix described by Miss Palmer as “a late banded cup” (grave 202-2) found together with “a fairly early little master” (grave 202-3). That these two Attic cups plus one Corinthian piece (a group ii skyphos) comprised the offerings inside the sarcophagus of grave 202 is again a similarity with the burial in I-37. Corinth grave 202 is dated “late second quarter to mid sixth century.”

15. IPG-68-188.  
Fig. 5, Pl. 86.
H. 0.094, D. 0.195, H. of foot 0.025, D. of foot 0.077. Like No. 13 except no reserved band on interior, edge of rim reserved, inner side of foot black, and no black nipple on underside of bowl which is reserved.

Broken and mended with parts restored in plaster.

This cup is considerably larger than Nos. 13 and 14, and differs from them in having a proportionately shallower, less rounded bowl, a wider lip, handles set slightly lower and at more of an angle to the bowl, and a higher, almost funnel-like foot painted black on the inner side. The distinctions in proportion are slight (see profile, Fig. 5), but the treatment of the foot sets this cup apart from Nos. 13 and 14 above and from No. 16 below.

Pl. 86.
H. 0.066, D. (max.) 0.162, H. of foot 0.01-0.014, D. of foot 0.052. Interior, exterior, and underside same as No. 13, which it closely resembles in size and profile, though the bowl of No. 16 is a little flatter.
Mended and partially restored in plaster, part of lip missing.
Rather inferior in quality to the rest of the group, with handles asymmetrically positioned, a thin glaze, and a roughly finished underside.

BROAD-BOTTOMED TREFOIL OINOCHOAI

Pl. 87.
H. 0.095, H. (with handle) 0.126, D. 0.095. Reddish buff clay. Overall glaze (mostly fired red), except for a narrow reserved band just above the base the underside of which is reserved. Glaze on inside of lip. Red band at lip of lid, inside and out, rest reserved. Both body and lip have small irregular patches of black. Tooling at top of neck where it meets the lip. Incised tongues on shoulder.
Broken and mended with about one-half of the body and most of the base restored in plaster.

18. IPG-68-204. Small oinochoe in white style.  
Pl. 87.
H. 0.10, H. (with handle restored) 0.14, D. 0.105. Very light greenish gray clay. Black glaze on neck, lip (inside and out), and handles (both sides), and lid. Body reserved, with band of four stripes around the shoulder below

*Corinth, XIII, pp. 158 and 199, pl. 31, 202-2, 3, and 1.
handle (topmost red, second black, two lowermost red) and two solid bands around base (the top band is black, the lower red).

Broken and mended with top of handle and most of one side restored in plaster.

The above were found on top of the cover-slab of Grave I-37 among the outside offerings at the tomb. They are small, but not miniatures. Compare Corinth, XIII, p. 109, and p. 176, 147-7, pl. 21 (late Middle Corinthian); p. 194, 180-4, pl. 27 (early second quarter of sixth century); and p. 196, 188-4, pl. 29 (second quarter of sixth century).

19. IPG-68-164. Large oinochoe with figured decoration. Pl. 87.

H. 0.16, H. with handle 0.197, D. 0.165, Max. W. of lid 0.09. Pale buff clay. Black glaze worn in many places and almost everywhere partially fired to a reddish brown. Lid has a glazed band at lip inside and out, elsewhere reserved except for top of knob which is black. Neck, lip (interior and exterior), and handle (both sides) glazed. Heavy tooling below lip, following its contour; another at the join of the shoulder, setting off the neck from a band running around the shoulder above the first frieze. Below the first frieze, a double dotted band between two solid bands. Below the second frieze, a wide band (0.026) over a zone of rays. Side of foot black, underside reserved with a large tooled circle (D. 0.13).

Shoulder frieze: two panthers confront a bird (mythical or actual) facing r. with outspread wings; behind them, facing the handle, a dove at right, a goat at left.

Body frieze: two panthers confront a goose facing r. with outspread wings; behind them, to right, a goose and a goat (both much abraded) confronted, and to left, a panther and a goat in like position. In the friezes, filling ornament: dots, hatched blobs, incised rosettes. Traces, generally faint, of added red in the usual positions on some birds and animals; it frequently runs into areas of misfired red.

