

AN OVERVIEW OF THE NEW CHRONOLOGY FOR 9th TO 13th CENTURY POTTERY AT CORINTH

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ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ: Για περισσότερο από αιώνα οι υποτιθέμενες συνέπειες γεγονότων, όπως εισβολές και διάφοροι σεισμοί, έχουν καθοδηγήσει την ανασύνθεση της αρχαιολογικής ιστορίας της Κορίνθου στα υστερορωμαϊκά και μεσαιωνικά χρόνια. Η αρχαιολογία χρησιμοποιείται ουσιαστικά για να εικονογραφήσει τον καθιερωμένο μακροϊστορικό κανόνα. Σχετικά πρόσφατα αναγνωρίστηκε ότι η πίστη ορισμένων μελετητών σε αυτόν τον κανόνα ήταν άστοχη. Αυτό δεν σημαίνει ότι τα προαναφερθέντα γεγονότα δεν συνέβησαν ποτέ, παρά μονάχα ότι η τελική κατάληξή τους δεν ήταν ακριβώς όπως είχε υποτεθεί. Σε αντίθεση με ανασυνθέσεις που επικεντρώνονται σε αλώσεις, καταστροφές, εγκατάλειψη και Σκοτεινούς Αιώνες, το αναπόφευκτο συμπέρασμα δείχνει να είναι η συνέχεια της ελληνορωμαϊκής πολιτιστικής κληρονομιάς. Για ένα μεγάλο χρονικό διάστημα η Κόρινθος έχει θεωρηθεί ως ένας από τους πρωταρχικούς χώρους-πρότυπα για την τυπολογία και τη χρονολόγηση της κεραμικής στην Ανατολική Μεσόγειο και για το λόγο αυτό η συνειδητοποίηση αυτής της συνέχειας έχει συνέπειες που εκτείνονται εκτός του χώρου της Κορίνθου. Πραγματικά αυτή τη αντίληψη μπορεί να επηρεάσει σοβαρά όλους όσους μελετούν υστερορωμαϊκό και μεσαιωνικό υλικό στην περιοχή. Η μελέτη αυτή βασίζεται σε πρόσφατη έρευνα στην Κόρινθο και συνοψίζει συμπεράσματα που προτείνουν λύσεις για πολλούς από τους αναχρονισμούς του παρελθόντος.

After almost sixty years, Charles Morgan's *Corinth XI* is still the standard reference for regional Byzantine pottery (Morgan 1942). Although it is a remarkable volume representing the highest academic achievement, its extreme longevity owes almost as much to the inactivity of Medieval archaeologists in Greece. Unfortunately, *Corinth XI* can no longer be considered reliable, especially in the sections dealing with glazed pottery of the 9th, 10th and 11th century. Its weakness lies in the basic precept that there was a historical truth where, in reality, there is only ever an ephemeral best hypothesis. The chronological framework employed by Morgan was underpinned by the region's history as it was then understood (Finley 1932). Corinth, devastated by plague in 542 and earthquakes in 532 and 551/2, was abandoned with the arrival of the Slavs at the end of the 6th century. The city remained deserted until the reintegration of the Peloponnese into the Eastern Roman Empire by Stavrakios in 783. For Morgan the earliest post-Roman strata and the pottery therein were therefore late 8th to early 9th century in date.

The fundamental inaccuracy of this interpretation is now clear from recently excavated contexts, tombs, buckles and, finally, from a more mature understanding of trends in numismatic distribution and the true significance of coins in the archaeological record. Excavations since the early eighties East of the Theater (Williams, Zervos 1982; 1983; 1984; 1985; 1986; 1987 and 1988) and in the Panayia area (Sanders 1999b) have permitted a complete reappraisal of the dates of Corinth's 5th, 6th and 7th century material. This study, which is still in progress, shows that the 551/2 earthquakes did not affect Corinth as frequently claimed and that the Slavic invasion left Corinth relatively unscathed and perhaps untouched (Sanders 1999b).

The Lechaion and Cenchreian Gate basilicas (Fig. 2), for instance, were not destroyed and abandoned but remained in use well into the 7th century. Indeed, large numbers of tombs, once considered 5th to 6th century in date are actually much later burials that continue Greco-roman burial traditions well into the 8th and perhaps into the 9th century (Sanders, forthcoming). This new research has helped us to better understand the material culture of the succeeding centuries.



Fig. 1. Map of the Peloponnese.

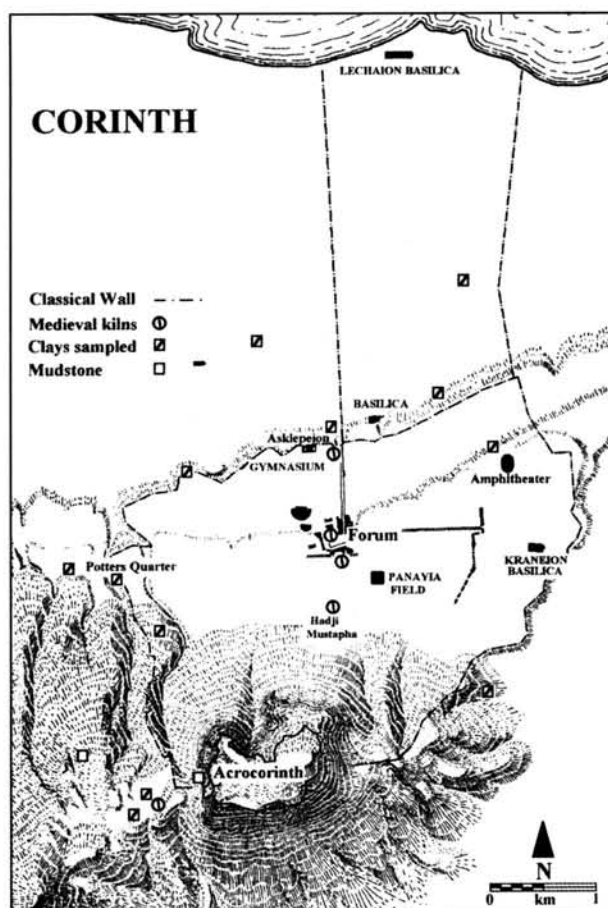


Fig. 2. Map of Corinth.

