

# THE CITY OF CORINTH AND ITS DOMESTIC RELIGION

(PLATES 87–90)

**A**LTHOUGH much attention has been devoted to Greek religion, most of the emphasis has been upon major gods and goddesses. Information is readily available in ancient official or state records and inscriptions, or by interpretation of sanctuary artifacts and architecture. Much less information is available for the understanding of the humbler aspects of religion as practiced along the byways and in the neighborhoods of the urban centers of Greece.

To judge by such descriptions as Pausanias' enumeration of the hero shrines found throughout the city of Sparta,<sup>1</sup> by such archaeological remains as the street shrines and altars at the entrances of houses in Delos<sup>2</sup> and by Wycherley's study for Athens,<sup>3</sup> to use three examples, one suspects that small neighborhood shrines were commonly scattered throughout many Greek cities, even though they appear in different forms in different places.

Little literary testimony and even less epigraphical evidence exist for neighborhood and domestic religion at Corinth, as contrasted with official or public religion. Still one is able by examination of the archaeological remains to present a reasonable picture of a pre-Roman Corinth studded with numerous neighborhood shrines of various sorts and with still others within the houses themselves.

One type of shrine is that set in the open, along a roadway or in a small open-air temenos, pictured commonly on reliefs of the Hellenistic period.<sup>4</sup> The sacred areas are marked by statues raised high on tall shafts. Such shrines appear not to have been uncommon in Corinth. Two tall shafts with cuttings on their tops for statues are pre-

<sup>1</sup>Pausanias, iii.12–16.

<sup>2</sup>P. Bruneau, *Recherches sur les cultes de Délos à l'époque hellénistique et à l'époque impériale*, Paris 1970.

<sup>3</sup>R. E. Wycherley, *The Stones of Athens*, Princeton 1978, esp. pp. 143–200; see also H. A. Thompson, "Some Hero Shrines in Early Athens," *Athens Comes of Age* (Papers of a Symposium Sponsored by the Archaeological Institute of America, Princeton Society and the Department of Art and Archaeology, Princeton University), Princeton 1978, pp. 96–108.

<sup>4</sup>Votive relief in Glyptothek in Munich, from Corinth (?), L. Laurenzi, "Rilievi e statue d'arte Rodia," *RömMitt* 54, 1939, pp. 42–44, pl. 11. Votive relief in Naples, Museo Nazionale from Capri, M. Bieber, *The Sculpture of the Hellenistic Age*, rev. ed., New York 1961, fig. 648. Bronze votive relief from Delos, J. Marcadé, *Au musée de Délos*, Paris 1969, pl. XXXIX, A-1719. Fragmentary votive relief in the British Museum, A. H. Smith, *British Museum Catalogue, Sculpture III*, London 1904, pp. 223–224, no. 2150; for illustration see L. Laurenzi, *op. cit.*, pp. 43–44, fig. 3.

For representations of outdoor sanctuary of Chryse (image on column, in front of which is rustic stone altar) see examples in E. M. Hooker, "The Sanctuary and Altar of Chryse in Attic Red-Figure Vase-Painting of the Late Fifth and Early Fourth Century B.C.," *JHS* 69, 1949, pp. 35–40, figs. 1–5.

served in the Corinth Archaeological Museum and were found in the northeast quarter of the city, within the city walls at about 350 meters west of the Roman amphitheater (Pl. 87:a, b).<sup>5</sup> They were found, unfortunately, in a field that had little earth covering bedrock. No votives were found in the earth round about, but no archaeological excavation has been conducted in the area. With our present knowledge of the topography of the city, it seems best to think that the two bases supported statues in a rustic shrine or shrines within the city walls, but in an area that was not densely populated. Such a neighborhood is easy to imagine in Corinth where the city was not completely built up within its walls. In fact, much land in the city must have remained uninhabited throughout the life of Classical and Hellenistic Corinth. Even pockets of burials of almost all periods, in some areas quite extensive, have been found scattered within the city walls. The more concentrated centers of population seem to have clustered around the good water sources and along the main arteries of circulation within the city.<sup>6</sup>

Between 1961 and 1963 the American School of Classical Studies excavated an area outside the northern line of the defenses, where an ancient road rose to the city from the coastal plain below. This road, entering the city from the direction of Sikyon, passed close to a spring that still flows both in summer and in winter. The results of that excavation have only been preliminarily published, but the basic facts have been presented.<sup>7</sup> A stele, its top broken off and missing, and a favissa full of terracotta votives were found at the south side of the road. The area associated with shrine and votives does not seem to have been delineated by walls or by a special temenos. Suggestion has been made, however, that a temenos may lie on the opposite side of the thoroughfare.<sup>8</sup>

The shaft identified as a stele is almost square in plan, with a large, square base fashioned from the same block (Pl. 88:a).<sup>9</sup> This might be better identified as the bottom of a tall shaft which would have supported a small statue. The large, square base served as the foundation with shaft rising 1.5 meters or more. The proportions definitely suggest a shaft for a statue rather than a stele of any type known at Corinth. By this statue base was found a pit from which were recovered terracotta votives largely of a single type: dancers around a syrinx player. The encircling dancers are either four or five in

<sup>5</sup>Corinth inv. A-70-91. Complete H. 1.525 m.; shaft approximately square in plan, 0.231 m. to a side at bottom, 0.16 m. to a side at top under fascia. Rectangular cutting for statue base 0.15 by ca. 0.18 m., depth of cutting 0.04 m. Plastered poros shaft, rectangular in plan with fascia at top, no other molding.

Corinth inv. A-70-92. Max. pres. H. 0.876 m. Shaft at top 0.295 × 0.317 m. Rectangular cutting for statue base at top 0.134 × 0.195 m., depth of cutting 0.035 m. Plastered poros shaft almost square in plan rising to fascia, cyma reversa, cavetto, with rectangular box for statue base set off from crowning molding by reveal.

<sup>6</sup>C. K. Williams, II, "The Early Urbanization of Corinth," *ASAtene* (in press).

<sup>7</sup>G. Daux, "Chronique des fouilles en 1962," *BCH* 87, 1963, p. 724, fig. 9. Final report will be published by N. Robertson.

