

# POTTERY AND CULT IN CORINTH

## OIL AND WATER AT THE SACRED SPRING

(PLATE 87)

AS THE RESULT of two excavation campaigns in the forum area of ancient Corinth, scholars are able to reconstruct a significant proportion of the large and complex sanctuary called the Sacred Spring.<sup>1</sup> By the beginning of the 4th century B.C., the sanctuary was laid out on two terraces. The principal architectural components of the site were a springhouse which protected and served as access to the water supply; an apsidal building with perirrhancherion base, entered either by conventional means or by a secret passageway, from which water could exit through a drain leading back into the temenos; altars of varying forms but always low to the ground;<sup>2</sup> accommodation for seating which faced onto a flat area and was adjacent to a space where wooden stelai were erected; a processional way delimited in part by curbs; and a horos stone regulating entrance into the sanctuary or into the apsidal building (Fig. 1).<sup>3</sup>

The focus on both a spring and low altars can be evidence of chthonic cult.<sup>4</sup> Several pieces of evidence suggest that the temenos housed a mystery cult: the apsidal building was closed and could be reached by a secret passageway; there is no evidence of a cult statue; and access to either the sanctuary or the building was limited. The elaborate history of the

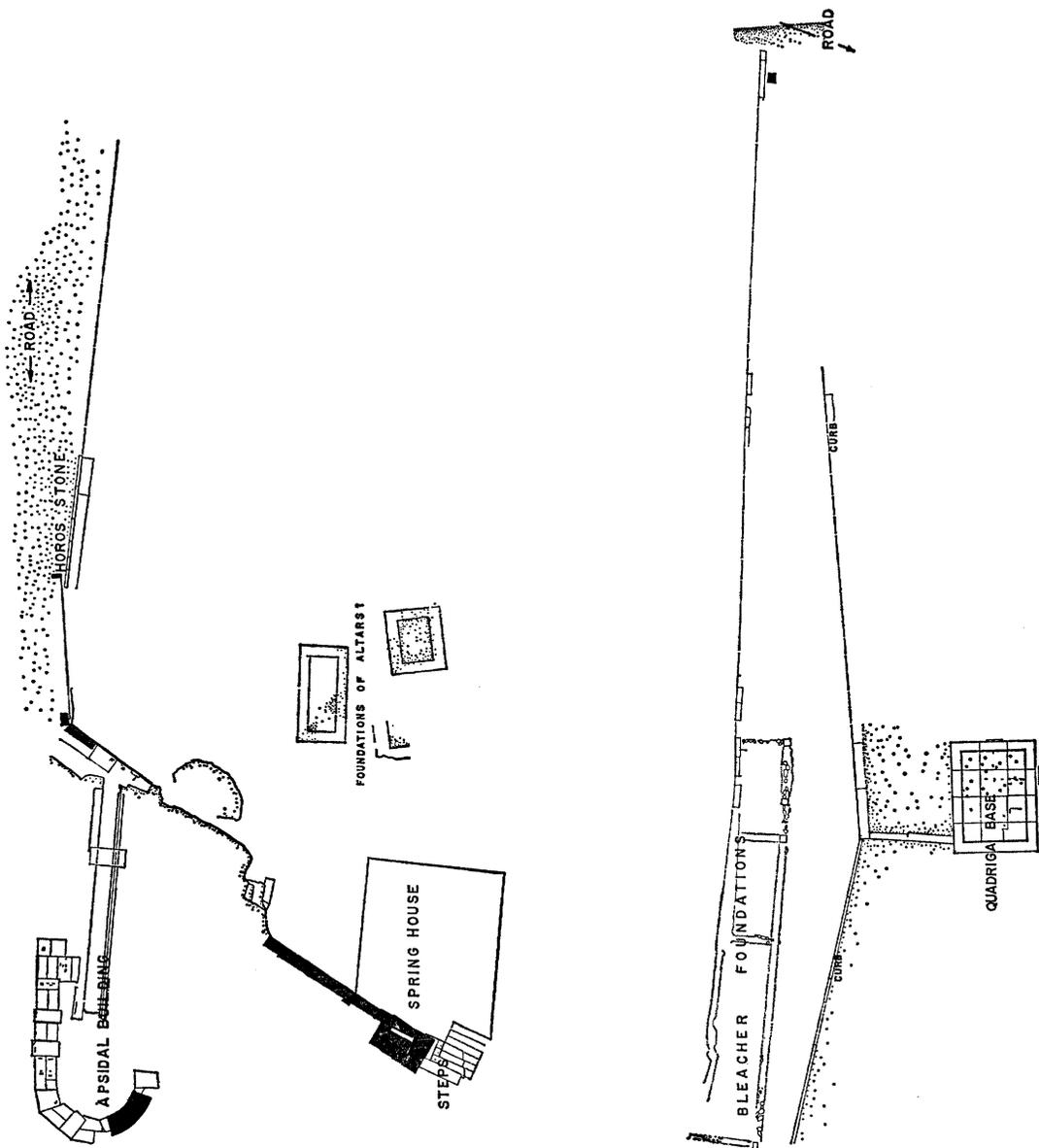
<sup>1</sup> *Corinth I*, vi, pp. 116–199, is the publication of the initial excavations; Williams 1978b (pp. 88–136 and *passim*) summarizes the second phase of the excavation; for a narrative account of the history of the sanctuary which supersedes the preliminary reports, see pp. 105–127. Preliminary reports are to be found in Williams 1969; 1970, pp. 21–31; 1971, pp. 10–51; 1973, pp. 27–32.

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<sup>2</sup> Preliminary investigation revealed that bones found around these altars and in the levels associated with their use were from the sacrifice of goats, pigs, sheep, and oxen (Williams 1970, p. 24, pls. 11, 12:a). David S. Reese informs me (*per ep.*) that his restudy of the material in 1986 revealed nothing that was, in his opinion, “cultic”. The altars definitely show evidence of burning, however, and the remains of bones can suggest either sacrifice at the altar or eating of meat on bones in the area around the altar.

<sup>3</sup> Smith 1919, no. 70, pp. 353–357. Smith repeats a suggestion of Hill that the inscription monitors entrance into the area of the sanctuary near the apsidal building or temple. For other publications of the inscription, see *Corinth VIII*, i, pp. 30–31 and Jeffery 1961, no. 37, p. 132, pl. 21.

<sup>4</sup> See Williams 1978b, p. 114 for the chthonic nature of the altars at the Sacred Spring and Burkert 1985, pp. 88 and 199 for “ground-level hearths” as chthonic. Note also Burkert’s comment that “the actual findings are rarely unambiguous” (p. 199, note 4); I presume he is referring to the difficulty in distinguishing between altars for the gods, “built up from stones”, and those for the dead, “a ground-level hearth . . . or a pit.” Richardson (1974, pp. 18–19) discusses how the cult of Demeter and Kore was originally associated with a spring and chthonic.



SACRED SPRING  
 PHASE 5  
 0 5 meters

A scale bar with a vertical line and a horizontal line, indicating a length of 5 meters.

Fig. 1. Plan of Sacred Spring, phase 5

springhouse and of the water supply itself indicates the importance of water to the sanctuary; the perirrhanterion base and the provision for water to return to the sacred area reveal that the cult probably involved rites, perhaps initiatory, with water. There is also accommodation for processions and performances at the sanctuary.

We have no archaeological evidence to confirm the identity of the cult at the Sacred Spring, but two scholars make a very convincing argument for assigning the sanctuary to Kotyto, a daughter of the pre-Dorian Corinthian, Timandros.<sup>5</sup> Ancient sources indicate that the Corinthians worshipped Kotyto with rites requiring initiation by water and including orgiastic performances; the architectural elements at the Sacred Spring provide for both these features.<sup>6</sup>

Still, much about this sanctuary remains elusive. Is there a way to confirm the identity of the deity worshipped here? How and why was that deity venerated? How does the cult practiced at the Sacred Spring fit into the larger scheme of Corinthian civic religion? This study, focusing on one category of ceramic evidence, aims to provide answers to these questions.

One difficulty in interpreting activity at the Sacred Spring exists because excavations have not yielded a discrete votive deposit; rather, the evidence of pottery and small votives comes from dumped fills used in the numerous phases of sanctuary remodeling.<sup>7</sup> The diversity of votives found in these fills is unusual in comparison with other Corinthian sanctuaries; generally, when enough material is preserved, there is a preponderance of one or two specific types of dedications, such as kalathiskoi at the Demeter Sanctuary on Acrocorinth,

<sup>5</sup> Lisle 1955, pp. 116–117, where he collects the ancient sources, and Williams 1978b, pp. 44–45, 134–136.

<sup>6</sup> Eupolis' comedy *Baptai* apparently parodies the rites of Kotyto; Edmonds (1957, pp. 330–337) conveniently collects and translates the testimonia and fragments. Hesychios (*s.v.* Kotyto) tells us the play was written as an attack on the Corinthians (Edmonds 1957, no. 83, pp. 336–347). Initiation by water: the title, cited by, among others, the scholiast on Juvenal 2.92, suggests a water ritual (Edmonds 1957, M, ii, 447, pp. 330–331); orgiastic performances: the scholiast on Juvenal 2.92 reports that in the play “shameless persons are represented by Eupolis, who causes the Athenian citizens to make supplication to a lyre-girl, dancing in the guise of women” (trans. Edmonds 1957, *loc. cit.*), and Aischylos refers to *orgia* in connection with the rites of Kotyto (frag. 57, as restored by Nauck [1889]).

<sup>7</sup> Williams (private communication) believes that the pottery and votives are originally from the sanctuary rather than brought in from another area. Supporting his opinion is the presence of many fragments of votive figurines, diverse in technique, subject, and size (such as the terracotta seated temple boy MF-68-55 and the terracotta male head MF-68-61, Williams 1969, pls. 18:g, 15:a), and of miniature pottery which appeared together with fragments of pottery of functional sizes. Almost half of the lots preserve votives and miniatures: animal; horse and rider; rooster; large crouching animal plaque; bird; cat; kore plaque; jointed doll; satyr; seated female; reclining banqueters; and other, indistinguishable human figures. Miniature shapes are kraters; kotylai; bolsals; mesomphalic phialai; hydriai; plates; lekanides; one-handlers; and white-slipped bowls. Votives and miniatures (not including small banded lekythoi, which are accounted for below; see note 50) are found in the following lots: 5152; 5154; 5155b; 5157; 5158; 5198c; 5199; 5200; 5201; 5205; 5206; 5209; 5204; 5211–14; 5216; 5219; 5221; 5225; 5227–29; 5238; 5229; 5777; 5780; 5783–87; 5789; 5792; 5802; 5803; 5806; 5807; 5810; 5811; 5813; 5814; 5817–20; 6237–39; 6241–43; 6265; 6266; 6303; 6306; 6307; 6334; 6335; 1972-40; 1972-41; 1972-45; 1972-54; 1972-55; 1972-98.

