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Responses to the 12th Century BC Collapse

Recovery and Restructuration in the Early Iron Age Near East and Mediterranean

Proceedings of the 9th Melammu Workshop,
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The Melammu Logo was drawn by Ria Berg from a Greco-Persian style seal found on the north-eastern shore of the Black Sea (Dominique Collon, *First Impressions: Cylinder Seals in the Ancient Near East* (London: British Museum Publications 1987), no. 432).

Illustration on the cover: Kastraki from the foot of Barbouna (photograph by Mait Kõiv).

Responses to the 12th Century BC Collapse: Recovery and Restructuration in the Early Iron Age Near East and Mediterranean: Proceedings of the 9th Melammu Workshop, Tartu, 7–9 June 2019

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(Photo courtesy of Deborah Boedeker)

We dedicate this volume to the memory of
the notable scholar and dear colleague
Kurt Raaflaub.

Table of Contents

An Elite in the Making

The North Cemetery at Corinth, 800–500 BCE

Hans van Wees

By the end of the classical age, the northern flanks of the rocky terraces on which the city of Corinth stood, and a wide strip of the plain below, were one large suburban graveyard. Such cemeteries just outside the city walls were common in Greece then, and their first appearance has been seen as a sign of the beginning of urbanisation and the development of citizen communities with equal access to communal burial grounds. One part of the Corinthian graveyard, the so-called North Cemetery, has been cited as the earliest example of this process, a generation or more before other towns followed suit.[1] However, the early date makes it difficult to accept any link with urbanisation since settlement on and below the plateaus of Corinth appears to have been scattered at the time, and the historical tradition does not favour the early development of an egalitarian community at Corinth, which was famously ruled by an oligarchy, the "Bacchiads", c. 750–650 BCE. A more plausible suggestion, therefore, is that the North Cemetery was not always the civic space that it later became, but started out as a burial ground for the elite.[2] This chapter tries to show that we can indeed trace in this cemetery the formation and changing fortunes of new elite groups from 800–500 BCE, some claiming hereditary status, others boasting of wealth.

The main part of the North Cemetery was brought to light in 1928–1930 by excavations conducted mainly by Josephine Platner, under the direction of T.L. Shear, and published by Carl Blegen, Rodney Young and Hazel Palmer in *Corinth XIII* in 1964. The material was meticulously re-examined in a valuable but unpublished PhD thesis by Keith Dickey in 1992. Neither *Corinth XIII* nor Dickey's thesis looked at the results of earlier, shorter campaigns in the same area in 1915, 1916 and 1919, which one can now access through notebooks, unpublished plans and other materials made public on-line by the American School of Classical Studies at Athens.[3] Most of the graves found in these earlier excavations are of

[1] Morris, 1987: 185–186; Shanks, 1999: 65, 68, 70; Osborne, 2009: 77–82, 94. For the wider northern burial area at Corinth, see Slane, 2017.

[2] Morgan, 2003: 60; cf. 1998: 333; 1994: 121–122; 1999: 408–409; Dickey, 1992: 136–139.

[3] http://corinth.ascsa.net/research. The notebooks are cited below as "NB". Graves from the North Cemetery are cited as numbered in *Corinth XIII*; other graves are cited by ASCSA number with the catalogue number in Dickey, 1992 in brackets, e.g. 1937-3 (LV-34). For the dates of graves in the North Cemetery, I follow Dickey, 1992 and Morgan, 1999: 465–482, who use Coldstream's pottery chronology, rather than *Corinth XIII*.

late archaic or classical date and do not concern us here, but a few overlooked burials add something to our picture of earlier developments. To this we can now add a very substantial body of new finds from Corinth and the northern plain in the last 20 years, which further illuminates the development of Corinthian burial customs and cemeteries.[4] A reassessment of previously studied finds, with the addition of the oldest and the latest material, and a new focus on the spatial politics of burial, will show that we can trace in the North Cemetery in remarkable detail the development of an important part of the Corinthian elite.

Starting a new cemetery: where and why?

In the Early Iron Age (EIA), the plateaus at the heart of the later city of Corinth were apparently home to several separate, smaller settlements.[5] Recent rescue excavations in the northern plain have brought to light early activity also immediately below the plateaus, where the motorway (A8, Olimpia Odos) was widened, and slightly further north into the plain, where the high-speed railway Corinth-Patras was constructed, roughly parallel to the road.[6] These excavations have as yet been published only piecemeal and in preliminary form, so conclusions must remain tentative, but the finds certainly show that the North Cemetery was not as isolated and exceptional as it once appeared.

One crucial discovery is that a cemetery was established in the northern plain in the Early Geometric period (EG, 900–825 BCE). This cemetery was apparently part of what is known as the Lechaion Road Valley, the main route from the centre of Corinth into the plain and towards the harbour on the Gulf of Corinth. Clusters of Early Geometric and Middle Geometric graves were already known along the upper parts of this valley on the plateau, and we now find that burials of the same periods continued much further down this road, into the plain. The cemetery here contained 58 burials of the ninth century in a "loose layout", without any discernible "family" clusters among them.[7] This cemetery was situated c. 800 m east of the later North Cemetery. The railway rescue excavation covered a continuous band 60 m wide across the area, but found only four Early Iron Age graves in the interval, and none within about 500 m of the North Cemetery,[8] which was thus

[4] See Pfaff, 2007; Sanders *et al.*, 2014 (Panaghia Field); rescue excavations cited in n. 6, below.

[5] See e.g. Tzonou / Morgan, 2020: 726–727; Pfaff, 2007: 529; 1999: 117; Dickey, 1992: 124–129; Williams / Fisher, 1973: 2–4; Roebuck, 1972; *contra* Salmon, 1984: 39–45, 83.

[6] Aslamatzidou, 2018 for graves found by railway excavations; *ArchDelt 66* (2011) *Chr.* 424–442 (summarised *AR* 2017, 34-5) for National Road excavations. Overviews: Tzonou / Morgan 2020; report of 37th Ephorate at https://www.culture.gov.gr/anaskafes/pdfs/LZ_EPKA.pdf.

[7] Aslamatzidou, 2018: 229 (graves in Rota property, at km marker 0200).

[8] Aslamatzidou, 2018: 233, fig. 1: 3 graves at km marker 0288 (i.e. 88 m west of the Early Geometric cemetery at marker 0200), 1 grave at marker 0474 (Soukouli property, among at least 35 Roman-era graves; cf. *ArchDelt* 56–59 (2001–4) B.4, 157; *AG Online* ID 3804).

clearly a separate entity rather than merely a later extension of the EG cemetery.

Just as the older cemetery lay along the main Lechaion Road, so the North Cemetery lay along another route from the plateau into the plain and towards the coast. A small section of this road was excavated where it touched the south-eastern edge of the cemetery. In its paved and wall-lined form it dated to the late classical period, but it is likely that an unpaved version existed much earlier. If one extrapolates from the road's angle in the excavated section, it must have run in the direction of Lechaion from the bottom of the plateau near the hill Cheliotomylos, where a gully provided a way down from the plateau into the plain.[9] The latest finds from the motorway excavations suggest that there was an early settlement at the foot of the plateau here. Within a 25-m stretch of road, south of the North Cemetery, were found a Protogeometric pottery kiln (c. 1000 BCE), and two unusual graves within a few metres of it; a Middle Geometric (MG, 825–750 BCE) apsidal building used for cult purposes; and a Late Geometric (LG, 750–720 BCE) altar near a grave that had been dug into the floor of a Bronze Age building. Twenty metres west stood an apsidal building of EG date.[10] At about 200 m west of this cluster, several graves dating from the EG period onward were found on the slope of Cheliotomylos hill itself.[11] The railway excavations, by contrast, reported no finds from this area, so it seems that the settlement covered only a narrow strip at the foot of the terrace and did not extend all the way to the North Cemetery.

West of the North Cemetery, along the road to Sicyon, three other burial areas were found. About 500–600 m to the west, a group of Geometric graves was discovered in a Mycenaean *tholos* tomb, well out into the plain. These burials were all in limestone (*poros*) sarcophagi, of which three – probably a man, woman and child – lay inside the vaulted chamber itself, and one or more, "very richly endowed with grave goods", lay in the *dromos*.[12] Some 800 m west of the North

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The North Cemetery is located at approximately marker 1000. (Note that arrows B and Γ in Aslamatzidou's fig. 1 do not quite match the distances indicated by the markers.)

[9] Excavated section: Palmer, 1964: 66 n. 3. Route of early road at Cheliotomylos: Carpenter / Bon, 1936: 63; Young, 1964: 14; Salmon, 1984: 34. It is not certain that Lechaion was already Corinth's harbour on the Gulf of Corinth at this time, but *AR* 65 (2019), 57, notes finds of Geometric and Archaic sherds by the Lechaion Harbor and Settlement Land Project (2016–18); cf. Tzonou / Morgan, 2020: 722 n. 1.

[10] *ArchDelt 66* (2011) *Chr*. 424–442: LG altar and grave at km 1 + 235; MG cult building at 1 + 245; kiln and two graves at 1 + 255–260; EG building at 1 + 280.

[11] EG and later EIA graves at km 1 + 450–485 (= slope of Cheliotomylos): *ArchDelt 66* (2011) *Chr*. 424–442 (summarised *AR* 2017: 34–35); despite extensive excavations in this area, only one other Geometric (pit-)grave and one possible Late Geometric pot burial had previously been found there: Dickey, 1992: 1930-97 (CO-11); s-7 (p. A-132); Morgan, 1999: 470.

[12] Kasimi, 2013: 44 (there was also a single, rich archaic sarcophagus in the *tholos*); cf. 45 fig. 1 for location; 46 fig. 3 shows that the three Geometric sarcophagi within the *tholos*

Cemetery, a major burial ground with 103 graves was found, but the graves here were apparently all from the Archaic period, when a stone quarry was being exploited in the vicinity.[13] A still larger cemetery, with 160 graves, was discovered another 400 m further west, and contained graves ranging from Submycenaean (SM, 1100–1050 BCE) to Roman date, as well as several funerary monuments and a 14-room building, still partly visible under the new railway. The graves included three from the Protogeometric period (PG, 1050–900 BCE) and ten from the ninth and eighth centuries.[14]

In short, the North Cemetery was neither the first nor the only burial ground in the plain north of Corinth, but it nevertheless retains a special position as the only large cemetery in the area in the eighth century. The cemetery to the east, along the Lechaion Road Valley, went out of use c. 800, and to the west the cemetery by the quarry did not come into use until after c. 700, leaving only a handful of likely eighth-century graves in the Mycenaean tomb down the road, and perhaps another handful among the 13 EIA graves in the long-lived cemetery three-quarters of a mile towards Sicyon. The 50-odd Geometric graves in the North Cemetery still stand out as the major burial ground of their time.

The structure of the cemetery: status rivalry?

Most of the eighth-century burials in the North Cemetery were situated between 135 and 190 m to the north of the road towards Sicyon that ran along the foot of the terrace at the time of the excavations.[15] This road was in much the same place as the modern motorway, so the cemetery was at about the same distance from the lower settlement mentioned above, and about 600 m from the top of plateau via the gulley alongside Cheliotomylos. Given this relative remoteness from habitation, it is surely significant that no more than 10 metres west of the earliest burials

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were of significantly different sizes, one evidently for a child. All three contained numerous pots, but one also had an iron knife (male?), and another a bronze ring, bronze dress pins, and golden hair spirals (female?). Kasimi speaks of graves in the *dromos* in the plural, but Aslamatzidou, 2018: fig. 1 (at km marker 1550) gives the total as only 4.

[13] Part of this cemetery (73 graves) was found by the railway excavations (at marker 1717; Lekka-Gotsi property), and the southern part (30 graves), along with the neighbouring quarry, a road, a building and what appears to be a fortification wall, by the motorway excavation (between road marker 1970 and 2200): see Giannopoulou *et al.*, 2013; *AG Online* ID 6929 (cf. 2493); and https://www.culture.gov.gr/anaskafes/pdfs/LZ_EPKA.pdf

[14] Cemetery at km marker 2153 (Deli and Mikrou properties): *AG Online* ID 3803; 160 graves between markers 2100–2191: https://www.culture.gov.gr/anaskafes/pdfs/LZ_EPKA.pdf (also monuments and 14-room building). Submycenaean to Roman range: Kassimi, 2013: 46 fig. 1 (no. 1). Thirteen EIA graves: Aslamatzidou, 2018: fig. 1; incl. 3 Protogeometric, Deli property graves 58 and 59 (p. 230) and Mikrou property grave 9 (fig. 6).

[15] NB 388 p. 1: the first trench laid in 1928 was at 112 m north of the Sicyon road; in the published grid plan of the excavations in *Corinth* XIII, this reference point corresponds to the centre of B 10, while the eighth-century graves cover C-D 2–7, c. 25–80 m north.

lay a circle of graves dating to the late Middle Helladic period (1700–1600 BCE). These Bronze Age graves were carefully respected in later centuries – when elsewhere many were buried among, above, or in, earlier graves – so evidently they remained visible, and it has been compellingly argued that they must have been covered by a large tumulus.[16] Those who started burying their dead in the North Cemetery thus no doubt did so for the sake of the association with this ancient monument, to claim a connection for the family or community with the "ancestors" supposedly buried here (fig. 1).[17] The cluster of burials made in a Mycenaean *tholos* tomb to the west suggests that a similar effort was made elsewhere, probably at about the same time.

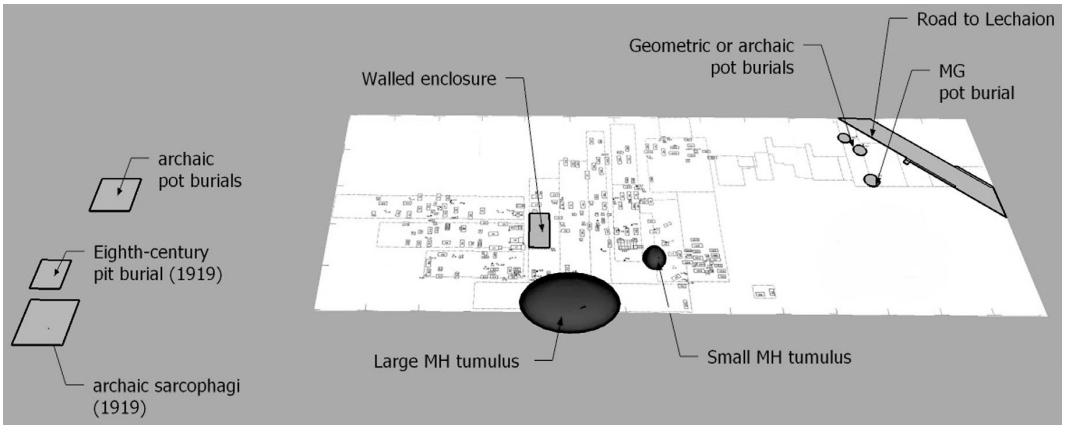

Fig. 1: Layout of North Cemetery: elements imposed on base map from Dickey 1992, fig. 5.

One might imagine a community burying its dead all around an ancient tumulus on a more or less equal basis, and the cemetery spreading outwards from this centre over the generations, but that is not what happened in the North Cemetery. Although our knowledge of developments is limited by a lack of excavation west

[16] Rutter, 1990: 455–458. The grave cluster was somewhat more compact than the published plan in *Corinth XIII* suggests. The southern trench, containing graves 8–11, did not continue in the same line due N-S as the northern trench, starting 2m south of it, as the plan has it, but is described in NB 394, p. 321, as running at an 8°–10° NE angle and starting only 50 cm south and 60 cm west of it. (A note added in biro *ad loc*., dated July 1998, makes this point.) An unpublished drawing (Corinth 184-014), showing only the MH graves, represents the alignment correctly. No sign of any elevation is recorded in the publication or notebooks, so any tumuli must have been levelled off after antiquity.

[17] Tzonou / Morgan, 2020: 727; Kõiv, 2016: 54, 60; Dickey, 1992: 129–130, 136–137. Pottery sherds from the Late Helladic to Early Geometric periods show that people visited the site throughout the centuries when no burials took place (Dickey, 1992: 9), probably to perform cult activity focused on the tumulus (or tumuli: see below).

of the tumulus, we can see that the distribution of graves in the excavated areas was very uneven and did not radiate outwards from a single core. The majority of early burials lay north-east of the tumulus, and although they eventually moved closer and crowded densely around its eastern side, an area of 12 m to its south and of at least the same distance north was left wholly unused. Moreover, a small but distinctive group of early graves (55–61) lay separate from the rest, to the south-east of the tumulus,[18] and beside the sole Middle Helladic burial (12) that was isolated from the others. This was surely no coincidence: presumably this ancient grave had a smaller tumulus of its own,[19] and the buriers of this group chose to make this monument rather than the main tumulus the focus of their funerals. If so, we may have rival groups staking separate "territories" for burial, each affording its own claim to ancient ancestry, rather than a united community with a shared cemetery centred on a single "founding hero".

This impression is reinforced if one looks beyond the core area of early burials. An MG II krater (800–750 BCE) which probably contained an infant burial was found about 75 m south-east of the large tumulus.[20] A few metres away were another two child burials, one in a large "pithos" (196) and the other in an amphora (197); these cannot be precisely dated but must be earlier than 550 BCE, after which we find no pot burials at Corinth. The "pithos" was the most easterly burial in the entire North Cemetery.[21] These burials were far from the tumuli, but they were close to the road to Lechaion. If one can extrapolate from the road's angle in the excavated section, pot burials 196 and 197 would have been placed right beside it, with the MG II krater about 5 m back. This location may have been prominent in its own right, even if it bestowed no "ancestral" prestige.

Further early graves lay a long way north. *Corinth XIII* assumed that the limit of the cemetery lay not far north of the tumulus, where a section of rubble wall was discovered, beyond which lay only graves of Roman date. However, this is more likely to have been a terrace wall than a boundary wall. [22] The excavations

[18] The mistake noted in n. 16, above, affects the location of Grave 55, which ought to be placed c. 2 m further north and 2–3 m further west than it is on the plans in *Corinth XIII* and Dickey, 1992, so that it lies due south of the main tumulus and due west of MH Grave 12.

[19] There is some indirect evidence for a tumulus here: see below, nn. 107, 192.

[20] Dickey, 1992: amphora s-2 (T1224; S-7 in *Corinth XIII*).

[21] The excavations went c. 7 m further east than the position of 196 in some places, but found no graves: *Corinth* XIII, Plan 1. See below for the eastern limit further north.

[22] The only record is a passing reference in NB 393, p. 108 (and plan on pp. 6–7): "a wall which cuts the trench the full width. It is only of rubble construction and measures 0.43 wide and 1.20 high"; Palmer, 1964: 65–66, interpreted it as a boundary wall. Even if the top of this wall lay only, say, 30 cm, below the modern surface, it would have reached to -1.50 m, whereas the top of a nearby sarcophagus (183) lay at -1.00 m below the modern surface, and the soil above it would surely have reached at least -0.90, i.e. halfway up the wall.

of 1915, 1916 and 1919 – which have not previously been taken into account in studies of the North Cemetery – brought to light numerous burials further north beyond the unused stretch later occupied by Roman graves. The geographical relation between the site of these early excavations and the published North Cemetery is nowhere described or mapped, but can be inferred from the notebooks.

The excavations of 1915–1916 centred on a plot of land owned by Panagiotis Kondylis, a butcher, and most of the 1928–1930 excavations took place in the field of the widow Irene Kondylis. This was evidently the same property.[23] In the notes of the 1915 campaign, the field is described as 121 m long, north-to-south, and 25 m wide, with a vineyard also belonging to Kondylis adjoining it to the north (NB 80a, pp. 1, 3). In 1930, the southern half of this field was almost entirely excavated, and at its eastern edge a trench reached c. 85 m north of the SE corner,[24] leaving the last 36 m unexplored. In 1915, digging had started in the vineyard, and in 1916 moved down into the north-east corner of the field below (NB 80b, p. 3). An unpublished plan of the 1915–1916 finds (Corinth 184 004) shows a small trench as far as 30 m south of the vineyard and therefore only 6 m north of the point where the 1930 excavations stopped. The 1919 sounding was made immediately west of the vineyard in a neighbouring plot (NB 85a, pp. 35–39). Since the Middle Helladic graves at the centre of the cemetery were situated immediately west of Kondylis' field (NB 394, p. 294), it follows that the graves found in 1919 lay due north of the large tumulus, about 100 m away.[25]

The notebooks (NB 80 a, b; 82) and drawings of some of the graves uncovered in 1915–1916 (Corinth 184-001, -003, -004) show that most of the burials were of classical date, but at the southern end of the main trench some burials lay on top of a cluster of earlier child burials, 600–550 BCE. The digging of a burial pit for a woman, interred holding a mirror, damaged a covered amphora with the body of a child (Grave XXIIA), while 3 m to the north a large Classical sarcophagus had crushed two hydrias, which may have held child burials as well.[26] Around the

[23] A note added in biro, and dated 23/7/98, on the front page of NB 80a says as much. The surname is variously spelled in the notebooks (e.g. Condyle, Kontyles).

[24] NB 393, p. 3: Trench F started "in the widow Irene Condyle's field 45 metres north of the south east corner of the field and 4.55 from the east edge of the field". Trench F (in C 1–4 in *Corinth XIII*, Plan I) stretched 40 m north of this point, and the bulk of the excavated area (C-D 5–8) stretched 40 m south, i.e. to about 5 m from the southern border of Mrs Kondylis' field and the adjacent road (not mentioned in the notebooks).

[25] The first trench of 1919 started 2.50 m west of the vineyard at the fifth fence-post (NB 85a, p. 39), which the 1915–1916 plan (Corinth 184 004) shows was 13 m north of the SW corner of the vineyard, i.e. 134 m north of the SW corner of the field. The *Corinth XIII* plan shows that the centre of tumulus (E5–6) was c. 35 m north of this same SW corner (E8–9).

[26] Dickey, 1992: 5 n.2; 8 n. 6, mentions Grave XXIIA "and possibly another" here, but did not include these in his study. Hydrias: NB 80b, p. 12; 82, 5. The amphora contained 13 small pots and a "clam shell" (NB 80b, pp. 32–33; 82, pp. 63, 69), which suggests a date

amphora lay three child sarcophagi (XX, XXV, XXXVIII) with early sixth-century features.[27] At the end of the trench, a fourth child sarcophagus (XXIII) may have been even older: the body was strongly contracted and without grave goods; the sarcophagus had thicker walls than any of the others and no stucco decoration. Its outsize cover slab confirms that the burial was austere rather than merely poor.[28] Here, then, we have an early grave close to the far north-eastern corner of the cemetery,[29] and it is possible that this burial was part of a larger group that lay in the unexcavated area immediately next to it.[30]

Even more interesting were the finds of 1919. In his foreword to *Corinth XIII*, Carl Blegen noted "a minor sounding, which in 1919 exposed one or two additional graves" (1964: v), but said no more about it. As it turns out, this sounding was made by a young Blegen himself, and in fact uncovered eight burials, which he recorded with evident disappointment when on lifting the sarcophagus lids they were found to contain "nothing of value" (NB 85a, p. 43); "no finds whatever" (p. 45); "not a find of any description" (p. 46). It is precisely their near-emptiness, in contrast to the pottery-rich sarcophagi of 600–300 BCE, which suggests that these were early graves.[31] The adult sarcophagi were small and the child sarcophagi minute, which implies bodies buried in a contracted position, and together with the absence of stucco decoration this is an indicator of a seventh-century date.[32]

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after 600 BCE.

[27] The contraction of the body in Graves XX and XXV is alluded to in NB 80b, 17–18, where the bodies are described as "boy or girl *hocker*", i.e. "squatter", and clearly shown in drawing Corinth 184 003; for Grave XXXVIII, see photo "bw 1366". The tabulated details of the graves in NB 82, pp. 56–59, confirm that XXV and XXXVIII contained no grave goods.

[28] For the contracted position, see Corinth 184 003; for the early features of the sarcophagus, see NB 82, pp. 56–59. Dating criteria: Palmer, 1964: 69, 72, 78–79; Dickey, 1992: 30, 56–60. The cover is recorded as 20 cm thick, for which there is no sixth-century parallel and only a couple in the seventh century (Graves 87, 89); drawing 184 003 shows that the cover was significantly larger than the box, and irregularly shaped. NB 80b, p. 23, notes that the cover was roughly cut, and comments on that the burial was in a "bad state, probably plundered": it would, however, be the only plundered grave here, and a better explanation for the lack of grave goods and decayed bones may be an early date.

[29] The unpublished plan Corinth 184 004 shows graves extending only about 3 m east of Kondylis' field into the neighbour's property, and it is recorded that here, "in Papapanagis" field there appear to be graves only at W. edge' (NB 80b, p. 26; cf. 80a, "spread 44" in the on-line copy, for graves crossing the boundary between Kondylis' and Papapanagis' plots). There were no graves on the east side of Kondylis' vineyard either: NB 80a, p. 1.

[30] But this area was certainly not fully occupied: there were, for instance no archaic or even classical graves for at least 8 m north of Graves 183–185.

[31] The only contents were one terracotta loom weight (grave IV, NB 85a, p. 43) and a pair of pins recorded first as "iron", then as "bronze" (Grave III, p. 44); if they were indeed of bronze, this would be an indication of a date before c. 700 BCE: Dickey, 1992: 79.

[32] Blegen recorded precise measurements of "box", cover, and position of the cover on the

Most interesting is the first grave found, last to be opened (Grave I), deeper than the others, and not a sarcophagus but an "earth burial" in a small pit under a large stone slab. This could be a classical grave, but the absence of grave goods and the likely contracted position of the body suggest that it dated to the eighth century.[33] The next day, Blegen moved on to a dig elsewhere, leaving two men to fill in the trenches (NB 85a, p. 50), so it seems that he abandoned his sounding just when he had found one of the earliest Iron Age graves in the entire burial ground.

Burials at the very northern limit of the cemetery[34] thus began in the eighth century, continued into the seventh, and may well have been part of a larger group. Further groups may have existed west and south-west of the tumuli, where no excavation took place.[35] From the beginning, therefore, the North Cemetery covered a large area within which there were multiple clusters and scattered burials, among which only two groups, so far as we can tell, chose to associate their graves with imagined Bronze Age forebears. These groups were evidently determined to stand out in the community by claiming a notable ancestry.