<sup>8</sup>G. Daux, "Chronique des fouilles en 1963," *BCH* 88, 1964, pp. 704, 708.

<sup>9</sup>The statue base has a wide foot, rectangular in form with height of 0.405; 0.775 thick, 0.732 m. wide. Shaft above wide foot preserved to height of 0.745; shaft thickness 0.282, width 0.175 m. Fascia 0.146 m. high on four sides at base of shaft.

number.<sup>10</sup> The remains suggest that a rustic shrine of Pan and the Nymphs might have stood at this spot.

In the area later used by the Romans for their forum two different types of small sanctuaries have been found, one classified as a hero shrine, the other as a stele shrine.<sup>11</sup> The difference between the two rests, essentially, in what lies immediately beneath the enclosure. The hero shrine is built over a group of graves, apparently to please or propitiate a shade (Pl. 87:d). The other, the stele shrine, had been built over what appears to have been a storeroom of a private house, destroyed just before the shrine was established (Pl. 88:b). No grave is associated with this second type of sanctuary.

The hero shrine, called the Heroon of the Crossroads, is at the intersection of roadways, although it was not planned to serve as a wayside shrine. Rather, a reconstructed history of the area suggests the following. A plot of at least four burials had been established in this immediate area in the Protogeometric Period, but, apparently, they were forgotten sometime in the Geometric or Protocorinthian Period (Fig. 1). Once the graves were forgotten, an east-west road started to encroach upon the ground that had been reserved for them. To facilitate traffic over the higher bedrock where the graves were, a decision appears to have been made to grade the bedrock. During this operation workers seem to have lowered the surface to the level of the cover slab of the largest grave of the Protogeometric group, lifted its slabs, and removed the contents of the grave. After the looting a limestone temenos wall was erected around the grave, with an entrance in its east wall and an offering table at the left side once one had entered. The grave of the hero was straight ahead.

Thus a shrine was established to propitiate the spirit of the person found in the grave, thought, perhaps, to have been a hero of the past or, at least, an ancient ancestor of the Corinthians.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup>See Daux, *op. cit.* (footnote 7 above); fig. 9 shows four dancers around figure playing double flute.

<sup>11</sup>For hero shrine, see C. K. Williams, II, "Corinth, 1972: The Forum Area," *Hesperia* 42, 1973, pp. 6–12, figs. 2, 3, pls. 1–5; C. K. Williams, II, "Excavation at Corinth, 1973," *Hesperia* 43, 1974, pp. 1–6, fig. 1, pl. 1. For stele shrine, see C. K. Williams, II, "Corinth 1977, Forum Southwest," *Hesperia* 47, 1978, pp. 5–12, fig. 1, pls. 1, 2. The division made here into two types of shrine does not mean that every hero shrine must have a grave or cenotaph associated with it. Pausanias records the fact that at Sikyon Aratus was buried in the agora (III.9.4, 6), but he records a second hero shrine dedicated to Aratus before the house of Cleon in the lower city (III.8.1). This one must be without grave.

An interesting combination of stele and hero shrine exists in Argos. There graves underlie an area enclosed by a poros wall. Possibly to be associated with the shrine is a stele carved with hero and snake in low relief. This stele may be similar to the Corinthian stelai in which the panels probably were painted with representations of gods or heroes. See Ch. Kritzas, *Δελτα* 28, 1973, B' 1 [1977], pp. 132–134, figs. 6, 7, pl. 117–120. For evidence of Olympians in stele shrines see below, footnote 25.

<sup>12</sup>Although the grave was not of pretentious form, the discovery of an unknown grave with ancient pots in it might have been treated with reverence for a number of reasons. See J. N. Coldstream, *Geometric Greece*, London 1977, pp. 346–348. He relates the rise of hero cults to the diffusion of the Homeric epic and the interest in the Heroic Age. At Corinth such interests were encouraged by the poet Eumelus. The same point of view is stated in less detail by A. N. Snodgrass, *The Dark Age in Greece*, Edinburgh 1971, p. 399 and by V. R. d'A. Desborough, *The Greek Dark Ages*, London 1972, p. 283.

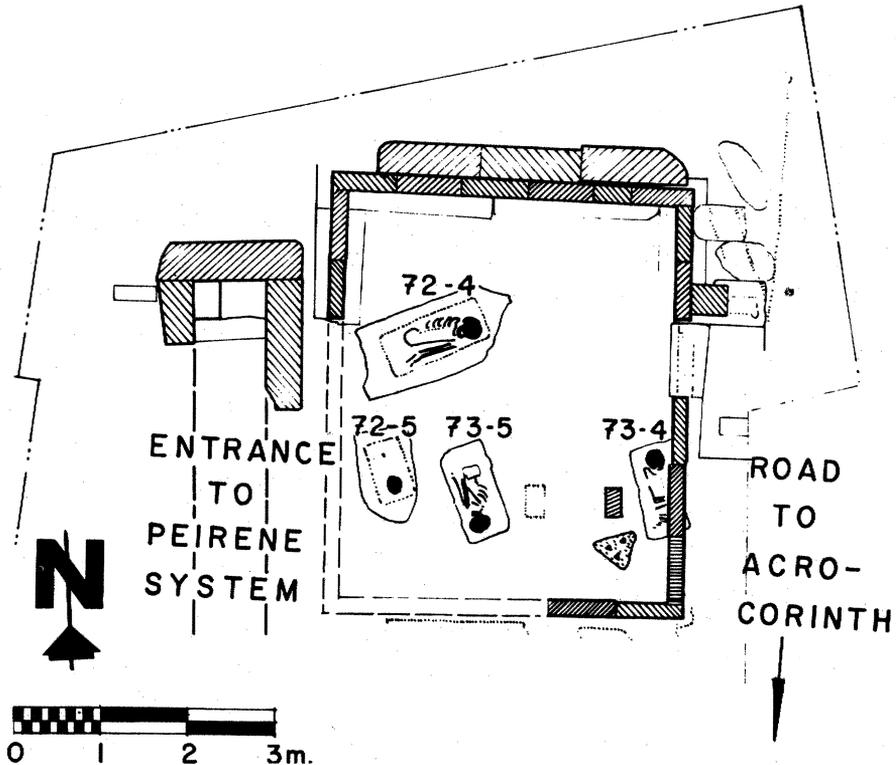


FIG. 1. Plan of the Heroon of the Crossroads

The second enclosure is constructed over burnt debris of a Middle to Late Corinthian house, not a grave. It was built against the west wall of a new structure which replaced the burnt one. In the late 4th century the temenos was altered because the west end of the South Stoa was laid out over its eastern wall. At this moment the temenos was converted into a smaller enclosure appended to the west end of the stoa and protruding from it at an oblique angle. Compensation for the loss of land may have been made, however, by allowing the temenos to be extended northward to the anta of the colonnade of the South Stoa.