We now know that what Morgan considered to be his earliest material is much later than he believed. His principal examples came from the fill within a Classical rock cut cellar (Fig. 3). It contained quantities of Constantinopolitan imports (Morgan 1942: nos. 99, 114, 176 and 186), amphoras (Fig. 4.13), plain table and cooking wares (Fig. 4.1-4, 6-13; MacKay 1967: nos. 92-94). Morgan drew parallels between the chafing dishes (Fig. 11.3; Morgan 1942: 39, nos. 2 and 3) in the fill and examples found directly over Roman strata in the Forum area and so dated all the material to the 9th to 10th centuries. In doing so he decided to reject as contaminants an Anonymous Class A2 follis (about 970-1035) within the fill and a Class D follis (about 1050-1060) found ten centimeters above bedrock. In fact the dumped fill dates to the third quarter of the 11th century as the coins suggest (Fig. 5, context 5, Lot 1937-36).

The recognition of Morgan's error raised questions about Corinth's Byzantine ceramic chronology in general. The result was that, over the past decade, the stratigraphy and contents of all the old contexts available to Morgan as well as several new deposits excavated since 1959 have

been reconsidered in detail (Sanders 1995a). As a control for this study some forty deposits, each containing a minimum of one kilogram of glazed pottery, were subjected to statistical applications including quantification, similarity analysis and seriation. Although Morgan's decoration types were retained almost intact, a new typology of shapes was created and a fabric typology was created from scratch. The latter designed to enable field workers without specialist training to characterize fairly broad fabric groups in a fashion comprehensible to a readership equipped with the same descriptive materials (Sanders 1999b; 1995a; 1993: 253-254). At the same time local clay sources were sampled and brickettes fired to give some idea of what resources were available to Corinthian potters (Fig. 2). This practical work resulted in the discovery of a good match for Corinthian Archaic pottery fabric found near the Potters' Quarter. More pertinent to the subject in hand were a blond, calcareous clay which took a high burnish and a *terra rosa* clay found close together on the west slopes of Acrocorinth near a Byzantine pottery production site. The 10th to 11th century Byzantine workshop produced a range of wares including transport amphoras, *stamnia* (table amphoras) and table wares in a blond fabric and both cooking wares and glazed vessels in a mixture of the *terra rosa* and blond clays.

The study pottery was sorted, counted and weighed by type and the weight of each type was then calculated as a percentage of the total weight of glazed pottery. These percentages were tabulated by category and context and the results seriated on the basis of their mathematical similarity. Two clear groups were immediately apparent. The first group, consisting of Deposits 1-13, unevenly covers a period of about 150 years from the mid-10th and late 11th centuries. Coin finds and parallels with published deposits from Constantinople confirm the seriated order and date (Fig. 5). The second group, Deposits 14-37, contain considerably greater proportions of glazed pottery and the decorative styles employed cover a large proportion of the vessel thus making identification of style possible even on small sherds. The similarity matrices show strong axial symmetry with high values clustering along the diagonal, low values at the extremes and a reduction of values from center to edges (Fig. 6). Significant numbers of associated coins indicate that the earliest deposits within the second group date to the last decades of the 11th century. The latest deposits contain Zeuxippus Ware known from the floors of Saranda Kolones in Cyprus, a castle believed to have been destroyed by earthquake in 1222. The two principal types of this ware, from macroscopic examination of their fabric, appear to have had a common origin in Asia Minor with two well known Roman pottery types; Çandarlı and Phocian Red Slip. In the seriated deposits and several other contexts at Corinth, Zeuxippus is found with coins considered to be the first issue of Prince Guillaume