Pit graves: funerary display and commemoration, 800–720 BCE

The earliest burials were pit graves, in essence simply holes in the ground, which may seem an unspectacular form of interment and support the idea that this was a simple, egalitarian community cemetery. However, even if the graves were inconspicuous, a close look at the scanty material remains shows that burials of this type required a good deal of manpower, and that they must often have involved large quantities of perishable wealth, especially valuable textiles. Funerals thus

box (NB 85a, 41–48). The numbers imply that he measured the external dimensions of the box, from which we must deduct the thickness of the walls: the longest sarcophagus was 1.39 m in length internally (1.57 m minus 2x9 cm), the others 1.29, 1.23 and 1.16; the child sarcophagi were 38.5 and 34 long. This corresponds well to range of sarcophagi containing "contracted" burials in the main part of the cemetery. (The eighth grave was an infant burial "under fragments of tiles and potsherds", NB 85a, p. 48, which sounds like a classical burial.)

[33] The depth of grave I was 2.53 m: the cover slab lay at 2.08 m (NB 85a, p. 39; cf. grave II at 1.50 [pp. 39, 41], III–V at 1.65 [p. 39]) and was 15 cm thick, with a 30 cm-deep grave pit below (p. 49). The small pit (1.28 × 0.56; p.49) implies a contracted position. The cover slab was much larger than the grave (1.68 × 0.70–0.78); the type of stone is not specified (p. 49).

[34] Blegen found nothing north of Grave I, although his trench continued another 8 m north (x 1.25) and was dug nearly 3 m deep: NB 85a, pp. 36, 39. The 1915 campaign found 12 graves up to 13 m north in the vineyard, the same distance north as Blegen's Grave I, but found nothing further north here or in the neighbour's plot to the east: NB 80a, p. 1. Of the 12 graves in the vineyard, only 3 were opened, and the recorded details (NB 80a, pp. 7–14; NB 82, pp. 56–59) indicate a late archaic or classical date.

[35] Only one small isolated trench was dug in the south-west: this revealed 2 seventh-century graves (86, 87), c. 30 m south of the large tumulus (or 15 m south of the smaller one).

afforded opportunities for the display of wealth and status. Moreover, some graves were monumentalised and honoured by later generations.

The pit graves that can be dated by pottery found inside or around them date to the MG II period (800–750 BCE) or in a single instance perhaps to the LG period (750–720 BCE).[36] Datable burials from later periods take different forms: "composite" sarcophagi appear in the Early Protocorinthian phase (EPC, 720–690 BCE), and monolithic sarcophagi become the norm from the end of this phase, c. 700 BCE (see below). It seems safe to conclude that pit graves went out of use around 720 BCE, so that we can attribute even the many otherwise undatable pit burials to 800–720 BCE.[37]

The development from pit graves to sarcophagi was not simply a "natural" progression. As discoveries since 2002 have made increasingly clear, sarcophagi were in use elsewhere at Corinth long before the North Cemetery was even established. If those who buried their relatives in the North Cemetery did not initially use such forms of burial, therefore, it was because they either preferred pit graves or were unable to acquire sarcophagi.[38] Similarly, the type of stone used in burials elsewhere at Corinth was usually *poros* limestone, whereas in the North Cemetery the cover slabs of pit graves were usually carved from sandstone and occasionally conglomerate, no doubt quarried locally from the nearest slopes of the plateau, and more easily acquired than *poros*.[39] In terms of pottery placed in and around the graves, too, the earliest burials in the North Cemetery, each with just a single *hydria* capped by a *skyphos*, seem "poor" compared to their contemporaries. Nevertheless, there are signs that the people buried here enjoyed considerable wealth and status.

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[36] This possible LG grave has no number because it was destroyed in the late fourth century and reused (as Grave 476), as noted by Palmer, 1964: 287, leaving only part of the sandstone cover at -2.50 m and bronze "spirals" and an iron pin very nearby at -2.70 m (NB 394, p. 281), as noted by Dickey, 1992: 86 n. 84. The LG date derives from a krater placed very close to this grave (Young, 1964: S-2, pl. 10 = s-4 in the fuller list in Dickey 1992; hereafter, capital S- refers to *Corinth XIII* number, lower case s- to Dickey's list), but I regard this as a pot burial rather than a gift deposited in the shaft of this grave: see at n. 96, below.

[37] See Dickey, 1992: 25–26, and Morgan, 1999: 408, on sarcophagi.

[38] Of the 80 EIA graves in total found by the railway excavations, most MGI or earlier, as many as 35 were sarcophagus burials: Aslamatzidou, 2018, 229, 231. Several early sarcophagi were found in the Panaghia Field excavations: 2002-11 and 2003-12, both EG (Pfaff, 2007); 2006-4, MG II (Sanders *et al.*, 2014). Some early sarcophagi were already known: Grave 1933-204 (CO-10), LPG; 1961-2 (GC-2), EG; 1899-2 (LV-40), MGI; 1969-18 (CO-12), MG.

[39] See Hayward, 2003: esp. 30, for sandstone and conglomerate as the types of stone available from the terrace scarp (and from pits in the plain), whereas *poros* (oolitic limestone) was quarried at the centre of the terrace (and elsewhere); cf. Hayward, 2013: 66–67, for the superior qualities of oolitic limestone as a building material.

Grave shafts: digging for glory

The early pit graves or "earth burials" in the North Cemetery took the form of what are known elsewhere as shaft graves. A long and wide trench was dug into the soil, and at the bottom of this trench a smaller pit was dug into which the body was deposited, covered with a stone slab. The excavations of the North Cemetery were conducted at speed, and no note was taken of these shafts as opposed to the grave pits, but calculation suggests that the burials here included some of the widest and deepest shafts yet attested in Corinth.[40]

The depths of shafts can be easily calculated by adding the thickness of the grave's cover slab to the depth at which it was found. The trenches of Graves 14–16 reached 2.74, 2.77 and 2.81 m below the modern surface, and the bottom of the grave pits another 35–44 cm below this, more than 3 m underground. In several adjacent graves (17, 21, 22), the shaft alone was more than 3 m deep.[41] The reason for digging so deep was presumably the habit of cutting graves into bedrock or into a hard layer of sterile soil, which is very commonly attested for early graves at Corinth. On parts of the plateau, this stratum was reached quite quickly, but in the North Cemetery it took much digging. For two of the three earliest graves, the notebooks record that, while the soil above the grave was loose brown earth, "this character of earth changed completely when the bottom of the grave was reached into a hard packed greyish claylike earth" (NB 390, p. 376; NB 391, p. 383). This is not recorded for the other burials, but in general "bedrock" was reached at 3.00 m (Blegen, 1964: 1–2; cf. NB 394, p. 312). The earliest graves thus lay below this level and burial customs were maintained, although it was hard work doing so in the plain.

From these depths, we must deduct about 1 m to account for the surface in c. 800 BCE lying lower than it did in 1930. One clear indication of the ancient surface level is that Graves 14–16 were surrounded by a wall, which was evidently a surface marker. From the fact that the top of this wall lay 50 cm below the modern surface and the wall must have risen to c. 45–50 cm above the ancient surface we can infer a difference of a metre, which, as shown below, is confirmed by the level of a number of other nearby surface markers.[42] In other parts of the cemetery,

[40] The results of the railway excavation may change this picture, since the earliest report spoke of graves much deeper below the modern surface: 4.35 m in the Rota property, 4.56 in the Lekka-Gotsi property, and a range of 5.00–6.97 in the Deli property (*ArchDelt* 56–59 [2001–4] B.4, 156–157). The more recent accounts by Giannopoulou *et al.*, 2013 and Aslamatzidou, 2018 do not, however, repeat this striking information.

[41] For these graves the depth of the pit was not recorded, but the shallowest pit elsewhere was 35 cm deep (Grave 16). Depths of early shafts: 3.08 (Grave 17), 2.88 (18), 2.79 (19), 2.66 (20; grave pit 45 cm deep); 3.15 (21), 3.115 (22), 2.765 (23), 2.42 (24; grave pit 49 cm), 2.59 (25; grave pit 45 cm); 2.50 (26; grave pit 50 cm); 2.46 (29).

[42] Young, 1964: 21; photo: pl. 6. This wall was formed of juxtaposed upright slabs of stone of uneven length, 64–78 cm; on the assumption that the bottom one-third of even the shortest slabs would have had to be set below ground for stability, the wall would have risen

surface markers suggest a ground level 20–30 cm lower.[43] The deepest shafts in the North Cemetery were therefore 1.50–2.00 m deep, plus the depth of the grave pit. Digging these involved a notable effort: shafts elsewhere were often much shallower, and in the "Potters' Quarter" only 20–50 cm deep.[44]

Estimating the length and width of shafts is more difficult, but again Graves 14-16 provide us with a clue. A scale drawing in the field notes (NB 390, pp. 292–293) shows that in each case a hydria was placed at the bottom of the shaft c. 50 cm north and 50 cm west of the north-west corner of the grave pit. If the grave pit lay more-or-less in the centre of the shaft while these pots stood in its far corner, as in Grave 2002-11 (Pfaff, 2007: 449; fig. 5), the shaft would have been twice 50 cm wider and twice 50 cm longer than the pit. On that basis, the shafts would have covered surface areas of 6.81 m^2 (14), 5.46 m^2 (15) and 3.95 m^2 (16): 4.0, 4.6 and 4.5 times more than their respective grave pits. The largest of these shafts was exceeded only by EG grave 2002-11 and MGI grave 2006-4 in the Panaghia Field on the plateau (respectively 8.74 m^2 and c. 8.00 m^2), and matched the next largest shaft, which held two adult graves (6.90 m^2; 1937-1/2 [LV-28/29]). The greater depth of Grave 14 means that its shaft is the largest at Corinth in volume: 12 m^3, about 18 tonnes of soil. It would have taken a team of 4 men at least 3 days to dig a shaft on this scale.[45]

Grave pits: size matters

Since the skeleton in Grave 16 was well preserved, one can see that the pit, which measured 1.47 × 0.60 m and was a mere 35 cm deep, was only just large enough to hold the body with legs in a slightly contracted position (fig. 2). In Archaic graves, too, sarcophagi appear to be tailored to the size of the deceased, whose bodies usually take up almost the full length and breadth.[46] Grave goods, in Grave 16 as in the later sarcophagi, had to be squeezed into whatever space was left

43 cm above the ground, putting the ancient surface at -0.93 m. Graves 101, 106 and 112, just south of the enclosure, lay at depths of 0.98–1.00 m, and thus just below the ancient surface; for surface markers, see below. Dickey, 1992: 116 with n. 15, posits on the basis of finds at higher levels (explained below) that the ancient surface lay at only -0.30 – -0.40 m, but on that view the entire wall around 14–16 would have been underground.

[43] See below, nn. 91, 183 (marker near 206), n. 215 (road), n. 217 (marker near 144).

[44] In addition, Grave 1971-5 (LV-20) had a shaft, lined with clay, at least 0.35 m deep × 2.00/2.05 × 1.22/1.25; Grave 1930-97 (CO-11) is described in NB 553, p. 45, as only 1 m below the modern surface. Archaic graves are shallower in the North Cemetery, too.

[45] Sanders *et al.*, 2014: 33 n.44, estimate that it takes 7 man-hours to excavate 1 m^3 with modern spades and picks. In at least part of the cemetery, shafts were dug not only through loose soil but through a 50-cm layer of "hard pack" followed by a 10-cm layer of sand and gravel: Blegen, 1964: 1–2; cf. NB 394, p. 312; NB 85A, p. 39; NB 80B, p. 12.

[46] Non-standard size: Dickey, 1992: 28–30, with the tabulation in his Figure 1 (contra Palmer, 1964: 72–73). That most buried bodies took up the full length of the sarcophagus can be seen most easily from the drawings of burials in *Corinth XIII*, pls. 102–123.

beside or on top of the body. Grave 15 was rather larger (1.60 × 0.75 m, and 37 cm deep) but may simply have contained a larger person. Grave 14 and the adjoining graves to the north, on the other hand, were quite different.

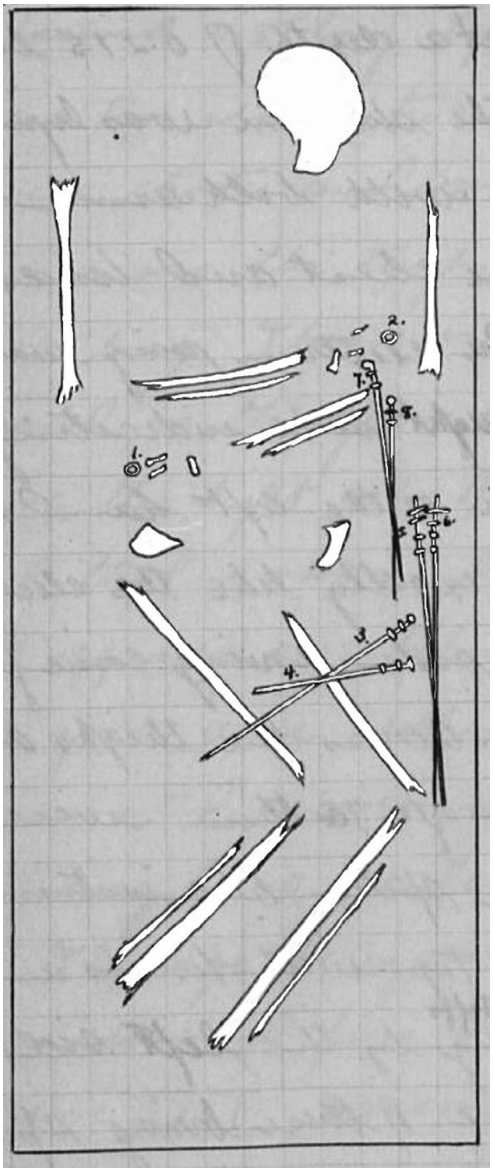

Fig. 2: Grave 16 (drawing by Josephine Platner in NB 390, p. 377; details enhanced). (1) electrum ring on left hand; (2) silver ring on right hand; (3–8) three pairs of bronze dress pins.

The pit of Grave 14 was 1.80 m long, which would certainly leave space at the head or foot of the grave, given burial in a contracted position, and the pit also left a great deal of space at the sides, since it was 0.95 m wide and required the widest cover slab in the cemetery (1.05 m). Moreover, at the south-east corner of Grave 14 lay another slab above another pit (14B). This has been interpreted as a child grave, on the analogy with a small burial at right angles to the neighbouring Grave 15 (see below). However, the pit contained no bones, and the slab was neither the right shape nor in the right place to be a grave: it was nearly square (0.78 × 0.69 m) whereas all grave slabs and pits were elongated oblongs (1.32 × 0.52 m for 15B, for instance), and it did not lie at right angles at the head of the grave, but off to one side. These features remind one of the niches with offerings, but without burials, beside Grave 2003-12, and at the SW corners of Graves 2-5 at Aghioi Theodoroi,[47] and I would therefore suggest that the slab beside Grave 14 covered a pit for (perishable) offerings and that the grave was even more capacious than the outsize grave pit itself suggests.

This separate offering pit set a precedent for five adjacent burials to the north, which have "compartments" for offerings integrated into the grave pit, above the head of the deceased, covered by a separate slab lying at right angles to the main slab covering the body (17–19, 21, 23). The dimensions of these pits were not recorded, only those of their cover slabs, but a couple of drawings show that the compartments were wider than the rest of the grave pit and occupied nearly the whole space under the secondary cover slabs.[48] The total length of these burial pits exceeded that of the spacious Grave 14 by up to a metre: the cover slabs of Grave 17 added up to 2.88 m, while the other graves reached 2.70 (18, 19) and 2.50 (21).

Graves 20 and 29, immediately east of Grave 19, had no offering compartments in the grave pit, but had an equivalent extra space in the shaft above the pit. At depths of 0.90–1.02 and 0.85–0.99 m, a triangular and a trapezium-shaped sandstone slab, respectively, lay directly above these graves. The excavator recorded that there were "grave areas" below these slabs, that the pit under the trapezoidal slab measured 1.00 × 0.50 m, and that neither pit contained anything but earth. They were accordingly published as Graves 499 and 500 in *Corinth XIII*, but with the comment that they might instead be surface markers of Graves 20 and 29.[49] If they were graves, we would have to assume that the ancient surface

[47] 2003-12: Pfaff, 2007: 488–490; Aghioi Theodoroi: Dickey, 1992: A-102-3 (Graves AT-2 to 5); published: Verdelis / Alexandri, 1961/2: 53.

[48] For dimensions, see below; the second slab over Grave 23 was fragmentary, having been destroyed by a later burial. Some of the pins in Grave 17 and the displaced skull in Grave 19 lie further east than the main grave pit extended: see fig. 3 (17) and NB 393, 158–159 (19).

[49] Palmer, 1964: 294; cf. Dickey, 1992: 116. Triangular slab (499) at -0.90 m: 1.40 × 1.00 × 0.95 m; 12 cm thick; trapezoidal slab (500) at -0.85 m: 1.08 × 0.60/0.74 cm; 14 cm thick.

level was significantly higher than we have argued and that the adjacent wall was largely underground, which seems highly unlikely. The slabs surely did indeed rest on the ancient surface, probably sunken into the soil by a few centimetres, but instead of serving merely as surface markers, they covered offering trenches that had been dug above Graves 20 and 29.[50]

Graves with larger pits required proportionally larger shafts as well, and therefore a good deal more manpower engaged in digging. Moreover, they required larger and additional sandstone cover slabs. Even if quarried locally and not hard to carve, these slabs would have taken much effort to put in place. Grave 14 was covered by a slab measuring 1.94 × 1.05 × 0.16 m, a volume of 0.326 m^3, which at approximately 2,000 kg per cubic metre implies a weight of over 600 kg, the maximum load for a span of oxen.[51] The two thick slabs covering Grave 18 had a combined volume of 0.474 m^3, and an approximate weight of 950 kg. In contemporary Argos, pit/shaft graves rarely had a stone cover at all, so their constant use and large size at Corinth was in itself a notable form of display.[52]

Grave goods: property or gifts?

Most pit graves in the North Cemetery have few or no grave goods, the criterion by which burials are usually judged "rich" or "poor". To assess the significance of this, we need to make some distinctions. One category of grave goods consists of items placed in the shaft outside the grave pit, and in this respect the North Cemetery graves do look rather poor. A second category consists of the clothes and ornaments worn by the deceased at the time of burial: these seem little different in the North Cemetery from other burial places. The third and final category are separate "gifts" or "offerings" deposited inside the pits, and these may in the North Cemetery sometimes have exceeded the wealth of many other burials, if we take into account the probable role of perishable goods that archaeology can rarely trace.

In the shafts of seven burials (14–20) stood a hand-made, unpainted *hydria* with an upright *skyphos* on top to close its mouth; in one or two cases, the *skyphos* in turn held a small bronze cup or bowl (17, 19). Once, a large krater was added (17), and in one other shaft an amphora and a total of four *oinochoai* (18). The *hydria*-and-*skyphos* set appears to have been a standard feature of Middle Geometric burials at Corinth, but it was sometimes accompanied by numerous other

[50] Although the excavator did not give the dimensions of the trench above Grave 20/under 499, she did not merely assume that a "grave area" existed here: she did not do so for other slabs found at this level (discussed below), but recorded the one above Grave 19 as simply an isolated slab (NB 393, p. 125) and immediately identified all others as grave markers.

[51] See Sanders *et al.*, 2014: 38, on the weight and transport of limestone sarcophagi.

[52] Dickey, 1992: 16, 33, citing Hägg, 1974: 107, for Argos. The two slabs of Grave 19 measured 0.415 m^3, but the larger slabs of Grave 17 were thinner and the total volume only 0.297 m^3.

vessels.[53] The indications are that these vessels were not meant to endow the deceased with possessions for the afterlife, but were used at the funeral and then "buried to remove them from mundane use".[54] Most obviously, the heavy cover slab over the grave pit placed a strong symbolic barrier between the dead and any vessels placed in the shaft. At times, this separation was reinforced by half-filling the shaft with soil again before depositing the vessels,[55] or by placing them in a niche dug into a wall of the shaft, sometimes behind a cover slab of their own,[56] as if to give them an emphatically separate burial. Moreover, some of the pots appear to have been made specifically for funerary use, rather than being household possessions that were given up to the dead. Despite their plainness, the *hydriai* were high-quality, professionally made vessels, and the addition of "a pair of pointed knobs" at the shoulder of each jar, not found on "normal" *hydriai*, suggests that they were designed for a special purpose.[57]

Few objects other than ceramic vessels are found in shafts anywhere at Corinth. Apart from a unique instance where personal ornaments were deposited on top of the grave (see below), all we encounter is a spearhead in two EG graves, snapped off its shaft and deposited outside the grave on the left-hand side of the deceased.[58] Whatever symbolic significance this may have had, all the other items

[53] *Hydria/skyphos* only: LV-6 (identified as "probable grave" by Dickey, 1992), 1936-20 (LV-27); with additional pots: 1937-3 (LV-34ab; 2 kraters); Aghioi Theodoroi, Graves 2-4 (AT-2 with 8 other pots; AT-3 with 17 pots; AT-4 with 3 pots); 2006-4 (Sanders *et al.* 2014; 4 pots). In MGI, we find an amphora covered by *skyphos*: 1899-2 (LV-40; plus 14 other pots); 2004-4 (Pfaff, 2007; plus 2). Cf. Kasimi, 2013: 45. EG grave shafts also often contain numerous pots.

[54] Sanders *et al.*, 2014: 33; Pfaff, 2007: 476–477; Dickey, 1992: 111.

[55] Pfaff, 2007: 450 (2002-11): some vessels deposited after shaft filled in up to 63 cm. The same procedure is implied by Grave 18 in the North Cemetery, which had some pots at the level of the cover slab, and others two feet higher: the cover of Grave 18 lay at – 2.70 m and was 18 cm thick, and an amphora found at -2.50 m and 38 cm tall stood at the same level, while at a slight distance to the west, 3 *oinochoai* stood at the level of the top of the cover slab (not mentioned in the description of the grave, but reported separately as "objects found outside the graves" in NB 393, pp. 139, 144); by contrast, a *hydria*-with-*skyphos* was found at only -1.75 m, which, with the *hydria* 47.2 cm tall gives a total depth of only c. 2.25 m. A single *oinochoe* found at -2.00 m and 15.5 cm tall was found "near" the *hydria*, (NB 393, pp. 110–111, 139). Neither Young, 1964 nor Dickey, 1992 noted this feature of Grave 18.

[56] Graves 2003-12, 2004-4 (Pfaff, 2007); 2006-4 (Sanders *et al.*, 2014, 13: limestone cover slab of 1.59 × 0.93 × 0.17 m; pp. 33–34 for partial parallels); AT-2-5 (Dickey, 1992: with cover slabs).

[57] Young, 1964: 18, 21–23, 41; pl.6; for their high quality, see Dickey, 1992: 69, 71–72.

[58] Pfaff, 2007: 490–491, 502–503 (2003-12, in niche); Dickey, 1992: 92 and A-1 (1940-5; LV-1a), with NB 187, p. 230, for its position in relation to the grave; the fact that it lay about halfway along the length of the grave suggest that, like the other spearhead, it no longer had its full shaft (which would have protruded far below the foot of the grave if still

in grave shafts could easily have been used in funerary rituals, above all libations, in view of the many pouring vessels, cups and bowls among them (Young, 1964: 21). Their limited number in the eighth-century North Cemetery thus suggests simple funerary rites rather than a lack of wealth.

Aside from a few beads, items of personal dress and ornament found inside the grave pits and sarcophagi are limited to finger rings, "spirals", pins and fibulae. The spirals are found elsewhere at Corinth either in pairs, one on each side of the head, or singly, under the head, which suggests that they were worn either at the sides or the back of the head, as hair ornaments or part of a headdress. Grave 1937-1 (LV-28) contained a body wearing a heavy solid gold pair of spirals, as well as five rings (four gold, one silver) on the right hand. No other contemporary eighth-century burial matches this, but with an electrum ring on one hand and a silver ring on the other, Grave 16 in the North Cemetery vies for second place with Grave 1936-21 (LV-33), and the newly found grave inside a Mycenaean *tholos* tomb, each of which had a pair of gold spirals but just one bronze ring.[59] Otherwise, only seven published eighth-century graves in the Corinthia have one or two bronze spirals, including a destroyed burial (near 17), while nine have one or two bronze rings, including Grave 17 next to that destroyed grave.[60] It is reported that a few of the graves found by the recent railway and motorway excavations contained the same range of ornaments.[61] By eighth-century Corinthian standards, therefore, the personal ornaments of some of those buried in the North Cemetery were as luxurious as they came.

Fibulae and pins found in graves were sometimes worn by the dead as part of the dress in which they were buried. A pair of pins was an essential part of early Greek female dress, used to fix a draped robe (*peplos*) at the shoulders, while a single fibula was used by men to pin a cloak (*chlaina*) at the shoulder or chest.[62] Often, however, the ornaments found in graves were not worn by the dead, but deposited separately as "gifts". Only eight Corinthian graves between 1100 and 550 BCE included a fibula, and half of these were child graves from the beginning and end of the period, in which the buried child or infant certainly or probably

attached). A supposed third spearhead, inside grave 1936-18 (LV-24), has now been reinterpreted as an iron pin with a tang for attaching an ivory finial: Pfaff, 2007: 491 n. 55, 507 n. 71.

[59] New grave: Kasimi, 2013: 46. NB 162, 60, says of the spirals in 1937-1 (unlike those in 1936-21) that "their weight is too great for hair ornaments".

[60] Spirals and rings: Dickey, 1992: 86–90. Note also the 2 bronze rings in Grave 2003-12, one apparently not on the hand (Pfaff, 2007: 481, 506–509).

[61] Ornaments from EG/MGI cemetery at railway marker 0200: Aslamatzidou, 2018: 229–230. Bronze spirals in grave at road marker 1255: *AR* 63 (2017), 34–35. An even earlier grave (a late tenth-century cist) at railway marker 2153 (Mikrou property), however, was richer, with a pair of gold spirals, 3 bronze rings, 2 bronze bracelets, 4 bronze beads, 3 iron pins, and 2 bronze fibulae: *Arch. Deltion* 56–59 (2001–4) B.4, 158; *AG Online* ID 3803.