Within the enclosure were found two poros blocks that may have served to support an offering table, numerous terracotta figurines of horses and riders, standing korai, birds and banqueters, as well as votive pottery. The most important find was the bottom part of a poros stele. Unfortunately the top frame is missing, but the stele appears in dimensions and design to be similar to those from the Corinthian Kerameikos. In fact, the original form of the shrine itself is paralleled by the stele shrines of the Potters'

Quarter, although the temenos in the Forum is larger and better constructed than the others, perhaps as a result of having been built within a richer neighborhood.

But what is the function of the stele shrine in the Forum and of those found in the Potters' Quarter? A new look at the shrines in the Potters' Quarter might now be helpful.

Exploration between 1929 and 1931 at the northwest limit of the city was initiated after large amounts of pottery and figurines had been found there; results include the examination not only of two phases of city wall but also of a series of buildings and a number of small shrines. It is along this segment of the defenses that the Kerameikos of Corinth was found.<sup>13</sup> Here the earliest fortifications, probably constructed within the Late Protocorinthian Period, ran along the edge of a steep, easily defensible cliff. A collapse of the bedrock at cliff edge, perhaps after the earthquake of 426 B.C., may have demanded the rebuilding of the city wall back from the original line, or the design of the original wall may have been considered obsolete or inadequate, with the Peloponnesian War as the impetus for a total rebuilding of the northwest defense line of the city.<sup>14</sup> Whatever the reason, a new line was built at this time with horseshoe-shaped towers placed at intervals along the run of walls.

The rebuilding of the defense system at the end of the third quarter of the 5th century behind the original line demanded the destruction and abandonment of buildings within a strip of land generally at least 6 meters wide. The strip had previously been protected but now found itself outside the defenses of the city. A number of small shrines were discovered in this area; it is an analysis of these that concerns us at the moment.

The most important features of these shrines are the stelai which seem to have been the heart of the sanctuaries. The stelai of the Potters' Quarter are thin poros slabs, each with a rectangular panel recessed in its broad front face (Pl. 88:c). Rarely a stele may have two panels rather than one (Pl. 88:d). The crown always is horizontal, with a rectangular, shallow depression cut into its top surface, forming a shelf along the front of the stele.<sup>15</sup> This shelf is about as wide as the panel on the stele below. If the face has

<sup>13</sup>A. N. Stillwell, *Corinth*, XV, i, *The Potters' Quarter*, Princeton 1948; this contains the architectural description of the excavated area. *Idem*, *Corinth*, XV, ii, *The Potters' Quarter. The Terracottas*, Princeton 1952. J. Benson, *Corinth*, XV, iii, *The Potters' Quarter. The Pottery* (in press) will present the inventoried pottery.

<sup>14</sup>In 426 Peloponnesian forces at the Isthmus stopped their invasion of Attica because of a series of earthquakes. Thucydides, iii.89.1; see also Thucydides, iii.87.4 and Diodoros, xii.59.1-2.

<sup>15</sup>For discussion of the stelai, see Stillwell, *Corinth* XV, i, pp. 63-66; stelai I-VII, X-XII, pp. 72-76. A terracotta model of a stele shrine, Corinth inv. KT-64-4, helps one to visualize one of the shrines in the Potters' Quarter in the process of use, Stillwell, *Corinth* XV, ii, pp. 204-205, 208, pl. 45, type XXXIII, no. 1. The model portrays a figurine of horse and rider on the top ledge of one stele, two figurines of standing females on a ledge, divided perhaps to represent a double stele. A type of altar table from Tanagra has certain resemblances to the stelai of the Potters' Quarter of Corinth. These, however, are found associated with graves. See E. Pfuhl, "Tanagräische Grabaltäre," *AthMitt* 28, 1903, pp. 330-337. For commentary on the Tanagra grave altars, see W. Deonna, "Mobilier délien," *BCH* 58, 1934, fig. 51, nos. 3, 4.

For a variant opinion concerning the shrines of the Potters' Quarter, see J. H. Young, review of *Corinth*, XV, i, *The Potters' Quarter*, *CP* 47, 1952, p. 120, where he disagrees with the identification of the

two panels, two shelves crown the stele, one centered over each panel. This type of stele is never crowned with a pediment.

Our first example, the Erosa Shrine, was published as a small building, less than nine square meters in area.<sup>16</sup> It was said to be composed of two rooms with the possibility that a third stretched westward from the first two, extending toward the edge of the cliff along which ran, at that time, the early defense wall of the city. No evidence exists, however, that a door penetrated the west wall of the two-room complex to connect it with the third room. Excavation in 1980–81 has changed the picture quite radically, showing that the shrine occupied the ruins of another structure (Fig. 2). Originally the site was thought to have been that of the shrine only.

Now the Erosa Shrine is seen as a single-roomed structure erected over the ruins of the southeast corner of an earlier, larger building (Pl. 89:a). The shrine was constructed upon the walls of what may have been a storeroom divided by a partition wall. The larger building, almost certainly a house, had a central court that was paved in crushed limestone, a typical flooring material for such open spaces (Pl. 89:b).<sup>17</sup> The court had a well in its southeast corner and a single row of rooms on its south, east, and north sides. The west side of the building has fallen away with a large section of cliff edge, and thus the design of the fourth side of the building must remain unknown.