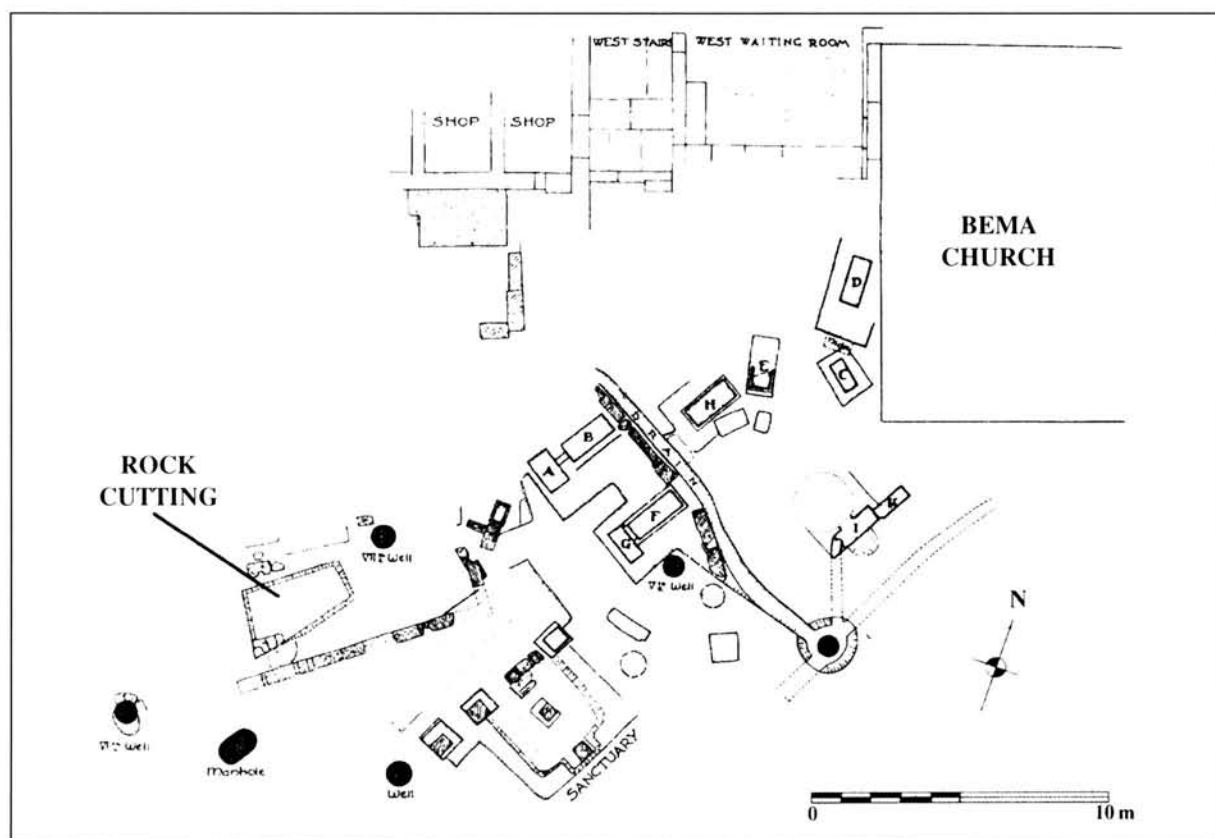


Fig. 3. Rock cutting with Byzantine pottery fill.

Villehardouin on his accession in 1245 after the grant of a French royal charter permitting the minting of *deniers tournois*. Since the inscriptions identify the prince only as “G” there remains a remote possibility that Prince Geoffrey II Villehardouin struck coins illicitly at an earlier date. On the Corinthian evidence, however, Zeuxippus Ware appears to be in use in the mid-13th century (MacKay 1967: Shiny Olive Incised II, lots 85, 299, 333 and 346).

Glazed pottery is uncommon in the earlier assemblages and makes up only 0.7% or less by weight of all 10th and 11th century pottery (Fig. 7). It is the paucity of glazed pottery in this and earlier periods that excluded 8th to mid-10th century contexts from the study group. A majority of the glazed material comes from heavy locally made chafing dishes many of which are glazed on the interior of the bowl only and show little or no trace of glaze on the stand. The vast majority of the pottery was unglazed. The bulk of these assemblages consists of quantities of transport and table amphoras, cooking pots and table wares. Some of the tankards, pitchers, pedestal plates and other shapes were burnished, occasionally with slip-painted decoration, cups and pitchers may have incised or gouged decoration (Fig. 4.1-4, 13). In later contexts the proportion of glazed pottery in-

creases rapidly. The forms of glazed vessels are smaller and lighter than chafing dishes and the proportion increases to about 2% at the beginning of the 12th century, 6% in the mid-12th century and to about 20% in the mid-13th century.

Surveyed in brief, the history of glazed pottery at Corinth is as follows.

Importation of small quantities of Constantinopolitan White Wares (Fig. 10.4) commenced in the late 8th century but ends in the early 9th century. In the second half of the 10th century White Ware imports from Constantinople resume. Their numbers increase steadily through the 11th century until they finally dominate the glazed ware market (Fig. 8). The imports include chafing dishes, dishes on tall and low pedestals (Fig. 11.2), large bowls and cups. Green glaze, though less common than yellow at Constantinople, is in a majority at Corinth. Yellow glazed pieces often cover a thin red slip that is sometimes also incised. Pellets of red slip may be applied to the rim and red slip festoons are common on the inside and outside surface of the walls of open shapes. Circular relief patterns incorporating linear designs inside bowls, chafing dishes and some cups probably derive from patterns incised on forms used on the potters' wheel used to facilitate throwing and to ensure a