The creature flanked by panthers in the shoulder frieze may seem at first glance a pug-nosed siren with upturned face (for pug-nosed sirens: Corinth, XIII, p. 174, 141-6, pl. E; p. 180, 155-c, pl. 88). However, it lacks a periuke and the incised contour of what may seem a chin continues into the field some 0.002, turns a 90° angle upward, runs straight for some 0.004 into the left part of the near-by black patch, makes a turn to left and runs as a slightly convex curve ending in a zigzag at a point above and behind the "nose." Yet none of this seems very satisfactory for the head of a goose. It should be noted that the area behind the tip of the "nose" is abraded and the surface above and to the left of the eye is nicked.

The ugly duckling at the right end of the shoulder frieze we have called a dove, relying on the more elegant creature on the pyxis Corinth, XIII, p. 183, 157-m, pl. D. The quality they share in common is a certain chubbiness.

The Isthmia oinochoe belongs to the Middle-Corinthian animal frieze vases connected with the Dodwell Painter and his associates. In type of filling ornament and in its vigorous but somewhat slapdash drawing the oinochoe is close to the pyxis Corinth, XIII, p. 180, 155-c, pl. 88. The same three kinds of filling ornament occur also on the oinochoe Corinth, XIII, p. 182, 157-f, pl. C, a finer, but rather academic work.

KOTHON


H. 0.054, D. 0.145, D. of foot 0.09. Buff clay. Glaze very consistently fired an even red. Rim curved over and in, down to the level of the widest outside diameter. Band handle. Interior: glazed up to the level of the widest diameter. Exterior: reserved, with band decoration: broad band around inturned rim, stripe on shoulder ridge, at mid-shoulder a double-dotted band between stripes, a band below the handle zone, and a stripe above the foot. Glaze on side of foot. Underside: reserved, with a wide band in small part black on interior of foot, large dot and circle on bottom. Handle: glazed in-
side and outside, except the base reserved in continuation of the reserved shoulder zone.

We follow Brian Sparkes and Lucy Talcott in applying the name to the shape (see The Athenian Agora, XII, i, pp. 8, 70, 180-181). The shape first appears in the Corinthian potters’ répertoire in the Early Corinthian period (H. Payne, Necrocorinthia, Oxford, 1931, p. 298 and nos. 722, 723, 723-A, and 724, with figured decoration in polychrome style; also Corinth, VII, i, p. 60, and nos. 217, 296 and 297). One late Middle Corinthian example, from Samos, is noted in Necrocorinthia (1089 A) and one late Corinthian example, in white style, in Corinth, VII, i (no. 375). White-style kothons became common in graves after 550, but in the decades immediately before the mid-century they seem not to have been numerous. None were found in the North Cemetery at Corinth and only two in the West Cemetery at Isthmia. One of these, IP 3899, in white style, is from an uncertain context. It is tempting to connect the present vase, I-37-20, with Corinth, VII, i, nos. 296 and 297, which are similar to it in proportions, have band handles, and are simply decorated with red-brown glaze. These, however, are Early Corinthian in context. Presumably I-37-20 is rather later.

Many of the vases we have briefly reviewed here have their congeners in Middle Corinthian. The latest seem to be the Corinthian group ii skyphoi and the Attic kylikes and it is they which have caused us to believe that Grave I-37 is a burial of the second quarter of the sixth century.

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West cemetery from northwest

PAUL A. CLEMENT AND MARGARET MACVEAGH THORNE: FROM THE WEST CEMETERY AT ISTHmia
a. Cover-slab deposit in situ

b. No. 19 in situ
Grave I-37

Paul A. Clement and Margaret MacVeagh Thorne: From the West Cemetery at Isthmia
a. Grave I-37 from south

b. Nos. 9, 13, and 14 in situ

Paul A. Clement and Margaret MacVeagh Thorne: From the West Cemetery at Isthmia
Vases from Isthmia, West Cemetery, Grave I-37

Paul A. Clement and Margaret MacVeagh Thorne: From the West Cemetery at Isthmia
Vases from Isthmia, West Cemetery, Grave 1-37

Paul A. Clement and Margaret MacVeagh Thorne: From the West Cemetery at Isthmia
Vases from Isthmia, West Cemetery, Grave I-37

Paul A. Clement and Margaret MacVeagh Thorne: From the West Cemetery at Isthmia
Vases from Isthmia, West Cemetery, Grave I-37

a. 19, upper frieze, detail
b. 19, upper frieze, detail
c. 19, lower frieze, detail
d. 19, lower frieze, detail

Paul A. Clement and Margaret MacVeagh Thorne: From the West Cemetery at Isthmia