The Erosa Shrine definitely was constructed over the ruins of this house and is not a shrine used within the house. First, the solid west wall of the shrine is patched, a rebuilding of the original house wall where a door had been. Secondly, the “very narrow wall along the north side of the shrine room, close to the north wall” was mistakenly thought to be “the support for a bench or a table.”<sup>18</sup> This narrow wall which is bedded upon destruction debris of the underlying room is, in reality, the north wall of the Erosa Shrine. The wide, better-built wall that had been identified as the north wall of the shrine is, rather, the north wall of the corner room of the earlier house and as such is founded on bedrock.

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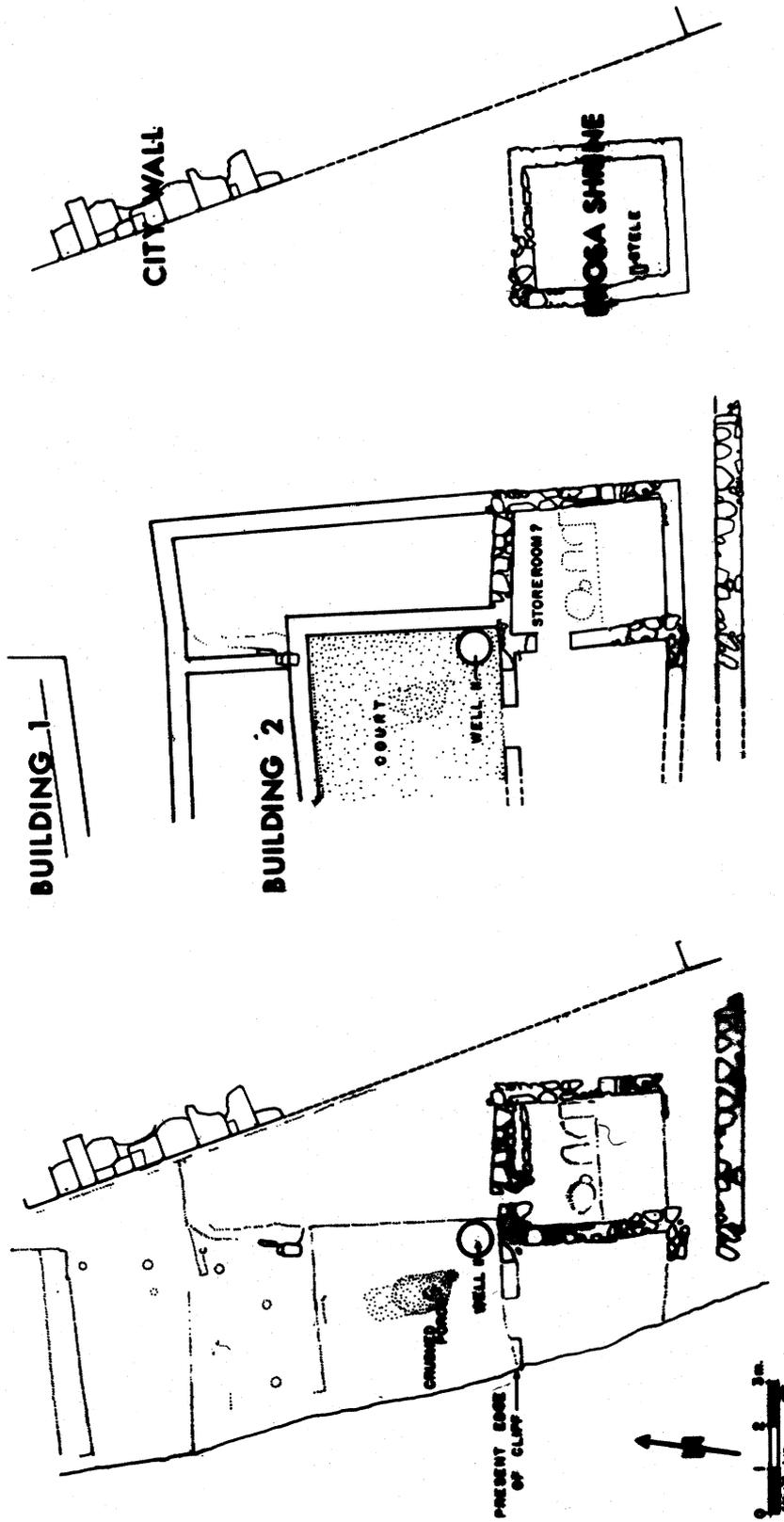
stelai shrines as shrines. Mr. Young’s argument is invalidated by the finding of a stele shrine in the area of the Corinthian forum and by the following re-examination of the architectural remains of the shrines, as well as by the publication of a model of a stele shrine with votives resting on the stelai. See KT-64-4, cited above.

<sup>16</sup>Stillwell, *Corinth XV*, i, pp. 28–29. The Erosa Shrine is so named because of a dipinto on a pot found in the area (p. 52). The pot, however, should be dated before the mid-5th century B.C. By date it is to be associated with the house underlying the shrine, not with the shrine itself. The name given to the shrine by the excavator is retained here, however, to avoid confusion.

The excavator suspected that more than one phase existed in the shrine. “About thirty miniature vases and several figurines were found in the building, comprising mostly 5th and early 4th century types. The present level of the stele may indicate that at some period the building was remodeled, with the floor at a higher level” (p. 29).

<sup>17</sup>Crushed limestone or poros is used in the paving of a Protocorinthian house by the Sacred Spring, C. K. Williams, II, “Corinth, 1970: Forum Area,” *Hesperia* 40, 1971, p. 5; in the western court of Building III of the Forum Area, *idem*, “Corinth, 1972: The Forum Area,” *Hesperia* 42, 1973, pp. 21–22, and in the court of the Punic Amphora Building, *idem*, “Corinth, 1978: Forum Southwest,” *Hesperia* 48, 1979, p. 108.

<sup>18</sup>Stillwell, *Corinth XV*, i, p. 28.



PLAN: END OF 8TH CENTURY B.C.

PLAN: END 5TH CENTURY B.C.