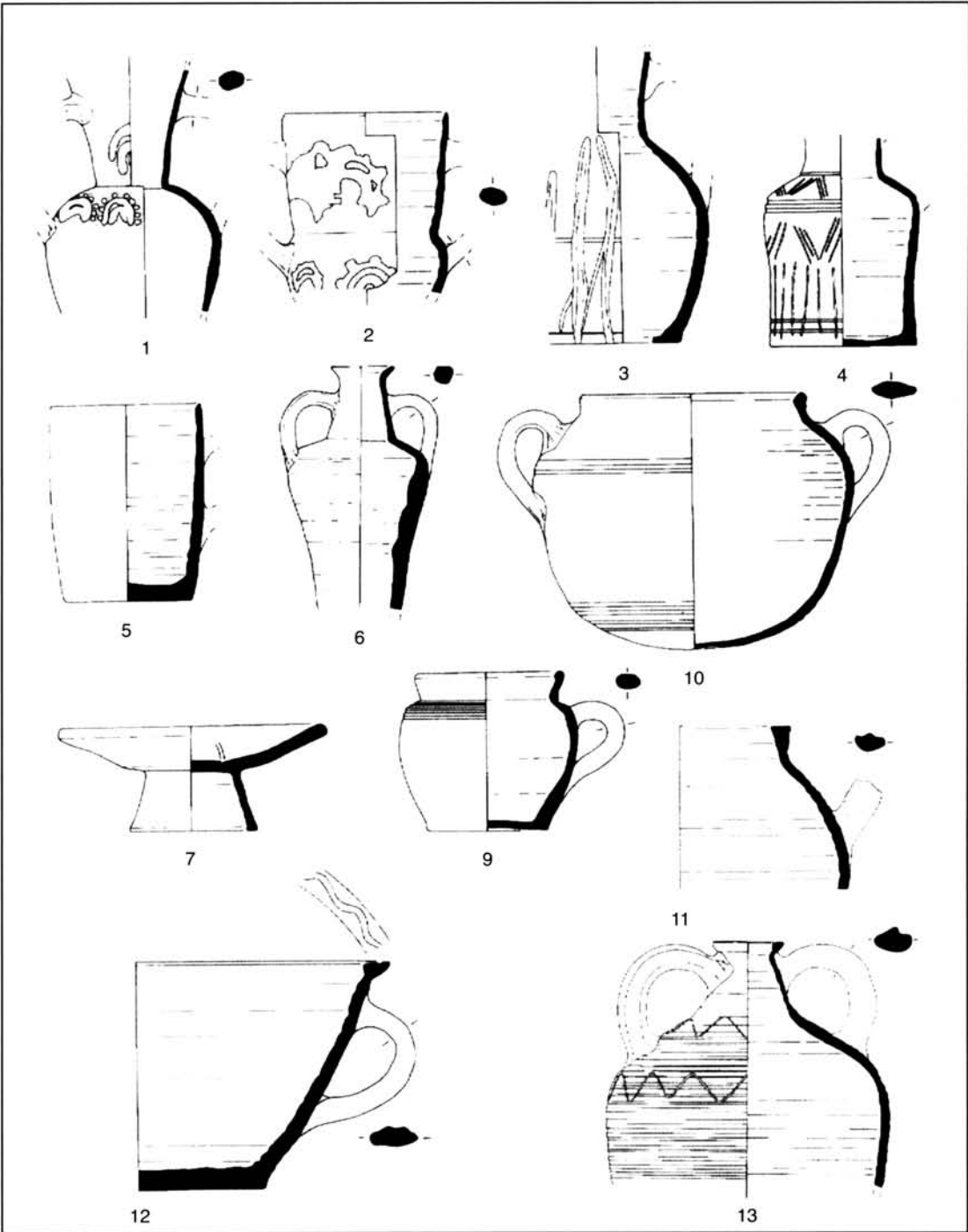


Fig. 4. Pottery in late 11th century fill of the rock cutting (1-4 and 6-13), and a contemporary tankard (5).

standard shape and size. The size and extent of the relief appears to increase with time while the quality and evenness of the glaze tends to deteriorate. A number of sparsely glazed White Ware trefoil-mouthed and spouted kettles, identified by lime encrustation on the bottom inside,

were also imported until the early 12th century. It is clear that the fabric was not only a suitable background for decoration but also resistant to the effects of rapid heating and cooling. Sparsely glazed corrugated cups are a common feature throughout the period.

DATE		LOT	COINS	DATE		LOT	COINS
Mid-10th	1	1977-47	(867-68) 1	About	21	1989-15	(1092-1118) 1, (1085-92) 1
Late 10th - early 11th century	2	1977-34	(931-44) 3, (1078-81) 1 (contam)	1120/30	22	1992-87	
	3	459	(931-44) 1	to	23	1989-73	(1143-81?) 1
	4	1992-98	Above 976-1001	1160+/-	24	1989-8	(1092-1118) 1, (1085-92) 1
Mid-11th century	5	1937-36	(1050-60) 1, (976-1001) 1		25	1989-5	(1143-81) 1
	6	1937-40	(1010/15-1020/25) 1	About	26	1976-245	(1092-1118) 4
Late 11th century	7	1936-18		1160+/-	27	418	(1092-1118) 16, (1118-43) 1
	8	1978-18	(976-1001) 1	to	28	Box 102	
	9	C-52	(1078-81) 6	1200+/-	29	489	
	10	C-18			30	488	(1143-81) 16, ? Bulg. imit 1 (contam)
	11	1938-24	(1030/35-42) 1, (1118-43) 1 (contam)	About	31	89	(1143-81) 4
	12	1622		1200+/-	32	292	
	13	1511		to	33	88	Issac II (1185-1204) 1, Latin imits 5
About 1085/95 to 1110/20	14	1990-12, 13	(1070-75) 1	1260 +/-	34	1987-7	Latin imits 10, W. Villehardouin (1245-50) 1
	15	1989-63	(1078-81) 2, (1070-75) 1		35	1986-26	
	16	1990-54, 55	(1078-81) 5		36	1977-11	Latin and Bulgarian imits 13
	17	1990-9 to 11	(1078-81) 1		37	316	(1143-81) 1, Latin and Bulgarian imits 5
About 1110/20 to 1120/30	18	5117					
	19	1989-16	(1092-1118) 1				
	20	1990-4					

Fig. 5. Contexts 1 to 37 with date range and coin contents.