[62] For the conventions of early Greek dress, see Van Wees, 2005.

wore a garment pinned by the fibula.[63] In two of the four adult burials, we have no details of the position of the fibulas, but in the remaining two, both of 800–750 BCE, they were clearly not worn. In Grave 17, a bronze fibula lay above the head of the deceased and under an *oinochoe*; in Grave 1937-3 (LV-34), one bronze and two iron fibulae, and a gold ring, were uniquely deposited above the grave, in the shaft, after it had been part-filled again with a 25-cm layer of earth.[64]

Bronze and iron pins, which appear much more commonly in graves, might be worn by the dead, but in the eighth century were again often separate offerings. In PG/EG grave 1936-21 (LV-33), two long bronze pins (30–35cm) lay at the shoulders of the deceased, who was presumably a woman dressed in a *peplos*. In MG II grave 1931-98 (PQ-5) an iron pin had become so welded to the right shoulder that it was found only when the bones were cleaned 23 years after the excavation.[65] By contrast, in the rich Grave 1937-1 (LV-28) two ornate, 60 cm-long bronze pins were placed above the dead person's head on a "shelf" cut into the wall of the pit, and two smaller iron pins with ornamental bone knobs lay at the foot of the grave pit. No pins appeared anywhere near the body. Similarly, Graves 16 and 17 in the North Cemetery each contained 3 pairs of pins, none of them in a position compatible with having been worn. In 16, a pair of bronze pins c. 20 cm long lay across the thighs, and two pairs lay along the wall of the pit: one, about 25 cm long, at a level from elbow to waist; the other, 38 cm long, reaching from waist to knee (fig. 2). In 17, all three pairs, along with a single iron pin of an unusual type[66] and the fibula already mentioned, lay in the separate "compartment" above the head of the deceased (fig. 3).

Pins are often found beside the head or in the middle of the grave, at the two locations in the grave pit where there was space beside a body lying on its side in contracted position. In Grave 2003-12, for instance, a single iron pin lay beside the skull, with a small knife across it, suggesting that this was not part of the deceased's funeral clothes.[67] In another grave, one bronze pin leant against the wall at the head of the grave, while another lay halfway down the pit (1968-1/LV-

[63] The children in Submycenaean Graves 1969-33 and -34 (LV-9a, -10) each had a fibula at the left shoulder. In the North Cemetery, 2 child burials of c. 590–570 BCE (154, 159) included a small fibula of bone and iron which may well have been worn by the deceased.
[64] NB 162, p. 8: two iron fibulae "were found in the earth ca. 0.25 m over the grave cover". The bronze fibula was found later when sifting through the fill (ibid. p. 40), so its original location is not known but was in any case outside the grave pit.
[65] NB 123, 51; note added July 1954.
[66] Dickey, 1992: 81: the sole example at Corinth of a *Rollenkopfnadel* (but his catalogue entry for NC-17 says "a short unidentified iron object"; NB 393, 174–175, calls it simply an "iron pin").
[67] Pfaff, 2007: 481 fig. 27 (items 72, 73), 507 (pin "immediately below" the knife), 509 (knife "directly above" pin); the knife would hardly have been balanced on top of a pin attached to the shoulder, but will have lain beside the head on a piece of cloth attached to the pin.

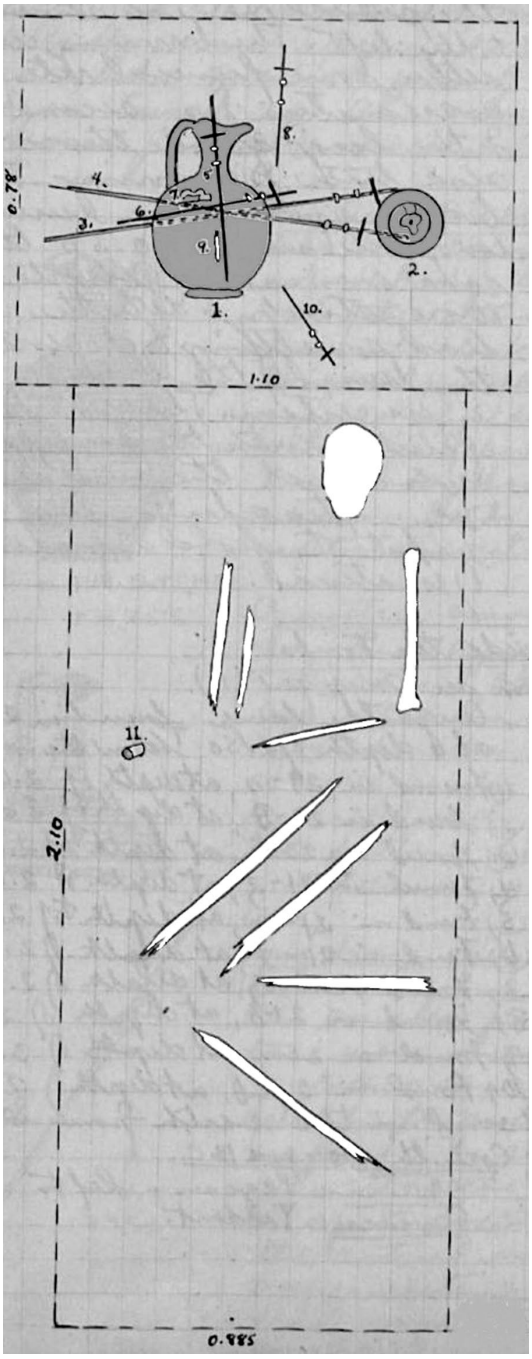

Fig. 3: Grave 17 (drawing by Josephine Platner in NB 393, p. 175; details enhanced). (1) large *oinochoe*, lying on its side; (2) small *oinochoe*, standing upright; (3–4) a pair of bronze dress pins, under the *oinochoai*; (5–6) a pair of iron dress pins, (7) bronze fibula, and (9) iron pin, all on top of large *oinochoe*; (8 and 10) iron dress pins; (11) bronze ring on left hand.

5). An item published as a "spearhead" but discovered to be a corroded pin with a tang for attaching an ivory or bone knob, lay in the far corner of a grave, above the head, and I suggest that an item published as "arrowhead (?)", lying beside a knife, was in fact another corroded pin paired with a knife in the same position beside the deceased's head as in Grave 2003-12.[68] Pins found variously "under the skull", "near the head" and "on top of the skull", are therefore not puzzling exceptions to a rule that pins must appear at the shoulders, but further instances of a habit of depositing pins in the grave separately, not as part of the deceased's clothing or shroud.[69]

In the North Cemetery, apart from Graves 16 and 17, we find pins in four further pit graves: two iron pins side-by-side halfway down 21; one at the head of 22; and, without information about location, in 25 and the destroyed burial near 17.[70] The earliest datable burial here in which pins were clearly worn at the shoulder as part of the deceased's dress is MPC Grave 63 (690–650 BCE). So far as our evidence goes, then, no one buried in a pit grave in the North Cemetery wore a pinned robe or cloak, but at least six persons had one or more pins deposited in their graves.

It is *a priori* likely that these pins were attached to pieces of cloth rather than deposited on their own. Traces of fabric have been noted in a few instances,[71] and there may be indirect evidence from the position of the fibula and five of the pins in Grave 17. The two largest pins lay under an *oinochoe*, which was placed on its side, while the fibula and three of the shorter pins lay on top of the *oinochoe* (fig. 3). This arrangement would have been impossible to achieve unless the pins and fibula were attached to pieces of cloth of which the largest was placed under the

[68] 1936-18 (LV-24): "spearhead", reinterpreted by Pfaff, 2007: 492 n. 55; see Dickey, 1992: pl. 14, for position. 1940-5 (LV-1): "iron object (arrowhead?) found with knife blade" in NB 187, p.242; photo bw 5461 shows that this object (MF8814) could be part of a corroded pin. Cf. 1937-2 (LV-29) for another knife in top corner of grave. Another example is 1931-2 (PQ-2): a bronze pin (17.6 cm) lay only 7 cm from one end of a 1.10 m long grave with the remains of an infant whose skull had disintegrated but whose legs were at the other end of the pit (NB 123, pp. 41–42), i.e. not near the shoulder but above the head (*pace* Dickey, 1992: A-21).

[69] Supposed exceptions: Dickey, 1992: 83, listing 1969-33 (LV-9a: "under the skull"); 1931-104 (PQ-7: "near the head"); Graves 4 and 6 from Aghioi Theodoroi (AT-4, 6: "on top of the skull"). Note also e.g. 1933-207 (PQ-6: single pin at centre of burial, NB 132 bis, pp. 48–49); North Cemetery 71 ("one metal pin on right side of body", NB 393, p. 40); 1969-18 (CO-12): below.

[70] Grave 21: Dickey, 1992: NC-21, and pl. 31 (the unidentified iron object recorded in *Corinth XIII* turned out, after cleaning, to be two corroded pins fused together). Single iron pin surviving from destroyed LG burial: Dickey, 1992: 86 n. 84.

[71] Traces noted by Dickey, 1992: 83, for 1936-21 (LV-33), where the pins were actually worn; 1931-97 (PQ-4), where the location of the pins is not recorded (NB 123, p. 49). Now also in the grave near the pottery kiln, reported in *AR* 63 (2017): 34–35.

oenochoe and the others placed over it. The pot might have been laid on its side because there was no room in the grave compartment for it to be placed upright, in which case we can infer that the cloth was piled 20–30 cm high.[72] Pins and fibulae in early Corinthian graves therefore probably imply the presence of pieces of cloth in addition to whatever covered the dead body. The latter might in itself be substantial, judging by funeral dress described in Homer.[73] Tunics, wraps and veils were worn without pins, and *peploi* and cloaks were also used without pins as blankets, sheets and covers, so in addition to pieces of cloth with one or two pins attached, a grave might have contained a variety of un-pinned cloth that would have left no trace.

This would help explain why there appears to be so much unused space in the larger graves, especially those with separate "compartments". The pits beside Grave 14 and above 25 and 29 seemed empty. In Grave 18 a single *oinochoe* with a diameter of 22.7 cm stood in the middle of a compartment covered by a 1.22 × 1.05 m slab. In Grave 19 a single *kalathos* with a diameter of 15.4 cm (and only 7 cm tall) stood under a slab of 1.06 × 0.72 m, in Grave 21, an even smaller *kalathos*, and a pomegranate-shaped vase (diameter 10 cm), under a slab measuring 0.88 × 0.62 m. The buriers would hardly dig such large holes for only one or two small vessels. I suggest that these pits were partly filled with pieces of cloth, without pins, and that some of the space in other larger graves was also filled in this way. We can detect this only in the relatively few cases when cloth was buried with pins or a fibula attached.

The additional pieces of cloth in the grave could be clothes and other textiles used by the deceased in life. Alternatively, they could be grave "gifts" in the true sense, items given to the deceased by their loved ones as tokens of affection and respect. One may recall Achilles placing jars of oil and honey, four horses and two of his pet dogs on Patroclos' funeral pyre (*Il*. 23.170–174), or Andromache promising, as a mark of honour for her dead husband, to burn all the cloth she and her slave women had woven (*Il*. 22.510–514). Where funeral gifts were tailored to the person being buried, it is hard to tell the difference between a gift and a personal possession, but a few anomalous items are hard to explain other than as gifts. An example from the late seventh century is an adult-sized bronze finger ring in the grave of a small child (129).[74] The three fibulae and gold ring deposited

[72] The *oinochoe* is 24.6 cm tall, max. diam. 17.9 cm (Young 1964, no. 17-1). Attested depths of grave pits range from 37–50 cm. If the pot could lie on its side but not stand upright, a stack of up to 32 cm high would be implied for the deepest pit or 19 cm for the shallowest. Note that a smaller *oinochoe* was placed upright in the same compartment.

[73] Hector's body is dressed in tunic and *pharos*: *Iliad* 24.589; Patroclos is covered by *heanos* and *pharos*: *Iliad* 18.352–353. Laertes' need of a large, high-quality *pharos* as shroud is integral to the plot of the *Odyssey* (2.94–102, 19.139–147, 24.129–137).

[74] Noted by Dickey, 1992: A-61. Palmer, 1964: 170, gives the diameter of the ring as 2.3 cm.

in the shaft of Grave 1937-3 (LV-34) would be odd if they were the deceased's personal items – did the buriers forget to put them in the grave proper? why three, when no one else had more than one? – but make sense as additional gifts made in the course of the funeral. Two children, one an infant, were apparently buried here at the same time as the adult,[75] and one can imagine that such an emotive occasion inspired several of the men in attendance to take off their cloak on the spot and make a gift of it to the dead, fibula and all.

If these grave goods were gifts, we may be able to explain graves in which the skeleton is male but the grave goods seem more appropriate to a woman. An early ninth-century grave of a "fairly robust 19-year-old male" (1968-1/LV-5) included not only two separate pins, but also five different types of spindle whorl in various parts of the grave. The only other burial with a (single) spindle whorl is a sixth-century sarcophagus so tiny that it could only have held a baby (165). Here the implement was presumably a gift from the infant's mother, and the explanation for Grave 1968-1 may similarly be that at the premature death of the young man his distressed mother and other female relatives each threw their spindles into his grave. In a burial near Anaploga (1969-18/CO-12; probably MG), a poorly preserved skeleton identified as male, wearing a single gold-foil bronze spiral at the back of his head, had four large bronze pins lying beside him, one pair lying on top of the other, suggesting two *peploi* (NB 435, p. 95). And the person buried in Grave 2003-12 with a single iron pin and a knife, as well as two finger rings, as mentioned above, was a 25- to 29-year-old man (Pfaff, 2007: 511). In none of these cases did the dead man wear the pin(s) – unlike the hair spiral and the rings – and they are best explained as part of gifts of cloth contributed by mourners.[76]

If the few other items in MG II grave pits in the North Cemetery were also gifts, we can understand why they are quite varied. Apart from two *oinochoai* (Graves 17, 18), two *kalathoi* (19, 21), and one pomegranate-shaped vessel (21), we find one sturdy mug (22) and two pots with long narrow necks for storing and pouring small amounts of liquid, probably costly scented oil (17, 20). The basket-shaped *kalathoi* are often associated with woolwork, but the ones deposited in these and other graves are far too small and delicately balanced to have contained useful amounts of wool or yarn, and may instead have contained small delicacies presented to the dead.[77] We may imagine other gifts of food being deposited in

[75] A child was buried in a niche in the shaft, and a krater with "2 small fragmentary bones" at the SW corner of the adult grave (NB 162, pp. 4, 8) was surely an infant burial.

[76] Less reliably identified as male (from teeth) is 1933-207 (PQ-6), with fragments of a hair spiral and a single iron pin at centre of burial (NB 132 bis, pp. 48–49). For *ad hoc* offering by women of female apparel to the male dead, see Euripides, *Orestes* 113–123, 1431–1436.

[77] These *kalathoi* are shaped like short, broad cones, with a very narrow base and wide rim; one was 6.9 cm high, 15.4 cm wide (Grave 19), the other 5.7 × 11.0 cm (Grave 21); cf. Grave 1968-1/LV-5 (7.5 × 14 cm). Later examples (Graves 128, 157, 186, 287, 357)

wicker baskets and therefore leaving no trace in the grave.

A final item found in some grave pits was charcoal and "burnt matter". Grave 17 contained "a great deal of charcoal"; in the offering compartment "a few faint traces of bones were found … with a great deal of burnt matter" (NB 393, pp. 174–176), and around the body, too, there were "traces of burning", while the skull itself appeared "very much burned" (NB 393, pp. 174–176). The latter may be merely discoloration as a result of close contact with ashes.[78] Since the metal and ceramic grave gifts were not affected by fire, the burning must have taken place outside the grave, and since cremation burial is not attested in EIA or Archaic Corinth (Dickey, 1992: 47–51), it must have been offerings that were burnt before being deposited. The traces of bones suggest that on this occasion an animal, cremated or roasted, was part of the offering (Young, 1964: 24).[79] Graves 21, 22 and 25 also included charcoal and "some burning" (NB 393, p. 178), "a great deal of burning" (NB 393, p. 152), and "traces of burning" (NB 391, p. 570). We may infer that burnt offerings were deposited, a practice not attested later in the North Cemetery and very rare elsewhere in Corinth.[80]

In short, the apparent "poverty" of some of the largest grave pits is deceptive. These graves were large in order to make room for sizable quantities of cloth, burnt offerings and perhaps other perishable items, offered as gifts by family or friends of the dead. These mourners must have been persons of some wealth, just as the personal ornaments in a few graves suggest that some of the dead themselves were wealthy men and women.

Grave markers and grave cult

A striking feature of the North Cemetery is the extent to which eighth-century burials were marked and monumentalised. The normal grave marker at Corinth appears to have been a small, plain column or even a simple oblong natural stone. Very few of these survive *in situ*, but one such natural stone was preserved in the Potter's Quarter because this marker of an MG grave was left in place and integrated into a house later built on the spot. Two roughly carved 5- and 7-sided columns of c. 38 cm high were found in an LG well, and two coarse eight-sided columns of similar size have been found recently close to eighth-century graves.

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are still smaller.

[78] Dickey, 1992: 50; Morgan, 1999: 324.

[79] These bones are an obstacle to Dickey's idea that the charcoal and burnt matter were "sweepings" from the (polluted) hearth of the deceased's house (1992: 35–36), as is the absence of ash and charcoal from the hypothetical sweepings in archaic or classical graves.

[80] For a cluster of graves with charcoal but no burnt matter, see below; the bones in the "compartment" of Grave 19 were the partly displaced remains of the person buried, as Dickey, 1992: A-27/28, argues (not animal bones, contra Young, 1964: 28). Ash and cinders were also found in Graves 1937-3 (LV-34); 1970-3 (LV-39), animal bones in 1899-2 (LV-40).

In the North Cemetery, similar markers are attested for archaic and classical graves.[81] Several Geometric graves, however, had large monumental markers instead.

The largest of these was the walled enclosure already mentioned, which measured c. 9.50 × 5.00 m and was formed by some 40 upright *poros* limestone slabs, 20 cm thick and rising c. 45 cm above ground (fig. 4).[82] The enclosure contained Graves 14, 15, 15B and 16. From the very first publication onward, it has been said that the wall marked "a specific family lot" (Shear, 1929: 528–529), "obviously … a family burial plot" (Young, 1964: 21), as if Corinthian families routinely made use of formally demarcated sections of the graveyard. Yet no other walled burial plot existed anywhere else in Corinth, and by comparison with the minimal markers above other graves, dozens of carved slabs with a total volume of about 2 m^3 and weight of 4,000 kg formed a massive monument. It must have been erected only after all four burials within it had been made, and almost certainly also after the burials adjacent to the northern wall (17–20) were made, since there would not have been enough room to dig the shafts of some of these graves if the wall had already been in place.[83] A later date is also suggested by the use of

[81] Potters' Quarter: 1931-98 (PQ-4; Stillwell, 1948: 8, Grave V). Carved columns: Brookes, 1981: 287–279; identified as grave markers by Dickey, 1992: 113–114. Recent finds: Sanders *et al.*, 2014: 12–13 and 32 (fig. 30), publish a 41.2 cm high column probably associated with Grave 2006-4, and note a similar unpublished column found by the railway excavations. North Cemetery: short column or block markers *in situ* with archaic Graves 141, 144, 164, 240, 243 (discussed below); one was reused in Grave 457; four fourth-century square columns with some decoration were re-used in Roman Grave 516. Photo 1998 051 08a = bw 8856 in the ASCSA archive shows two slender columns and one block marker (probably over late classical or Roman graves) in the northern half of Trench F – not recorded in notebooks or published – while photo bw 8854 (cf. *Corinth XIII*, pl. 17) shows a marker above Grave 517.

[82] NB 390, p. 363, gives the measurements of "the area bounded by upright slabs" as 9.10 × 4.25 m, and the plan drawing on p. 293 confirms that this refers to the internal dimensions of the excavated area. We must add not only the 20 cm thickness of the walls, but also the distance between the north bank of the trench and the north wall of the enclosure, which remained unexcavated just beyond the trench (contra Young, 1964: 21, who gave the internal dimensions of the enclosure as 8.60 × 3.90 m; cf. pl. 6). Not all slabs survived *in situ*; the number of c. 40 is extrapolated from the 13 slabs indicated in the drawing NB 390, p. 293. Estimated height of wall above ground, see above, n. 42.

[83] The 1.32 × 0.52 m cover slab of grave 15B lay directly below the edge of the east and south walls of the enclosure. (*Corinth XIII*, plan 2, and Dickey, 1992: plan 5, follow a mistake made in the notebook drawing, NB 390, pp. 292–293, and show 15B as a small square pit south of Grave 15 – but their catalogue entries correctly follow the notebook text and record that the adjoining pit had a much larger, oblong cover slab, 1.32 × 0.52, orientated E-W.) The hydria outside 16 was under the west wall of the enclosure. The "compartment" of 17 extended c. 50 cm into the one-metre-wide bank between trenches which contained the unexcavated north wall of the enclosure.

poros for the wall, which in the North Cemetery became the norm only after c. 720 BCE, while the covers of the MG II and LG graves were made of sandstone. The unique enclosure was therefore almost certainly not constructed to stake out a family plot but to monumentalise a group of older burials that came to be regarded as important.

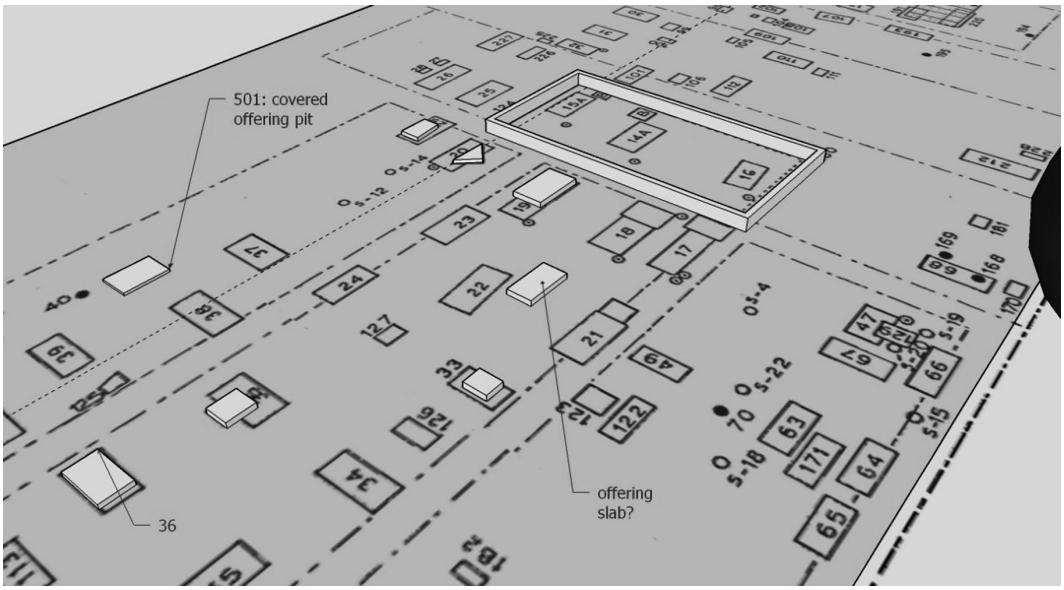

Fig. 4: Enclosure with surface markers. Features added to base map from Dickey 1992, fig. 5. Graves 14A and 14B on the base map are treated as a single burial with offering pit and referred to as Grave 14 in the text.

The ancient ground level around this wall, at -0.95/1.00 m, was apparently 20–30 cm closer to the modern surface than it was at several other points in the cemetery, as noted above. So far as one can tell from photos and drawings, the surface at the time of the excavations was flat, sloping down gently from the foot of the plateau to the sea,[84] so the shallower depth around the enclosure implies that the ancient ground level was slightly elevated here, whether naturally or artificially, which made the enclosure even more prominent.

Grave 14, the largest of these burials and the only one with a separate offering pit, lay in the middle of the enclosure. Aligned with it to the north, just outside the wall, was Grave 19, which had a monumental marker of its own, a large rectangular *poros* slab (1.70 × 1.00 m). This lay above the grave at a depth of only 0.70–0.88 m, i.e. its upper surface a mere 20 cm below the top of the enclosure wall, and 15–20 cm higher than the slabs above the surface trenches of Graves 20

[84] Note especially the view illustrated in *Corinth XIII*, pl. 1b, and the section drawing (184 004) of the area excavated in 1915–16.

and 29 a few metres away, which suggests that it rested on a slight further elevation, presumably a low bank of earth.[85] This marker, too, was surely a later addition: the burial in Grave 19 was seriously disturbed – part of the skeleton had been displaced from the main grave into the offering compartment[86] – which could not have happened without moving the marker slab if that had already been in position.

Among the graves further north, two surface slabs lay above 33 and 35 at depths of 0.85–1.03 and 0.95–1.12 m. The small slab above 33 was neatly aligned with the burial pit below, but the slab above Grave 35 only partly overlapped with the pit and was orientated north-south whereas the burial faced east-west. As a result, the latter slab was almost exactly in alignment with the large marker slab of Grave 19, as well as Grave 14 (fig. 4), which may have been of symbolic significance.[87] Grave 56 by the smaller tumulus appears to have had a *poros* marker orientated due north-south, although the pit below lay off its axis, NW-SE.[88]

In addition to the monumental enclosure, four pit graves were thus marked with a thick stone slab lying flat on the surface, rather than with the normal small upright stone or column. Parallels are known from the mid-sixth century onwards, and some of these later slab markers are inscribed with the name of the deceased on one side, where it would have been hard to see, while the much larger and easily visible top of the slab remained uninscribed. The explanation may be that the top of the slab was used for ritual purposes such as making libations or depositing offerings.[89] In the older cemetery to the east found by the railway excavations, 10 of the 58 graves not only had *poros* slabs as surface markers, but also shallow offering trenches directly south of the markers.[90] This practice was not

[85] Cf. Dickey, 1992: 116, *contra* Young 1964: 27–28, for the slab as a surface marker. It should be noted that the recorded depths were rounded to the nearest 5 cm, and that there is sometimes a discrepancy of 5 or even 10 cm between various indications of depth.

[86] As noted by Dickey, 1992: A-27/28; see n. 80, above.

[87] Details (not in *Corinth XIII*): NB 393, p. 142 (cf. 163); plan pp. 112–113: slab 0.80 × 0.70 × 0.17, at -0.95 m, 1.56 m above Grave 35 (excav. no. 311); NB 393, p. 163, 166 (slab 0.70 × 0.57 × 0.18 m, at -0.85 m, 1.40 m above Grave 33 (excav. no. 312). For Grave 36, see below.

[88] See trench plan in NB 394, pp. 330–331; estimated dimensions of slab 1.15 × 0.85 m; the slab is not mentioned in the description of the grave at NB 395, p. 386, or anywhere else.

[89] As tentatively suggested by Dickey, 1992: 117 n. 18. Dickey, 1992: 116, convincingly makes the case that the marker slabs in the North Cemetery had not "fallen over" (*pace* Young, 1964: 16, 27–28, 32), but were always intended to lie flat, as the nearby "*poros* platform" (see below) suggests. He also makes a compelling case (ibid. 117) that the stray inscribed slabs published by Kent 1966, nos. 5ab, 6, 7 (from Aghioi Theodoroi) and Stroud 1972 (nos. 10–19, from east Corinth, taken to be "sarcophagus lids") were surface markers from nearby graves.