Both Herbert and McPhee, in their discussions of the Sacred Spring material (*Corinth* VII, iv; McPhee 1981), were careful to consider only what appeared to them to be from activity within the temenos. I have chosen to consider all the material from the onset of architectural modification of the site until its abandonment, including dumped fills, because of the presence of votive figurines or miniatures in the vast majority of the stored lots and the uniformity of lot contents as a whole. While it is probable that the dumped fills come from the Spring and reflect movement of earth from one place in the temenos to another, I recognize that certain fills may be a combination of both sanctuary and non-sanctuary material.

kalathiskoi at the Sanctuary of Hera at Perachora, and limbs at the Asklepeion. No such emphasis exists at the Sacred Spring. The character of the ceramic evidence is also unusual in at least one respect: in comparison to evidence from other public cult areas at Corinth, there is a large number of lekythoi and other oil-containing vessels.<sup>8</sup> What follows is a discussion in two parts: Part I is a presentation of the evidence of oil-containing vessels at the Sacred Spring. It includes a detailed discussion of the Corinthian white-ground lekythoi from the site as well as issues of typology and chronology, unrelated to cult activity but of general interest for understanding 5th-century Corinthian pottery production, which the Sacred Spring material generates. Part II focuses on an interpretation of the ceramic evidence by providing proof that the ample and diverse roster of oil containers is anomalous among Corinthian sanctuaries, finding parallels for this same roster elsewhere, and concluding with a suggestion of how these parallels illuminate our knowledge of cult.

### I. OIL-CONTAINING VESSELS

Ideally, the presentation of this evidence would include both a formal catalogue of the types of oil containers and information on the relative proportions of oil containers to other types of vessels. The process of recovery and the state of the evidence preclude both. Most of the sherds are so small as to make comprehensible documentation through photography, let alone profile drawing, impossible. Moreover, with one exception, the types are so common and well attested at Corinth that readers will have easy access to photographs of complete examples (cited in notes to the narrative account). The one exception is the Corinthian white-ground lekythos, which, because of its rarity in contexts outside graves, requires both catalogue and full discussion. The relative proportion of oil containers to other vessel types is not retrievable for three reasons: the evidence is extremely fragmentary, and we are therefore unable to determine minimum vessel numbers; the material is unsieved; and the sanctuary is dug to different levels in different areas, and so statistics for different periods are not parallel. In any event, the interpretation of the evidence does not depend on great relative proportion of oil containers to other vessel types at the Sacred Spring; rather, it depends on their diversity and character in comparison to the examples from other public shrines as well as private graves at Corinth.

Cult activity may have begun in the area of the Sacred Spring by the middle of the 8th century B.C., but there is little ceramic evidence which can be correlated with the earliest periods of use through the 6th century B.C. Sixth-century oil containers, such as Corinthian globular aryballoi,<sup>9</sup> do appear in 5th-century lots that contain votive miniatures and

<sup>8</sup> Various scholars have offered opinions on what pottery was used in the sanctuary: Herbert (*Corinth* VII, iv, p. 22) suggests that two Corinthian red-figured stemless cups may have been used to pour libations; McPhee (1981, pp. 264–265, note 5) includes Attic versions of the same shape. Williams, discussing a later period, suggests that the imitation Cypriot amphora is “the acceptable container in which the devout collect water from the underground spring chamber” (1978b, p. 123). These belly-handled table amphoras are appropriate as water containers; under the lion-head spouts in the underground spring chamber, paving was cut to receive pots with feet the size of the largest imitation Cypriot amphoras. Williams also points out (1978b, p. 123 and 1969, p. 61) that the lekythos, of both Attic and Corinthian manufacture, can be considered to have “cult significance” since it is unusual to have so many examples of this shape in a sanctuary at Corinth.

<sup>9</sup> Stored in lot 5214. Compare those from North Cemetery grave 147: T 2917, T 2918, T 2920, T 2922, T 2923, T 2927, T 2928, T 2931, T 2935, T 2937, T 2938; *Corinth* XIII, p. 176, pl. 21.

terracotta figurines. Of special note among fragments of 6th-century wares is a lydion (5786:1),<sup>10</sup> probably imported (Pl. 87:a).<sup>11</sup>

The 5th and 4th centuries B.C. see a great deal of new building and remodeling activity in the area, and in the lots associated with this activity is an impressive diversity of oil containers. As the following roster testifies, nearly all types of oil containers found in other contexts at Corinth, cultic, funerary, domestic, civic, are also represented at the Sacred Spring.<sup>12</sup> Date divisions are rough, and the list begins with the most numerous type in each period and ends with the least numerous.

A. Up to 450 B.C. There is a large number of fragments but not a wide range of shapes:

1. Attic cylinder lekythoi: black-figured,<sup>13</sup> white-ground,<sup>14</sup> and ivy-and-palmette examples,<sup>15</sup> including Attic examples with upright vertical palmettes.<sup>16</sup>
2. Corinthian small banded lekythoi.<sup>17</sup>
3. Corinthian black-glazed lekythoi of the Archaic type.<sup>18</sup>

There is an Attic askos fragment and possibly some fragments of Corinthian kothon(s).<sup>19</sup>

<sup>10</sup> A number following a number and a colon indicates a pot or fragment within that lot.

<sup>11</sup> The lydion probably held *bakkaris*, a perfumed substance “applied by smearing and/or anointing” (Greenewalt 1966, pp. 103–104, where he provides the philological argument for this interpretation). 5786:1: H. 0.036, est. Diam. 0.065 m.; of Greenewalt’s Type A 45, which he suggests may be Attic (p. 46 and note 20), and which he dates to the 6th century. For North Cemetery parallels, see note 74 below.

<sup>12</sup> Of 5th-century oil containers now known to have been in use at Corinth, only Attic red-figured cylinder lekythoi are not certainly testified. Some large black-glazed fragments may be from red-figured vessels, however. Although the following list is intended to represent all the different types of vessels which appear, by no means is it a comprehensive account of examples for each type. I have selected relevant examples from various pottery lots for purposes of discussion. Whenever there are published examples, I refer to them.

<sup>13</sup> The Attic black-figured cylinder 6354:2 is an exceptionally large example; numerous smaller examples are stored in lot 5777. Compare the examples from North Cemetery grave 272: T 1074, T 1077, T 1081, T 1084 (*Corinth XIII*, pp. 219–220, pl. 94).

<sup>14</sup> C-69-333 + C-69-334 is to be published in a forthcoming article by Ann Brownlee. Other fragments are stored in lot 5777. Compare the example from North Cemetery grave 274: T 2912 (*Corinth XIII*, p. 221, pl. 39).

<sup>15</sup> Ivy: numerous examples stored in lot 1972-65. Compare the examples from North Cemetery grave 342: T 591, T 592, T 595 (*Corinth XIII*, p. 245, pl. 51). A white-ground example with palmettes arranged horizontally is 5777:2; compare the example from North Cemetery grave 295: T 2847 (*Corinth XIII*, p. 228, pl. 43).

<sup>16</sup> White ground: 1972-98:1; black figure: 5782:1. Compare examples of both types from North Cemetery grave 334: T 1802, T 1805, T 1813, T 1814 are black figure and T 1810 and T 1807 are white ground (*Corinth XIII*, p. 242, pl. 49).

<sup>17</sup> See *Corinth XIII*, pp. 140–141. Pemberton (1968, pp. 73–77) presents a taxonomy and a discussion of the nomenclature, development, and chronology. For a summary of her discussion see Pemberton 1970, pp. 292–294. Here I use Pemberton’s terminology rather than Palmer’s (that is, “small” rather than “miniature”). *Fifth-century types*. Type I: C-68-108. This type does not appear in North Cemetery graves. Type 2: C-68-95. Compare the example from North Cemetery grave 373: T 1445 (*Corinth XIII*, p. 256, pl. 60). Type 3: C-69-121; 1972-98:2; 5786:2. Compare the examples from North Cemetery grave 388: T 2872 and T 2875 (*Corinth XIII*, p. 260, pl. 63).

<sup>18</sup> 6334:1 and 6335:1; compare the example from North Cemetery grave 219: T 1479 (*Corinth XIII*, p. 203, pl. 32). For Palmer’s discussion of this type see *Corinth XIII*, p. 140.

<sup>19</sup> A fragment of an askos rim is stored in lot 5777; compare the example from North Cemetery grave 424: T 1275 (*Corinth XIII*, p. 273, pl. 71). For a 5th-century askos see C-70-166 (Williams 1971, no. 34, p. 31, pl. 8). A fragment of a kothon(?) lip, not paralleled in the North Cemetery finds, is stored in lot 1972-60.

B. 450–400 B.C. There are fewer fragments but a wider variety of shapes:

1. Corinthian small banded lekythoi.<sup>20</sup>
2. Attic red-figured squat lekythoi, figural and palmette.<sup>21</sup>
3. White ground: Attic pattern and black figure.<sup>22</sup>  
     Attic white-ground funerary (Pl. 87:b).<sup>23</sup>  
     Corinthian white-ground funerary.<sup>24</sup>
4. Vrysoula lekythoi.<sup>25</sup>
5. Blisterware aryballoi.<sup>26</sup>
6. Corinthian red-figured squat lekythoi.<sup>27</sup>
7. Galaxidi Class lekythoi.<sup>28</sup>

C. 400–325 B.C.

1. Corinthian small banded lekythoi.<sup>29</sup>
2. Attic red-figured squat lekythoi<sup>30</sup> including St. Valentin's Class.<sup>31</sup>
3. Blisterware aryballoi.<sup>32</sup>
4. Corinthian red-figured squat lekythoi.<sup>33</sup>
5. Attic glazed askoi.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>20</sup> See note 17 above.

<sup>21</sup> Figural: C-68-71 and C-68-179, McPhee 1981, nos. 31 and 32, pp. 273–274, pl. 68; palmette: 5227:1; C-68-195, Williams 1969, no. 12, p. 60, pl. 18:e; C-68-72, McPhee 1981, no. 33, p. 274, pl. 68. Compare the examples of both types from North Cemetery grave 426: T 3147 and T 3152, *Corinth XIII*, p. 274, pl. 67.