Among the finest of imported White Wares are the different styles of Polychrome that have received considerable attention from Art Historians and Archaeologists. They dated these, with their revetment plaque equivalents, to the late 9th or 10th century (Grabar 1931; Talbot Rice 1930: 17). The keys to this early chronology are the Polychrome plaques found in the excavation of a monastery in Bulgaria by Gospodinov between 1909 and 1914. They were found associated with coins that at the time were considered to be issues of John Tzimisces (Gospodinov 1914). The archaeological evidence, as interpreted by Grabar, indicated that the church was destroyed in AD 972 by John Tzimisces. He proposed that the plaques adorned a church founded by Prince Simeon in AD 907 (Grabar 1931). The date of the coins can now be reappraised and the latest are now dated circa 1020 to 1028 (Ivanisević 1989: type 42a). Polychrome forms, decoration and fabrics divide into three groups. The archaeological evidence from Corinth and elsewhere strongly suggests that Polychrome pottery should be considered almost exclusively a phenomenon of the 11th century (Sanders 2001). Decorative group I is both the earliest and most rare Polychrome style. Its very rarity makes accurate dating ambiguous on the evidence presently available; it may originate in the late 10th or early 11th century

but certainly not long before. On the basis of shapes, some of which are similar to those of the succeeding group, and contexts a mid-11th century date is perhaps preferable. Local Corinthian pottery forms of the late 11th to early 12th century, such as those decorated with early Slip Painted and Green and Brown Painted designs developed directly from Polychrome group II shapes and they therefore must be near contemporaries (Fig. 9). Group III is the latest of the different varieties.

Red wares, both local and imported follow a different pattern of development. From the Panayia area, excavation of a deep stratum of broken up cement from the cement and spolia walls of two 6th century buildings produced Dark Age pottery. Eighth and 9th century pottery little resembles Late Roman pottery but rather looks forward to the material culture of the Middle Byzantine period (Fig. 10). The Panayia material amounts to two almost complete and several fragmentary stew pots in a very micaceous fabric similar to those from nearly contemporary phases at Emborio (Balance *et al.* 1989: no. 282), Saraghane Djami in Constantinople (Hayes 1992) and at Kato Komia and Akradhies on Melos (unpublished). Rims, handles and bases of pitchers, also found in 8th to early 9th century tombs, were also relatively common in this deposit (Fig. 10.1-2). These help us to identify amphoras of

LOT → DECORATION ↓	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	← LOT DECORATION ↓
Approx. Date	About 1085/95 to 1110/20				1110/20 to 1120/30				1120/30- to 1160+/-				1160+/- to 1200+/-				1200+/- to 1260+/-								Approx. date
Aegean Ware																				5.2			16.2	52.0	Aegean Ware
Zeuxippus																						11.7	1.3	1.7	Zeuxippus
Frank Inc																		3.8	4.1	0.6		0.6	3.1	4.7	Frank Inc
Sl. Ptd. III																			5.0				1.8		Sl. Ptd. III
Stripy gl. ptd														3.9				0.8	6.5	13.7	54.2	61.5	37.0	11.0	Stripy gl. ptd
Sgr. as PL 45a-e													1.3					29.9	33.9	25.0			0.9	2.5	Sgr. as PL 45a-e
Incised as Fig. 142																		23.9	25.6	41.7	21.3		3.6		Incised as Fig. 142
Intern. Incised																	8.3	4.9							Intern. Incised
Incised as Fig. 144															4.5	10.6	13.3		7.3				0.8		Incised as Fig. 144
Free Style Incised														2.9		21.8	46.5	10.9	7.3	1.7	9.3			3.2	Free Style Incised
Sgr. as Fig. 104														6.0	27.5	1.3	13.0	0.8	4.1	8.4			3.2	1.2	Sgr. as Fig. 104
Medallion Sgr.														10.4	15.9	20.3	6.1	1.3	2.9		0.6	1.3	0.6		Medallion Sgr.
G & B III													21.2	13.0	2.3					1.2			0.4	1.9	G & B III
Sl. Ptd. II								0.1			0.4		7.4	10.8	6.3						0.4			1.2	Sl. Ptd. II
Painted Sgraffito						1.2		1.4		0.6	3.6		4.0	5.5	3.0										Painted Sgraffito
Sgr. as Fig. 106-7						1.2	1.1	2.4		9.9	33.4	29.7	46.9	12.1	15.8	6.6		1.7		1.8					Sgr. as Fig. 106-7
Measles	1.6					0.5		2.6	10.8	28.0	26.7	28.3	6.2	4.4	9.3	7.0	1.2	1.0					0.8		Measles
G. and B. II/III					0.2				8.6	16.6	1.1	5.6		3.9				0.8					0.5		G. and B. II/III
Imit. Lustre									6.8	12.1	8.0	5.8	3.0	1.3	5.9								1.2		Imit. Lustre
G. and B. Spiral				1.5					8.6	10.5		1.8	1.4		5.6					1.1			0.5		G. and B. Spiral
Sl. Ptd. Spotted				5.0	2.3	3.0		0.1				2.9			2.3										Sl. Ptd. Spotted
Spatter Painted			0.6			7.2	1.8	0.6				0.6		0.2											Spatter Painted
G. and B. I/II	9.2	0.5	3.4	5.1	10.5	13.7	52.0	29.8	14.0	7.4	10.0	7.3				1.0									G. and B. I/II
Duochrome	6.2	2.6	20.9	17.2	4.3	2.5	6.3	7.3	12.0	5.8		1.9											0.3		Duochrome
Sl. Ptd. I y. gl.	24.2	58.9	38.5	37.5	27.3	33.8	8.8	2.4				0.1		0.5	0.5										Sl. Ptd. I y. gl.
Plain gr. gl.	29.4	13.8	23.7	14.0	7.8	20.9	19.2	17.1	15.8	11.9	9.0	8.5	3.3	6.5	11.6			4.0	0.5		3.5	14.8	4.8	9.5	Plain gr. gl.
Plain y. gl.	5.4	2.7	1.6	6.2	2.7	9.0	0.5	4.1	8.7	2.4	8.2	6.8	6.1	5.8		19.0	6.1	13.0	0.2	0.2	10.7	9.6	14.5	6.5	Plain y. gl.
Other	24.0	21.5	11.3	13.5	44.9	6.8	10.3	17.3	7.5	9.4	0.8	3.9	22.3	2.6	1.0	12.4	5.5	3.2	1.4	0.2	0.4	0.5	8.5	4.6	Other