[90] Aslamatzidou 2018, 229 and 230, mentions markers and offering trenches; for the rela-

identical, but it has in common with what we find in the North Cemetery that a select few graves were more elaborately marked and honoured with ritual activity.

Three slabs in the North Cemetery lay at the surface but not above a grave. Two of these were omitted from *Corinth XIII* and the third was tentatively published as a "Roman" grave (501). One of the omitted slabs lay close by Graves 18 and 21, only about 1.5 m from each; it measured 1.48 × 0.775 × 0.17 m, and its top surface lay at -1.00 m (NB 393, pp. 112–113, 124). The other was of similar size and at the foot of the smaller tumulus, close to the surface marker of Grave 56 but with a different east-west orientation, its top at a depth of 1.10 m.[91] Apart from their location near eighth-century burials, nothing indicates a date or function for these stones, but the third slab does offer some clues.

Slab 501 lay about 12 m north of the walled enclosure, barely 30 cm from an infant burial (40), within 2–2.5 m from Graves 37, 38 and 39, and about 5 m from Graves 42 and 48. The slab, which measured 1.33 × 0.95, lay at a depth of 0.85–0.93 m and was covered with "many fragments of a large krater or *pithos* of crude ware" (photo: bw 1998 061 07a). Immediately below it was a slightly smaller pit (1.15 × 0.80 m), which contained "a great deal of charcoal, numerous sherds – some crude handmade, others Geometric" (NB 393, p. 5), but no sign of a skeleton, although all other adult burials had at least traces of bones. *Corinth XIII* assumed that this was a cremation burial and assigned it to the Roman era, although Roman cremation burials (516–519) were otherwise completely different, and Palmer conceded that in form the grave looked more like a Geometric burial (1964: 294). The absence of a body, the large amounts of charcoal, its location at the surface, and the fragments of an early vessel on top, all make it more likely that this was instead an offering trench, which after a moment or period of use had been sealed with a stone slab.

It is surely no coincidence that four of the nearest graves (37–39, 48) each contained "some charcoal", but apparently no other burnt matter. The only other graves in the cemetery that contained charcoal (17, 21, 22, 25, as noted above) did contain quantities of burnt matter and other signs of burning as well. The most likely explanation for the charcoal in 37–39 and 48 is, therefore, not that burnt offerings were placed in these graves, but that stray bits of charcoal from the nearby offering trench accidentally entered the graves when they were filled and covered again with soil. This would imply that the trench was open and actively used when these four graves were dug, before c. 720 BCE, but had perhaps been closed by the time Grave 41 was dug, probably c. 690–650 BCE (see below), since this contained no charcoal despite lying almost next to Grave 48. "Grave" 501 may thus have been a trench for burnt offerings which towards 700 BCE was converted into a platform for different ritual activities.

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tion between them, see *ArchDelt* 56–59 (2001–4) B.4, 157; cf. *AG Online* 3803.

[91] NB 395, p. 384, records the depth but no other details; the plan at NB 394, pp. 330–331, suggests that the slab measured c. 1.40 × 0.65 m.

Not only, then, did some of the earliest burials in the North Cemetery associate themselves with "ancestral" monuments and involve labour-intensive funerals with displays of funerary gifts – mostly perishable yet probably valuable goods – but they were monumentalised and commemorated with rituals in ways not attested in later centuries. These graves evidently belonged to persons who continued to enjoy high prestige long after their deaths.

Burial "territories", 800–720 BCE: demography and politics

Although the enclosure was not a "family plot" in the sense that it was marked out for the members of a single household, it did become the centre of what we might call a burial "territory": a loosely defined area of the cemetery where *de facto* only members of a particular group were buried. From 800–650 BCE, we can identify three such territories which expanded gradually without crossing the others' informal borders. This implies a good deal of continuity in elite membership over that period, as well as a radical break at the end.

The first territory was the area around the walled enclosure. This included all largest and richest graves discussed above, and those who buried their dead here were evidently the wealthiest people in the community, who not only claimed that they were descended from "heroic" ancestors buried in the tumulus but reinforced their boast of hereditary status by monumentalising the graves of their immediate ancestors. I shall call this group *Alpha*, for the sake of convenience, without trying to decide whether it was a single household, an extended family, or a group of unrelated high-status households. The second territory, physically clearly separate from Alpha's, was the area near the smaller Bronze Age tumulus further south, where graves were fewer and less rich, but nevertheless also staked a claim to an ancient lineage, perhaps slightly less prestigious than that claimed for the larger tumulus. The group that used this area will be called *Beta*. All adult burials of both Alpha and Beta were orientated north-south, with the head of the deceased almost always at the south end, even if the orientation of some Beta graves was only loosely north-south.

The third territory lay just to the north of Alpha's and was almost contiguous with it, but set apart by the different orientation of the adult burial, which was always east-west, with the head of the deceased almost always at the east end of the grave. The orientation of graves was not regarded as symbolically significant in *Corinth XIII*, which proposed family groupings that included both types of burial.[92] However, until 650 BCE, and indeed later still, areas with north-south burials and areas with east-west burials remained quite distinct, and both the initial separation and the later expansion of these areas suggest that there was indeed a separate territory in the cemetery for one or more groups of people who preferred to bury their dead facing east-west, whom we shall collectively call *Gamma*.

[92] Dickey, 1992: 51–57, sees no fundamental distinction between the orientations either; at 132–134, he is rightly critical of many of the groupings suggested in *Corinth XIII*.

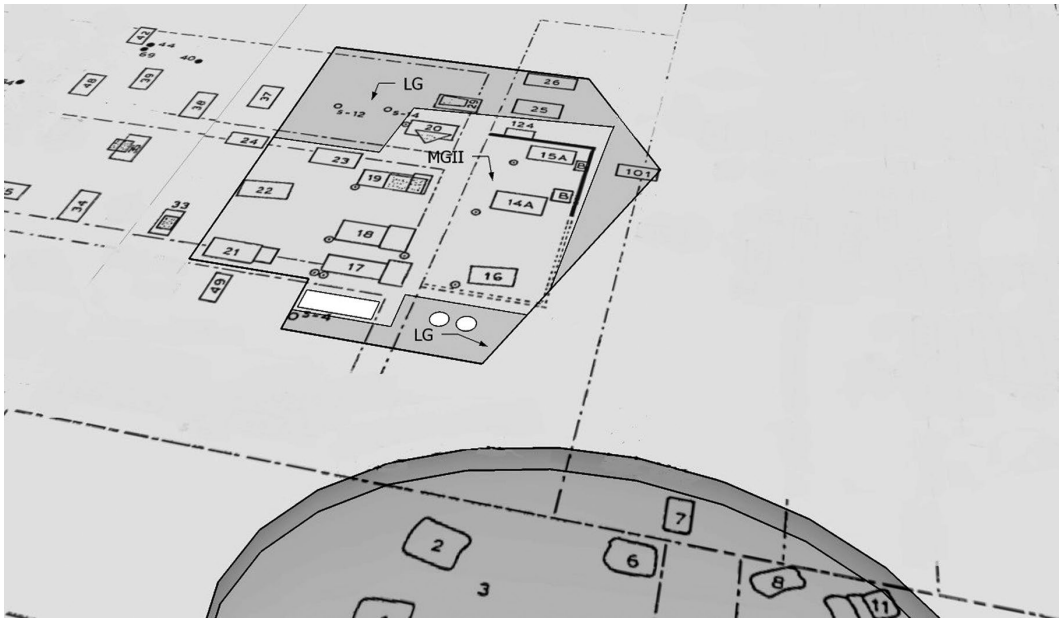

Fig. 5: Alpha burials, MGII-LG. Territory marked on base map from Dickey, 1992, fig. 5. Tumulus drawn at minimal size; later graves deleted from map.

The core of Alpha (fig. 5) consisted of the three adult graves (14–16) that were later surrounded by the enclosure wall. At the south end of Grave 15 lay a smaller burial, surely of a child (15B), at right angles to it. Such arrangements are also found in the centre of Corinth, where two MG II graves, orientated north-south, were abutted by smaller graves orientated roughly east-west. The pairs were symbolically connected, by a small channel running between the graves in one case, and by a narrow window cut into the wall between the graves in the other. One pair had been disturbed and was empty, but in the other pair the larger grave had a wealth of goods, while the smaller contained only a single *skyphos* and an iron knife.[93] Similarly, a rich EG grave, orientated north-south, had a smaller, east-west orientated, oval pit at its south end that contained a child and 2 small pots. An MG II burial with a broadly north-south orientation and a striking number of grave goods had a child burial in an east-west facing niche in the south wall of its grave shaft, containing just one small pot.[94] On the one hand, these examples show that the same group of people could adopt different orientations for its graves, but

[93] Graves 1936-19 and 20 (LV-26/27 – empty) and 1937-1 and 2 (LV-28/29): see Dickey, 1992: A-11-13, pls. 16-19; published by Morgan, 1937: 543–545 (as Graves A and B, F and G).

[94] EG grave: 1940-5 (LV-1ab); Dickey 1992, A-1, published Weinberg, 1948: 198, 204–206. MG II grave: 1937-3 (LV-34ab); Dickey, 1992: A-15, published by Morgan, 1937: 543 (as Grave D).

on the other hand they also show that orientation was not random: north-south was preferred for the larger, richer graves and east-west for the smaller, simpler burials of children or other persons in an apparently "junior" position.

Immediately north of this cluster lay a row of four graves (17–20) that also dated to the MG II period and had offerings placed in their shafts, but were more lavish insofar as they had separate offering compartments. They were just outside the later enclosure, but aligned with the graves within it: 17 and 18 lay close together next to 16, while 19 and 20 (with surface marker slabs) lay next to 14 and 15 respectively. Around this second row lay a third set of five graves (21–23, 29 and a destroyed, unnumbered burial) which formed a loosely arranged arc extending slightly to the west and east of the enclosure. They differed from the others by having no external grave goods, but at least two (21–22) were of MG II date and two (21, 29) had offering compartments.[95] Of these nine graves in total, only one was probably a child burial: what survives of the cover slab shows that the destroyed grave west of 17 was the narrowest of all pit burials (0.58 m) apart from child grave 15B (0.52 m).

Another scatter of north-south orientated burials lay beyond this: immediately west of the destroyed grave with the "spirals" a LG krater (s-4) was buried, but at a much shallower depth which suggests that it was a separate pot burial of an infant rather than a grave gift.[96] Two plain pots buried side-by-side at much the same depth as the LG krater, just a metre west of the enclosure, may also be infant burials of this period. [97] One additional adult burial (24) was made at the north end of the cluster, but this was in a composite sarcophagus and so presumably dates after 720 BCE (see below). Two further pot burials in handmade undecorated kraters (s-12, s-14), probably dating to 750–720 BCE, were interred just north of Graves 20 and 29.[98] To the east of the enclosure were two adult graves

[95] 21 and 22 are dated by pottery to MG II; 21 and 29 had offering compartments (see above for 29). A piece of sandstone c. 30 × 20 cm (judging by the drawing in NB 393, pp. 184–185) has been interpreted as part of a cover of an offering compartment for 23 destroyed by later digging, but there was hardly any room for this: the head end of 23 lay only about a foot from the foot end of 19 (NB 393, pp. 112–113). The unnumbered burial west of 17 is likely to have been of MG II date because it contained "spirals", not otherwise found after MG II. I take the LG krater next to it as a separate pot burial: see below.

[96] The krater was found at -1.75 m, with an oinochoe beside it (NB 394, pp. 208–209, 228), while the cover slab of the grave lay at -2.50 m and the "spirals" at -2.70 m (see n. 36, above). In the following, I draw on Dickey's identifications and datings of pot burials, which correct and add to those recognised in *Corinth XIII* as either (differently) numbered burials or "sporadic finds" (for which, see Dickey, 1992: A-132-3). See also Morgan, 1999: 465–482.

[97] NB 390, p. 325 (plan on pp. 292–293), found at -1.70 m. No further details were recorded and these pots are omitted from the publications. One reason for assigning them to the MG/LG period is the otherwise low proportion of child burials in this group: see below.

[98] They were deemed contemporary with LG pot burial 40 (see below) by Young, 1964:

without offering compartments, but still relatively large: Grave 25, which contained an iron pin and burnt matter, was covered by the single heaviest slab in the cemetery (0.371 m^3 or c. 740 kg), while 26 had a quite long and deep pit (1.82 × 0.70 × 0.50 m), with ample space for perishable offerings. In the absence of pottery, their date is not clear. East of these two lay a pair of child burials (27–28) that date after 720 BCE and will be considered below. A final pit grave (101) lay just south of the enclosure, far shallower than any other: at -1.00 m it would have been only a few centimetres below ground.[99]

Given that the burials, insofar as datable, become more recent as they move outward from the core graves that were later enclosed, the pattern was evidently that this group spread outward from the earliest graves, mainly to the north, but later also east and west, and eventually south by 720 BCE. There is one apparent exception to this outward movement, namely a child burial in a sarcophagus (124) that lay just beside the enclosure wall, in a more central position than pit graves 25 and 26. This was a very odd sarcophagus, however, consisting of a small slab (1.00 × 0.75 m), "hewn quite roughly", into which an off-centre hollow of 0.69 × 0.33 m, only 20 cm deep, had been cut. The cover slab was too narrow (0.485 m) for the underlying block. The material is not specified, which implies that it was *poros*.[100] Although *poros* sarcophagi in the North Cemetery generally date later, this one was so clumsily made that it must surely be earlier than the skilfully carved composite sarcophagi that appear c. 720 BCE. I would therefore suggest that it was an early, experimental sarcophagus, perhaps contemporary with the MG II pit graves next to it on the other side of the enclosure wall. If so, this burial fits the pattern of outward spread and relatively lavish funeral customs in the Alpha group: to bury an infant or toddler in a *poros* sarcophagus, however primitive, rather than a pot, would have been a notable form of display at the time.

Alpha territory from 800–720 BCE thus included 14 adult burials in pit graves (14–23, 25–26, 29, 101), three child burials (15B, 124 and the destroyed grave), and up to five infant burials in kraters (s-4, -12, -14, two unpublished pots). The proportion of child burials (36%) was rather lower than for other groups in the cemetery (see below) but similar to the proportion of deaths among under-5s in "least developed countries" in the modern world (32%),[101] which suggests that

39–40; Dickey, 1992 leaves them undated. Since s-12 was equidistant between Grave 20 and "Gamma" grave 37, it is not certain that it belongs to our group Alpha', but as we shall see the Gamma pot burials tended to cluster elsewhere.

[99] Young, 1964: 60, dated 101 to the seventh century on account of its shallowness, but as a pit grave it must surely be earlier, and Dickey, 1992 rightly treats it as "Geometric".

[100] NB 391, 479: dimensions of the slab are not given but can be calculated by adding the various thicknesses of the rim to the dimensions of the hollowed-out centre. Material is not specified, so presumably the usual *poros*. *Corinth XIII* treats 124 as a seventh-century burial.

[101] But as shown below the proportion of child burials in the rest of the North Cemetery tends to be higher, c. 46–50%. For modern mortality statistics published by the UN, see

burial in this location was not selective but shared by all members of the family or families involved. With a total of 22 burials that probably covered the entire span 800–720 BCE, three generations, the Alpha group need not have consisted of more than a couple of households. Two trends emerged over this period. One was an initial increase in funerary display, with special compartments dug for additional perishable grave gifts, but in the later graves a degree of austerity for adults and simple pot burial for small children. The other trend was the expansion of the group primarily towards the north and east, away from the Bronze Age burial mound. Instead of crowding in around the tumulus, the later graves were placed "behind" those of their immediate forebears, as if to symbolise their junior status in a line of descent. The monumentalisation of the early graves also suggests that an emphasis on descent from the Iron Age founders of the cemetery replaced the display of wealth c. 750 BCE.

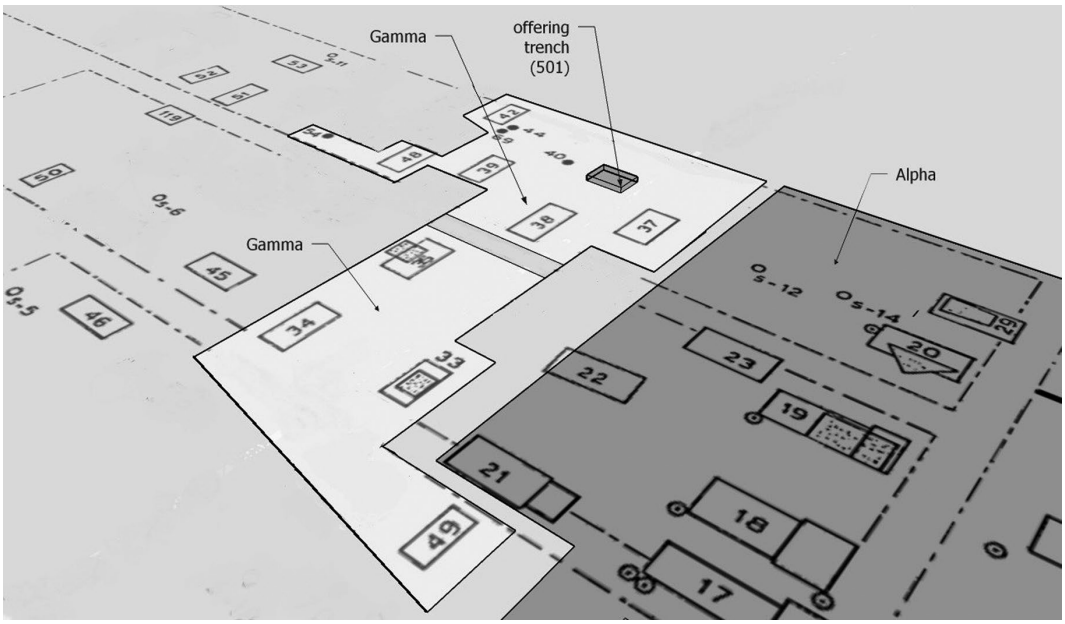

Fig. 6: Gamma burials, LG. Territory marked on base map from Dickey 1992, fig. 5; later graves deleted from map.

Just as the Alpha group by 720 BCE occupied a territory of c. 16 × 16 m within which all pit burials with the exception of child grave 15B were oriented north-south, so an area of c. 13 × 10 m immediately north of it was by then occupied entirely by pit burials oriented east-west, our group Gamma (fig. 6). Beyond this group lay a strip of land c. 6 m wide which was empty except for a couple of pot

https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/publications/pdf/mortality/World-Mortality-2017-Data-Booklet.pdf

burials, and beyond that a final line of five pit graves among which orientations alternated. The nine pit graves within the block of 13 × 10 m (33–35, 37–39, 42, 48–49) were thus clearly separated from their neighbours. In Corinth at large, only a minority of burials in the period 900–625 BCE was orientated east-west[102] so Gamma's preference was surely a means of expressing a distinct identity. Since, as noted, east-west burials often stood in a relation of juniority to adjacent larger burials with the normal north-south orientation, it is possible that Gamma's choice implied acceptance of a collective status inferior to the Alpha group. In any case, all but one of the Gamma graves were farther from the tumulus than the Alpha burials,[103] which suggests a less strong claim to affiliation with ancient "ancestors".

In the absence of datable grave gifts, we cannot trace the development of the Gamma group before 720 BCE in the same detail as Alpha's, but there is some reason to think that its burials started later, and that it grew from two separate clusters. One cluster consisted of the four adult graves that, as we have seen, contained traces of charcoal but no burnt matter (37–39, 48) and were situated around an offering trench ("Grave 501"). Just to the east was a fifth pit burial (42), one of the three smallest Gamma graves and so perhaps a child, with close beside it, at a lesser depth, two infant burials (44, 69) in handmade Late Geometric pots.[104] Another krater with an LG aryballos as grave gift (40) lay between the offering trench and Graves 37–39,[105] and a fourth LG pot burial (54) lay two metres north of Grave 48, in the strip of no man's land. Grave 42 lay at the eastern edge of the excavated area, so that there may have been unexcavated burials beyond it, but the pattern in Alpha (and Beta: see below) of LG pot burials lying at the periphery of the group suggests that the territory of Gamma did coincidentally stop more or less where the trench ended.

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[102] As noted by Dickey, 1992: 52 and fig. 2c–d, and confirmed by the finds of the railway and motorway excavations (Aslamatzidou, 2018: 229; Giannopoulou *et al.*, 2013: 91).

[103] The exception is Grave 49, somewhat further west and south than the rest of the group, and thus closer to the tumulus. Young, 1964: 35, felt that 49 bears "no relation … to any of the groups of graves", but it was only c. 4 m SE of Grave 33, and most graves in this group were 3–4 m distant from one another.

[104] The smallest graves, measured by the dimensions of the cover slabs, were 49: 1.36 × 0.64 m = 0.87 m^2; 42: 1.33 × 0.75m = 1 m^2; 33: 1.38 × 0.83 m = 1.15 m^2. Compare child Grave 15A's 1.32 × 0.52 m = 0.69 m^2. The size of other Gamma graves ranges from 1.27 to 1.63 m^2. NB 393, pp. 9, 18 (as Dickey, 1992: A-43, points out) shows that pot burial 69 was located here, rather than in the radically different location given in *Corinth XIII*; see also ASCSA photo bw 1998 060 35 (mislabelled "Grave 96"), which shows 69 and 44 side-by-side.

[105] Pot burial 40 is (slightly) misplaced in the plans in *Corinth XIII* and Dickey, 1992: NB 393, p. 38 at 12γ (cf. pp. 6–7 for plan) shows that it should be placed c. 30 cm west of "Grave 501".

The remaining 4 pit burials to the west (33–35, 49) formed a separate group, not only because they contained no charcoal but also because in other respects they seem to have aligned themselves more closely with their Alpha neighbours. No pot burials appeared among this small cluster, but two of the graves (33, 49) were among the three smallest Gamma burials and thus likely to have contained children, a relatively lavish form of burial for them, as in several Alpha graves, compared to the simple pot burials found elsewhere. Two of the graves (33, 35) had surface marker slabs, again like several Alpha burials, and as noted the marker slab of 35 was not placed exactly above the grave but positioned and oriented to align with the surface marker of Alpha Grave 19. Finally, the two child burials were placed closer to Alpha burials than any other: 33 just a few feet north of 21, and 49 right beside 21 and just north of the destroyed Alpha burial with the "spirals". These characteristics continue into the next period, as we shall see.

With two adult and two child graves, the western Gamma cluster probably represented just a single generation of a single household, c. 750–720 BCE. The eastern cluster, with 4 adult graves and 5 child burials, might in principle represent two generations of one household, but since none of the pot burials dates earlier than 750 BCE, it seems more likely that these burials, too, covered only one generation and represented two households.[106]

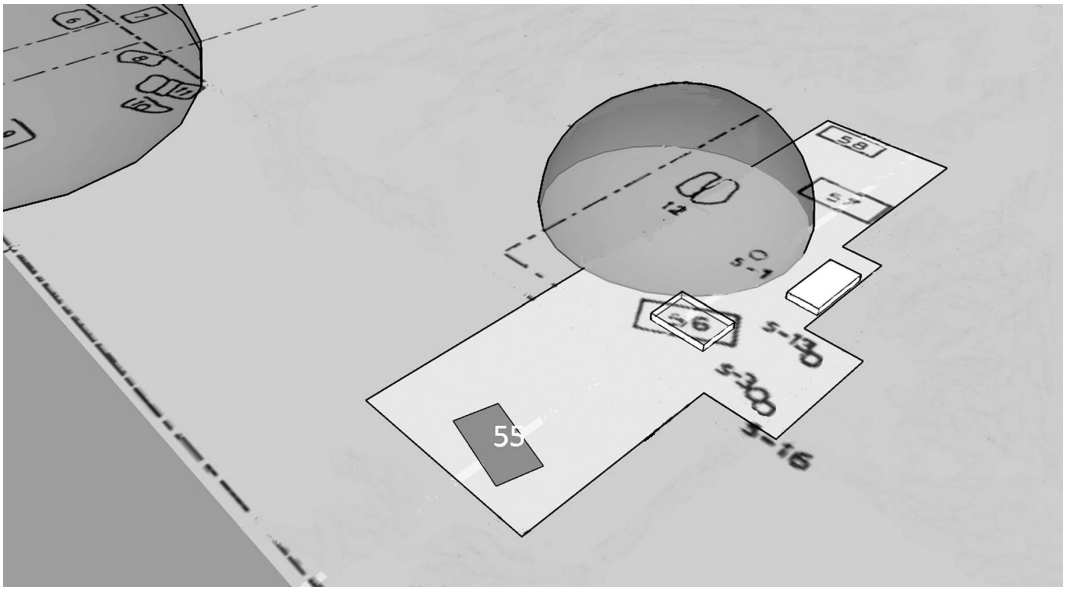

Fig. 7: Beta burials, MGII-LG. Territory marked on base map from Dickey, 1992, fig. 5. Size of tumulus hypothetical; later graves deleted from map. The location of Grave 55 has been corrected on the basis of NB 394, p. 321.

[106] Grave 39's unusual *poros* cover may also suggest a date relatively close to 720 BCE.

The Beta graves tell a story similar to Alpha's but on a smaller scale (fig. 7). The four pit graves fall into two sets: one pair (55–56), almost as deep as the Alpha graves (-2.50 m), was located west of the small tumulus, and south of the large tumulus; the other pair (57–58) was far shallower (-1.70–1.80 m) and lay east of the small tumulus. The next generation of burials in this group, after 720 BCE, formed a line still further east, which suggests that there was a general move from west to east, with Graves 55–56 forging the initial connection with the "ancestors" and subsequent burials being placed "behind" them, increasingly distant from the Bronze Age monuments in a symbolic line of descent, as in the Alpha cluster. The surface marker slab of 56 and the probable offering slab close by reinforce that impression, as does a cluster of child burials near 56. These were all in pots, the earliest an MG II krater (s-1) which was probably buried just within the perimeter of the smaller tumulus.[107] One metre south of 56, a painted LG krater (s-3) and two unpainted handmade kraters (s-13, s-16) that were probably also of LG date were found at levels well above the grave, and so were surely separate infant burials rather than grave gifts.[108] This gives us four adult and four infant burials before 720 BCE in group Beta, perhaps representing two generations of a single household.

To complete the picture of burial in this period, we should note a pair of north-south burials (45–46) that was not contiguous with Alpha but lay at the same distance as the most northerly Gamma graves, only a bit further west; two LG pot burials (s-5, -6) lay in the near-empty strip a few metres away and may be associated. This cluster was later largely surrounded by east-west burials and may have been an isolated household. Beyond the strip of no man's land lay a group of two east-west burials (51–52) flanked by two north-south burials (53, 119), with an LG pot burial to the east (s-11)[109] and to the west at the edge of the excavated area the smallest of the pit graves (50),[110] very probably a child's. Only three further burials were made in this area until the end of the classical period (see below), and again we may infer a short-lived use by one or two isolated households.