<sup>22</sup> See notes 15 and 16 above.

<sup>23</sup> C-69-326 and C-69-349. There are no examples of Attic white-ground figural lekythoi from the North Cemetery. There are, however, a number of examples with funerary iconography which come from undocumented contexts at Corinth: MP 91 (*ARV*<sup>2</sup>, p. 759, no. 2); Athens, N.M. 1811 (*ARV*<sup>2</sup>, p. 1379, no. 54); Athens, N.M. 1810 (*ARV*<sup>2</sup>, p. 1375, no. 3); MP 93 (*ARV*<sup>2</sup>, p. 1245, no. 3).

<sup>24</sup> See *Corinth XIII*, pp. 141–143 for a discussion of this type. C-70-171; 5213:1; 5213:2; 5221:1; 5777:1; 5785:1; 6354:1. Full treatment of the Sacred Spring examples (1–7) follows.

<sup>25</sup> See Pemberton 1970, nos. 5–15. The Sacred Spring examples, C-72-136 and fragments in lot 1972-98, are larger than those in the Vrysoula deposit. These lekythoi do not appear in North Cemetery graves.

<sup>26</sup> *Corinth VII*, iii, pp. 146–148. Fragments are stored in lot 5777. Although this type is not common in North Cemetery graves, compare the example from grave 363: T 1434 (*Corinth XIII*, p. 252, pl. 58); note that Palmer calls this shape a “round-mouthed oinochoe, Type B”.

<sup>27</sup> C-70-104 and C-69-120, a miniature. Compare the examples from North Cemetery grave 418: T 2420 and T 2422 (*Corinth XIII*, p. 270, pl. 69).

<sup>28</sup> C-68-111 (Williams 1969, no. 7, p. 56) and another similar fragment in lot 5216, both of the Galaxidi Class(?), ca. 420 B.C. For a discussion of this class, see *Agora XII*, nos. 1142 and 1143, p. 155 and Beazley 1940–1945, p. 17. Production of this class extended down into the 4th century. There are no Galaxidi Class lekythoi preserved from Corinthian graves.

<sup>29</sup> Examples include C-68-178; C-68-191; C-68-192 (Williams 1969, no. 13, p. 60, pl. 17:d); and all are Pemberton's Type IV. Compare the example from North Cemetery grave 426: T 3148 (*Corinth XIII*, p. 274, pl. 67).

<sup>30</sup> C-68-195 and many more examples in lot 5227. Compare the example from North Cemetery grave 433: T 2436 (*Corinth XIII*, p. 277, pl. 73).

<sup>31</sup> C-69-139 and four to six more in lot 6265. See Beazley 1940–1945 and *Olynthus XIII*, pp. 141–167 and pls. 101–106 (Robinson dates them to the second quarter of the 4th century). There are no parallels for this type in the very few North Cemetery graves from this period.

<sup>32</sup> See note 26 above.

<sup>33</sup> See note 27 above.

<sup>34</sup> See note 19 above.

6. Lydion (Pl. 87:c).<sup>35</sup>
7. Alabaster alabastron.<sup>36</sup>

#### D. After 325 B.C.

1. Unbanded and banded unguentaria, including imitation Cypriot types.<sup>37</sup>
2. Blisterware aryballoi.<sup>38</sup>

Although the excavator believes that the sanctuary remained in use until 146 B.C., there is no evidence for substantial architectural alteration after 275. As a result, the latest stratified evidence of pottery is at about that time.<sup>39</sup>

#### CORINTHIAN WHITE-GROUND LEKYTHOI

One type of oil container from the Sacred Spring requires more detailed analysis, the Corinthian white-ground lekythos dating *ca.* 450–400 B.C. The vast majority of Corinthian white-ground lekythoi come from graves, and Hazel Palmer has analyzed those from the North Cemetery. These fragments from the Sacred Spring expand our knowledge of that local production, allowing us to build upon Palmer's analysis of the type.<sup>40</sup> Hence, a full discussion of the implications of this new evidence is included here.

#### CATALOGUE

##### 1. Foot fragments

5222:1. H. 0.025, est. Diam. 0.050 m.

About one-half of foot preserved.

Clay: very pale brown, 10YR 8/3. Wash: light red, 10R 6/6.

Light grooves on stem; groove at top of side of foot.

Covered with pink wash on exterior and under-surface. On top of foot, bits of shiny black glaze.

A close parallel for the size and shape of the foot is T 2190 (*Corinth* XIII, 416-8, p. 269, pl. 68), Fig. 2, and so the reconstructed dimensions of the entire vase ought to be *ca.* 0.254 m. in height and 0.072 m. in shoulder diameter.

Fig. 2

Parallels for glaze and wash are difficult to find among lekythoi of roughly the same size as this example: most lekythoi with a light-red wash on the foot are Corinthian imitations of Attic ivy lekythoi (as T 645 [*Corinth* XIII, 370-6, p. 256, pl. 59], H. 0.139, Diam. 0.05 m.), which are much smaller than the Sacred Spring example. Although Palmer (p. 142) describes her Group iii lekythoi as having a pink wash on the foot, I did not find it to be present on examples which Palmer assigned to that group.

Context: Probably dumped fill from construction between phases 1 and 2 (section in Williams 1971, p. 18, fig. 8) around the fountain house. Lot 5221

<sup>35</sup> 5811:1. H. 0.048, est. Diam. 0.045 m.; it possibly belongs to Greenewalt's "Late and Transitional" group (Greenewalt 1966, pp. 35–42). See note 74 below for North Cemetery parallels.

<sup>36</sup> MF-68-360 and other fragments in lot 5783. One rim fragment has a reconstructed diameter of 0.07 m.

<sup>37</sup> Catalogued examples are C-68-75, C-68-363, and C-68-364. Lot 5265 has 15 additional fragments of fusiform unguentaria. For comparison, see Pemberton 1985, pp. 284–286 for a list of unguentaria found in graves and a discussion of unguentaria in relation to other oil containers found in earlier graves. For a discussion of the earliest of the local Corinthian type in the series, see also *Corinth* VII, iii, pp. 98–99. The imitation Cypriot pottery from Corinth was once held to be imported (Williams 1978b, p. 124), but Williams (personal communication) now believes that it may have been locally produced.

<sup>38</sup> See note 26 above.

<sup>39</sup> Stored in lot 5811. The upper levels of the Sacred Spring were excavated primarily at the beginning of the century, and complete pottery records are not available for the Hellenistic levels around the center of the sanctuary.

<sup>40</sup> *Corinth* XIII, pp. 120–122 and 140–143.

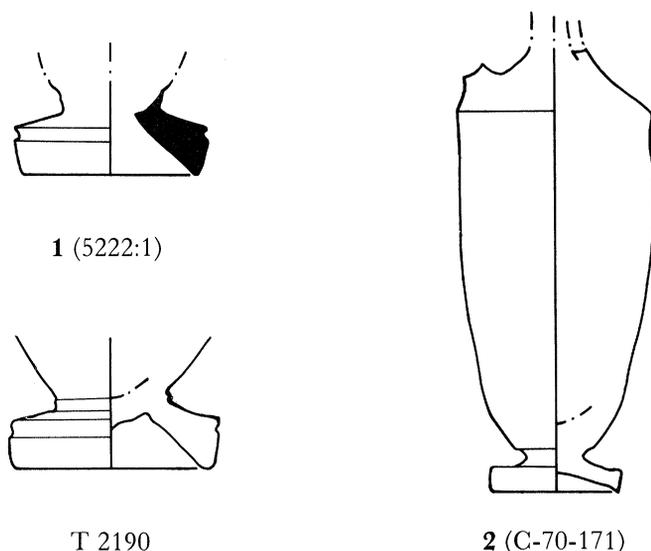


FIG. 2. Corinthian white-ground lekythoi. Scale 1:2

dates chiefly to the second half of the 5th century; one fragment is possibly a 4th-century unguentarium.

2. Cylinder lekythos Fig. 2

C-70-171. H. 0.119, Diam. 0.037 m.

Broken at base of neck.

Clay: reddish yellow, 7.5YR 7/8. Glaze: red, 2.5YR 5/8.

High, sloping shoulder. Just below shoulder, a slight indentation emphasized by an incised line. Baggy at bottom, then tapering abruptly. Low disk foot, concave on undersurface. Strap handle.

Cylinder, shoulder, and lower part of neck slipped white (white slip stops close to break on neck). On cylinder, traces of red (10R 4/6) and brownish yellow (10YR 6/8) paint over slip. Handle, base, top, and exterior of foot glazed. Bottom of foot reserved.

This example is very difficult to parallel. By analogy to parallels cited below, I reconstruct the decoration as an upright palmette. Close, but not identical, is T 1182 (*Corinth XIII*, 411-9, p. 267, pl. 66, H. ca. 0.147 m.), Fig. 4; T 1156 (*Corinth XIII*, 407-11, p. 266, pl. 66) preserves the same colors, and Palmer records the decoration as "vertical red palmette; on either side, three-petalled floral motif; some yellow color preserved."

Context: This lekythos was found at the bottom of

a hole, 0.110 m. in diameter, which pierced a hard floor. Accompanying the lekythos were earth and fragments of undiagnostic pottery which were discarded. The general date corresponds to the period of construction of a new set of steps, dating from the third quarter of the 5th century through the beginning of the 4th century.

3. Small section of neck and shoulder of cylinder lekythos

5213:1. H. 0.027, W. 0.036 m.

Clay: white, 2.5YR 8/2.

Narrow neck; sloping shoulder. Possibly a very light groove at join of neck and shoulder.

Traces of white slip on neck and shoulder. On top of slip are small specks and a drip of black glaze. Lekythos T 1268 (*Corinth XIII*, 430-3, p. 276, pl. 71; H. 0.174, Diam. 0.054 m.) is of about the same size as 5213:1 and also has small traces of glaze preserved on the neck.

Context: There is no stratigraphic context for this fragment; the lot has modern contamination from excavations earlier in the 20th century.

4. Neck and shoulder of cylinder lekythos

5213:2. H. 0.045, W. 0.035 m.

Clay: reddish yellow, 7.5YR 7/6. Glaze: red, 2.5YR 5/8.

This is essentially a twin of **2**, and its context is the same as for **3**. A close comparison for size is T 1285 (*Corinth XIII*, 430-5, p. 276, pl. 71; H. 0.176, Diam. 0.051 m.), Fig. 5.

#### 5. Section of body of cylinder lekythos

5777:1. H. 0.054, W. of two joining fragments 0.060, est. Diam. 0.055 m.