Fig. 6. Decorative styles in contexts 14-37 expressed as a % of all glazed pottery within the context. Figure and plate notation refer to Morgan 1942.

the period (Fig. 10.3) which have a family resemblance to Late Roman type 2 amphoras. These amphoras resemble examples from Melos and the theater at Sparta (Sanders 1995b) while others are forerunners of 10th and 11th century types (Fig. 4.13). A locally produced chafing dish belonging to this phase of the site is by far the most complete of the ten or so early pieces that exist in the collection. These early vessels resemble the forms and, in certain cases, the decoration of examples found in 8th century strata in the Crypta Balbi excavations in Rome (Fig. 12.3; Romei 1992). An early Abbasid coin from the debris is indicative and supportive of the suggested pottery date.

In the mid-10th through 11th centuries, locally manufactured chafing dishes and some coarse wares approximately imitate the forms of the imported White Wares (Fig. 11). The local industry is otherwise conservative, limiting its production to chafing dishes, pitchers, cups and pilgrim flasks etc. (Fig. 4). Early in the reign of Alexius I (1081-1118), at the end of the 11th century when the import of White Wares effectively stopped, there was a morphological and decorative revolution in the Corinthian industry. The rare local chafing dishes briefly revert to their old form then disappear. Shapes formerly available only in White Ware, such as large bowls and dishes

suddenly appear in local fabrics. Local potters used a white slip as a plain background for painted, incised or simple glaze decoration or for a slip painted linear decoration under the glaze. This technique permitted potters to exploit glaze colour in a manner similar to that used on White Wares and marks a transition in the use of glaze from the purely functional to the partly decorative. The earliest phases of this technological innovation at Corinth can be dated in the last decade or two of the 11th century.

Conclusions which can be drawn from the pattern of glaze use and production will have to remain tentative until much more material of the period from about 800 to the end of the 11th century has been excavated and processed. However, the absence of Constantinopolitan pottery at Corinth between the early 9th century and the third quarter of the 10th century suggests the existence of certain impediments to their circulation. This particular hiatus in imports coincides with a long period of instability in the Aegean after an Arab fleet from Spain invaded Crete in 827 and utterly defeated the Byzantine fleet in 829. For much of the 9th and 10th century the Cretan based Arabs raided the coasts of the Aegean almost at will until their eventual expulsion from Crete and the Aegean in 961.

Locally produced chafing dishes follow an odd pattern

of development. The early examples tend to be cylindrical and are assembled with the bowl inserted deep within the stand, so deep that the form essentially has a double rim consisting of the edge of the bowl and the edge of the stand (Fig. 12.2-3). The earliest examples have a decoration of applied pellets or petals outside and are glazed inside and out. They resemble pieces known so far only from Italy and persist until the mid-10th century. The next variety is radically different. The bowl is set on top of the stand and it flares so widely that the handles are applied up side down (Fig. 11.3). This type is generally undecorated, except perhaps for wavy incised lines inside the bowl and the glaze is only applied to the interior. The latest chafing dishes revert to the earlier type – cylindrical with dish set within the stand. Decoration is fairly eclectic and may consist of incised chevrons or fantastic animals and musicians in appliqué (Fig. 12.4). Occasionally the locally produced pieces use the new technology of the late 11th century and are Slip Painted or Green and Brown Painted. The fabric of many of these latest chafing dishes is not Corinthian and to my eye (Sanders 1995a: fabric H) is close to the fabric of so-called Proto-geometric Ware (Sanders 1993: fabric 10) and of Veneto Ware (Sanders 1987: 174). I hazard a guess that these are all of Northern Adriatic origin.

There was a time when revolutionary changes in the ceramic assemblage, such as that seen between about 1085 and 1095, would have been ascribed to invasion. Rather than accepting the arrival of a foreign “glazed white slip culture”, the changes may also be considered in the light of contemporary economic developments. It is perhaps more than a coincidence that the change occurs at a time of radical reforms in the Byzantine economy. At the end of the 11th century Alexius I defended and extended his empire by cunning and force against Balkan, Middle Eastern and Western barbarians. His extraordinary monetary reforms replaced the existing ancient and extremely cumbersome system of taxation. At the same time, in 1092, he reshaped the empire’s coinage. Where the smallest denomination copper coin in the late 10th century had weighed 13 grams, Alexius’ new coinage included a copper weighing only 3.5 grams. This was the currency of petty exchange which could have enabled a peasant to sell bunches of wild herbs gathered on the slopes of Acrocorinth in Corinth’s Saturday market and to buy a loaf for supper with the gain. Finally Alexius granted the Venetians privileges of commerce, free of import and export taxes. The Venetians were further privileged by permission to set up warehouses in regional centres such as Corinth where their factors could store the agricultural produce they had purchased.

Under the Comnenes styles of glazed pottery decoration evolved rapidly (Fig. 6). Slip Painted styles, in which decoration was applied directly to the biscuit, appear with

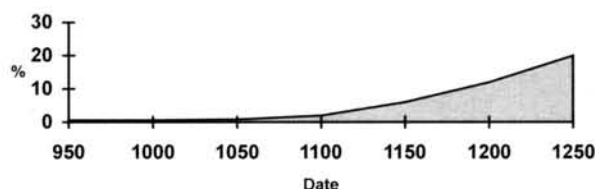


Fig. 7. Glazed ware weight as % of all pottery in contexts.