As well as their physical separation from Alpha territory, all Beta and Gamma burials and the few graves outside the three territories differed from Alpha burials in displaying much less wealth. They were shallower: two-thirds fell within 10

[107] It was found at a depth of only -1.20 m (NB 394, pp. 335, 337), which would have been at or above the ground level here, judging by a surface marker very nearby (see nn. 91, 183), unless the tumulus covered this area and the burial was placed in it.

[108] s-3, s-13 at -1.50 m (NB 394, p. 344), s-16 at -1,80 m (NB 394, p. 384); Grave 56 at -2.50 m. The LG date of s-13 and -16 was suggested by Dickey 1992, 38 n. 75; Young, 1964: 39–40, noted the similarity of s-13 (his S-11) to pot burial 40 (dated to LG).

[109] Dickey leaves s-11 undated, but Young, 1964: 39–40, argues that it (his S-9) is of much the same date as pot burial 40 (LG). Young, 1964: 63, dated 119 to the seventh century, on the basis that it was "isolated" from other pit graves, but in fact it lay near 50, 51 and 53. Dickey, 1992 rightly treats 119 as "Geometric".

[110] Its cover slab (of *poros*, so perhaps close to 720) measured 1.20 × 0.64 m = 0.77 m^2.

cm either way of a median of 2.25 m below the modern surface, whereas Graves 14–19 and 21–23 were half a metre or more further down.[111] They were smaller: the length of cover slabs ranged from 1.20 to 1.77 m, with a median of 1.60 m, whereas in the Alpha group only Grave 16 and the child burials fell within that range, while other single cover slabs varied from 1.85–2.18 m, and the combined lengths of slabs for graves with offering compartments was 2.57–2.88 m, with an outlier of 3.23 m (Grave 20).[112] None contained any imperishable goods, and their small size suggests that they could not have contained much perishable wealth either. The length of the grave pits, rarely recorded, would have been at least 10–15% shorter, a median of around 1.40 m, which left little room above the head or below the feet for offerings.[113]

The earliest history of the North Cemetery thus saw Alpha begin to bury their dead around 800 BCE, before being joined by Beta a generation later, and by Gamma around 750 BCE. The number of burials implies that the three main burying groups were very small – perhaps two Alpha, one Beta and three Gamma households – and no more than three additional households can be identified among the remaining pit burials in the North Cemetery. These nine households clearly constituted only a tiny fraction of the population of Corinth at the time, and confirm that the pit graves, which even at their most austere were quite costly, represented the burials of an elite.[114] Within this elite a clear hierarchy existed: Alpha made the strongest claim to ancestral status, Beta later staked a rival but lesser claim to ancestry, and when eventually Gamma joined the cemetery their choice of a place "behind" the Alpha graves implied acceptance of inferior status in terms of descent. Gamma's unusual burial orientation, too, may have reflected a perceived inferiority and in any case expressed a sense of distinct identity, even if one Gamma cluster associated itself with Alpha particularly closely. After Gamma entered the cemetery, Alpha's earlier display of wealth in their burials

[111] When the thickness of cover slabs is added to depth at which they lay: see n. 41, above. Contra Dickey, 1992, the depth of Grave 22 is 2.95 + 0.165 m: NB 393 p. 152; Young, 1964.

[112] The width of cover slabs varied less widely: from 0.82–1.05 m, with a median of 0.91, in the Alpha adult pit graves, and from 0.62–0.97 m, with two-thirds between 80 and 0.90 m and a median of 0.83, in the other pit graves.

[113] The proportion of grave pits to cover slabs is based on Graves 25, 26 and 101, where both were recorded, but in Blegen's Grave I, the pit was 25% shorter and narrower than the cover slab. As noted above, stray charcoal in a few of these graves does not imply burnt offerings.

[114] The total number of burials for MG II–LG is thus 53 (36 pits, 16 pots, 1 experimental sarcophagus), including 31 adults and 22 children (41.5%). 22 Alpha burials (14 adults, 8 children [36%]) from 800–720 BCE means a rate of 0.28 p.a.; 8 Beta burials (4 adults, 4 children [50%]) from c. 780–720 BCE = 0.13 p.a.; 13 Gamma burials (7 adults, 6 children [46%]) from 750–720 BCE = 0.43 p.a; 10 other burials, 750–720 BCE (?) (6 adults, 4 children [40%]) = 0.33 p.a.

was much reduced, and few material distinctions remain among the graves, suggesting a deliberate end to competitive consumption in favour of a degree of egalitarianism in material matters within the established elite hierarchy.

Sarcophagus burials: elite egalitarianism, 720–650 BCE

A trend towards less differentiated and elaborate yet still costly funerals continued with the change from pit- to sarcophagus-burials. After a short period of experimentation, these developed into near-uniform simplicity, without monumentalisation or visible ritual. In principle, this change might reflect the rise of a culture of citizen equality, but the signs are that it reflected a continued material egalitarianism among the elite instead. However, the spatial development of the cemetery in this period reveals striking discontinuities in burial activity around 650 BCE, when Alpha and Beta disappeared from the record and Gamma made several new starts: a previously stable elite apparently broke down at this point.

New forms of burial

Unique to the North Cemetery was the "composite" or "slab" sarcophagus, of which 13 were found.[115] A composite sarcophagus consisted of several slabs fitted together, with slots chiselled into the short sides to receive the ends of the long sides, placed on a floor slab and covered with a larger slab as coffin lid. This was a more economical way of using stone than the monolithic sarcophagus that became the norm subsequently. The latter was hollowed out from a single block, so that the centre of the block was chipped away into unusable chunks and slivers. The use of composite sarcophagi, like the previous use of pit graves and sandstone covers, shows again that the families who buried in the North Cemetery did not have as much access to *poros* limestone as others in Corinth did. Further signs of this lack of access are the continued use of sandstone rather than *poros* for the cover slabs, and the use of *poros* so soft that the walls and floor were barely harder than clay.[116] At the same time, the creation of composite sarcophagi suggests an attempt to overcome the limitations of the buriers' resources and to match the most costly form of grave as closely as possible.

Indeed, an attempt was apparently made to compensate for the limited availability of high-quality stone by a particular display of skill in stone-cutting. The excavators commented repeatedly on the high quality of the masonry of composite sarcophagi, and noted purely aesthetic refinements, such as bevelling of the sarcophagus rim or of the cover slab to give it an ornamental diagonal edge. Very few of these sarcophagi can be dated, but one (32) was buried in the Early Proto-

[115] The sole "composite" sarcophagus elsewhere at Corinth (1952-2; GC-4; MGI), noted by Dickey 1992, 26-8, was constructed in a fundamentally different way.

[116] Graves 24, 30–32, 36, 59–60, 62, 126. The cover of Grave 30 was made of "pebble conglomerate", not sandstone; Grave 28 was made of sandstone and had no floor slab. Composite sarcophagi 125 and 127 had *poros* covers. For Grave 68, see below.

corinthian period (EPC, c. 720–690 BCE), and was already a skilful piece of work although it must have been one of the earliest. We can identify its date because this was one of the very few graves at this time with pottery, in this case a krater that served as a surface marker of a type well-known from contemporary Athens but unique at Corinth.[117] Such a rare marker suggests that this was a prominent burial. One other composite sarcophagus (36) had a surface marker in the form of a large horizontal *poros* slab,[118] which confirms that a composite sarcophagus was at the time not a second-best option but the most prestigious form of grave available in the North Cemetery.

Alongside composite sarcophagi, three cists were found. These were pit graves in which the walls were lined with rubble stones (41, 502), in one case combined with upright *poros* slabs at the head and foot of the grave (61). This type may sound like a developmental stage between pit grave and composite sarcophagus, but it is occasionally attested at Corinth as an alternative form of burial from the Submycenaean period onwards, often of rough construction, with irregular slabs and piled-up fieldstones, though some early cists held quite rich burials.[119] No details are recorded for the cists in the North Cemetery, other than that the rubble walls in each case "supported" the cover slab,[120] which in a normal pit grave would have been supported by the floor of the shaft above the grave. Apparently, these graves had no shafts but were simple pits.[121] Accordingly, they were shallow, their covers only about 30 cm below the ancient surface.[122] Moreover, they appear in marginal locations: 41 among the Gamma pot burials, and 61 set back from the end of the Beta line.

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[117] Cf. Young, 1964: 31–32 and pl. 7 (32-1); Dickey 1992: A-32, with p. 26 n. 35 for the date (following Coldstream), and 112 n. 2 for its function as a marker. It was found at a depth of 0.83 m and was 29.6 cm tall, so its foot rested at -1.10, in a spot near the enclosure where the ground level was -1.00 m, as shown above, and two-thirds of the pot was above ground.

[118] NB 393, p. 137, records that the slab measured 1.33 × 0.80 × 0.14 m, and was found at a depth of 0.75 m, 1.25 above Grave 36, yet also records a depth of 2.10 (rather than 2.00) m for the burial. The bottom of the marker thus rested somewhere between -0.89 and -0.99 m.

[119] Dickey, 1992: 20–24, lists 13 cists (slab- and/or rubble-lined) from Corinth. We can now add a PG cist in the Mikrou property (above n. 61), and archaic Grave 502 (below, n. 221).

[120] NB 393, p. 25 (41); 394, p. 352 (61); 395, p. 536 (502).

[121] This is ostensibly contradicted by the dimensions of the pit of 61 given in *Corinth XIII* (and repeated by Dickey, 1992: A-40), which are smaller than the cover slab. Yet NB 394, p. 352, does not record measurements for the pit, and the general grave index (NB 392, p. 95) gives the size of the cover as the size of the grave, as it does when no separate measurements were taken. Where the measurements in *Corinth XIII* come from is a mystery.

[122] Recorded depths are 1.25 (502), 1.30 (41) and 1.37 m (61).

All this suggests that rubble-wall cists occurred in the North Cemetery as a rare cheaper substitute for a sarcophagus rather than as a transitional form of burial.[123] Nevertheless, the use of sandstone covers for 41 and 61 suggests a quite early date, and a pot burial (43) of the Middle Protocorinthian period (MPC, 690–650 BCE) was placed "leaning close against the … cover" of 41 in way that implies this cist was contemporary or earlier.[124]

The composite sarcophagus was soon replaced by the monolithic sarcophagus as the norm even in the North Cemetery. The earliest datable monolithic sarcophagi here (63, 65) were buried in the MPC period, but a sarcophagus (47) that can be dated by pottery to 700–690 BCE looks as if it was supposed to be monolithic but was spoiled when the stonecutter accidentally broke one of the walls. The implied inexperience of the craftsman, together with the use of a sandstone cover for the *poros* box, suggests an experimental phase, as do a few other irregular sarcophagi.[125] The transition to monolithic sarcophagi as the normal form of burial in the North Cemetery thus probably occurred around 700 BCE.

The uniform and plain box-like appearance of monolithic sarcophagi seems austere, but of course considerable expenditure was involved. The largest seventh-century sarcophagus in the North Cemetery (95) was made of a block of *poros* measuring 1.855 × 0.82 × 0.605 m, or 0.92 m^3, weighing about 1840 kg. In hollowing this out, 62% of the stone was chipped away and in effect wasted, until a sarcophagus weighing about 700 kg remained. This was covered with a 16-cm thick slab slightly larger than the box (1.90 × 0.85 m), adding another 0.258 m^3 or 500 kg. Quite apart from the manufacturing cost, much manpower was required to lower a total weight of more than 1,200 kg into the ground, and not surprisingly many sarcophagi were much closer to the surface than pit graves had been. For number 95, a hole about 1 m deep was dug and its lid was only 20 cm below the ancient surface. But there were also quite large sarcophagi that were buried much deeper: 88, for example, rested at a depth that would have been 2 m below the ancient surface. It must have required not only a team of men but the use of a mechanical hoist to lift and lower a large sarcophagus into place.[126] For all its apparent simplicity, the sarcophagus was an ostentatious kind of tomb.

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[123] The same is presumably true of three late fifth-century cists with rubble walls (411, 424, 489); here the separate measurements of the pits confirm that the cover slabs must have rested on top of the "small stones" of the rubble walls and not extended beyond them.

[124] NB 393, p. 25. The top of the krater (33 cm tall, covered by a slab of *poros* probably some 10 cm thick) stood only 10 cm above the cover of the cist (-1.20 and -1.30 m, respectively), so its foot must have stood at nearly the same depth as the floor of the cist.

[125] For Grave 47, see Dickey, 1992: 27 (and 26 n. 35 for the date). For "irregular" sarcophagi 27 and 111, see below. Note also that *poros* sarcophagi 113–114, 133, 158 had sandstone covers.

[126] See Sanders *et al.*, 2014: 38–40 and fig. 32, for the possible mechanics of the process. For the depth of the holes dug, we must add not only the thickness of the lid and the interior depth of the sarcophagus but the thickness of the floor to the depth recorded for the top.

Burial territory Alpha (fig. 8)

Alpha continued to expand its territory in all directions around the walled enclosure, but the centre of gravity shifted towards the Bronze Age tumulus. Three composite sarcophagi were used, two (24, 127) at the northern and the third (28) at the most eastern edge of the Alpha group, confirming that they represented the next stage of development after the pit burials. Grave 24, which belonged to an adult man, c. 49 years old, and Grave 127, child-sized, were made of "soft limestone or unbaked clay"; the equally small Grave 28 was made of sandstone. The adult grave had a "neatly cut" interior finish (NB 393, p. 181), while the sandstone sarcophagus was "carefully dressed, leaving a sort of *anathyrosis* on the edge while the centre forms a rough surface panel" and the edge of its cover slab was "bevelled very carefully" (NB 391, pp. 439–442). An effort was clearly made to display the craftsman's skill. Grave 127, by contrast, relied on stucco to cement the slabs together and had no distinctive ornamental features,[127] but did have a cover slab of *poro*s instead of sandstone.

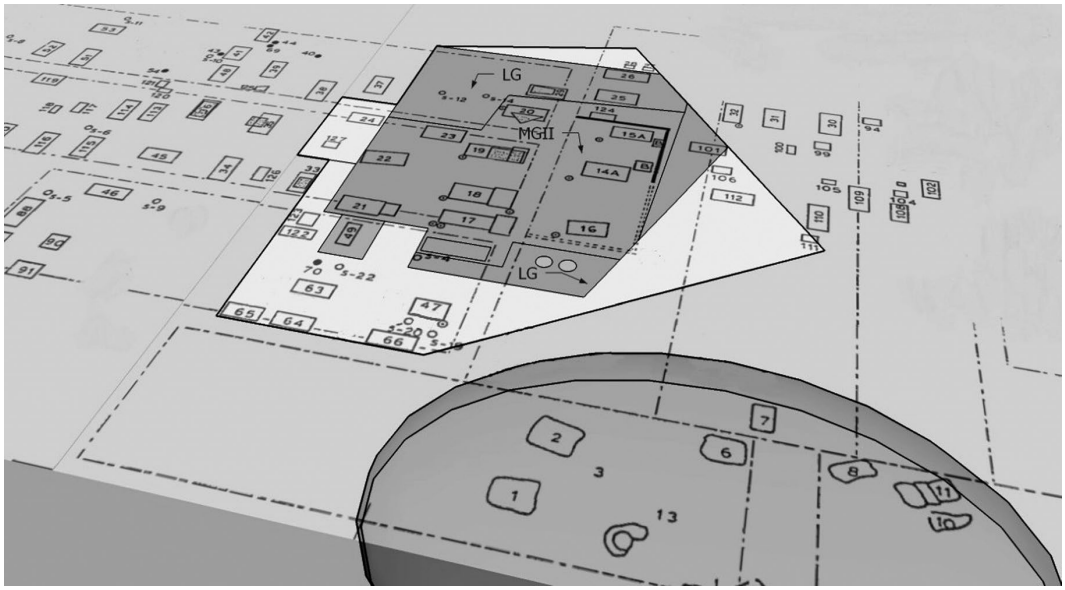

Fig. 8: Alpha burials, EPC-MPC. Territory marked on base map from Dickey, 1992, fig. 5. Tumulus drawn at minimal size; later graves deleted from map.

A third child (27) was buried next to 28 in a very small monolithic sarcophagus, made of sandstone, and covered by "an irregular shaped block", very much larger than the tiny coffin underneath, and very nearly as thick as the sarcophagus was deep. Five metres south of the enclosure lay a fourth child burial in an irregular form of sarcophagus (111), with walls "crudely cut out of sandstone and set

[127] *Pace* Dickey, 1992: A-60, no bevelled cover is mentioned in NB 393, p. 131.

up on a rock which served as a floor" (NB 391, p. 546). Presumably this was a monolithic sarcophagus with the floor deliberately cut out in order to make use of a natural rock – not a carved stone slab, as the published accounts have it – and as such it is unique. The grave was found without a cover, but a sandstone cover lay over a much later burial next to it (303), and this may well have been taken from the older grave. If so, the cover slab was long enough but too narrow for the sarcophagus so that a few centimetres of its rim were left exposed.[128] These small and untypical monolithic burials seem likely to belong to a transitional phase, 720–690 BCE, like the composite sarcophagi.

The final transitional Alpha burial was the first sarcophagus made of *poros*, mentioned already (47), of which "the sides and north end had been cut from a single block of stone, but the south end was cut separately and mortized to the rest" (NB 394, p. 234). The description seems to imply that the grave either had no floor (like 111) or a separate floor slab like composite sarcophagi, and this, along with the use of sandstone cover and the apparent failure of an attempt to create four walls from a single block, suggests the experimental and early nature of the sarcophagus. The funeral ritual revived the old Alpha custom of placing a large pot in the grave shaft – in this case an imported Argive krater with figurative decoration including a large snake in white paint circling around the black-glazed bottom, which gives us a date of 700–690 BCE.[129] The grave was quite small, as early monolithic sarcophagi tended to be, but large enough for an adult woman in contracted position.[130] She was buried just west of the destroyed grave with "spirals" and the adjacent LG krater burial, and thus another step closer to the Bronze Age tumulus.

All remaining Alpha burials were regular monolithic *poros* sarcophagi with *poros* cover slabs, presumably all later than the irregular burials listed above and in two cases positively dated to the MPC period. In 720–690 BCE, Alpha thus produced two adult and four child burials, ranged in a circle around the earlier grave cluster, perhaps a single generation of a single household, spread around all corners of the cemetery.

After this, we find two regular sarcophagus burials south of the enclosure, between pit grave 101 and irregular sarcophagus 111, one child-sized (106) and one adult-sized (112). Like their older neighbours, they were buried mere centimetres

[128] The connection between 111 and 303 was suggested by Palmer, 1964: 231–232.

[129] Unlike the nearby LG krater s-4, this krater was placed at the level of 47's cover slab and thus a grave gift rather than a separate burial: found at -1.80 m and 31 cm tall, it rested at -2.11 m beside the cover slab, which at -2.00 m and 13 cm thick rested at -2.13 m. Young, 1964: 35 (cf. Dickey, 1992: 27), says that the monolithic block "included the floor", but the notebook entry cited above seems to me hard to reconcile with that assumption.

[130] Internal dimensions: 1.07 × 0.62 m, 0.53 m deep. The smallest sarcophagus known to have contained an adult woman measured only 0.985 × 0.45 m, 0.355 m deep (93).

below the ground, in contrast to the deep Alpha graves elsewhere.[131] The adult grave, unlike those of the previous generation, contained a grave gift, a single handmade (and undatable) *aryballos*. Otherwise, all Alpha burials were made in the space between the walled enclosure and the large tumulus, a remarkable choice given how much room there was to expand in other directions as well. Admittedly, the area further north of the enclosure was fully occupied by Gamma graves, but there were no burials at all to the east until at least a century later, and the space between the enclosure and the line of recent Alpha graves to the south also remained unused until much later. Evidently the tumulus acquired a renewed significance, as the buriers reasserted a direct connection with their ancient "ancestors".

Six sarcophagi were found here in close proximity: Grave 66 was buried west of 47, a couple of metres at most from the foot of the tumulus, representing Alpha's final move in that direction, while 64–65 were lined up behind it, and 63 and 122–123 were lined up a few metres behind the destroyed pit burial with "spirals" and experimental sarcophagus 47.[132] Several of these graves were disturbed and reused, so that their contents do not survive, but 63 and 65 each contained an MPC *aryballos*, and the other sarcophagi may very well date to the same period (690–650 BCE). The only other north-south burials made in this area (171, 244–245) dated to 570–550 BCE, but these were sarcophagi of a different type.[133] There may thus have been a hiatus of up to a century in north-south burials here, as in the east and south.

The most remarkable grave in this cluster by the tumulus is 63, which contained a body with an iron pin at the shoulder – clearly part of the deceased's dress rather than a grave gift – and an amphora cradled in its arms (fig. 9). In the entire corpus of burials in the Corinthia, only two other sarcophagi contained an amphora, and in both cases that was a much smaller, painted vessel.[134] Here, the amphora was a sizeable plain storage vessel, with a diameter of 22.7 cm, placed on its side on the chest of the deceased, in a sarcophagus only 42.5 cm deep. This can barely have fitted, and it is no surprise that one of the handles was broken, no doubt snapped off when the lid was lowered onto the coffin. This amphora was surely not a grave gift but a pot burial: the tomb contained a mother and baby who died in childbirth.[135] The other five sarcophagi were in principle large enough to

[131] Grave 106 at -0.98; Grave 112 at -1.00. Pit grave 101 was at -1.00. Grave 111 was recorded as lying at -1.20, without cover; if the sandstone cover of 303 originally belonged to 111 (see above, n. 128), this would have raised its level to -1.12 m.

[132] Contra *Corinth XIII,* the orientation of the heavily damaged 123 was north-south, not east-west: NB 394, p. 289; Dickey, 1992: A-59.

[133] They had stucco and strap holes (see below), features absent from 63–66 and 122–123.

[134] Dickey, 1992: 71 (141 in the North Cemetery, and 68-121/IS-11 at Isthmia, both 590–570 BCE).

[135] Compare the double burial in sarcophagus 149: Dickey, 1992: 46; *pace* Palmer (1964:

contain adults, and if the iron pins found in 66 and 123 were worn (which is not clear), they may have included two women dressed in *peploi*.

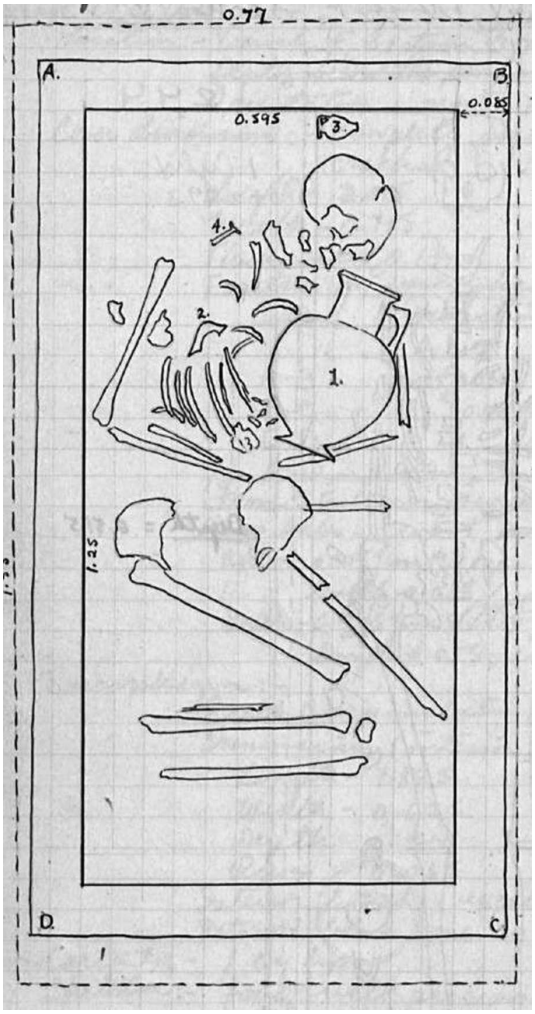

Fig. 9: Grave 63: mother and baby burial (drawing by Josephine Platner in NB 394, p. 242).
(1) amphora;
(2) amphora handle, snapped off;
(3) *aryballos*;
(4) iron pin.

As for children, the presence of a pot burial inside an Alpha sarcophagus here raises the possibility that a number of nearby pot burials may also belong to this group. An obvious candidate is a plain transport amphora – or rather the top half of it, used as a cover for the body – with 5 small pots neatly arranged beside it as a gift (70), buried halfway between 63 and 122, at the same level and in the same period as 63, 690–650 BCE.[136] The other pots buried in the area were plain large

179), the interior length of 1.025 m is enough for an adult woman in a strongly contracted position.

[136] The amphora was found at -1.60 m, and 0.408 m tall, so rested at -2.01; the cover of

pouring vessels (*chytrai*) and in the absence of skeletal remains, grave gifts or stone covers we cannot be entirely sure that they were infant burials. But that does seem a very likely function, given that they were buried quite deep, yet not the type of vessels otherwise found in ritual use or as grave gifts. One was found just south of amphora burial 70 (s-22), and two between Graves 47 and 66 (s-19 and -20), all at a depth of -1.90.[137] The depth is significant because it means that they rose above the top of those graves (at -2.00 and -2.05), but barely reached the floor of Grave 129 which was placed above 47 around 600 BCE (see below). Pot burials are usually shallower than contemporary pit burials and sarcophagi, so these *chytrai* are unlikely to have been buried later than sarcophagus 129, and a seventh-century date is probable.[138]

The total number of Alpha burials in monolithic sarcophagi and associated child graves was thus seven adults and six children, including the mother and her newborn placed in the same grave. Adding the two adults and four children buried in the transitional period from 720 BCE onwards, we have 19 burials, which – at the rate of 0.28 p.a. attested for 800–720 BCE – would represent a period of 68 years, c. 720–650 BCE. In principle, it is of course possible that the Alpha group shrank, and if they had been reduced to a single nuclear household nine adult burials might be eked out to cover four generations, from 720–600 BCE. In practice, the fact that some Alpha burials had grave gifts even when these were very rare, yet no Alpha burial had grave gifts datable between 650 and 570 BCE, a period in which they were becoming more common again (see below), makes such a stretch unlikely.

The most likely conclusion is therefore that the Alpha group stopped burying in the North Cemetery around the middle of the seventh century. They might have simply died out, but the appearance of north-south oriented burials in places contiguous with old Alpha territory from 570 BCE onward, as we shall see, suggests another scenario: the group moved away for two or three generations and eventually returned to pick up where they left off.