Clay: pink, 7.5YR 7/4.

Cylinder tapers toward bottom of fragment.

Traces of white slip above; dull black glaze below. An apt parallel for clay color is T 670 (*Corinth XIII*, 415-18, p. 269, pl. 68). Note that the fabric of this lekythos is very close to that of examples in the semiglazed repertory, such as C-70-591, a round-mouthed oinochoe. For size, compare T 2198 (*Corinth XIII*, 416-11, p. 270, pl. 68; H. 0.205, Diam. 0.063 m.).

Context: Construction fill for a new east-west racecourse. A dumped fill between floors of phases 7 and 8 is at its deepest one meter thick (Williams 1971, p. 19, fig. 8). The fill contains imitation Cypriot dating to 325-280 B.C.

#### 6. Section of neck and handle of cylinder lekythos

5785:1. H. 0.042, Diam. 0.024 m.

Clay: very pale brown to yellow, 10YR 8/4-8/6.

Cylindrical neck; strap handle.

Black glaze preserved on upper part of neck and some on exterior of handle. Very light groove at bottom of painted section and another slightly lower down. A close parallel for clay color, decorative scheme, and size is T 2381 (419-9, *Corinth XIII*, p. 271, pl. 69; H. 0.280, Diam. 0.078 m.), Fig. 5.

Context: deep dumped fill, which dates before the end of the 5th century, under a floor level which is under the end of phase 3. There is no specific 5th-century phase of sanctuary construction which can be associated at present with this fill.

#### 7. One-half of mouth of cylinder lekythos

6354:1. H. 0.025, Diam. 0.030 m.

Clay: between white and pale yellow, 2.5YR 8/2 and 2.5YR 8/4. Wash: lighter than red, 10R 4/8.

Broken at join with neck. Trumpet-type mouth: out-turned lip, flat on top. Pink-red wash preserved on top of lip; two or three tiny spots or streaks of glaze on exterior. A close parallel for size, clay color, and scheme of decoration is T 2309 (*Corinth XIII*, 400-5, p. 263, pl. 64; H. 0.153, Diam. 0.051 m.).

Context: Construction fill behind and to south of steps along south side of Sacred Spring. Pottery in this lot dates to the 5th century. See section, Williams 1971, p. 18, fig. 8.

While some of the examples fit neatly into Palmer's taxonomy, not all the Sacred Spring fragments find obvious parallels among the three groups which she distinguished in the North Cemetery material (note especially **1** and **2**). An observable diversity among Corinthian white lekythoi is already on record: Palmer herself noted that the groups which she identified were not consistent.<sup>41</sup> Here we can illustrate the diversity of types from the North Cemetery, the Sacred Spring, and other Corinthian locations:

#### *North Cemetery Group i*

As defined by Palmer, this group is characterized by a shallow mouth, flat shoulder, tapering body, and low foot with concave edge; the decoration is that of an Attic ivy lekythos with the unglazed areas of mouth, neck, shoulder, and foot covered with pink wash.<sup>42</sup> Examples such as T 2277 (*Corinth XIII*, 379-7, p. 257, pl. 62; Fig. 3) are usually close imitations of Attic types such as C-32-225 (Fig. 3).

#### *North Cemetery Group ii*

This is an inconsistent group, primarily distinguished by a baggy profile, trumpet mouth, and low disk foot. Mouth, handle, lower body, and band on edge of foot are black.

<sup>41</sup> *Corinth XIII*, p. 121; Palmer refers to the fact that there is less uniformity in the development of Corinthian lekythos shapes in comparison to Attic ones, and under her discussion of Group ii states that "forms are less controlled, and deviations are common" (p. 143).

<sup>42</sup> *Corinth XIII*, p. 142.

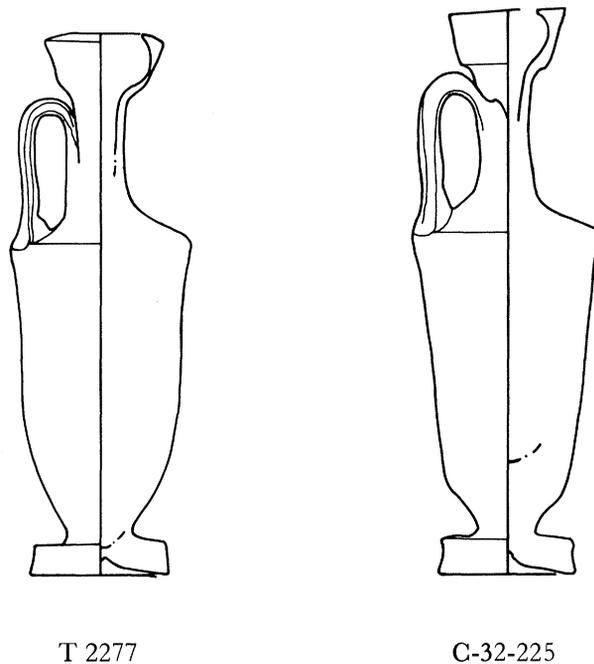


FIG. 3. Corinthian white-ground lekythoi, North Cemetery Group i. Scale 1:2

The neck and most of the body are covered with thick, white glaze. A comparison of the following examples (Fig. 4) demonstrates the range within the group: T 2307 (*Corinth XIII*, 400-4, p. 263, pl. 64); T 3034 (*Corinth XIII*, 417-4, p. 270); T 2397 (*Corinth XIII*, 397-5, p. 262, pl. 65); T 1182 (*Corinth XIII*, 411-9, p. 267, pl. 66). Reexamination of Palmer's Group ii confirms her observation that examples in it vary widely. Note especially how the trumpet mouths may vary: lips may have an interior flange or not. Handles attach at varying places on necks; necks are of differing proportions to the whole; and feet vary in height and profile.

#### *North Cemetery Group iii*

Palmer describes this group as having a deep conical mouth, narrow sloping shoulder, swollen cylindrical body, and small high foot. She states that mouth, neck, handle, and lower body are black; shoulder and most of body are white; and foot and top of mouth are covered with pink wash.<sup>43</sup> As mentioned above in the discussion of 1, I found no pink wash on any of the Group iii examples. This is the most regular of Palmer's groups, with the largest number of examples preserved: T 2381 (*Corinth XIII*, 419-9, *Corinth XIII*, p. 271, pl. 69), a very large example (H. 0.254 m.), and T 1285 (*Corinth XIII*, 430-5, p. 276, pl. 71), a small example (H. 0.176 m.), show the range in size (Fig. 5).

#### *Anomalous White-ground Lekythoi*

There are two North Cemetery examples which are so distinct that they really do not fit easily into even the most liberal definition of any group. T 1340 (*Corinth XIII*, 392-5,

<sup>43</sup> *Corinth XIII*, p. 142.

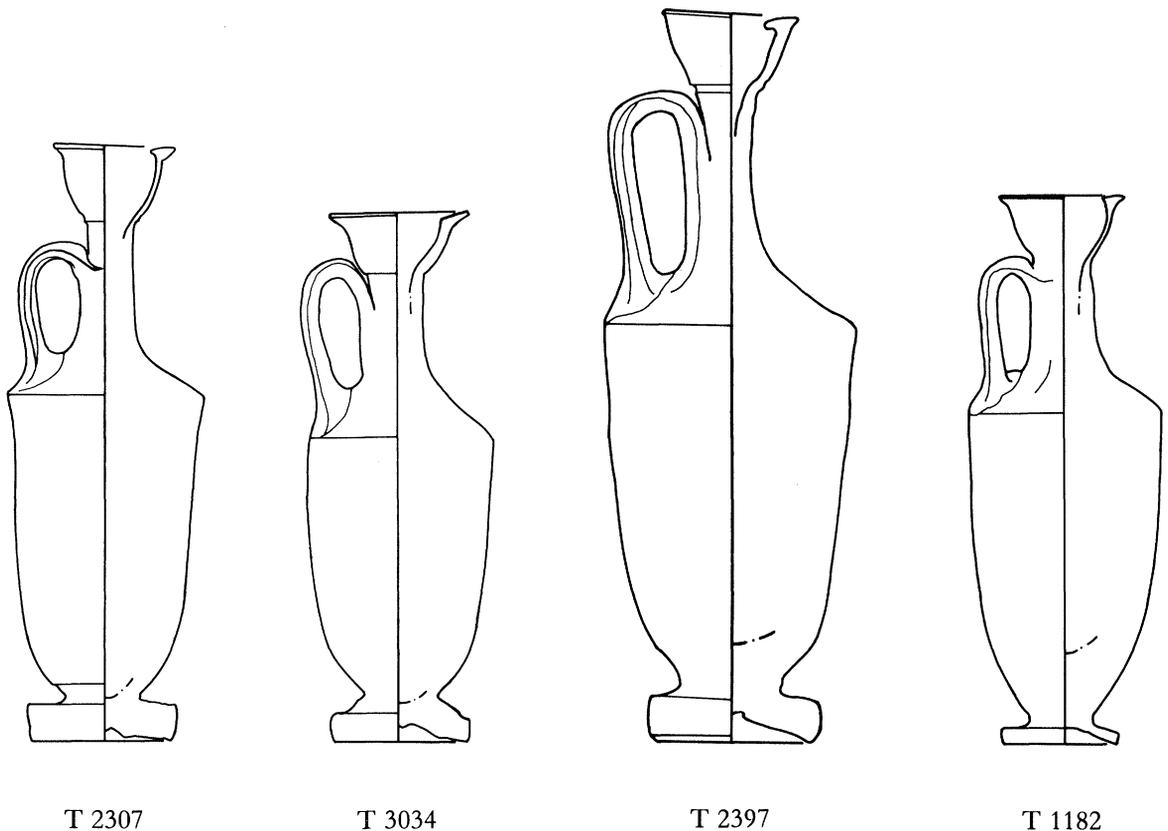
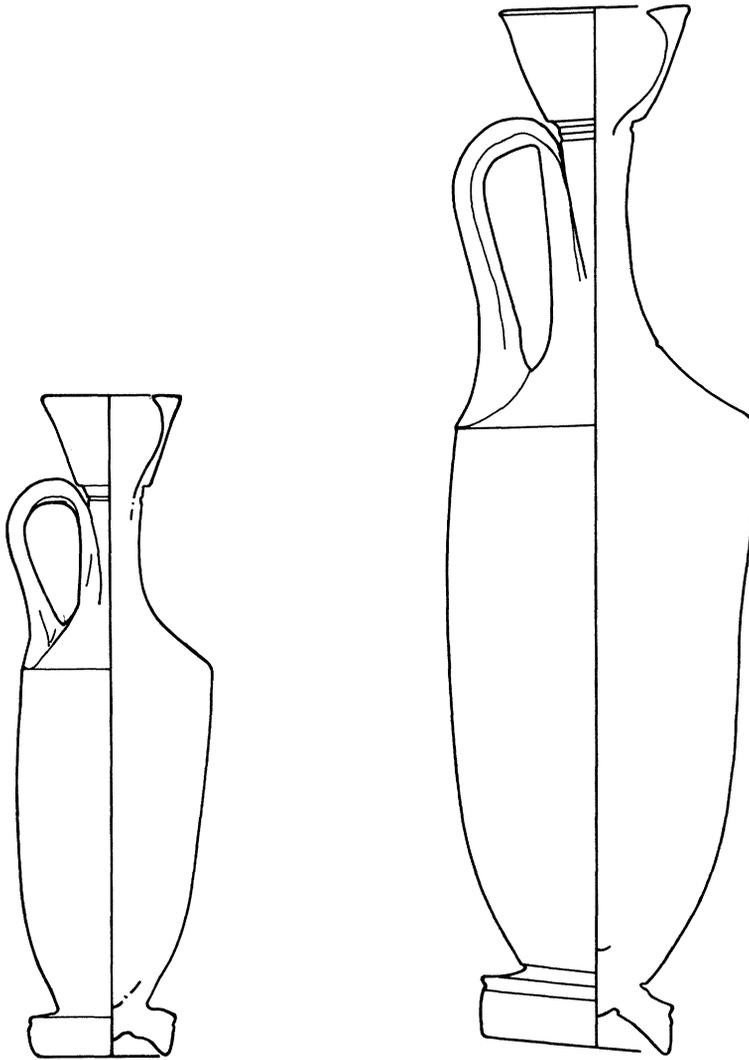