ACTUAL STATE PLAN

FIG. 2. Plans of the Erosa Shrine

A date for the destruction of the building underlying the shrine was established by excavation in 1980. Skyphoi recovered from below the floor of the shrine can be placed within the third quarter of the 5th century. This pottery is synchronous with the material found in the court well.<sup>19</sup> The house appears to have been destroyed when the defenses of the city were rebuilt back from the cliff, for the northeast corner of the house falls within the line of the later city wall. The house would have to have been destroyed before the new city wall was built.

The second stele shrine of the Potters' Quarter to be considered is the Double Stele Shrine; it was found 60 meters north of the Erosa Shrine, in the zone between the earlier and later city defenses, and, more specifically, within the ruins of the South Long Building, a structure erected in the second half of the 7th century just inside the early fortification wall.<sup>20</sup> Even when discovered the shrine preserved almost no fabric of its walls *in situ*, but its existence was attested by trenches for walls within a cleared area *ca.* 5.30 × 4 m. and by two strata, each with upright stelai.<sup>21</sup> The lower level of the shrine preserved remains of two stelai and pottery dated at the end of the 5th century B.C. The date for the alteration of the shrine with a new floor and a single stele of double-panel design (Pl. 88:d) is not precisely fixed, but the phase probably did not exist far into the 4th century B.C.

The enclosing wall of the shrine appears not to have been laid out parallel to the earlier city wall, nor to the walls of the South Long Building, which probably took its orientation from the early defense wall. Although this shrine was placed within the limits of the South Long Building, the shrine was oriented more in respect to the 5th-century line of defenses than to that of the 7th century. Judging from the pottery and orientation of walls, the shrine can only have been laid out after its site had been isolated from the city by the construction of the later defenses and after the South Long Building had been destroyed.

Stele Shrine B is the last of its type to be considered here.<sup>22</sup> This temenos lies at the south end of a built rubble wall (Wall B) that wanders north-south, roughly parallel

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 28–29, Well II. Pottery from the well, not particularly diagnostic, is published as “late 5th c. in date”; the well is only 2.10 m. deep and was filled largely with stones. The two skyphoi from under the floor of the shrine are C-1980-187 and C-1980-188, both about 0.07 m. tall and close to no. 2 of H. Palmer, *Corinth*, XIII, *The North Cemetery*, Princeton 1964, p. 257, pl. 62, grave no. 379. The grave is dated within the third quarter of the 5th century, but no. 2 is, apparently, the earliest pot in the group. It should be dated close to the middle of the century.

<sup>20</sup> Stillwell, *Corinth* XV, i, p. 15.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 49–53.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25. The Circular South Shrine and Stele Shrine A are not considered in the text. Both shrines are more complicated in their details than is the Erosa Shrine, Shrine B or the Double Stele Shrine. Moreover, both shrines have been excavated totally, with no possibility for any further testing of associated fills.

The Circular South Shrine is dated in the late 5th century (p. 61), and later than the hypothesized construction of the 5th-century defense wall. A building predating the shrine exists on the same site (p. 32). In these conditions the Circular South Shrine follows the pattern expected of stele shrines in the Potters' Quarter. The shrine is badly disturbed, if not totally uprooted, and has only one stosis of votives

to the 5th-century defense wall (Fig. 3). In the original publication Wall B was considered to have been erected in the last half of the 7th century. The stele shrine, enclosed with large, roughly squared blocks, was thought to have been built later, in almost any period after the middle of the 6th century B.C.<sup>23</sup>

The 7th-century date for Wall B does not stand, however, and the earliest possible date for the shrine must be lowered as well. Excavation in 1980 exposed a stratum of debris that clearly underlies the bottom of Wall B. This stratum contained a stepped pyxis lid, a top not produced before the middle of the 5th century. Because Wall B must be dated within the second half of the 5th century, it seems logical to assume that the wall was constructed during the rebuilding of the area after the erection of the 5th-century defense line. In any case, Stele Shrine B, which is an alteration to Wall B, must be dated at the end of the 5th or within the 4th century, not earlier. An examination of the remains indicates, in fact, that the shrine never was designed as an addition to Wall B, but, rather, it destroyed the south end of that wall. The strata in the area associated with the south end of the wall were removed when the temenos was built, since the shrine was bedded on living rock; the piled debris and earth east of Wall B thus served as a bank that formed the north side of the shrine.

Shrine B (Pl. 90:a) itself is slightly different in form from that originally published. It is a space over three meters long east-west by 1:70 m. north-south (inside dimensions). It is enclosed on its west and south sides by a series of roughly squared poros blocks that are preserved to a maximum height of 0.55 m. above a floor of re-used, cut and broken poros blocks. The pavement lies directly on bedrock, although the rock itself was not trimmed. Two stelai stand within the enclosure, their panels facing east. They are in the southwest corner of the shrine at 0.30 m. from the west wall. A large, roughly squared block, in the original publication thought to have been an altar table set within the temenos, is in reality a block of the southern enclosure wall tumbled onto its north face.

Some votives have been recovered from within the enclosure and in fill surrounding the shrine, but not concentrated in any special area. No pits or pockets of votives were found. Those found loose in fill include miniature mesomphalic phialai, pitchers, krateriskoi, handmade terracotta horses, and one fragment of a figurine of a reclining

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associated with the architecture (p. 32). The unusual circular form and "rather carelessly laid" enclosure wall may be what is preserved of the disturbed remains of a canonical shrine that had existed over an earlier house and not a shrine that had been designed to be circular in plan.

Shrine A is set inside and has its walls oriented in relation to the South Long Building. In fact the walls of the shrine appear in drawings and photographs to abut the walls of the South Long Building. The shrine is dated within the first half of the 5th century B.C., perhaps operating within the larger building. The other possibility is that the South Long Building went out of use in the 6th century and that the shrine was built in its ruins. One cannot now test stratigraphically the problem of contemporaneity of the two structures. One might accept Mrs. Stillwell's suggestion that the Double Stele Shrine was erected as a replacement of Shrine A. The gap in votive material may be due to the discontinuation of Stele Shrine A in readying the area for the building of the 5th-century city defenses, while its replacement, the Double Stele Shrine, was constructed only after the new defense wall had been inaugurated.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.