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grave 63 rested at -1.98 (depth of -1.85 + thickness of cover 0.13 m). I adopt Dickey's interpretation of why the amphora was cut in half (1992: A-43/4).

[137] *Chytrai* s-19 and -20 were published in *Corinth XIII* as X-138, -139; s-22 was published in Dickey 1992, A-133 and pl. 82a; for its depth, see NB 394, p. 229). The plans in NB 394, pp. 209–210 (no. 34), 222–223 show a third "pithos", apparently on or above the NW corner of the cover of Grave 47, but this was not inventoried and no further details are available. I will suggest below that s-15, also nearby, was of later date. Similarly, s-18 near amphora 70 may have been another *chytra*, but its description in *Corinth XIII* (X-137) suggests that it was of a different fabric from the other three, smaller, burnt and largely destroyed, and buried at much greater depth (-2.25 m), beside and at the level of a late-classical tile grave (464).

[138] *Corinth XIII* deemed X-139 "probably much older" than Grave 129.

Burial territory Beta (fig. 10)

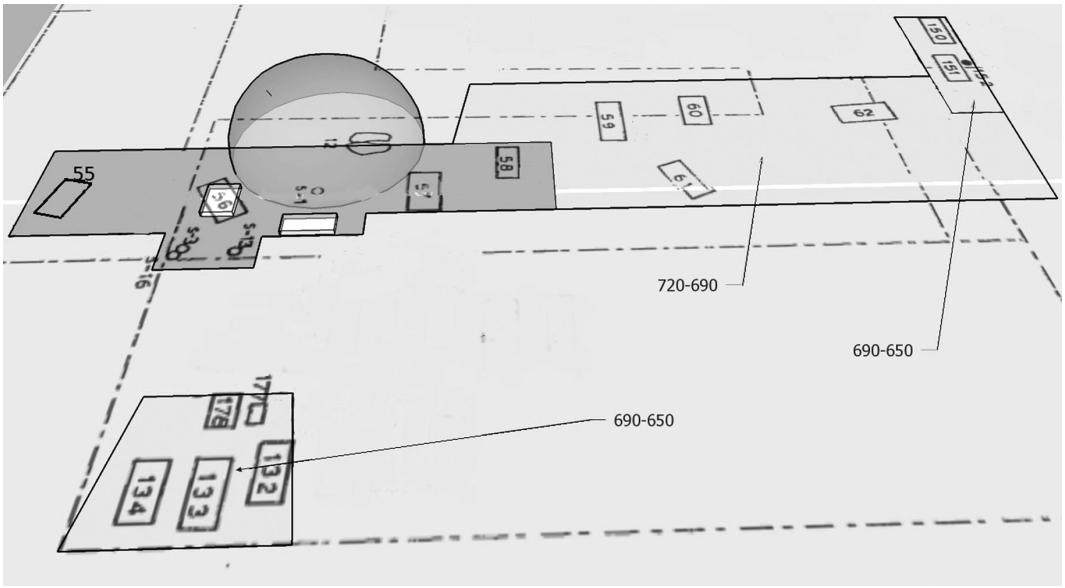

Fig. 10: Beta burials, EPC-MPC. Territory marked on base map from Dickey, 1992, fig. 5. Size of tumulus hypothetical; later graves deleted from map. The location of Grave 55 has been corrected on the basis of NB 394, p. 321.

The story of Beta is remarkably similar. After the four pit graves near the smaller tumulus the next three in a line continuing to stretch east were composite sarcophagi (59–60, 62).[139] All three contained pins which may have been part of grave gifts rather than worn, especially in the case of a pair of bronze pins (60) which date to c. 700 BCE, since it appears that iron rather than bronze pins were normally worn at Corinth after 750 BCE, but bronze pins used in dedications to the gods.[140] In all three burials very soft *poros* was used, cut with a saw rather than chiselled, and the sarcophagus walls were bevelled at the top. Slightly south of the others lay the cist with rubble- and slab-walls (61), discussed above. All four cover slabs were still cut from traditional sandstone. No contemporary pot burials were associated with this line of graves,[141] which suggests that these graves in-

[139] The close similarities between 59–60 and 62 strongly suggest that they were part of the same group, but the orientation of 62 was nearly east-west rather than north-south; however, the axis of several Beta burials (56, 61) was less strictly north-south than it was among Alpha graves.

[140] See Dickey, 1992: 79. Moreover, these bronze pins were said to be "near shoulder" (singular; NB 394, p. 379), which ought to mean both together on one side of the body, and so part of a gift rather than worn. No location is given for the iron pins in 59 or 62.

[141] Krater burial 153 beside 59 was much later; *chytra* s-23 was relatively near 62 and cannot be dated, but lay nearer, and at a similar level, to Grave 147.

cluded one or more children although they were in principle large enough for adults in contracted position. The shallow cist grave is one candidate, and perhaps the relatively small and shallowly buried sarcophagus 60 is another.[142] If the burials were all adults, they may represent two lucky households without child deaths. Alternatively, these four burials could represent a single generation of one household with relatively lavish funeral customs.

As in Alpha, the next period saw a couple of further burials at the far end of the line, but otherwise a return to burial at the foot of the tumulus where Beta had started. East of the composite sarcophagi lay two monolithic sarcophagi (150–151) that cannot be dated precisely but were of the same small and simple type as the early seventh-century Alpha burials.[143] A pot burial (152) with a single small black-glazed cup was buried next to 151 at the same depth and probably belonged to the group, although again it is not datable.[144] The north-south burials continued no further east, although there was much empty space in that direction. Instead, later burials formed a dense cluster by the smaller Bronze Age tumulus. At the back of this cluster, about 7 m south of the earliest Beta pit graves, lay a monolithic *poros* sarcophagus (133) with a sandstone cover, like the Beta composite sarcophagi but unlike later burials,[145] which suggests an early date. A child sarcophagus (178) directly in front of 133 did have a *poros* cover, but it was "roughly hewn", which may be another sign of an early date. Two adult burials (132, 134) were made on either side of 133, at virtually the same depth, in sarcophagi of almost the same length, containing no grave goods except iron pins. I suggest that they, and perhaps also the adjacent child burial (177), all belonged to the seventh century.[146] The burials next to this small group, by contrast, contained pottery dating to 590–570 BCE, while the row of burials in front of it dated to 570 BCE or later.

Graves 132–134 lay at the southern edge of the excavated area, and we cannot exclude that there were further early graves beyond the last trench. One further north-south burial (86) that dated to 650–615 BCE[147] was found in a small isolated

[142] Its rare grave gift of bronze pins might reflect the trend (after 750 BCE) of placing gifts above all in child graves (Dickey, 1992: 95–100), and it was filled with a much thicker layer of soil (14 cm, about one-third of its depth) than 59 and 61 (1 and 7 cm, respectively), which was another trend in child graves (Dickey, 1992: 33–35).

[143] They contained contracted burials, and had no stucco or strap holes: see below.

[144] 152 was "a complete *pithos*" found at -1.35 m (NB 390, p. 287); no details were recorded. If it was c. 35 cm tall, it stood at the same level as the floor of 151 (found at -1.15 m, to which should be added 11 cm for the cover, 37.5 cm for interior depth, and c. 9 cm for floor).

[145] The only other examples in the North Cemetery are Graves 113–114 and 158: see below.

[146] *Corinth XIII* treats 132–134 and 177–178 as contemporary with the nearby graves of 590–570 BCE, purely on the basis of proximity (Palmer, 1964: 171).

[147] See Dickey, 1992: A-49 (he reverses the numbers of 86 and 87).

trench about 6 m south-west of 132, with an east-west burial south of it (87), but no other graves. If this was an outlier of the Beta group, they would have spread southwards away from the tumulus before eventually returning to it, but the empty space around the grave suggests that it was an isolated burial, perhaps part of a small "mixed" group of the kind we encountered among pit graves to the north of Gamma territory. If we disregard 86, then, the total number of Beta burials after 720 BCE adds up to at most 12, probably seven adults and five children. At the rate of 0.13 burials p.a. estimated for the period before 720 BCE on the assumption that Beta represented a single household, this would cover a maximum span of 92 years, c. 720–630 BCE. If the group was any larger, the period covered was proportionally shorter. Either way, we cannot bridge the gap to 590 BCE and there must have been a quite long hiatus in the burials here. As in Alpha, the pattern was a phase of renewed focus on the "ancestral" monument followed by a temporary end to burial in the area: Beta, too, probably moved away for some time.

Like Grave 86, a few other north-south orientated burials were not contiguous with the two main clusters. Near pit graves 45–46, an EPC pot burial (s-9) was interred. Two sarcophagi (183–184) re-used in the Roman era and without archaic remains but with features implying a date before 550 BCE lay just north of pit graves 53 and 119; a nearby pot burial in an EPC krater (s-8) may support an early seventh-century date.[148] Finally, in the far north Blegen's 4 adult sarcophagi (1919-2, 3, 4 and 5) were also north-south orientated, like the nearby pit grave, with at their south end the child sarcophagi (1919-6, 7) at right angles. Grave 1919-3 contained two bronze or iron pins and 1919-4 a terracotta loom weight, located in both cases "just above [the] right shoulder" (NB 85a, 43, 44), suggesting gifts of cloth. As before, these sets of burials probably represented single households outside the main groups.

Burial territory Gamma (fig. 11)

The Gamma group initially continued to bury around the borders of Alpha territory, emulating its neighbour while also developing its own distinctive forms of burial, and its choice of locations showing that it continued to accept a position inferior to Alpha. Limited dating evidence makes it hard to pinpoint how long this pattern lasted, but the small number of graves suggests that it did not last long, and may have come to an end around the time of the hiatus in Alpha and Beta burials.

One branch of the Gamma group – the cluster around the offering trench mislabelled "Grave 501" – petered out, even before Alpha and Beta stopped burying. Just one composite sarcophagus (125; photo: bw 1998 061 05a) may be associated with it, and after that the only activity in this area until the late seventh century

[148] Grave 185 is interpreted as another archaic sarcophagus in *Corinth XIII*, but was recorded by the excavator as merely a slab of *poros* from a "mutilated" sarcophagus (NB 393, pp. 6–7, 108), and there is no indication of either orientation or date.

appears to have been the cheap cist burial (41) and two pot burials (43, s-10) right beside it in 690–650 BCE.

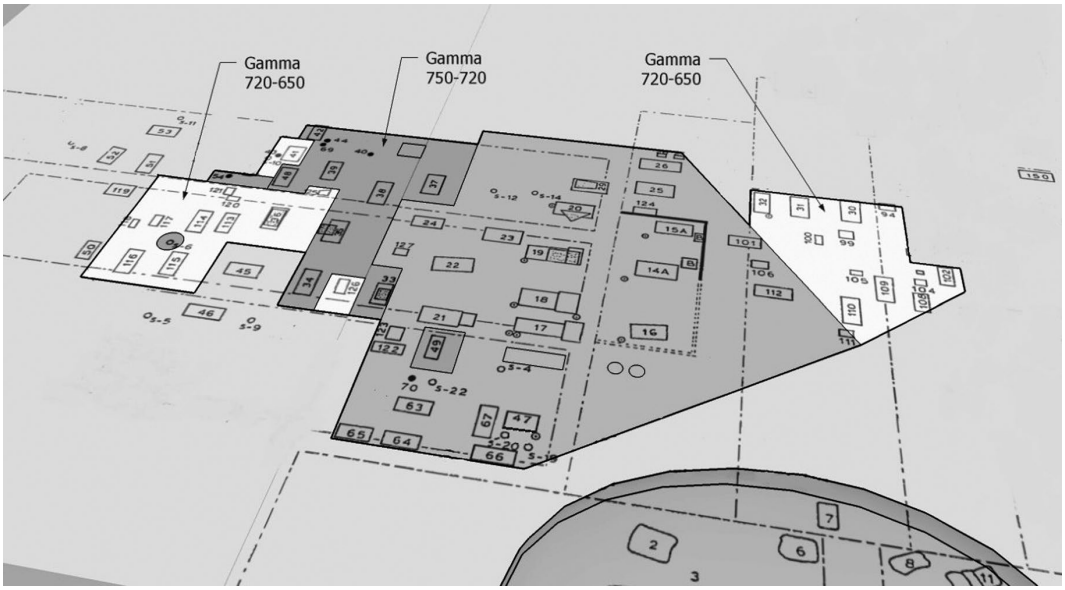

Fig. 11: Gamma burials, EPC-MPC. Territory marked on base map from Dickey, 1992, fig. 5. Tumulus drawn at minimal size; later graves deleted from map.

The child-sized composite sarcophagus 125 was oriented north-south, yet surrounded on all sides by east-west Gamma burials. This is the first but not the last Gamma child burial that has a different orientation from all adult graves surrounding it, which may seem a challenge to the notion that grave-orientation was a meaningful element of group identity, or that certain groups had distinct burial "territories". However, these apparent exceptions to the rule are all very small sarcophagi, almost certainly for infants who might equally have been buried in pots, and since burials in round vessels by definition had no orientation, the direction of burial evidently did not matter for infants in the same way that it did for older children and adults. Hence, I suggest, even when infants were buried in sarcophagi they might be positioned differently from the rest of the group. A reason to connect 125 with the cluster around the offering trench in particular is its early use of *poros*: just as its immediate neighbour 39 had been the only pit grave with a *poros* cover slab, so was 125 the only composite sarcophagus made of *poros* rather than a softer stone.

The cist and pot burials very nearby surely also belonged to this group, but the adjacent monolithic sarcophagi – four adults (71–74) and three children (75–77) – appear to be of much later date. They display several features that are otherwise

only found in sarcophagi from the late seventh century onward. Stucco was used to cement the cover slab to one of the sarcophagi (73), and another (75) was entirely covered with stucco on the inside despite being monolithic and not needing "cement". Such purely ornamental use of stucco is not otherwise attested until c. 590 BCE. Two other sarcophagi (72, 74) featured notches that were cut into their bottom corners so that they could be lowered by ropes. These were rare in the North Cemetery, and in the West Cemetery at Isthmia, where they were more common, made an appearance only from the Early Corinthian period onwards (615–590 BCE). Child sarcophagus 75 had a unique shape, with rounded corners on the north side and walls of varying thickness (2.5 to 5 cm), for which the only datable parallel is Grave 78, of 650–615 BCE.[149] Graves 76–77 had irregularly shaped covers – a drawing of 76 shows a shapeless slab without any straight lines or corners (NB 393, p. 4) – which is a feature shared with two other graves (82, 96) in apparently late seventh-century clusters to be discussed later.

All in all, it seems likely that Graves 71–77 represented a new start in the late seventh century in an area that had seen only one cist and two pot burials since 700 BCE. The closing of the offering trench with a stone slab fits this pattern of a temporary near-abandonment of the sector. We reach the edge of the excavated area here, and there was plenty of available burying space beyond the trench, so the new 71–77 group may well have been much larger. But if it is true that burials spread outwards, any additional unexcavated graves would have been of later date, and the hiatus in local Gamma burials remains.

Just as one corner of Gamma territory was abandoned, however, a new group of east-west burials appeared in new territory, starting with three composite sarcophagi (30–32) in a line towards the south starting just east of the walled enclosure. The krater used as surface marker of the grave closest to the enclosure (32) gives us a date of 720–690 BCE. At this time, the space of c. 20 × 20 m east of the Bronze Age tumuli between the Alpha and Beta groups was unoccupied by any burials, so the decision to start breaking new ground right next to Alpha territory is significant. Like the earlier Gamma group, the buriers associated their dead closely with the Alpha group yet deferred to them by taking a position somewhat less close to the tumulus. The sarcophagi as such not only suggest a degree of material inferiority but also an attempt to set the group apart. The stone was so soft that many of the slabs had disintegrated. The long sides did not consist of single large slabs but of two short slabs put together, the floors were "rough hewn", and one of the covers was made of pebble conglomerate rather than sandstone. However, the bevelling of the upper rim of the sarcophagi (not the cover slabs) was a distinctive refinement, the krater as surface marker was unique, and the buriers filled the sarcophagi partly or wholly with "earth and stones",

[149] Stucco, rope notches, and irregular shapes: Dickey, 1992: 30–32; Young, 1964: 51. For Grave 75, see NB 393, p. 15 (Dickey, 1992: A-45, tacitly corrects multiple errors in *Corinth XIII*'s entry for this burial). For Grave 78, see below.

rather than just earth, as was usual.[150]

Half of the space towards the west, between this new line of burials and the tumuli, and all of the space towards the south, between these burials and the line of Beta graves, filled up in the course of the seventh century with monolithic sarcophagi, of which all adult-sized ones lay on an east-west axis. No burials were made towards the east (or north) until much later. The dating evidence is very limited and the burials are rather loosely scattered, but some patterns can be tentatively identified. Two fairly distinct clusters nearest the Beta line show signs of a late seventh-century date, and a small group of sarcophagi between 30–32 and these later clusters is notably ostentatious in scale which may also suggest a relatively advanced date. The initial expansion may thus have been in the area nearest the enclosure, moving in the direction of the tumuli. The Gamma grave nearest the large tumulus here was adult sarcophagus 110, which significantly stayed just behind Alpha child burial 111, thus respecting the territory demarcated by Alpha. Slightly further back and south lay another three adult burials (102, 108–109) and the ample space between this front line and the rear line formed by Graves 30–32 was taken up with a scatter of child sarcophagi.

Of the adult burials, by some way the largest sarcophagus was 108, with internal dimensions of 1.475 × 0.60 m, 0.45 m deep.[151] Despite this size, the excavator comments on the "bent knees" of the skeleton, "allowing it to fit into the sarcophagus" (NB 391, p. 395), which implies that the contracted body fully filled the coffin and was a tall person, most likely an adult male. The two sarcophagi next to it were 20 cm shorter and slightly narrower, and the body in 109 was identified as a woman, c. 44 years old, in possession of a pair of iron pins[152] and a green faience scarab worn on a string, while 110 also included two iron pins and may have held another female dressed in a *peplos*. Grave 102 was very small (1.00 × 0.525 m, 0.36 deep), but the notebook describes an extremely tightly contracted body ("knees drawn practically up to the chest and lower legs brought up right under thighs", NB 391, p. 396), so this will have been another adult, perhaps even a man.

These details are significant because they contrast with a pair of sarcophagi just south of the 30–32 line (93, 95), where the excavator noted that the bodies lay

[150] For the details, see NB 391, p. 553–556; earth and stones are mentioned for all three (but omitted by *Corinth XIII* and mentioned only for 30 and 32 by Dickey); the notebook does not say that the joints were "neatly" chiselled (*pace* Dickey, 1992: A-31), as it does elsewhere.

[151] This is not apparent from the published plans, which draw graves to scale based on the size of the cover slabs, because the excavator made a mistake, which is reproduced in the publications: the dimensions given are far too small for 108 but identical to the cover of the next reported grave, the much smaller 102, for which it is the perfect size (NB 391, p. 395–396).

[152] Dickey, 1992: 90–91, and A-55 for the three pin fragments representing two pins.

in a contracted position although the sarcophagi were large enough for the bodies to have been laid out fully extended (NB 391, pp. 411–413). The internal dimensions of Grave 95 (1.685 × 0.65 m) could have accommodated an adult, while those of the smaller 93 (0.985 × 0.45 m) would imply that a child was buried here in a sarcophagus just about large enough for a contracted adult burial. The third and most easterly burial in this small group (92) was of intermediate size and had no room to spare: it contained an adult male, c. 25 years old, who with strongly contracted legs just fitted inside (*Corinth XIII*, pl. 102). Whether the excess size of 93 and 95 sprang from a wish to spend on a lavish sarcophagus or was also designed to provide room for an array of perishable grave gifts, the increase in size looks like a step towards the much larger sixth-century sarcophagi, and suggests a relatively late date in the seventh century.

In the triangular space delimited by the Gamma sarcophagi described so far lay 9 child sarcophagi (94, 96–100, 103–105), all but two facing north-south, so that it looks as if in this area child burial at right angles to adult burial was the preferred practice. Three of the burials (96–98) lay side-by-side in a line just west of sarcophagus 95 and seem to share its interest in display: 97 was one of only three child sarcophagi to have rounded interior corners, while 96 and 98 were among the few early child sarcophagi that were not fully packed with earth but left space around the body, conceivably for perishable grave gifts. If these three burials belonged to the relatively late cluster around Grave 95 – along with two possible pot burials nearby[153] – we would be left for the earlier period with a set of three child sarcophagi (94, 99–100) near the composite sarcophagus 30, and three more (103–105) in the cluster around Grave 108. As a result, the earliest Gamma burials here would have run in a line just south of the Alpha burials without intruding on Alpha territory or going beyond it in the direction of the tumulus (see fig. 11).

A notable feature of these burials south of the enclosure, both Alpha and Gamma, was how shallow they were. Given the attested ancient ground level of about -0.95/1.00 m by the enclosure, sloping down to -1.20/1.25 m further south, the cover slabs of the adults' monolithic sarcophagi can have been barely a few centimetres below ground: instead of impressive shafts, minimal holes were dug for the coffins. Indeed, the sarcophagus of the woman with the scarab pendant would probably have been about 25 cm above ground, and the covers, or more, of all child burials would have been visible, while four of the child sarcophagi would not have been buried at all but placed *on* the ground (94, 98, 100, 104).[154] Pre-

[153] NB 391, 400, mentions "two large *pithoi*" found near the northwest corner of 93 and just east of 97–98 (cf. plan in NB 390, 258–259). No details were recorded, and these pots were not reckoned among the burials by *Corinth XIII* or Dickey, 1992.

[154] For these four, adding the thickness of the cover slab, the interior depth of the sarcophagus, and the thickness of the rim (as a proxy for the unrecorded thickness of the floor) to the depth at which the burial was found, produces a figure of -1.14 or -1.15 for the bottom

sumably they were not left exposed but each covered with a small tumulus of its own, which would have had to be at 50–60 cm high for the wholly above-ground sarcophagi, matching the height of the walled enclosure. Perhaps even the deeper graves here were covered in this way, filling the field with cheap but conspicuous surface markers.

Our new group of east-west buriers south of the enclosure may of course have been an entirely new arrival in the cemetery, but it is probably no coincidence that the new cluster appeared just when an old cluster north of the enclosure was petering out, and that the burials showed the same deferential acceptance of a position on the margins of Alpha territory as the old Gamma burials had done. It seems likely that they were a continuation of the same Gamma group, now moving into new territory, closing their old offering trench, and adopting the latest style of composite sarcophagus to the best of their ability.

Finally, the western cluster of Gamma burials north of the enclosure continued to expand the established Gamma territory to the north and west, into the area which had been a nearly vacant strip of land between Gamma territory and the line of "mixed" pit graves to the north. Here we find two composite sarcophagi (36, 126), in which the slabs were cemented together with stucco, as in 125 and the nearby Alpha burial 127, whereas the other Alpha and Beta composite sarcophagi were so "neatly fitted" that they did not need this. The slabs of child grave 126 fitted so poorly that they needed not only stucco on the inside but also propping up by rocks on the outside. Nevertheless, this child's sarcophagus was meant to be a display piece since it had a spectacular cover and floor slab. A sketch in the notebook shows that the edges of the sandstone cover were bevelled to such depth that the slab was trapezium-shaped rather than rectangular (fig. 12), and the floor slab was a staggering 30 cm thick, almost a pedestal, as high as the sarcophagus was deep.[155] A show of ambition also characterised an adult composite sarcophagus (36), by some distance the largest of its kind in the cemetery[156] and important enough to receive a surface marker slab. Its plain sandstone cover slab was smaller than the sarcophagus and left much of the upper rim exposed, evidently by design, since small covers and very thick floors recurred among the monolithic sarcophagi that followed. These unusual features were presumably

of the sarcophagus, which is the ground level one expects to find halfway between the enclosure and smaller tumulus. The tops of the other five child sarcophagi lay at levels varying from -0.95 to -1.06 m, i.e. 10–20 cm above ground.

[155] For the construction, see NB 393, p. 131; photo bw 8864.The thickness of the floor is implied by a comparison of the figures for interior depth (0.347 m) and exterior height (0.645 m: NB 393, p. 130–131) but has not been noted in previous publications. Exterior heights were rarely recorded, but there were a number of other massive floor slabs in this area (see below) while elsewhere the floor was only marginally thicker (121, 129, 245) or indeed thinner (67) than the walls; I assume that generally exterior heights were recorded only when floors differed significantly in thickness from walls.

[156] External length of 36: 1.81 m (cf. Alpha grave 24: 1.505 m long); of cover: 1.63 m.

adopted to give the group a means of displaying a distinctive identity at its funerals.

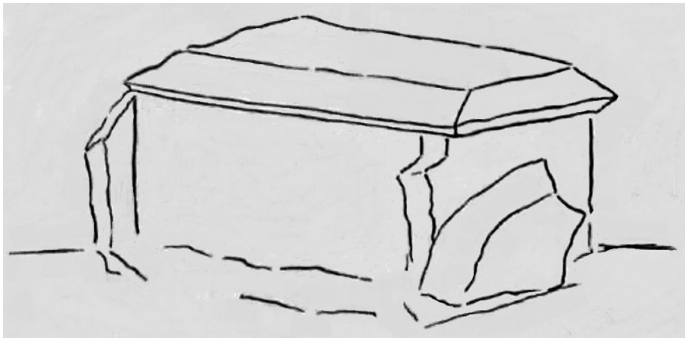

Fig. 12: Composite sarcophagus 126, with bevelled cover; stone propping up the side (drawing by Josephine Platner in NB 393, p. 131)

The first pair of monolithic sarcophagi (113–114) immediately north of 36 still had sandstone covers, which points to a date in the early seventh century (as does the unique grave gift of a seventh-century ivory fibula in 113). The second pair (115–116), slightly further north, were made entirely of *poros*. All four were adult-sized, and while one of each pair was of average proportions the other had an undersized cover slab and oversized floor slab (114, 116).[157] Two infant burials (120–121) lay beside the older pair, the smaller of the two oriented north-south, with another infant (118) and perhaps an older child (117) beside the later pair.[158] These reached the line of the next group of pit graves, and no Gamma sarcophagus burials ever "trespassed" beyond this line. Instead, they moved west, where another pair of adult burials was found side-by-side (88–89), one with two pins as a grave gift (88), and an infant burial in a *chytra* (s-21) beside the other but at a higher level.[159] If we assume that each pair of adult sarcophagi with associated

[157] The small size of cover slabs can be inferred from the data in *Corinth XIII* and Dickey, 1992. Exterior heights recorded in the notebooks imply floor slabs of 38 cm for 114 (NB 394, p. 203), 28 cm for 116 (ibid., 204); a mistake must have been made for 115, credited with an exterior height (51 cm) lower than interior depth (54 cm; NB 393, pp. 169–170)! No exterior measurement was taken for 113, which presumably means that it was unexceptional.