FIG. 4. Corinthian white-ground lekythoi, North Cemetery Group ii. Scale 1:2

p. 261, pl. 60; Fig. 6), according to Palmer, is a squat example of Group ii. In my opinion, it is too remote from most examples of that group to be associated with them: the mouth is tiny and straight sided, and there is a red wash on its top. The neck is much longer and more narrow than those on other lekythoi in that group (Fig. 4); moreover, the fabric is a bright orange rather than the usual yellow buff.

T 3029 (*Corinth XIII*, 396-4, p. 262, pl. 64; Fig. 6, Pl. 87:d, e) is an example which, according to Palmer, ought to be in Group i, but its decoration is virtually unique among all Corinthian lekythoi. There are palmettes on the shoulder and body in orange matt paint with black stems, it has a trumpet mouth, and the foot is in imitation of two degrees with a flare at the bottom.

The following have associations with both her Groups ii and iii but do not fit easily into either: the mouth on T 1103 (*Corinth XIII*, 404-5, p. 265, pl. 65), according to Palmer in Group ii, flares only slightly and does not really qualify as a "trumpet mouth"; T 2947 (*Corinth XIII*, 401-6, p. 264, pl. 64), according to Palmer in Group ii, has pink wash on the top of the mouth, a characteristic only of her Groups i and iii, and an exceptionally thin foot with a strongly concave undersurface; T 623 (*Corinth XIII*, 365-3, p. 254, pl. 59), according to Palmer in Group i, has a white slip on body and neck as is characteristic only of her Groups ii and iii, the mouth flares slightly, and the handle joins the body at a lower point than others in Group i. Palmer herself recognized that the white slip separated this last



T 1285

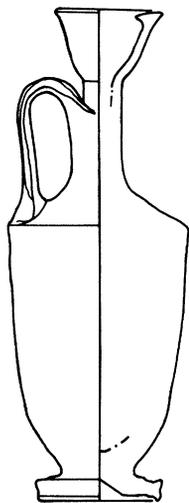
T 2381

FIG. 5. Corinthian white-ground lekythoi, North Cemetery Group iii. Scale 1:2

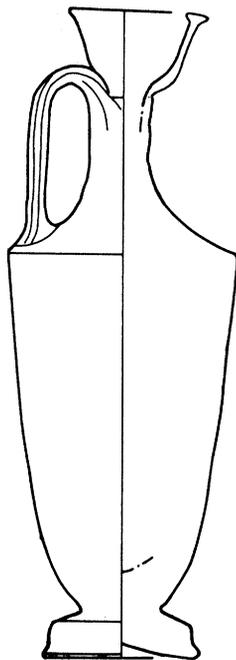
lekythos from most of those in Group i, and she suggested that it might be “transitional to Group ii.”<sup>44</sup>

MP 98 (Fig. 6) and MP 99 come from *outside* the North Cemetery and have similar dual associations with Palmer’s groups. MP 99 has a white slip on body and neck and a straight-sided mouth; it conforms to the characteristics of Group iii, except for a very small rim which turns out slightly and is like the trumpet mouths of Group ii. MP 98 is identical in shape to those in Palmer’s Group i but is decorated like those in Group iii.

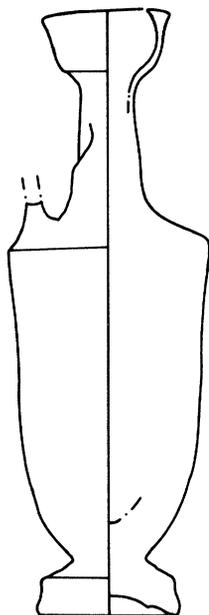
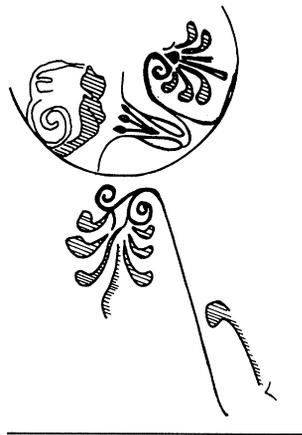
<sup>44</sup> *Corinth XIII*, p. 143.



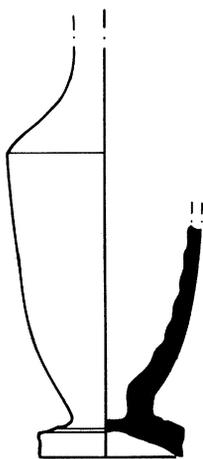
T 1340



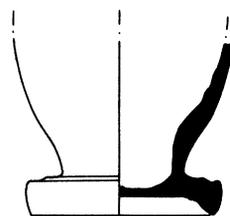
T 3029



MP 98



C-64-392



C-64-280

FIG. 6. Corinthian white-ground lekythoi (anomalous). Scale 1:2

Thus, we need to acknowledge that even giving “diversity” the widest possible definition, there are more types of lekythoi, each represented by a single example, than the three groups identified by Palmer.

Other new evidence, which has come to light since Palmer’s publication, suggests that an even more diverse production of cylinder lekythoi existed in Corinth. For example, note the types in the Vrysoula repertory which are not paralleled by material from the North Cemetery: C-64-392, C-64-280 (both Fig. 6), and C-65-277. Note also that the Vrysoula production shows another Corinthian use of certain decorative motifs, such as palmettes, which are typical elements of the white-ground-lekythos repertory of decoration. The Vrysoula examples demonstrate that an earlier *Corinthian* model for white-ground lekythoi decorated with palmettes exists and that Palmer’s hypothesis of strictly Attic models for the production should be modified accordingly. Thus, her strict dependence on the Attic sequence for prototypes is no longer necessary.

The attempt to find parallels for **2** from the Sacred Spring suggests the ubiquity of the upright-palmette motif, both in polychrome and, occasionally, in black glaze (Pl. 87:f).<sup>45</sup> There are examples from each of Palmer’s groups which have traces of polychrome floral decoration,<sup>46</sup> and on 11 of these (4 from Group ii and 7 from Group iii), we certainly see an upright palmette on the body. This observation confirms the independence of Corinthian painters from Attic prototypes: single upright polychrome palmettes do not decorate Attic white-ground cylinders, since polychrome technique is reserved for figural decoration in the Attic repertory. We do see the single upright palmette on Attic red-figured squat lekythoi, which appear about 425 B.C., but that date is too late to have inspired the Corinthian white-ground production.

The new evidence from the Sacred Spring invites modification of previous conclusions; groups with certain affinities do exist, but more types of lekythoi are preserved than have been described. Corinthian painters and potters were more independent than earlier analysis suggests; in particular, we ought not to understand Corinthian white-ground lekythoi to be so tied to and reliant upon Attic models as Palmer’s scheme requires. There is evidence for independence from Attic forms from at least the middle of the 5th century, when the Vrysoula production begins.

Some evidence advises caution in the strict application of Palmer’s extremely refined dating scheme as well: Groups i and ii, *ca.* 430 to *ca.* 421, and Group iii, *ca.* 421 to *ca.* 400–390. Pemberton suggests that Corinthian small banded lekythoi might go down later in date than Palmer allows; if they were produced in the 4th century, and this is not certain, it would suggest that the production of white-ground lekythoi also went on later than

<sup>45</sup> As T 3108 (*Corinth XIII*, 427-13, p. 275), where the black glaze has fired red.

<sup>46</sup> Palmer originally studied 110 Corinthian white lekythoi from the North Cemetery; of these, 21 have been lost. These observations are based on an examination of the remaining 89 of her original 110 lekythoi (*Corinth XIII* catalogue numbers in parentheses). *Group i*: T 623 (365-3). *Group ii*: T 1107 (404-3), T 1156 (407-11), T 1184 (411-7), T 1185 (411-8). *Group iii*: T 662 (415-16), T 1195 (412-13), T 1284 (430-8), T 1285 (430-5), T 1286 (430-3), T 1287 (430-6), T 1291 (430-7), T 1292 (430-4), T 1360 (409-8), T 1364 (409-9), T 2189 (416-7), T 2193 (416-6), T 3108 (427-13), T 3111 (427-12), T 3141 (426-6), T 3143 (426-8), T 3145 (426-9), T 3146 (426-7), T 3153 (426-10). See also C-66-177, an example with a trumpet mouth and traces of blue paint over a white wash; **2** (C-70-171), from the Sacred Spring; MP 97; and MP 96.