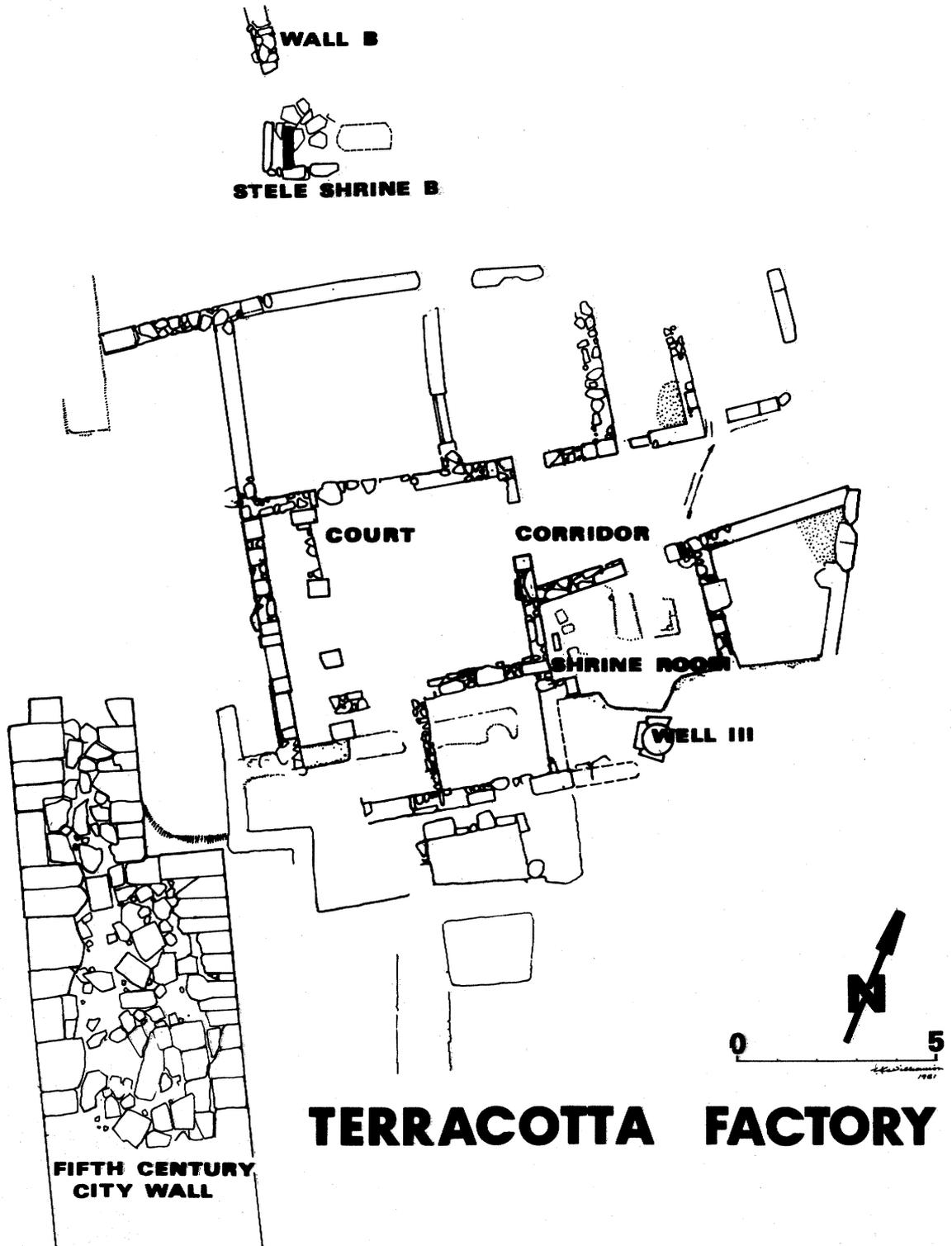


FIG. 3. Plan of Stele Shrine B and the Terracotta Factory

banqueter. Nothing, however, was found in enough quantity to suggest which type of offering was preferred at the shrine.

From the evidence presented above concerning Corinthian stele shrines, one sees a pattern in which one of the main, if not the sole, purpose of erecting a stele shrine is to mark the ruins of a destroyed house. Why should this be so? One of the most obvious conclusions is that Corinthians, when forced to leave their homesteads, still maintained a special attachment for the place, and thought that the family heroes or gods who had been worshipped within the house should not be forgotten or removed from the soil upon which they had originally been worshipped.<sup>24</sup> One may say here purposefully “heroes or gods”, for evidence at the Potters’ Quarter suggests that in at least one case Aphrodite, the goddess whose temple crowned Akrokorinthos, was honored.<sup>25</sup>

Not a single stele shrine of the Potters’ Quarter, however, preserves evidence that cult practices were continued for any extended period of time. Probably the shrines were maintained by surviving members of the family and reverence lasted for one generation, though perhaps longer.<sup>26</sup> On the other hand the stele shrine discovered at the west end of the South Stoa near the core of the city survived from its inception in the 6th century down to the destruction of Corinth in 146 B.C. This shrine may have taken on some special public significance in its early days that ensured it protection and a long life.

The final problem concerning Corinthian stele shrines has to do with the cult room in the Terracotta Factory at the Potters’ Quarter. Although in publication the building is called a factory, there is no reason to believe that it did not also serve as a residence. Home industry was the rule in Classical Greece.

The plan of the “factory” in its first phase has not been published.<sup>27</sup> Its original design appears to have been that of house with court surrounded by rooms, most of which opened onto that court. The plan as published shows the building after the 5th-century defenses of this part of the city had been constructed, with the resultant loss of the western rooms of the house. Compensation for the loss could not be made by a natural alteration of the building, it being limited now on its west by fortifications, on its south by a neighbor and to a lesser extent on its north by a public street. The major change came through expansion toward the east. The postfortification-wall phases of the building show a building with rooms on both sides of a broad eastern corridor that leads into a square western court. The shrine room of the house is just east of the court, entered by a door in the south wall of the corridor.