[158] Sarcophagi 120–121 had relatively thick floors, but only because they were very small and shallow: their exterior heights were recorded as 26 and 27 cm respectively (NB 394, pp. 197, 202), and they were hollowed out to a depth of only 14 and 19 cm. No exterior height was recorded for 118, and the exterior height of 117 was recorded as 34 cm, which with an interior depth of 33 cm would imply a very thin floor (although its walls were 11 cm thick); its cover was too small and "had been tampered with", NB 393, p. 204).

[159] For *chytra* s-21, see *Corinth XIII*, X-140 (at -1.25 m, whereas Grave 89 lay at -2.40 m).

child burials represents one generation of a household, this last set would date after the middle of the seventh century.

Again, these latest burials lay at the edge of the excavated area, and there may have been further graves west and north. However, the vacant space north of the Bronze Age tumulus suggests that there was a line here that burials did not cross, and if the line of older pit graves that Gamma also did not cross extended slightly further west, then the trenches here reached virtually the limit of the available area, and there would not have been any more Gamma graves in this sector than we already know. These burials cannot be dated with any precision, so we cannot tell whether three pairs of adult sarcophagi accompanied by four child sarcophagi and one infant pot burial represented three generations of one household, spanning most of the seventh century, or a larger group for a shorter period.

Outside the groups discussed, there was just a single east-west oriented grave that is likely to date to the early seventh century, an adult sarcophagus with a sandstone cover (158) lying in isolation at eastern edge if the cemetery. If we add up all the attested east-west burials from 720 BCE onwards, but exclude the probable late seventh-century graves identified so far (71–77, 88–89, 92–93, 95–98, s-21), the total comes to 15 adults and 14 children. Over the period 720–650 BCE (EPC-MPC) this implies a burial rate of 0.41 p.a., of which 48% were children, virtually the same as in 750–720 BCE (0.43 p.a., 46% children).

A coherent picture emerges: from 720–650 BCE, the cemetery was dominated by three groups that each had their own territory and subtly different funeral customs, but buried their dead in essentially the same way, in costly sarcophagi but with very little other sign of display or competition. Around 700 BCE, two of the groups, Alpha and Beta, began to concentrate their burials again on the tumuli of their imagined ancient ancestors, and a third group, Gamma, moved into the space between the tumuli – at a respectful distance – but all three groups recognised the others' territory and did not trespass on it. Around 650 BCE, however, the north-south oriented graves of Alpha and Beta came to an end, and over the next two generations all new burials lay on an east-west axis and expanded only Gamma's territory.

Bacchiads in the North Cemetery?

As it happens, the Greek literary tradition fits this reading of the archaeological evidence perfectly. From c. 750 BCE, the story goes, Corinth was ruled by an oligarchy of "more than 200" men (Diod. 7.9.6) who called themselves Bacchiads, descendants of Bacchis, an earlier king of Corinth, and intermarried only amongst themselves (Hdt. 5.92 β). Specifically, they claimed to be the descendants of the three daughters and seven sons of Bacchis,[160] which shows that they thought of themselves as 10 separate families of an average 20 households each, with only a distant ancestor supposedly in common, in some cases through a female line. Ac-

[160] Aristotle, fr. 611.19 Rose = Heraclides Lembos 19 Dilts.

cording to tradition, the Bacchiads ruled collectively for 90 years but were "destroyed" (Diod. 7.9.6) or "thrown out" (Paus. 2.4.4) in a *coup d'état* that re-established a monarchy under Cypselos around 650 BCE.[161] As is generally accepted, these stories reflect the rise and fall of a closed ruling class that gave itself an identity and a claim to legitimacy by positing that they were all descendants of Corinth's former kings, who in turn were descended from the city's legendary founder Aletes (Diod. 7.9.2–3; Paus. 2.4.4).

What we see in the North Cemetery between 800 and 650 BCE can easily be understood in terms of these developments. Alpha and Beta may be two of the families that would eventually constitute the Bacchiad oligarchy, each choosing a burial territory that helped establish their claim to hereditary power. Gamma may represent lower-ranking members of the elite, either "junior" Bacchiads or not reckoned among the Bacchiads at all despite their social standing. From 750 to 650 BCE, no additional groups appeared in the cemetery as membership of the elite was in effect closed. The display of wealth was reduced and by 700 BCE burials were virtually uniform, but renewed efforts were made to assert hereditary prestige by monumentalising the graves of recent ancestors and making new burials as close as possible to the "founding" ancestors supposedly interred in the tumuli. The end of Alpha and Beta burials around the middle of the seventh century marks the overthrow of the hereditary oligarchy as its leading members left Corinth to go into exile. Only lesser members of the elite remained, and their new prominence is reflected in a take-over of the North Cemetery, where for the duration of the Cypselid monarchy virtually all burials were of the east-west-oriented kind previously confined to Gamma territory.

A new elite: burial strategies under the Cypselids, c. 650–590 BCE

After the overthrow of the Bacchiad regime, the literary evidence focuses on the new rulers, Cypselos and his son Periander, and tells us nothing about the nature of the new upper class of Corinth. The burial record, by contrast, not only continues but gradually becomes even richer, enabling us to track the development of the elite and its changing burial strategies.

For convenience, I shall continue to refer to east-west-facing burials as "Gamma" graves, without implying that the buriers were a single organised group, as opposed to a number of separate families or other groups who shared a basic funerary custom. From the start we have seen hints of sub-groups among the east-west buriers, and after 650 BCE their burials divide into six separate clusters with distinct burial strategies, some contiguous with Gamma territory, but others at some distance from it. Whether these were new groups acquiring elite status or descendants of existing elite families establishing new "territories" is hard to tell.

[161] Kõiv, 2016: 61–64, argues that a hereditary and lifelong kingship continued to exist during the Bacchiad oligarchy; if so, Cypselos did not revive the monarchy but merely abolished the oligarchic institutions that existed alongside it.

Either way, the burial record shows that the group(s) of people who used the North Cemetery did not become any broader but remained confined to a small elite (fig. 13).

Fig. 13: Gamma burials, LPC-EC. Territory marked on base map from Dickey, 1992, fig. 5. Tumulus drawn at maximal size; later graves deleted from map.

As well as the east-west burials from the second half of the seventh century that we have already encountered at three corners of earlier Gamma territory, three new sets of burials on an east-west axis appeared after 650 BCE: two still further south, bordering on Beta territory, and one at the heart of Alpha territory at the foot of the large tumulus. Aligned with Gamma burials 30–32 and 95, but further south, lay three adult sarcophagi (83–85) with another set of three just east (79–81), and three child sarcophagi (78, 82, 128) and a pot burial (531) nearby. The adult burials were typical of the seventh century – undecorated sarcophagi with contracted bodies and no grave gifts – except for a liking of long cover slabs, in several cases a foot longer than the sarcophagus box (81, 83, 85), and nearly two feet longer for one relatively small sarcophagus (80). If increasing size is a sign of a later date, the second row would be later than the first and the group would have expanded to the east, away from the tumuli. This is confirmed both by two of the associated child burials and by the next row of adult burials, which are datable.

Child sarcophagus 78 stood at the foot end of Grave 80, its floor at precisely the level of the adult burial's enormous cover slab, and like all child burials in this

group almost entirely above ground and so no doubt covered by a small mound.[162] It was the third and last of the sarcophagi with rounded interior corners, endowed with a grave gift of six bottles of scented oil from the Late Protocorinthian or Transitional period (LPC / TR, 650–615 BCE). A little further east, beyond the second tier of adult burials, child grave 128 had impressive gifts placed outside it: a *kalathos, pyxis* and cup beside the cover slab, as well as a *pyxis*, two bronze rings and two bronze discs arranged on the lid. The pots date to the Early Corinthian period (EC, 615–590 BCE). Still further east lay a third row of burials (148–149, 160), of which the first two had the rope notches otherwise found in this cemetery only in two burials in the old Gamma territory north of the enclosure, as mentioned above. Each had grave gifts: two cups, including an Attic import, in 148; a cup and *oinochoe* as outside offerings for 149;[163] and a pair of pins (not worn), fragments of bronze, and 8 drinking and pouring vessels in 160. All these pots were made in the Middle Corinthian period (MC, 590–570 BCE). The burials thus evidently moved eastward and became more lavish in the process.[164]

Beyond 148–149 and 160 lay a few metres of open space, and the line stopped here after what must have been two or three generations. As it expanded, in the course of the EC and MC periods, the cluster crossed over the extreme eastern end of the older line of Beta burials (150–152), which had at the time been abandoned and ended up surrounded by Gamma graves. That they continued past this "obstacle" towards the east is remarkable because there would have been vacant space in which to expand westward instead. The similar new Gamma burials north of the enclosure also expanded towards the east. Given the burial orientation of these groups, whose dead lay with their heads pointing east, the reason for this preference may have been ritual, or it may (also) have been motivated by a wish to move closer to the road to Lechaion. Either way, neither this group nor their contemporaries further north showed any interest in burying their dead near the Bronze Age tumuli. For them, conspicuous funerals were of greater interest than

[162] The exterior height of 78 was recorded, so we know its exact depth: -0.84 + cover slab 0.17 thick + box 0.205 high = total depth of -1.215 m. The top of 80 lay at -1.22 m. The floors of 82 and 128 rested at -1.16 m (82: -0.85 + 0.09 + c. 0.22; 128 (-0.81 + 0.11 + c. 0.24), surely on the ground. The *pyxis* on top of the cover slab of 128 raised its level to -0.70 m, while the stone block that capped pot burial 531 (a *chytra*?) lay at -0.60 m, requiring a mound of more than 56 cm tall to cover it. No further details of 531 are known; it was not included in *Corinth XIII* but added and numbered by Dickey, 1992: A-94 (cf. NB 390, pp. 286–287).

[163] These were not recorded as such, but as a separate deposit, D1. NB 390, p. 304, shows that they were found very close to the head end of 149, at -0.95 m, which given their heights means that they rested at -1.035 and -1.085 m, while the top of 149 was at -1.07. They were therefore in exactly the right place for external offerings for 149 and would imply that the grave was covered with a low mound c. 20–30 cm high.

[164] The pierced bronze discs (X-98) found near 160 at -1.10 m may have been outside offerings for this grave, as for 128 in this group.

a location that bestowed "ancestral" prestige.

The opposite is true of the two remaining Gamma clusters. One of these consisted of four adult sarcophagi (107, 136–138) separated by a stretch of empty space from the previous group, in a line only about 10 m from either of the tumuli and in alignment with the earliest Alpha burial (14) as well as the most westerly Gamma burial (110). Associated with these were three pot burials (135, 139–140), one in a painted krater that dates to the EC phase (135), which suggests an approximate late seventh-century date also for the rest of the group.[165] The adult burials were medium-sized sarcophagi without distinctive features other than relatively deep burial, 20–30 cm below the surface, but the child burials were austere compared to those of their neighbours: no sarcophagi, only pots. The painted krater 135 had a couple of miniature pots placed beside it, above ground and presumably covered with a small mound. The other two were apparently large unpainted pots without any gifts inside or out, placed directly above graves 136–137, probably also above ground.[166]

Only three further east-west burials were later made just west of this line, an adult burial (193) of 570–550 BCE that stood out, by the more luxurious standards of its time, insofar as it contained only a single cup; another plain pot burial with a small bowl of the same period (195); and finally "a rather small child" in a sarcophagus of 550–525 BCE (237), so plain that it might almost have come from the previous century.[167] The shared austerity of all these graves suggests that they may well form a single cluster that started in the late seventh century and lasted until the middle of the sixth. This group attached no importance to the display of wealth in funerals but valued a burial location close to the "ancestral" monuments.

The final set of east-west burials in this period is the most remarkable of all: two adults and a child buried in prized Alpha territory at the foot of the large tumulus. The first of these (67) cannot be dated and is remarkable only for its location immediately behind Alpha graves 47 and 66, the two burials nearest the tumulus. It contained two pins, probably not worn but part of a grave gift,[168] leav-

[165] *Corinth XIII* included Graves 136–138 and nearby pot burials 135, 139–140 among the "classical" burials, but Palmer, 1964: 172, noted that they might be Protocorinthian and be linked to 107. The latter is slightly smaller than 136–138, and fractionally off the east-west axis, but otherwise closely aligned, of the same type, and buried at the same relatively deep level (-1.44 m) as the others (-1.36 to -1.46), so there are no grounds to separate it from the group.

[166] Krater 135 was found at -0.85 m and was 0.252 m tall, to which the thickness of a *poros* slab covering its mouth must be added: total depth at its foot c. -1.15–1.20 m. Depth and size of 139–140 were not recorded, but the pots were found at an early stage of clearing the trench, before any graves were reached (NB 390, p. 240), and thus close to the surface.

[167] As suggested by Palmer, 1964: 207 (but there was no sign of reuse). See NB 391, p. 414, and the drawing on p. 412, which is not accurately rendered in *Corinth XIII*, pl. 107.

[168] Dickey 1992: A-42, notes that the surviving fragments of what the excavator described as "an iron nail" look more like "they come from one or two pins". If two pins had corroded

ing the sex of the deceased in doubt. The second grave was a child sarcophagus (129) with elaborate grave gifts: an adult-sized bronze finger ring, a cup, and, neatly arranged at the foot end, three vessels for scented oil, dating to the EC period (615–590 BCE). Its location was even more exceptional: directly above Alpha grave 47, its floor just an inch above the top of the older burial.[169] This is the only instance of an archaic grave taking over the space of an earlier burial: it was another two centuries before such usurpations became relatively common. The re-occupation of a burial spot only three generations old at the time reveals an extraordinary interest in taking up this prestigious position closest to the tumulus, and indeed suggests an active show of disrespect towards a group that had until recently been dominant in the cemetery but was no longer present.

The next step was to go beyond the limit of old Alpha territory and make a burial still closer to the tumulus. This was Grave 68, a composite sarcophagus, and made of sandstone rather than *poros*, two features which at first sight suggest a date around 720–700 BCE. Its construction and decoration, however, tell a different story. In the early composite sarcophagi the slabs at the short ends projected beyond the long slabs slotted into them, so as to give stability to the loose structure, but in 68 the "carefully hewn" slabs were fitted to form the simple box shape of a monolithic sarcophagus. The interior of this box was lined with stucco, as in a couple of earlier composite sarcophagi, but with a kind of "excellent fine, thin stucco, well-preserved" that is otherwise first attested in some of the most lavish burials of 590–570 BCE. The cover uniquely had a single strap hole, to attach a rope for lowering the lid into place, a feature elsewhere found no earlier than c. 580 BCE, when adult sarcophagi began to have two or three such holes.[170] Grave 68 would hardly have been more than a century ahead of its time in these respects, and we must conclude that it belonged in the late seventh century at the earliest. That it could not be later is shown by an EC krater that was buried just above the cover of the sarcophagus, either as a grave gift or as a separate child burial.[171]

This sarcophagus was one of the largest to date (internal dimensions 1.50 × 0.495 × 0.515 m), and was buried deeper than the great majority of seventh-cen-

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into a single lump, they could not have been worn but must have been attached to a grave gift.

[169] NB 394, pp. 226–227, records the exterior height of 129 as 0.30 m: adding a depth of -1.53 and a cover slab 0.14 m thick gives a total depth of -1.97. The cover of 47 lay at -2.00 m.

[170] Quotations from NB 390, pp. 343–344, with Dickey, 1992: A-42/3. Palmer, 1964: 72, discusses the development of fine stucco and strap holes, and notes the exceptional status of 68.

[171] This krater (catalogued as a stray find, X-136, in *Corinth XIII*) was found at a depth of 1.65 m, and was 26.6 cm tall, putting it 8 cm higher than the cover slab at a depth of 2.00 m. Location above the cover of 68: plan in NB 390, p. 292–293; no precise location was recorded, but the plan is accurate for the location of two pot burials above 68 (see below).

tury graves, with its top at -2.00 m and floor at c. -2.73 m. Such size and depth may have made it easier to construct a composite sarcophagus *in situ* than to lower a complete sarcophagus into place, but that does not explain the use of sandstone. I would suggest that the method of burial was deliberately archaising, a reversion to the oldest form of burial still remembered – but with better masonry and superior stucco. The question is why, and the answer may lie in the precise location of the burial. Grave 68 jumped forward to about 3 m south of the old Alpha burials, whereas 67 and 129 had squeezed in right behind and directly on top of these burials as if there were no other space left. We can explain this by assuming that the large Bronze Age tumulus was indeed very large, with a perimeter that extended some 5 metres beyond the outer edge of the grave circle itself, and a total diameter of c. 20 m. If so, burials before 68 were jostling for space at the foot of the tumulus, but 68 was the first Iron Age burial within the ancient tumulus itself. Burying as close as possible to an ancestral grave is one thing, but joining the ancestors in their own tomb is quite another: one can see why this vast symbolic leap required a special burial in an "ancient" style.[172]

This cluster of Gamma graves thus took the projection of ancestral status to a new level, and started a new trend, as we shall see. The display of wealth was secondary, though not entirely absent. The deceased wore two iron pins "at the shoulders" (NB 390, p. 344) and was therefore evidently a woman dressed in a *peplos*. Since she was buried in a contracted position, her sarcophagus was much longer than it needed to be. It was also very deep and contained only a 3-cm layer of earth, so it may well have included substantial gifts of cloth. The newly invented strap hole must have served to keep the contents and the fine interior stucco of the tomb on display as long as possible. Such holes were always on only one long side, which implies that the cover was first placed upright on its other long edge next to the sarcophagus, then lowered by ropes as if on a hinge. Such a precarious operation was not the most practical way of closing a coffin and suggests that the sarcophagus was open during the funeral and ceremonially closed only when it was already in the ground.

The significance of the burial of this woman in this particular location is very clear from the sequel. Even if we cannot be sure whether the EC krater buried on top of her sarcophagus was a child burial or a grave offering, two other pots that certainly were infant burials (168, 169) were placed in the centre and at the head-end of the cover slab 580–570 BCE.[173] In the same decade a second adult sar-

[172] If the tumulus was as large as this, the SW corner of the walled enclosure would have been only 1–1.5 m from its foot, Alpha Grave 111 3–4 m, Gamma Grave 110 4–5 m.

[173] Details of location given in NB 390, p. 323, confirm that the plan in NB 390, pp. 292–293, is accurate in placing both 168 and 169 on top of, not beside, 68. *Corinth XIII* misrepresents the location; Dickey, 1992: A-75 and fig. 5, corrects the location of 168 but not 169. Both were found at -1.65 m, and although no details of the pots were recorded, a height of c. 35 cm is likely for kraters or *chytrai*, so that they would have rested on the

cophagus (279) with a child sarcophagus at right angles next to it (170) were buried slightly further south still.[174] If Grave 68 was placed within the tumulus, then so were these successors – and indeed the many child and few adult burials that piled in close behind them between 570 and 450 BCE (see below). All the adult burials in this zone in or around the tumulus until c. 500 BCE lay on an east-west axis. The branch of Gamma that arranged the interment of the woman in Grave 68, therefore, literally and figuratively broke new ground by which they staked a dramatic claim to the ancestral status that Alpha had previously monopolised.

The extent of the take-over by Gamma deserves emphasising. Not only was Alpha and Beta territory abandoned, but very few north-south burials were made anywhere in the excavated cemetery during 650–590 BCE. We have already encountered Grave 86 to the south-west of Beta, and the only others were a pair (90–91) buried in 650–615 BCE near the isolated old pit graves 45–46 with adjacent EPC krater burial (s-9) – just south of the latest Gamma burials in the area (88–89), almost as if to block their further expansion. Their position in alignment with the century-old pit graves was surely significant, as was the deposition of an Early Corinthian krater – either a pot burial or cult offering – right next to the pot burial made there a century earlier.[175] It is interesting that this small group emerged and forged a link with some recent "ancestors" just when the main Alpha group disappeared, but it remains a rare exception to the near-complete dominance of Gamma burials.

The total number of Gamma burials that we have assigned to the period 650–590 BCE (LPC, TR, EC) is 39,[176] including 21 adult and 10 child sarcophagi plus 5 certain and 3 probable pot burials. This represents a rate of 0.65 burials p.a., a 55% increase on the average rate for Gamma in 750–650 BCE (0.42 p.a.), with a similar proportion of child deaths (46% as compared to 47.5%).[177] The disappear-

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cover.

[174] Grave 279 was disturbed and its cover smashed; inside it only fragments of an early fifth-century pot were found, but Palmer, 1964: 78, 222, points out that the absence of strap holes pointed to an earlier date. This is confirmed by "Deposit 45", an MC *aryballos* and *hydriskos* which according to NB 390, p. 323–325, were found "beside" 279 (we can calculate that their tops were 32 cm below its cover, but their feet about 25 cm above its floor; the location *above* its cover suggested by the plan in NB 390, pp. 292–293, must be a mistake). Child grave 170 dated to c. 580–570 BCE, lay at exactly the same level as 279 (-1.33 m), so close that it virtually touched the adult burial, suggesting that they were (near-)contemporary.

[175] This EC krater is listed as a sporadic find (X-135) in *Corinth XIII* and not included among pot burials, but its depth of -1.80 m and location next to s-9 (much more shallowly buried, at -1.25: NB 394, pp. 209–210, nos. 108, 110; pp. 289, 293) make it a likely burial.

[176] I.e. 67–68, 71–85, 88–89, 92–93, 95–98, 107, 128–129, 135–140, 531, s-21, plus 2 unnumbered pots near 95 and an unnumbered EC krater on top of 68.

[177] If we were to omit the 3 pot burials that were not certain enough to be accepted as such in *Corinth XIII*, and reassign, say, two or three of the less firmly dated adult burials to the

ance of Alpha and Beta, however, meant that the total size of the group(s) burying in the North Cemetery in this period was still only 75% of what it had been in the previous century[178] – this was not an age of "democratisation" of the North Cemetery, but merely the expansion of one section of the elite at the expense of others.

Apart from the disappearance of Alpha and Beta, little changed in the North Cemetery during the reign of Cypselos ("traditional" date 657–627 BCE) or the early years of Periander (627–587 BCE):[179] burials remained largely uniform and austere and within or close to existing Gamma burial territories. Around 600 BCE, however, we find burials in the eastern parts of the Cemetery becoming more ostentatious, including larger sarcophagi for adults and more elaborate child burials, with odd-shaped sarcophagi and increasing grave gifts, while in the western part of the cemetery burials remained largely austere but began to stake new claims to hereditary status by burying close to and inside the large tumulus. Evidently the previous cohesion of the elite was crumbling, and open competition for status resumed. Later traditions credited Periander with an effort to restrict luxury, and accused him of confiscating the finest clothes and jewellery of the women of Corinth, which was surely a hostile way of describing some of his anti-luxury measures.[180] Developments in the North Cemetery therefore were probably part of a trend towards conspicuous consumption which Periander tried to curb, and amounted to a show of open opposition against his regime – both in competitively displaying wealth and in making new boasts of hereditary privilege.

Old and new oligarchs: burial strategies, c. 590–500 BCE

Funerary trends that began to emerge around 600 BCE accelerated in the Middle Corinthian period (MC, 590–570 BCE), and it is no coincidence that this period also saw the end of the Cypselid dynasty, with the overthrow of Periander's short-lived successor (Psammetichos, 587–584 BCE). Sarcophagi became longer, so that the dead were now laid out with arms and legs fully stretched rather than placed in contracted positions; sarcophagi were often plastered with purely decorative stucco on the inside and sometimes further ornamented; cups, jugs and other pots became a standard part of the grave gifts, and sometimes also deposited in ostentatious quantities outside the tombs, suggesting lavish funeral ceremonies.[181]

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period after 590 BCE, the increase would fall to 30–35%.

[178] In the period c. 720–650 BCE, Alpha, Beta and Gamma together had produced 31 adult and 29 child burials, a rate of 0.86 p.a. (with 48.3% child burials).

[179] These were the – at best approximately correct – dates assigned by the Hellenistic chronographer Apollodoros of Athens, as reconstructed by Felix Jacoby, conveniently summarised along with all other ancient evidence for their dates in Servais, 1969: 30–32.

[180] Aristotle, fr. 611.20 Rose = Heraclides Lembos 20 Dilts. See Hdt. 5.92η2 on confiscation of women's clothes; Ephorus *FGrH* 70 F 178 (Diog. Laert. 1.96) on confiscation of gold jewellery.

[181] Palmer, 1964: 68–73; Dickey, 1992: 29–32, 139–140.

These aspects have been well-studied, but there were also developments in above-ground markers which have barely been noted, and remarkable changes in the spatial distribution of burials which have been entirely overlooked.

Alpha and Beta territory reoccupied

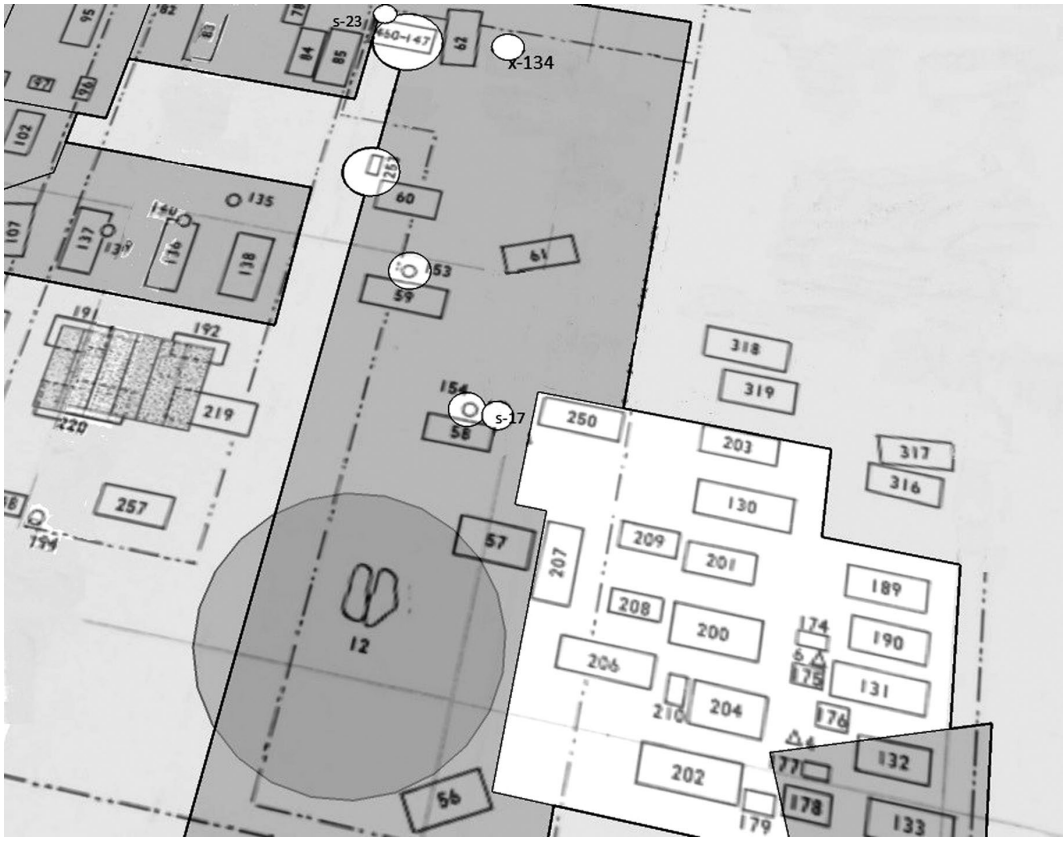

Fig. 14: Beta 590–500 BC. Territory marked on base map from *Corinth XIII.* Size of tumulus hypothetical; later graves deleted from map. Graves 316–319 of uncertain date.