Palmer's cutoff date.<sup>47</sup> Demetri Schilardi shows that one of the Palmer groups needs slight updating: he identifies a Group iii lekythos from the Thespian Polyandron which must date before 424, while Palmer believed that Group iii types were not produced until 421.<sup>48</sup> The date of the inception of red-figure production at Corinth should not be tied to Palmer's chronology as it was by Herbert; she based it, erroneously, on an Attic white-ground ivy lekythos rather than a Group i Corinthian imitation.<sup>49</sup>

### *Conclusion*

Despite numerous architectural changes at the Sacred Spring, oil-containing vessels appear consistently. Almost every type accounted for elsewhere on the site also appears at the Sacred Spring; certainly the most popular type is the Corinthian small banded lekythos. Virtually one-half of the pottery lots from the Sacred Spring (70 out of 141) preserve fragments of that type.<sup>50</sup> Almost all the types find parallels in the graves of the North Cemetery and elsewhere at Corinth.

## II. CORINTHIAN COMPARISONS AND INTERPRETATIONS

A comparison with a range of material contemporary to the Sacred Spring confirms that the presence of a large number of oil-containing vessels is very unusual among cult sites at Corinth. The Demeter Sanctuary on the slopes of Acrocorinth differs from the Sacred Spring in its focus on a panhellenic deity, but the cult probably shared rituals which include water and, perhaps, burnt sacrifice. Demeter cults are chthonic, often secret, and require initiation, all likely cult elements at the Sacred Spring. The pottery from the Demeter Sanctuary, like the Sacred Spring material, comes "not from sealed and limited contexts but from large dumped fills with a long range of dates."<sup>51</sup> The activity in the Greek period of the Demeter Sanctuary extended from the mid-7th century to 146 B.C., and so it overlaps considerably with that of the Sacred Spring.

The population of oil containers at the Demeter Sanctuary is less diverse and their distribution is more sporadic than that observed at the Sacred Spring. Following a very few

<sup>47</sup> Pemberton 1968, pp. 114–115.

<sup>48</sup> Schilardi 1977, nos. 34, 35, pp. 20–21, 137.

<sup>49</sup> *Corinth* VII, iv, pp. 13–16. Herbert uses her Deposit I, a grave from outside the North City Wall, as the beginning date for production of Corinthian red-figured pottery (p. 13: "No Corinthian red-figure appears in any context earlier than the late third quarter of the 5th century [Deposits 1 and 3]"). Deposit I contains a Corinthian red-figured stemless cup, together with three Attic ivy lekythoi. Herbert misidentified the lekythoi as Corinthian and dated them, and the Corinthian red-figured stemless cup which accompanied them, by Palmer's scheme to "late third to early fourth quarter of the 5th century B.C." Since Attic ivy lekythoi begin production by 460 in the workshop of the Beldam Painter (see Kurtz 1975, pp. 153–154 and the chart, pp. 134–135), and the ivy lekythoi in Deposit I are Attic and not Corinthian, the date of the Corinthian red-figured stemless cup, and with it the date of the inception of Corinthian red-figure production in general, can be raised. Ian McPhee has already suggested (1983, p. 138, note 7) that there is other evidence indicating that Corinthian production of red figure began as early as 440 B.C.

<sup>50</sup> The following lots contain fragments of small banded lekythoi: 5152; 5154; 5156–5158; 5198; 5199; 5200; 5202; 5204; 5206; 5209; 5213–5216; 5219; 5221; 5223; 5227–5229; 5232; 5235; 5245; 5247; 5257; 5261; 5267; 5777; 5780; 5783–5786; 5788; 5790–5792; 5802; 5813; 5814; 5819; 5822; 6242; 6262; 6266; 6267; 6305; 6320; 6334; 6347; 6354; 1972-39; 1972-56–58; 1972-60; 1972-61; 1972-98.

<sup>51</sup> *Corinth* XVIII, i, p. 2.

Corinthian black-glazed lekythoi of the Archaic type,<sup>52</sup> there is a showing of Attic cylinder lekythoi in the second quarter up to the middle of the 5th century. Examples include black-figured,<sup>53</sup> white-ground (some with ivy-chain patterns),<sup>54</sup> and black-figured palmette lekythoi.<sup>55</sup> The last, according to Pemberton, is the most prevalent type, and she suggests that a short-lived “cult requirement” is a possible explanation for this concentration.

Apart from this brief period of diverse representation, there are few oil containers at the Demeter Sanctuary. Archaic aryballoi are “virtually absent”<sup>56</sup> from the sanctuary, and the only locally manufactured example which appears with any intensity is the blisterware aryballos.<sup>57</sup> This shape, according to Pemberton, makes its appearance as the Attic cylinder lekythos fades out, about 450, and she hypothesizes that the Corinthian vessel might be a functional replacement for the Attic cylinders within the context of the cult. The presence of lekythoi might be explained as necessary to the dining or lustration which were part of sanctuary activity.

Although there is a single Attic white-ground figural, and possibly funerary, lekythos, there are no Corinthian imitations.<sup>58</sup> Nor are there Vrysoula lekythoi, and the small banded lekythos, the most plentiful of all types found at the Sacred Spring, is very sparsely represented. The numerous Attic 4th-century squat types seen at the Sacred Spring are represented only rarely.<sup>59</sup> Pemberton notes that the Hellenistic unguentarium, both Corinthian and imported types, “is not a popular shape in the [Demeter] sanctuary.”<sup>60</sup> Thus, either cult requirements did not remain consistent throughout the history of the sanctuary or they did not emphasize the use of oil containers.

The minimal presence of oil containers at the Demeter Sanctuary is in sharp contrast to evidence from most of the smaller shrines in the forum area.<sup>61</sup> At the Stele Shrine, which Williams suggests may honor an individual connected in civic memory with the overthrow of the tyrants, ritual included burnt sacrifice. From its period of activity, the 570's or 560's through at least the mid-3rd century B.C., there is very little pottery preserved, and there are no oil-containing vessels.<sup>62</sup> The Underground Shrine, used from the 5th century through the first quarter of the 4th century B.C., is an underground room connected to wells by means

<sup>52</sup> C-65-125, *Corinth XVIII*, i, no. 44, p. 86. According to Pemberton (p. 52) these are the only Corinthian types of lekythoi deposited during this period at the sanctuary. The type is also very rare at the Sacred Spring.

<sup>53</sup> C-65-42 and C-73-259, *Corinth XVIII*, i, no. 45, p. 86 and no. 326, p. 142.

<sup>54</sup> C-65-312 (*Corinth XVIII*, i, no. 327, p. 142) has a black-figure scene.

<sup>55</sup> C-65-41, *Corinth XVIII*, i, no. 46, p. 86.

<sup>56</sup> *Corinth XVIII*, i, p. 53.

<sup>57</sup> *Corinth XVIII*, i, pp. 53–54. Note that Pemberton extends the date of production of the blisterware aryballos to as late as the mid-2nd century B.C., while Edwards (*Corinth VII*, iii, p. 179) dates the terminus for production to ca. 300 B.C.

<sup>58</sup> C-64-418 (*Corinth XVIII*, i, no. 366, p. 150) shows two figures and a rock with flowers.

<sup>59</sup> C-65-516 (*Corinth XVIII*, i, no. 96, p. 94): a red-figured palmette lekythos of the second quarter of the 4th century from Pemberton Group 6: fill brought in for construction of the Trapezoidal Stoa on the Middle Terrace.

<sup>60</sup> *Corinth XVIII*, i, p. 55; the unguentarium C-61-469 (no. 134, p. 99) is dated to the early 3rd century, from her Group 7, a sacrificial pit, and so it may be cult related.

<sup>61</sup> For a discussion of these and other shrines at Corinth, see Williams 1981.

<sup>62</sup> Williams 1978a, pp. 2–12, nos. 7–18, pp. 35–36. Williams 1978b, p. 62, “miniature votive cups and figurines.”

of a ramp.<sup>63</sup> Sacred to a chthonic hero or heroine or possibly to Artemis Kori[n]thos, the Underground Shrine is akin to the Sacred Spring in its apparent religious use of water.<sup>64</sup> All told, excavation there produced very little pottery and few figurines.<sup>65</sup> The Heroon of the Crossroads,<sup>66</sup> a small temenos that was built around one of a group of four Protogeometric graves, produced votive figurines and miniature pottery dating to its period of use, from the late 7th century to 146 B.C. There are no oil-containing vessels among the shapes found within the shrine. Shrines from the Potter's Quarter preserve no oil containers at all.<sup>67</sup>

Comparison to a discrete deposit from outside a certain and specific sanctuary context confirms that the evidence of oil containers at the Sacred Spring is unusual. Well 1970-1, also in the forum area, dates to the middle to third quarter of the 5th century. The 41 lamps from the well show traces of burning, indicating that the well contents had been used prior to their deposition. The presence of a large number of miniatures and a few votive figurines<sup>68</sup> suggests that the contents of the well might be from a sanctuary context. There are slightly over 500 vessels, most complete and others substantially preserved, of both Corinthian and Attic manufacture. Of these, nearly two-thirds are small and miniature bowls and skyphoi and oinochoai of functional size; another one-fifth are one-handlers. There are a few singletons and a total of 17 (including 4 fragments) oil containers, which parallel only about one-half of the contemporary types found at the Sacred Spring. Attic and Corinthian white-ground, pattern, or figural lekythoi are lacking altogether, as are red-figured examples. The chronological range of the deposit would eliminate squat lekythoi.<sup>69</sup>

Undoubtedly, there is less diversity in the types of oil containers present at Well 1970-1 than at the Sacred Spring. This evidence supports the case for the unique nature of the pottery evidence at the Sacred Spring, made evident through comparison to the Demeter Sanctuary and the smaller forum sanctuaries which preserve either no pottery or no oil containers.

<sup>63</sup> Williams 1978b, p. 75.

<sup>64</sup> Williams (1978b, pp. 76, 77–78) says that the figurine types are appropriate to a hero. He believes a votive base inscribed with the name of Artemis Korithos, found in fill on the southeast side of the reset boundary wall, was not necessarily dedicated at this temenos (Williams 1972, pp. 153–154, no. 16).

<sup>65</sup> Williams 1978b, pp. 73–78; in lot 1972-2 there is one fragmentary squat lekythos from the packing used for remodeling.

<sup>66</sup> Williams 1973, pp. 6–12; Williams 1974, pp. 1–6; Williams 1978b, pp. 79–87.

<sup>67</sup> *Corinth* XV, iii, Stelai Shrine A, pp. 186–196; Circular South Shrine, pp. 202–204; Shrine of the Double Stele, pp. 214–215.

<sup>68</sup> Votives include two horse-and-rider groups and a dove (MF-70-219–221).

<sup>69</sup> Well 70-1 Forum West; for the location see Williams 1979, p. 106, fig. 1. Inventoried examples of contents include the following:

*Corinthian*. Black-glazed lekythoi of the Archaic type (C-70-592, C-70-593, C-70-385); small banded lekythoi (C-70-389 of large size); blisterware aryballoi (C-70-410).