<sup>24</sup>S. C. Humphreys sees a “significant change [in Athens] which stimulated the development in the late 5th and 4th centuries of monuments commemorating the domestic virtues of the ordinary citizen.” The same attitude may be emerging in Corinth at the same time. See “Family Tombs and Tomb Cult in Ancient Athens: Tradition or Traditionalism?” *JHS* 100, 1980, pp. 96–126, esp. 121.

<sup>25</sup>A bronze bowl inscribed as a dedication to Aphrodite was found in a votive deposit outside the southeast corner of Stele Shrine A, Stillwell, *Corinth* XV, i, p. 23; the bowl is no. 1, p. 115.

<sup>26</sup>A parallel may be found in the grave practices in Athens; see footnote 24 above.

<sup>27</sup>Stillwell, *Corinth* XV, i, pl. 52 records the third phase of the Terracotta Factory. The door from the corridor into the shrine is blocked. The south wall on earth (not crosshatched) is included in the plan. The third phase “stele” is shown in the northwest corner of the shrine room.

The two important facts in the present discussion are one, the original plan of the Terracotta Factory is that of a house with court surrounded by rooms; two, the final design of the building is the result of forced alteration, not original design (Fig. 3).

The building thus might best be considered as a residence, part of which served as a coroplast's atelier. As a coroplast's factory the building is deficient. It does not have a wide, open area with kiln, drying yard and shed. Facilities would be sufficient, however, to produce figurines in the building, with the dried clay products fired in a kiln built elsewhere or shared with a neighbor on another lot. Figurines appear, definitely, to have been molded in the building, but firing there or anywhere in the immediate vicinity is unattested.<sup>28</sup>

Granted that the Terracotta Factory is a residence in which an industry was conducted, then the shrines set up therein are to be identified as domestic or familial. The existence of house shrines may, in fact, be what inspired the occupants of the Potters' Quarter to resanctify a house plot even after the house itself was destroyed and the site leveled.<sup>29</sup> A closer examination of the shrine room of the Terracotta Factory now can be made.

Two groups of stone furnishings were found during the excavation of the west end of the shrine room of the Terracotta Factory.<sup>30</sup> The excavator referred to one group as a stele beside a pair of supports or *trapezoforoi* for a table top. Today their position is still determined by cuttings in bedrock at the west side of the room (Pl. 90:b). These elements are said to have been used in the second phase of the building and repaired for use in the third phase as well.<sup>31</sup> The other group is composed of a stele in the southwest corner of the room and a small triglyph altar at its east (Pl. 90:c). This stele and altar were found at a high level and are associated with the third or last phase of the building. Both sets of cult artifacts can have been used to celebrate the rites of domestic religion.

The first shrine had three elements including an offering table, apparently for cakes and fruits, perhaps also with provisions for offering eggs, with a pier, probably for a cult

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 36. A group of molds were found on the floor in a heap, Deposit 4. At Metapontum kilns appear to be found commonly in potters' areas and, apparently, scattered around the city. See D. Adamesteanu, "Problemi topografici ed urbanistici metapontini," *Metaponto*, Taranto 1973, pp. 160-161, esp. note 35.

<sup>29</sup> The pattern of activity attested at the Potters' Quarter is not necessarily generic. Shrines of this sort are not to be expected in cities destroyed by enemy action, as, for example, Olynthos. It would be against the interests of the conqueror to encourage in such cases the erection of shrines which would denote past ownership or ancestral rights.

<sup>30</sup> For first group, Stillwell, *Corinth XV*, i, pp. 74-75, fig. 5, pls. 14:A (*in situ*), 23:B, left, no. VIII, "stele"; pp. 76-77, fig. 7, pl. 23:B, no. XIII, table. For second group: *ibid.*, p. 75, no. IX, "stele"; pp. 77, 79, fig. 9, pl. 25:A, no. XVII, altar.

<sup>31</sup> In 1980-81 supplementary excavation in the Potters' Quarter cleared the shrine room of the Terracotta Factory to bedrock. By the investigation it became apparent that two cuttings in bedrock had been used to hold table legs in all three periods of the room. A third cutting north of the first two was fashioned to hold stele or shaft. When A. N. Stillwell excavated the shrine room, she found nothing set into the cutting north of the table, but a shaft was standing at the south side of the table. See A. N. Stillwell, *Corinth XV*, i, p. 41, pl. 14:A. This suggests that although it stood south of the table in Period II of the Terracotta Factory, the shaft was designed to stand originally at the north side of the table.

statue, set between the table and the west wall of the room. The space between wall and table, 0.30 m. wide, would allow room for a small base, but nothing more.<sup>32</sup> To the south of the table was found a rectangular shaft, referred to in the original publication as a stele, but which is without parallel (Pl. 87:c).<sup>33</sup> This shaft has a hemispherical depression in its top horizontal surface, shaped with the help of a heavy coat of waterproof cement. The depression is of the size and shape to hold snugly an upright egg. The front fascia of this support has three iron nails in it from which, probably, fillets were hung.

The remains of the so-called "stele" of the second shrine resembles the bottom portion of a statue base.<sup>34</sup> A parallel is to be found from the Kokkinovrysi shrine outside the city walls.<sup>35</sup> The poros "triglyph" altar that was found immediately in front of the stele or statue base preserves traces of burning between its barriers (Pl. 90:c).<sup>36</sup> The triglyph form is commonly used in private houses; examples of 5th-century date exist, with the type continuing into the Hellenistic period, when the triglyph form is elaborated; in one case the whole Doric order is used rather than just the triglyph frieze (Pl. 90:d).

From the remains of cult paraphernalia found *in situ* in the shrine room of the Terracotta Factory, one must posit that two separate cults were housed here. Each had its own image. One was served by an offering table and a tall holder for an object or incense. The second was served by an altar for burnt sacrifices. So little space remains unused along the west wall of the shrine room that it seems safe to say that only two cults were housed here.