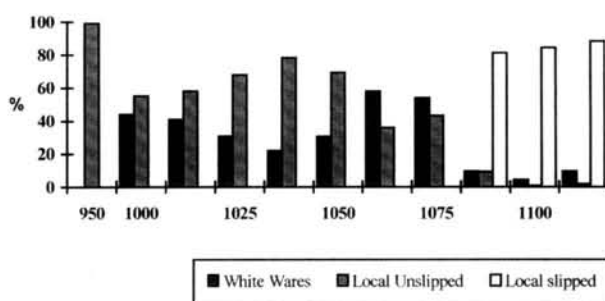


Fig. 8. White Wares, local unslipped and local slipped glazed wares expressed as a % of all glazed pottery within contexts c. 1000 to c. 1125.

Alexius I and apparently evolve from light on dark (Slip Painted I) to dark on light (Imitation Luster) in the second quarter of the 12th century and back to light on dark again (Slip Painted II) in the third quarter of the 12th century. The style reappears in the second quarter of the 13th century (Slip Painted III) and is revisited throughout the subsequent centuries up to the present. Green and Brown Painted styles evolve slowly over the course of the 12th century, stop and then reappear in the 13th century. Various styles of sgraffito can be found throughout the period. From finely drafted and incised designs the figures become increasingly stylised and the excised area increasingly greater with time until the second quarter of the 13th century when fine line decoration resumes. Sgraffito designs may be enhanced with added slip spots (Measles), pigments and coloured glaze (Painted Sgraffito) or coloured glaze alone (Glaze Painted Sgraffito).

A major change occurred in the Corinthian assemblage after the middle of the 13th century. At a time when locally produced ceramics seem to have lost much of their lively character and polish the market was penetrated and ultimately dominated by Italian imports. During the 1270's southern Italian Protomaïolikas appear in quantity and are followed by other Italian products such as Veneto

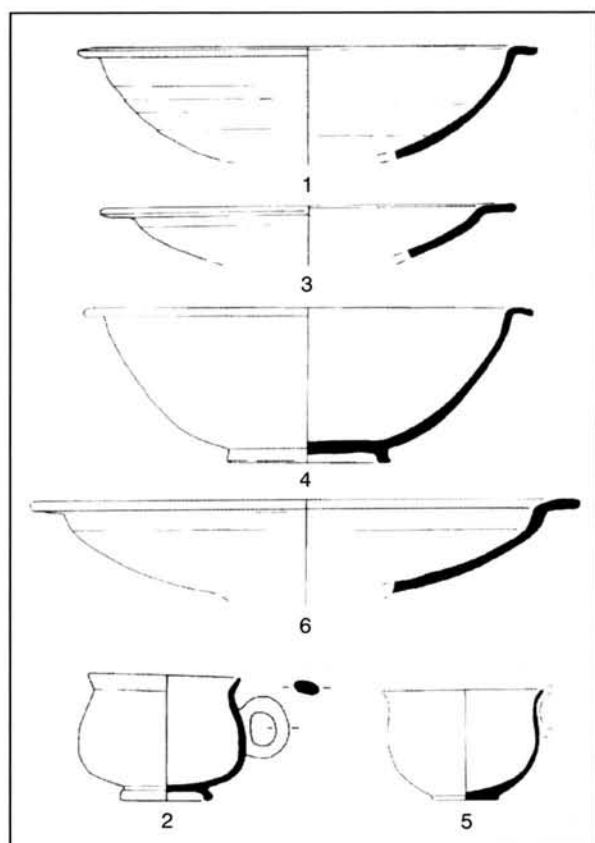


Fig. 9. Polychrome II White Ware (1-3) and local Glazed Red wares (4-6).

Ware. As in the late 11th century, this change apparently follows political and economic developments in the region. Specifically the catalyst was a marital alliance between the Villehardouin and Angevin dynasties that brought the Peloponnese under the sway of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. It was a contract that brought the Principality of the Morea under the authority of Charles I of Anjou, King of the Two Sicilies on the marriage of his son Philip to Isabella Villehardouin on June 17th 1270. A prime example of this influence are the Grid Iron Protomaïolica bowls immured in the walls of the Argive Church of Merbaka built or refurbished by William of Merbeke, Bishop of Corinth from 1277-1286. In fact, it is remarkable how the distribution of Protomaïolica in the Eastern Mediterranean coincides with the extent of Charles' budding Mediterranean empire. In addition to his Royal titles to Naples and Sicily, Jerusalem and Albania, the brother of St Louis was also Count of Anjou, Provence, Forcalquier and Maine, Regent of Achaia he held suzerainty over the Cyclades and several other Aegean islands and was Overlord of Tunis, Senator of Rome and "King of Corfu". It would be interesting to learn if RMR Ware and Grid Iron Protomaïolica made it as far as Angers. Although strictly beyond the scope of the present paper details of this later material can be found in the many preliminary publications of the excavations South of the Museum at Corinth (Sanders 1987; 1989; Williams 1977; 1978; 1993; Williams, Fisher 1975; 1976; Williams, Zervos 1987; 1988; 1990; 1991; 1992; 1993; 1994; 1995; 1996; Williams, Barnes, Snyder 1997).