*Attic*. Cylinders: black figured (C-70-390, C-70-391 plus 2 fragments in lot); palmette (C-70-413); black glazed (C-70-417).

*Complete vessels and some large fragments not inventoried*. Corinthian small banded lekythoi, 3; blisterware aryballoi, 2; Attic and Corinthian skyphoi and kotylai, 28; oinochoai, 31; miniature and small bowls, 335; other miniatures, 3; one-handlers, 37; lamps, 41; Attic cup, 1; Attic kantharoi, 3; bolsal, 1; Attic saltcellar, 1; fine-ware chytra, 1; cooking-ware chytra, 1; round-mouthed coarse-ware jug, 1; Attic red-figured columnkrater, 1.

## INTERPRETATION

What do the presence and number of oil containers at the Sacred Spring mean? Sacred laws from several sites, contemporaneous with the period of use at the sanctuary, sometimes include mention of oil, but such epigraphical evidence is almost never accompanied by archaeological evidence from the relevant sanctuary. In no case do we see an extraordinary proportion of oil in comparison to other offerings.<sup>70</sup>

Both literary sources and archaeological evidence associate oil with bathing. The physical remains at the Sacred Spring suggest that water played a part in the ritual, and so the presence of oil containers might be explained very generally in that context.<sup>71</sup> Yet cult at the Demeter Sanctuary at Corinth also involved rites with water and, as discussed above (p. 400), there is no correlating predominance or diversity of oil containers there.

Oil plays a part in funerary rituals; however, we expect and, in most cases, find a separation between the offerings made in sanctuaries and those made in tombs. This separation corresponds to the split, well attested in literary evidence, between the spheres of private funerary cult and other types of worship.<sup>72</sup> Even shrines at the putative burials of heroes, like the Corinthian Heron of the Crossroads, which have some of the same polluting

<sup>70</sup> Sokolowski 1962, no. 2 B f-g-h, line 4, Athens, 510–480 B.C., cult uncertain; Sokolowski 1969, no. 5, line 59, Athens and Eleusis, 423–422 B.C., Demeter; Sokolowski 1962, no. 10 A, line 2, Athens, 4th century B.C., cult uncertain; Sokolowski 1969, no. 151 B, lines 24–25, Cos, 4th century B.C., cult calendar, cult of Athena Machanis; and no. 151 D, lines 8–9, 13–14, rites concerning ephebes (?); Sokolowski 1969, no. 28, lines 3, 7–8, 14, 17–18, 21, Athens, 4th century B.C., rules concerning priests' fees for some unidentified cults and for cults of Dionysos and Demeter Chloe; Sokolowski 1962, no. 7, line 10, Athens, 4th century B.C., rules relating to the Thesmophoria; Sokolowski 1969, no. 64, line 8, Messene, before 191 B.C., cult calendar, cult uncertain. Sokolowski 1969, no. 97, lines 9–10, Keos, 5th century B.C., funerary regulations, also records the use of oil and the order that containers for oil should be removed. Sokolowski (1969, p. 190) suggests that the requirement for removal is for reasons of economy.

<sup>71</sup> Ginouvès (1962) discusses the role of the bath in Greek cults; in particular, he collects the evidence for "Le bain dans les religions à mystères" (pp. 375–404), which include cults of Demeter, Hera, Artemis, Athena, Dionysos, Orphism, and Pythagorism, and "les religions orientales" (pp. 397–398), which include cults of Bendis and Kotyto. Although he makes no connection with the architectural remains at the Sacred Spring, he accepts Srebrny's conclusions (1936, pp. 423–447) that Kotyto was worshipped at Corinth.

<sup>72</sup> 1. "... a human who has come into contact with birth or death is excluded for a period from worshipping the gods," Parker 1983, pp. 33–34. In note 7 Parker quotes Euripides, *IT* 380–384 and others.

2. "In post-classical sacred laws, contact with death normally causes exclusion from the shrine for a fixed period of days," Parker 1983, p. 37. In note 17 Parker gives evidence for laws at what are primarily, if not exclusively, Olympian sanctuaries: Sokolowski 1969, no. 55, line 6; no. 124, lines 2–4; no. 139, line 13. Sokolowski 1962, no. 91, lines 13–14; no. 119, lines 3–4. Parker lists others, but they are from Asia Minor or ambiguous.

3. "Greek religion rejects [death] wholly," Parker 1983, p. 53; note 80 lists evidence for no priests at funerals (Plato, *Leg.* 947d and others).

4. "Those who have attended a funeral are excluded from sacred places because they are polluted, but sacrifice is a joyous occasion for Greeks and thus they would have been excluded anyway by the conventions of mourning," Parker 1983, p. 64.

Although Parker maintains (1983, p. 70) that "... extramural [burial] was the norm in almost all classical Greek cities. It would be shocking to mingle the dwellings of the dead with those of the living, still more with those of the gods," his contention does not strictly apply to ancient Corinth. There is substantial evidence for burial plots within the boundaries of the city until 146 B.C.; see Robinson 1962, pp. 118–120 (cemetery on the north slope of Acrocorinth) and Pemberton 1985, pp. 271–307.

qualities as ordinary graves,<sup>73</sup> do not preserve the same sorts of offerings as graves of ordinary mortals.

In light of the evidence just cited, the predominantly funerary aspect of many of the oil containers at the Sacred Spring, such as the Corinthian and Attic white-ground lekythoi, the Corinthian small banded lekythoi, and the lydia,<sup>74</sup> comes as a surprise. At Corinth, Attic cylinder lekythoi are also funerary, if not exclusively so.<sup>75</sup> Most of the lekythoi of the Sacred Spring find their best parallels in the graves of the North Cemetery. We are confronting, then, a striking combination for which we need an explanation: evidence of structures and some votives typical of public cult together with vessels appropriate to private, family-oriented funerary cult.

There are some situations which theoretically might require public practice of the same sorts of funerary ritual usually restricted to the private sphere. For example, the entire city was responsible for purificatory rites if an individual died in a public place.<sup>76</sup> There is no evidence, however, to suggest that such an event would result in regular deposition of funerary lekythoi for a sustained period of time at a civic sanctuary.

As it happens, the Sacred Spring is not unique in its apparent abrogation of the funerary-sanctuary separation. Although we cannot normally assume uniformity of cult practice from one ancient city to another, we do find, in Athens and elsewhere, parallels to the type of material from this Corinthian sanctuary. The usual division between offerings in ordinary graves and sanctuaries is breached in at least one Attic sanctuary, one much simpler than the Sacred Spring in both architecture and, apparently, cult: the small hypaethral

<sup>73</sup> Parker points out that graves of “founders” and “saviors” can be found in agoras and are presumably devoid of pollution (1983, p. 42 and note 39). Apparently contradicting this generalization is the evidence that sometimes participants in hero cult were obliged to purify themselves afterward and that priests were sometimes excluded from hero cult altogether (Parker 1983, p. 39 and note 25).

<sup>74</sup> The lydion is a relatively rare shape at Corinth and contexts are not exclusively funerary. Inventoried examples known to me are (1) T 2860, from the North Cemetery, ca. 575–550 (*Corinth* XIII, p. 325: found outside a robbed grave of the 6th century B.C.; Greenewalt [1966, p. 72] identifies this as Type EG 13, calling it East Greek; and Segal 1978, no. 242, p. 318); (2) C-73-367, an East Greek example from a residential context, assigned by Segal to Greenewalt’s Fat-bellied category, ca. 550–500 B.C. (Segal 1978, no. 243, p. 320); (3) C-50-99, from Edwards’s Deposit 87 (*Corinth* VII, iii), a well north of shop IV in the South Stoa, a commercial context; Greenewalt places this example in his group Fb 128 (Greenewalt 1966, p. 27); (4, 5) The two fragments from the Sacred Spring (see notes 11 and 35 above) increase our sample by two-thirds. In its general distribution, however, the lydion is apparently ubiquitous in graves and rare in sanctuary contexts (Greenewalt 1966, pp. 114–115). Note especially that the majority of lydia from Attica are from graves. Two examples, Greenewalt’s EG 3 and EG 26 (Agora P 11397 and Agora P 12681, *Agora* XII, nos. 1163 and 1164, p. 317, pl. 39) are from an Agora well. The remaining 16 listed by Greenewalt are from graves in the Agora and the Kerameikos. To his total, add two published by Knigge (1976, no. 3 [HW 87], pl. 18:12 and 13; and no. 42 [HW 44], pl. 21:8). Zimmerman-Munn (1983, pp. 149–152) lists many examples of Corinthian small banded lekythoi which appear in grave contexts in the West. See also the comments of Brownlee (1989, p. 364, note 15).

<sup>75</sup> In addition to the specific examples cited above in Part I, see in general the finds from the North Cemetery graves dating to the early fourth quarter of the 6th century through the early 4th century B.C. (graves nos. 250–430) and sporadically beyond (*Corinth* XIII, pp. 210–276) for parallels to the list of oil containers from the Sacred Spring.

<sup>76</sup> Parker 1983, p. 38, note 21: Demosthenes 43.57; *IC* 4, line 76; Sokolowski 1969, no. 154 B, lines 17–32. In the latter inscription, there is no mention of oil.

shrine in the northwest corner of the Agora identified by Camp as “perhaps” sacred to the Nymphs.<sup>77</sup> Here votive material included lamps and various drinking vessels but was emphatically funerary in character because of the large numbers of lekythoi.<sup>78</sup> Similar is the custom of regular deposition of loutrophoroi, which carry funerary iconography and are found both in graves and at the shrine to Nymphe on the South Slope of the Akropolis and at other Attic Nymph sanctuaries.<sup>79</sup>

Moving outside Attica, there is at least one other parallel to the evidence of oil containers at the Sacred Spring; because correlating graves are lacking, however, it is not known if the local associations are specifically funerary. At the cave sacred to Pan and the Corycian Nymphs at Delphi,<sup>80</sup> there is a heavy preponderance and a diversity of oil containers which correlates with the Sacred Spring: the list of oil containers begins with imported Corinthian aryballoi in the 6th century, followed by Attic black-figured lekythoi, Corinthian banded lekythoi, Attic white-ground lekythoi, alabastro, and Attic squat lekythoi. There are even fragments of alabaster vessels.<sup>81</sup> We cannot be sure that such predominance is necessarily characteristic of other sanctuaries to Pan and the Nymphs, primarily because the evidence of proportion of oil-containing vessels to other pottery types is not available.<sup>82</sup>

Neither of the most direct comparisons, the shrine in the Athenian Agora or the Corycian Cave, is apparently the site of a mystery cult involving rites with water for initiation or theatrical performances as at the Sacred Spring. Correspondence in finds between the Sacred Spring and the Corycian Cave, however, suggests that the deity worshipped at the Corinthian sanctuary shares one aspect of cult with the Nymphs; the presence of loutrophoroi bearing funerary iconography at Nymph sanctuaries in Attica provides another analogy. It can be posited, then, that the deity worshipped at the Sacred Spring was female; unfortunately, no comparative evidence can confirm that she was Kotyto.