With the facts concerning house and stele shrines now presented, I hope that I have shown that a stele shrine at Corinth is a special type of shrine, with a special

<sup>32</sup>For such an arrangement, see red-figured representation of herm of Dionysos before offering table, L. Deubner, *Attische Feste*, Berlin 1966, pl. 20:1.

<sup>33</sup>See above, footnote 30. The depression in the top is considered to have been, probably, for incense, although no scars from fire exist. Incense definitely was used in the practice of domestic religion. It is attested archaeologically by the common finding of thymiateria among house remains. As attested in literature, see Antiphanes, fr. 206, Koch; Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 338; Plautus, *Aulularia*, 24; Theophrastus, *Characters* xvi.10.

Incense was scattered upon the altar at time of sacrifice or carried in a thymiaterion or in some other portable container. See C. K. Williams, II, "Corinth, 1978: Forum Southwest," *Hesperia* 48, 1979, p. 138, esp. notes 42, 43. This permanent fixture with a waterproof-cement-lined depression seems, however, more likely to be a receptacle for liquid or fashioned to hold a footless object or pot.

<sup>34</sup>See above, footnote 30.

<sup>35</sup>For the Kokkinovrysi base, see above, footnote 9.

<sup>36</sup>For the domestic terracotta altars used in Corinthian houses, although not of triglyph form, see C. K. Williams, II, "Corinth, 1978: Forum Southwest," *Hesperia* 48, 1979, pp. 136-140, pls. 51, 52. For one terracotta altar with triglyph decoration see Stillwell, *Corinth* XV, ii, p. 282, pl. 59, no. 67. Poros altars with triglyph decoration, probably all used in houses in Corinth, now in the Corinth Archaeological Museum:

A-1978-1. C. K. Williams, II, *Hesperia* 48, 1979, p. 124, pl. 52, no. 37.

A-1971-1, unpublished.

A-959, unpublished.

A-994, sides undecorated, R. Stillwell, R. Scranton, L. Freeman, H. E. Askew, *Corinth*, I, ii, *Architecture*, Cambridge, Mass. 1941, p. 10, fig. 8.

All the above range in height between 0.209 and 0.23 m., not including barriers.

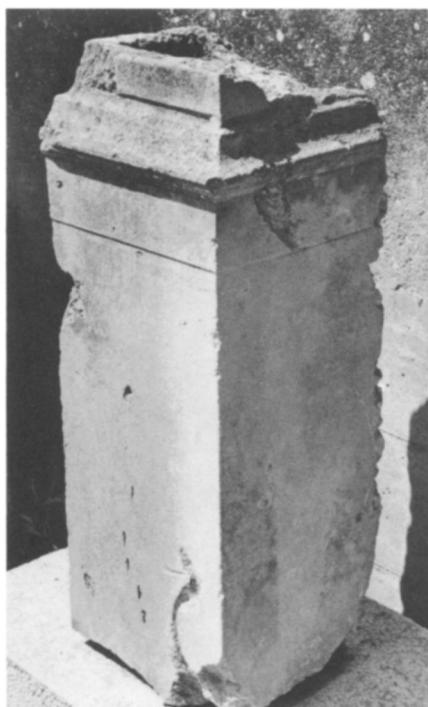
function. Such a shrine is built over a destroyed house, probably at the initiative of private citizens so that family or special group might continue to honor heroes or gods that were honored in the destroyed structure. This particular type of shrine appears, at the moment, to be unique to Corinth. I hope, however, that the above discussion may well aid in the identification of such shrines in other city states of Greece.

CHARLES KAUFMAN WILLIAMS, II

CORINTH EXCAVATIONS



a. Statue base A-70-91



b. Statue base A-70-92



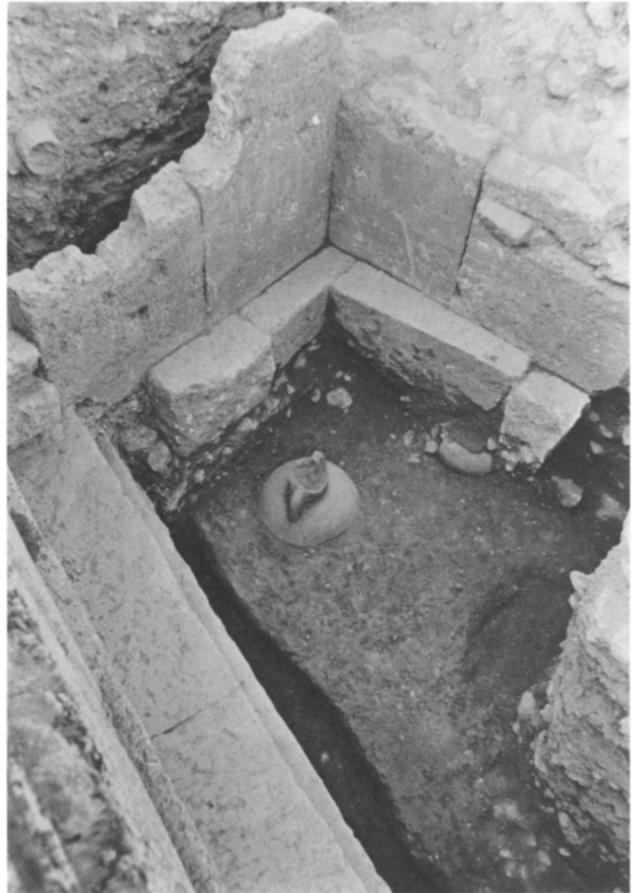
c. Stele KA-10, Terracotta Factory



d. Temenos of the Crossroads from the south, showing cuttings for earlier graves



a. Stele of Kokkinovrysi shrine, *in situ*



b. Stele shrine at west end of South Stoa, from north, showing pre-shrine amphoras



c. Stelai from Stelai Shrine A



d. Stele and altar from Shrine of the Double Stele



a. Erosa Shrine from east



b. Erosa Shrine and underlying house, from north. Fifth-century fortification wall at lower left



a. Stelai Shrine B from northeast



b. Terracotta Factory, shrine room with cuttings in bedrock, from east



c. Poros house altar from Terracotta Factory, KA-16



d. Poros house altar A-983