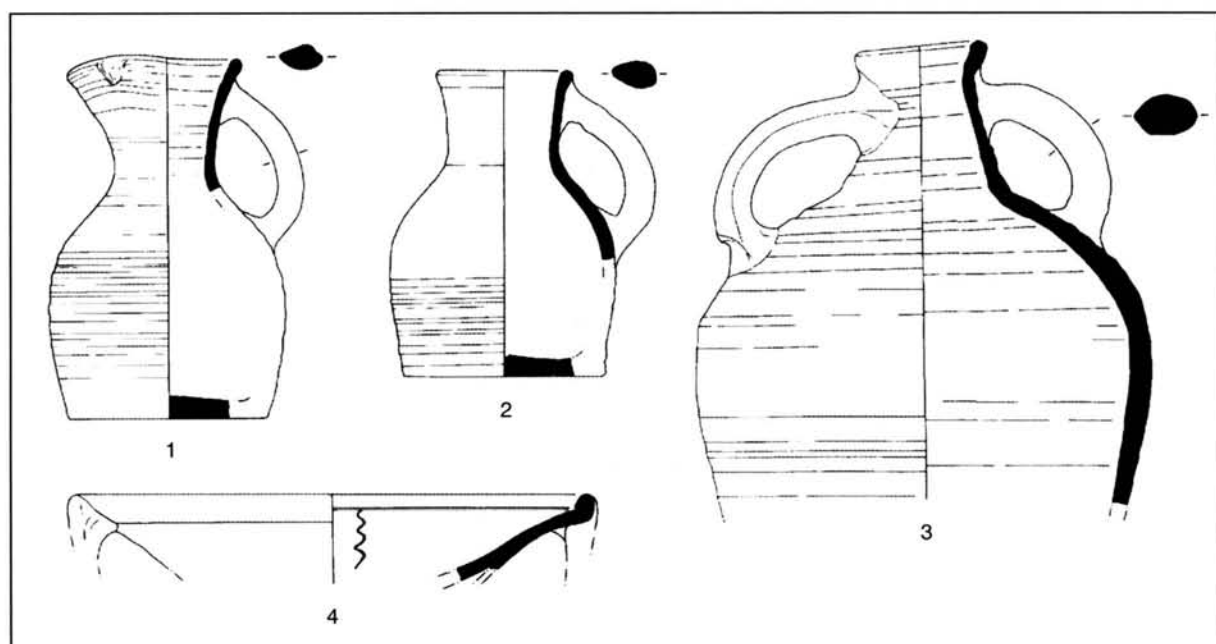


Fig. 10. Late 8th to 9th century pottery: local pitchers (1-2), local amphora (3), White Ware chafing dish (4).

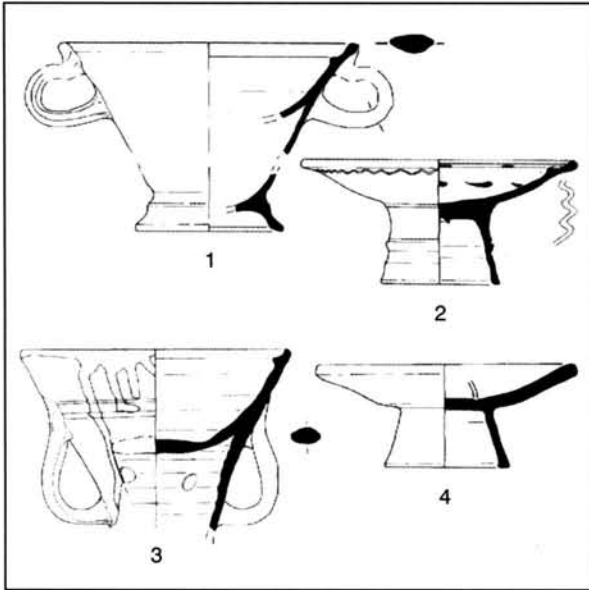


Fig. 11. Top: White Wares; Bottom: local products.

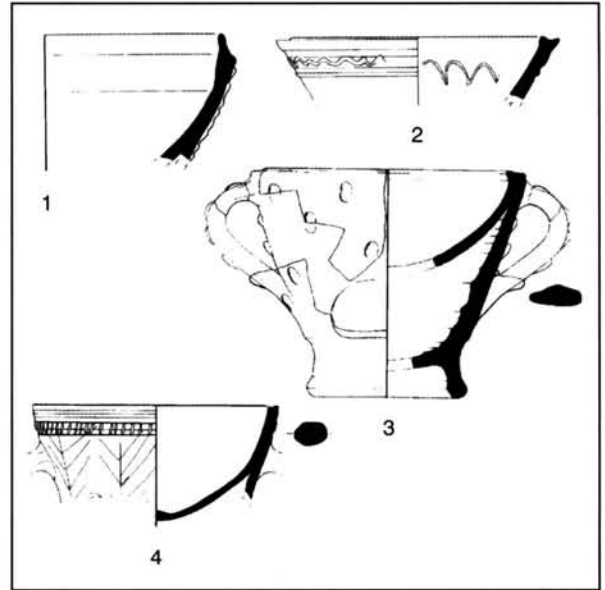


Fig. 12. Chafing dishes. Clockwise from left: local 9th century; early 10th century; late 11th century; Crypta Balbi, Rome.

The alarming proposition with which this paper started, that Corinth's ceramic chronologies could no longer be trusted, is clearly no longer the case. Indeed before the problem was more generally recognised a solution was sought, found and was put in place. Far from being inaccurate Corinth's ceramic chronology is better than ever. There is ample room, however, for refinement and the new chronology should not be considered as some kind of absolute truth but rather as a new working hypothesis that is closer to historical reality. If there is one lesson to be learnt from sixty years of reliance on *Corinth XI* it is that ceramic historians of all persuasions must continue to question their sources in search of a better theory and explanation. One area that demands serious consideration is the relationship between Byzantine and Islamic pottery. There are several anachronisms that exist in art historical comparisons between the decorative styles in pottery produced in these two geographical and cultural entities that perhaps can be resolved. One place to begin may be re-examination of the alleged mid-11th century date of the Luster bowls, once immured in the church of Ayios Theodoros in Athens, which are of such importance to Islamic pottery chronology.

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