<sup>77</sup> Camp 1986, p. 79. Thompson identified the shrine as the Leokorion (*Agora XIV*, p. 123 and Thompson 1976, pp. 87–89). For the excavation report, see Shear 1973, esp. pp. 360–369. Shear dates the sanctuary from ca. 430 to the end of 4th century B.C. (p. 364) and, like Camp, does not accept Thompson’s identification of the sanctuary as sacred to the Leokorai.

<sup>78</sup> Shear (1973, esp. pp. 360–369) reports that miniature squat, red-figured, and ivy lekythoi, as well as a single white-ground funerary lekythos, were present. He remarks that the repertory of shapes finds its best parallels in the late 5th-century graves from the Kerameikos (Schlörb-Vierneisel 1966) and Syntagma Square (Charitonides 1958).

<sup>79</sup> For the shrine to Nymphe, see Travlos, p. 361 and figs. 465–467, mid-7th century–3rd century B.C. For other Nymph sanctuaries in Attica: (1) Vari: Weller *et al.* 1903, pp. 263–349; (2) Parnes: Rhomaios 1901, pp. 38–40; 1902, p. 32; 1905, esp. pl. 5; 1906; Skias 1918; and (3) Daphni: Travlos 1937, esp. pp. 400–404. For an Attic loutrophoros decorated with funerary scenes, including one with a loutrophoros as a grave-marker, see Boardman and Kurtz 1971, pl. 36.

<sup>80</sup> The excavation report is Amandry 1981, “L’exploration archéologique de la Crotte,” pp. 75–93.

<sup>81</sup> Jacquemin 1984, esp. p. 101. Note that Jacquemin dates the squat lekythoi from the end of the 5th century to as late as the beginning of the 3rd century B.C., from the evidence at Apollonia (Ivanov 1963, nos. 68–132, pp. 106–111, pls. 49–50, resume in French, p. 375). The alabaster vessels are an aryballos (no. 2 [AC2535], p. 167) and an alabastron (no. 3 [AC2536], p. 167). Amandry 1984 (pp. 403–411) discusses the evidence of the oil vessels in terms of their implications for cult.

<sup>82</sup> For example, at the cave sacred to the Nymphs at Pitsa, there are Corinthian aryballoi and Attic lekythoi, but we do not know if they are present in extraordinary proportion: *EAA VI*, 1966, pp. 200–206, *s.v.* Pitsa (A. K. Orlandos).

What cult aitiology might explain the funerary character of the pottery evidence at the Sacred Spring? Certain mythological and legendary figures die in ways which place a burden of mourning on a population; in these cases, cult activity could include elements of the funeral. At Corinth, Hellotis, the daughter of the pre-Dorian Timandros and a sister of Kotyto, was killed in a temple to a goddess, possibly Athena, when the invading Dorians burned it.<sup>83</sup> A scholiast on Pindar tells us that the sacrilegious death of Hellotis brought on a plague which could only be ended when the death of the girl had been propitiated.<sup>84</sup> Only a few details are known of the worship of Hellotis at Corinth. Her cult was probably celebrated at the racecourse adjacent to the Sacred Spring, and the votives which scholars connect with her cult are not especially funerary. The cult of Hellotis as practiced on Crete, however, included the creation and display of a huge myrtle wreath, a votive offering with definite funerary associations.<sup>85</sup> Although the details of the cult itself are unknown, it is recognized that the aitiology for the cult of the Leokorai in Athens shares the elements of plague and sacrifice, though in reverse order, with that of Hellotis: the daughters of Leos were “enabling victims” for they were sacrificed to alleviate a plague which had come upon Athens. Clearly this sort of legendary motif may be associated with a youthful female, either Hellotis’ sister, Kotyto, or another, and may well explain the anomalous appearance of funerary offerings at the Sacred Spring.

How does this evidence from the Sacred Spring enlarge the knowledge of Corinthian religion as a whole? Undeniably, because the oil-containing vessels at the Sacred Spring overlap so closely with those placed in private graves, there is a conjunction between the paraphernalia used in the religious activities of both *polis* and *oikos* at Corinth. We cannot reconstruct a complete correspondence in ritual procedure, nor can we establish the entire range of connotations which the oil-containing vessels had in their ancient Corinthian contexts. It may, however, be possible to determine how this sort of conjunction came about by making a comparison to Athenian evidence.

Humphreys observes a separation between the spheres of *oikos* and *polis* in classical Athens, and clearly, many institutions served to sharpen this separation.<sup>86</sup> For example, in Humphreys’ view, the development of the Athenian *polis* resulted in the *oikos* relinquishing certain funerary institutions that emphasized individual family-based power groups within

<sup>83</sup> Lisle 1955, pp. 104–106; Williams 1978b, pp. 41–43, 155; Furley 1981, pp. 163–171, relying on the scholiast to Pindar, *Ol.* 13.56; Boeckhius (1839, pp. 275–276) discusses the rites of Hellotis; and Parker discusses types of cult which correspond to the stories of both the Leokorai and Hellotis (1983, pp. 273–274): “There are several story patterns which make murder a source of disaster. One is that of the killing, usually in civil war, in defiance of sanctuary. Guilt is normally ascribed to a whole people, or a tyrant. In the stories that blame plague on the killing of an individual on profane ground, the victim is almost invariably the son of a god, especially dear to a god, a priest, or fulfilling a mission pleasing to the Olympians; normally too such stories explain the foundation of a cult or temple and are *ad hoc* creations not involving substantial figures of mythology.”

<sup>84</sup> Pindar, *Ol.* 13.56; Boeckhius 1839, pp. 275–276.

<sup>85</sup> Furley (1981, pp. 167–170) collects and discusses the literary and archaeological evidence supporting the interpretation of the myrtle wreath as funerary.

<sup>86</sup> Humphreys 1983, “*Oikos* and *polis*,” pp. 1–22. See also Goldhill 1987, esp. p. 67, for a lucid and convincing application of similar observations.

the total population; similarly, burnt sacrifice ceased to be a part of graveside cult in the North Cemetery at Corinth after the Geometric period, yet it persisted in public sanctuaries.<sup>87</sup> Such a shift would have minimized opportunities for displays restricted to individual families, replacing with collective civic activities their opportunities for *oikos*-based ostentation on the occasion of death. Humphreys also points out, however, that there were important institutions where the concerns of Athenian *oikos* and *polis* converged: the entire family could participate in mystery religions like Demeter worship; the content of publicly performed tragedies focused on problems within the *oikos*; and the annual public adulation of those who died in war service was an open, collective performance of the mourning usually carried out in private by individual *oikoi*. Clearly, although public life and private life were evolving separately and perhaps in competition with one another, they also continued to buttress one another in very fundamental ways. Although we must be cautious in applying conclusions reached about the evolution of Athenian social structures to those in another *polis*, the archaeological evidence of oil-containing vessels at both the Sacred Spring and in Corinthian graves may be proof of a type of convergence similar to those seen in Athens.

Williams observes a more literal convergence at Corinth, where public shrines frequently memorialize the physical remains of an *oikos*.<sup>88</sup> During the evolution from aristocracy to tyranny to oligarchy, Corinthian public life and private life must have intersected in many other respects as well: the archaeological evidence at the Sacred Spring is tangible indication of one such liminal area.

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<sup>87</sup> "The aim of the celebration of public funerals, and of the legislation restricting ostentation in private celebrations, was to reserve the right of conferring 'heroic' honors on the dead to the *polis* (the same of course is true of legislation or norms prohibiting burial within the city, except in cases where the city gave special permission)," Humphreys 1983, "Family Tombs and Tomb-cult in Ancient Athens," pp. 89–90. For the Corinthian evidence, see *Corinth XIII*, pp. 16, 84–85. See also Burkert 1985, p. 193, note 4; he points out that after the Geometric period, the funerary banquet, which included animal sacrifice, is generally not performed at the graveside.

<sup>88</sup> Williams 1981.

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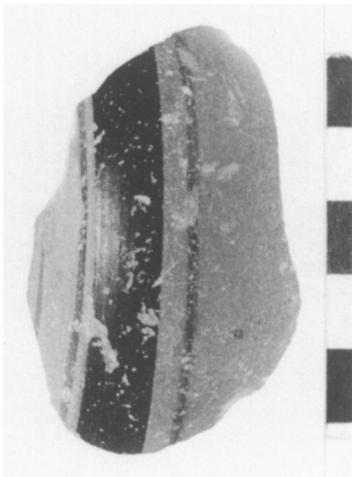
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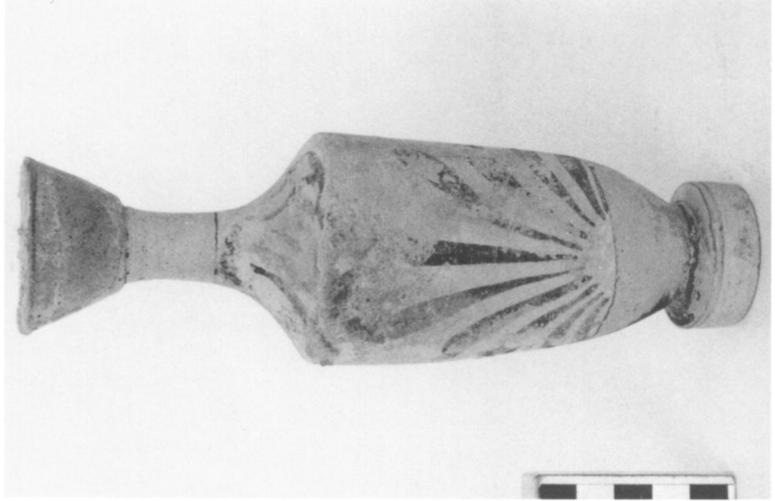
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b. White-ground figural lekythos  
C-69-349



a. Lydion 5786:1



f. White-ground lekythos T 3108



d, e. White-ground figural lekythos T 3029