One crucial change I have already hinted at was the return of Alpha and Beta after a 60-year hiatus in both of their territories. The return of Beta to the area near the smaller Bronze Age tumulus was quite spectacular (fig. 14). Immediately east of the last graves dug by Beta in the early seventh century, two adult burials were made in 590–570 BCE. One of these (131) was among the first to lay out the deceased with limbs fully extended, in a sarcophagus that even so was large enough to leave space below the feet. It was decorated with the very fine stucco first encountered in Grave 68, and outdid that grave by having a cover with a bevelled lower rim and not one but two strap holes. Its neighbour (189) had a

cover with strap holes, too, but was otherwise simpler, with the body in contracted position in a smaller, unstuccoed sarcophagus. Around Grave 131 lay three child sarcophagi (174–176), of which one was stuccoed, a rarity among child burials at this stage, and contained 4 small Middle Corinthian pots (174), while 6 pots were placed outside another grave of the same date (176).[182] This was a lavish set of burials by the standards of the time, and the shallow depth at which several of the burials were found suggests that they were covered by at least a small mound – perhaps even a collective mound for the group.[183]

In the same period, an infant was buried in an amphora (154) next to the old pit Grave 58; a *chytra* (s-17), buried next to it at the same level, was probably another child burial of similar date. Again, both were found slightly above ground level, implying a mound, perhaps one that had always marked Grave 58.[184] A third child was buried in a krater (153) between composite sarcophagi 59 and 60. Near Grave 62, the composite sarcophagus that lay at the end of the Beta line – since the even more easterly burials 150–152 had recently been surrounded by Gamma graves, as noted above – another spectacular burial (147) was made towards 570 BCE, containing the second-largest quantity of pots of any grave in the North Cemetery: 4 cups, 3 *oinochoai* and an impressive 11 *aryballoi* with scented oil. The sarcophagus was later reused and damaged, but with so many grave gifts to fit into a space of only c. 1.25 × 0.55 m, its original occupant was probably a child.[185]

In the period 590–570 BCE, then, a new cluster of north-south burials began to emerge at the foot of Beta's Bronze Age tumulus, and a series of child burials was made near every one of the Beta graves to the east, more than a century old at the time. The decision to bury in these locations, rather than anywhere in the wide open space to the south, was surely symbolically significant. Either the descendants of the old burying group were returning to their territory, or a new group claimed these graves as those of their imagined ancestors.

In the next generation, 570–550 BCE, a woman wearing a *peplos* with four pins was buried in a sarcophagus with the finest stucco (190), squeezed in between 131 and 189, and 5 adult and 3 child burials were placed in a row a step closer to the old Beta graves and the Bronze Age tumulus. They included both extended

[182] These pots, a "nest" of 5 skyphoi and an *oinochoe*, were published as "Deposit 4", but they were located in the small space between 176 and 177, and their depth (-1.30 m plus 9.4 cm for the height of the *oinochoe*) was at about the same level as the floor of 176 (c. -1.37 m).

[183] The top of 176 lay at -1.00 m, and that of 174 at -1.10, but without cover, so that the original level would have been c. -1.00 m; 175 and 189 lay at -1.15 m. With a ground level of -1.20/1.25 m here implied by the top of a surface marker slab nearby at -1.10 m (NB 395, p. 384), the whole group except 131 (-1.40m) lay partly above ground.

[184] Level of -1.10 m (NB 394, pp. 328, 335: called "Spitze amphora" and "Helladic pithos").

[185] The number of *aryballoi* in itself suggest a child burial: Dickey, 1992: 74 n. 32.

and contracted burials, all but one in unstuccoed sarcophagi, and most with just 2 or 3 pots, including some imported Attic cups.[186] At the eastern limit of Beta territory, another *chytra* (s-23) was buried next to the lavish Grave 147, and a krater just south of Grave 62.[187] A total of 20 burials in a span of 40 years indicates a group four times as large as the original Beta buriers (0.5 p.a. as opposed to 0.13 p.a.), and one which, judging by the relative austerity and closeness to the tumulus of its second-generation burials, emphasised claims of lineage more than wealth.

What happened to this group in the remainder of the sixth century is hard to tell, since two sets of four graves adjoining the cluster to north (206–209) and east (316–319) were robbed and can no longer be dated. One adult (250) and one child burial (253), near Graves 58 and 60, respectively, were made in 525–500 BCE, and a cup and *oinochoe* (D-6) from the same period may represent the grave gifts of an infant buried in the soil without either sarcophagus or pot. Other datable graves lay further east and started c. 480 BCE. Since the robbed sarcophagi were all quite large and stuccoed, they may well belong to the later sixth century and fill the gap in the record. If Grave 207 did belong to this period, it was the sole exception to an otherwise uniform practice of north-south oriented burials in this area.[188] A maximum of ten or eleven burials from 550–500 BCE represents a rate of about 0.20–0.22 p.a., less than half the rate in the previous 40 years, so that the Beta group was evidently shrinking or moving its burials elsewhere.[189] The group did not, however, lose status: the sole adult burial that escaped robbing (250) was "one of the richest graves in the cemetery", probably the resting place of a woman, given the 100 or more glass beads that were evidently part of a necklace or headdress as well as the gold, silver and bronze personal ornaments. Its close neighbour (295), c. 480 BCE, had no personal ornaments but was "one of the wealthiest fifth-century graves" in terms of pottery gifts, including six Attic cups and six Attic *lekythoi*.[190]

The renewed display of wealth at this time was combined with a show of ancestral status insofar as all the burials were within 10 m of the tumulus while the far end of the old Beta territory was left entirely unused between 550 and 480

[186] From east to west, these are Graves 203, 130, 201 (fine stucco, probably an older child), 200, 204 (robbed), 210 (a child; robbed), 202, and 179 (a child; robbed).

[187] *Corinth XIII* published this LC krater as a sporadic find (X-134) "east of grave 350" (dating to 450–425 BCE); NB 394, pp. 330–333, 337, shows that it was found c. 0.75 m south of Grave 62.

[188] Grave 402 (beside 58) was also oriented broadly east-west, but although *Corinth XIII* suggested that it was originally a late sixth-century burial, it had been broken and repaired before re-use in the late fifth century and its orientation thus reflects a later period.

[189] The overall rate for Beta in 590–500 BCE, with up to 16 adult and 15 child burials was at most 0.34 p.a. The proportion of adult:child burials fluctuated greatly over time (2:7 in 590–570; 6:5 in 570–550; 8:3 in 550–500 BCE), but the overall proportion of 16:15 is standard for groups in the North Cemetery (48.4% children).

[190] Quotations from the catalogue entries in *Corinth XIII*.

BCE. Indeed, one of the robbed clusters, consisting of two adults (206–207) and two children buried in sarcophagi far larger than necessary for their tiny size (208–209),[191] was closer to the tumulus than any grave since the mid-eighth century, and at such a high level that the child sarcophagi would have been entirely above ground,[192] unless they were covered by a mound. A tumulus at least half a metre high and 4 m in diameter must have been heaped up for them, abutting its Bronze Age predecessor. Alternatively, perhaps the latter was larger than we have assumed so far, in which case the earliest Iron Age burials (55–58, s-2) had been placed inside it, and the new burials were the first to join the "ancestral" tomb for nearly two centuries. Further signs of special status may be the location of Grave 206 beside the stone slab that probably served as an offering place,[193] and the spearhead deposited in that grave, left behind by the robbers, which was the first weapon in any burial in the North Cemetery to date.

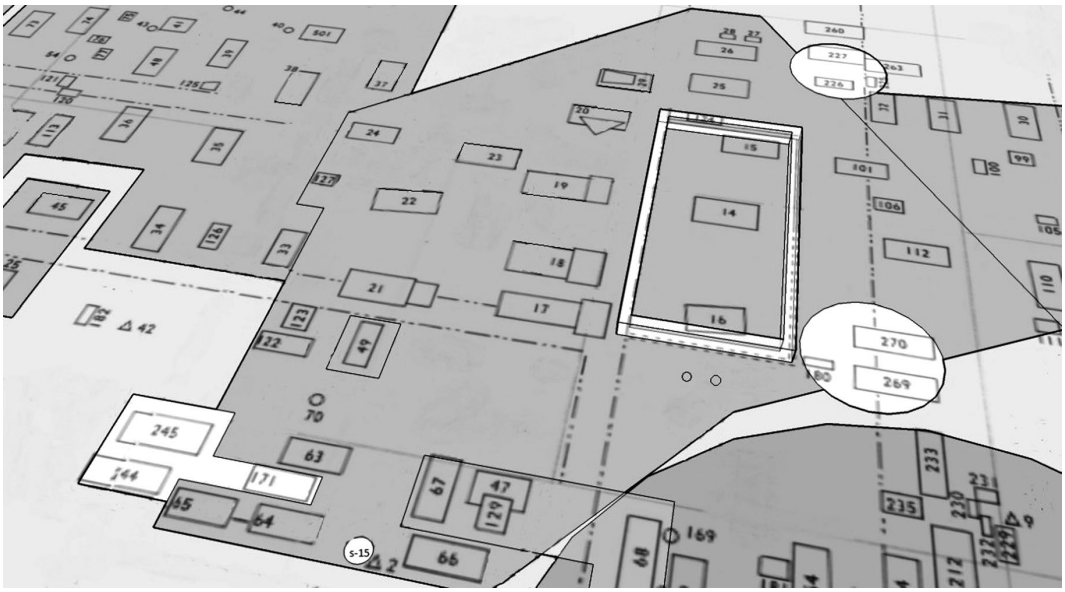

Fig. 15: Alpha 590–500 BC. Territory marked on base map from *Corinth XIII.* Tumulus drawn at maximal size; later graves, apart from 260 and 263, deleted from map.

[191] Both sarcophagi were of unusual interior lengths (0.895 and 0.96 m) between the normal adult and child ranges, yet the larger of the two held a "very small child" judging by the "very small leg bones preserved" (NB 394, p. 355).

[192] The floors of 208–209 rested at -1.285 and -1.25 m, the approximate ground level indicated by the adjacent offering slab. The tops of 206–207 rose 25 cm and 45 cm above this.

[193] For the location of the slab directly beside Grave 206, see NB 394, pp. 330–331.

By comparison, the resumption of burial in Alpha territory was inconspicuous (fig. 15). In the area of the latest Alpha burials made before c. 650 BCE at the foot of the tumulus, a rather small sarcophagus of c. 570–550 BCE, presumably with a contracted body (171), was squeezed in between Graves 63 and 64–65. Just behind it to the north two larger sarcophagi were buried side-by-side, probably c. 550–525 BCE (244–245). A large plain pot (s-15) placed between Graves 64 and 66 was apparently accompanied by two external grave gifts dating to 590–570 BCE and may have been the earliest burial in this group, which probably covered two generations but does not seem large enough to represent even a single complete household over that period.[194] No other north-south burials were made in this part of the cemetery, or anywhere north of the tumulus and enclosure, until c. 425 BCE.

In the small space between the walled enclosure and the large tumulus, a child was buried in a north-south oriented sarcophagus (180), so narrow that it could only have held an infant, yet unusually long so as to leave plenty of room for the grave gift of six pots (0.83 × 0.22 m).[195] Nearby was a not precisely datable adult burial without grave gifts (270), but no other north-south burials until the end of the sixth century (264). After that, the last of the remaining space between the tumulus and the seventh-century Alpha graves was finally occupied by eight further north-south burials between 500 and 425 BCE.[196] Again there were not enough sixth-century burials for even a single household.

The final cluster contiguous with Alpha territory lay just east of the walled enclosure, where no burials had been made since c. 700 BCE. Two unstuccoed sarcophagi with minimal grave gifts were buried here 570–550 BCE: an infant (225) at right angles to a medium-sized north-south burial, probably with an adult in contracted position (226). The infant burial was wholly, the other partly, above

[194] Dickey, 1992: A-133, lists s-15, a "large undecorated" vessel (missing), omitted from *Corinth XIII*, which, however, did include "Deposit 2", an MC *skyphos* and *oinochoe*: NB 394, p. 281, shows that all three were found in the west wall of the trench, at the same depth (-1.80 m), within the same grid square (50 cm wide). This was surely a pot burial with outside gifts.

[195] *Corinth XIII* published one of the 6 pots separately as X-157bis, an "intrusive" fourth-century bolsal, claiming that it was "found at a level above the other vases" (Palmer, 1964: 194). The notebook records and sketch plan, however, have all six pots together at the foot of the grave (NB 390, pp. 331–332; NB 392, pp. 34–35); Dickey, 1992: A-79, suggests that the supposed bolsal is in fact a "small, sloppily made sixth-century *kotyle*". The fact that the cover of 180 was missing may have inspired the idea of intrusive material.

[196] Of 4 adults (269, 283, 302, 369) and 4 children (303, 322, 336, 344). The suggestion in *Corinth XIII* that 269 was an older burial that was disturbed in the early fifth century is not well-founded: the fine stucco that is the main evidence for an early date is also found in some later graves (incl. 264), and the fact that the cover was still "cemented" to the sarcophagus with stucco (NB 391, p. 386) suggests that it was not disturbed.

ground level, and presumably both were covered by a single mound.[197] Two adult burials – one undatable (227), the other a young woman buried 490–480 BCE (263) – were made very close to the older pair at the same high level, and thus surely within the same mound. A final adult was interred in the early fifth century slightly further east and at a level well below ground, so probably outside the mound (260). Once again the number of sixth-century burials was less than one would expect even a single household to produce. After 480 BCE, there was no further expansion into the open space to the east.

The locations of these north-south burials suggest a conscious affiliation with the old Alpha group, and one explanation for the very limited number of graves in each location might be that a small group spread itself thinly to reassert its presence in all corners of Alpha territory. After the burial of two adults (171, 226) and three children (180, 225, s-15) in 570–550 BCE, only adult burials are attested until c. 500 BCE, between three and five over a span of up to 50 years. It looks like the Alpha group was dying out.

If the Alpha and Beta territories had been the burial grounds of two Bacchiad families from 750–650 BCE, as I have suggested, then the resumption of burial in these territories shortly after the fall of the Cypselid dynasty, after a hiatus of about 60 years, strongly suggests that the buriers were Bacchiad descendants returning from exile, or merely returning to power. The tenuous presence of Alpha suggests that few members of this once-dominant group remained, while the formerly small Beta group returned in greater numbers and perhaps with greater wealth than before. We need not assume that either group consisted purely of lineal descendants of the old Bacchiad families, but their reoccupation of the whole of each of the old Alpha and Beta territories does imply a degree of continuity and a conscious effort to portray themselves as the heirs of the old oligarchic regime.

Gamma's new burial strategies and territories

Gamma burials in the large tumulus continued, after Grave 68 had set the precedent (fig. 16). We have already noted the four children and one adult buried on top of or next to 68, and between 570 and 550 BCE another small child (228), an older child (234)[198] and a 60-year-old woman (212) were buried several metres

[197] The top of 225 lay at -0.70 m, so with a total height of 6 + 17 + c. 5 cm its floor rested at c. -0.98 m, in an area where ground level was c. -0.95/1.00 m. Graves 226–227 were at -0.80 m.

[198] Grave 234 was disturbed and empty; it was 1.375 m long, which given a practice of extended burial by this time (as in 212, also of c. 550 BCE: *Corinth XIII*, pl. 106) this must mean a child's sarcophagus. Palmer, 1964: 207, left the grave undated but noted that a *skyphos* and *oinochoe* of c. 550 BCE, "Deposit 3", might be outside offerings for the burial. This seems to me almost certain, since they were found immediately next to the grave (NB 391, p. 547) and rested at the same level as the cover: the latter at -1.68 (depth of -1.55 m, and 0.13 m thick), the offerings at -1.64 (depth of -1.50, *oinochoe* 0.143 m tall).

further along the perimeter of the tumulus. Of these earliest nine burials inside the tumulus, six were children, two of the three adults were certainly women, and nothing precludes the third adult from having been a woman, too. Another two or three adults and four to six children joined them in 550–500 BCE.[199] The gender of the adults in these later graves is not clear, but the great preponderance of child graves continued, and one way of explaining the imbalance would be to posit that the tumulus became a burial place for women and children while the men of their family or families were buried elsewhere. Perhaps the women and children were felt to need the protection of the ancestors more, or else the claim to lineage formulated by Gamma around 600 BCE derived from the female line, as it had done for some Bacchiad families, and for Cypselos.[200]

Fig. 16: Gamma 590–500 BC – tumulus area. Territory marked on base map from *Corinth XIII.* Tumulus drawn at maximal size; most but not all later graves deleted from map.

[199] Child sarcophagi 181 and 256 are hard to date but may even be earlier than 550 BCE; adult graves 254 and 255 in the same line were added c. 525–500 BCE, and 265 in c. 500–475 BCE. Among the earliest child graves behind this line were 231 and 235, c. 550–525 BCE. A number of nearby graves were robbed and thus undatable, of which one adult (233) and two child graves (229–230), might also belong in the sixth century (but in the same cluster, 232 is dated by outside grave gifts, separately published as "Deposit 9", to c. 475–450 BCE, and nearby 334 to c. 450 BCE). The large cluster of 14 child graves slightly further south (266, 271, 284–293, 298–299) apparently dates in its entirety to 500–450 BCE.

[200] Cypselos' mother Labda was said to be the daughter of a Bacchiad: Hdt. 5.92β.

Very few burials were made elsewhere in established Gamma territory. We have already noted the two children (148, 160) and a mother-and-child double burial (149) made in 590–570 BCE by the group burying next to Beta in the south-east corner of the cemetery.[201] In addition, two east-west burials, an infant (182) and an adult, probably female (162), were made around 575–550 BCE in the relatively little-used space to the north of the tumulus, aligned with the old Gamma pit graves 34 and 35. That the alignment was deliberate is suggested by an earlier deposit (D-42) close to 182: an EC aryballos had been buried here together with four bronze rings and a bronze disc, only 2–3 m west of Gamma burials 33–34 and 126 (NB 394, pp. 255, 208–209 nos. 63, 66). Similar ensembles featured as outside offerings for Gamma child graves 128 and 129, but this deposit was not attached to a burial, so was presumably part of a funeral cult for the older graves, in particular for child grave 126. If so, the location of Grave 182 and 162 was surely chosen for its connection with the original Gamma territory.

The total of 6–7 adult and 14–16 child burials in Gamma territory from 590–500 BCE amounts to a rate of 0.22–0.26 p.a., lower than ever before and only 35–40% of what it had been in 650–590 BCE, while the proportion of children jumped from a steady 46–48% to a startling 70%. The most likely explanation for the latter disproportion is that many of the adults of this group, and perhaps especially the men, were buried elsewhere. As it happens, we have a strong candidate for the missing adults, in a cluster due east of the large tumulus, but about 20–25 m away from it, leaving a gap of 5–10 m after the most easterly seventh-century Gamma burials (fig. 17). Seven adult sarcophagi were buried here 575–525 BCE (198–199, 211, 213–215, 218), all east-west oriented, with only one child burial (246), squeezed in among the adults at right angles to them, towards the end of that period.[202] Grave gifts in this group were minimal, but much work was made of the sarcophagi, which were often large and finely stuccoed, while one, uniquely, was painted with red and yellow patterns on the inside of the walls and cover (218).[203]

[201] 148: the drawing in NB 390, p. 291 (cf. *Corinth XIII,* pl. 103) enables us to calculate (by doubling the measurement from crown of head to perineum) that the body was c. 1.26 m tall and thus a child. 149 was 1.025 m long, and at least the smaller of the two bodies in it must have been a child. 160 was 1.17 long but nearly a quarter of the length was taken up by offerings above the corpse's head (*Corinth XIII,* pl. 104).

[202] Grave 246 was a medium-sized sarcophagus, but with a skeleton only c. 1.10 m long, described by the excavator as "a small girl" (NB 391, pp. 460–461). Graves 213–215 were set in a row, and probably similar in date, but two were re-used and only 213 can be dated to c. 550 BCE.

[203] Typical grave gift of the group was a single Attic cup: 198–199, 211, 246; fine stucco was used on these four and 213, 215, 218. The excavator also commented on the "careful finish" of sarcophagus 213, which had an unusual "rounded and cemented edge" on the underside of the cover (NB 391, p. 535).

Of these seven burials, two were certainly and three very probably men; the other two were almost certainly women.[204]

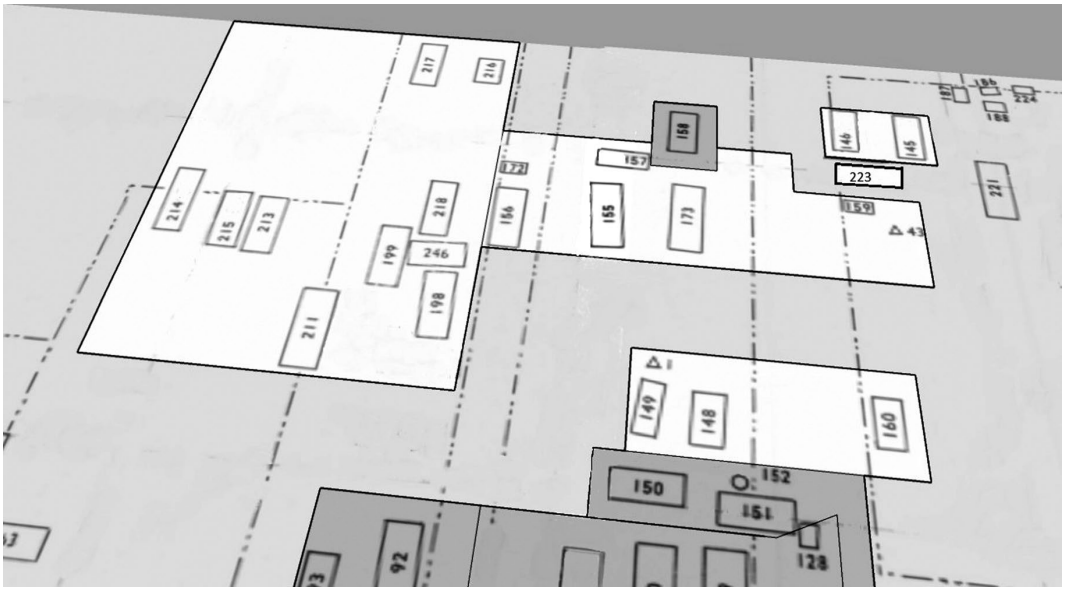

Fig. 17: Gamma 590–500 BC – roadside. Territory marked on base map from *Corinth XIII.* Later graves deleted from map.

A few older adult burials existed here, too, since a few metres further east, in an extension of the trench, the excavators found another pair of sarcophagi (216–217) facing east-west, both of which were probably robbed. The interior length of the one intact sarcophagus (1.48 m) suggests a contracted adult burial, yet both apparently showed traces of stucco, a combination of features that hints at an early sixth-century date.[205] Somewhat further south lay the isolated early seventh-century east-west burial with a sandstone cover mentioned previously (158), and a little south of that another pair of east-west burials (145–146) that had been re-

[204] Sex and age of 199 and 218 were determined from skeletal evidence: both male, aged c. 39 and 62 respectively. The well-preserved skeleton in 211 almost filled the full length of a sarcophagus with an interior length of 1.94 m (*Corinth XIII*, pl. 106), and since the sarcophagi in this group were generally tailored to the stature of the deceased, the re-used 214 and 215, with interior lengths of 2.005 and 1.74 m, are likely to have been made for men. Grave 213 was the shortest at 1.64 m and the 4 pins worn by the dead confirm that it was a woman's burial. Sarcophagus 198, however, was not tailored to the body within, which was a good deal shorter than 1.74 m (*Corinth XIII*, p. 106) and probably female.

[205] The width of this sarcophagus (217), 0.585 m, also suggests an adult burial; 216 was 0.57 m wide but "cut in two" with the preserved part 0.86 m long. NB 391, 551-2, reports that 216 "apparently had been stucco lined", and 217 "probably once had been stucco lined".

used in the Roman period but were of a size suitable for contracted adult burials and were not decorated with stucco. They were buried so shallowly that they would have been well above ground unless covered by a mound of earth, as in the case of several other sixth-century adult burials but not encountered among earlier adult graves, so an early sixth-century date seems likely.[206] Where the trenches extended further east, they revealed no other burials, so these graves were apparently at the edge of the cemetery, and there will not have been many more left unexcavated, except perhaps east of Graves 213–215, which were at the far end of a rather short trench.

A total of eleven adults and one child buried in this area,[207] added to the burials in established Gamma territory gives a total of 17–18 adults and 15–17 children over the period 590–500 BCE (0.34–0.39 p.a.), and brings the proportion of child burials down from an unfeasible 70% to the level attested in other periods, 45.5–50%. I suggest that this is no coincidence, but that one branch of Gamma divided its burials over two complementary areas: most adults, primarily men, at the eastern end of the cemetery, near the road to Lechaion; most children and a few adults, primarily women, in or near the "ancestral" Bronze Age tumulus.

A reason for this gender- and age-based split may have been the development of another established branch of Gamma, which, as we have seen, showed more interest in the display of wealth than in a show of lineage, and expanded eastward, away from the tumuli. Just a few metres east of the relatively lavish child and mother-and-child burials that had crossed the line of Beta graves, and near the outlying older grave with the sandstone cover, a final group of east-west buriers emerged briefly but spectacularly in 590–560 BCE. This consisted of three adult burials, and three child burials at right angles to them, all involving remarkable quantities of grave gifts. The three adults, two women (155–156) and one man (173), were laid out in fully extended position; the woman in 156 was probably the first to be buried in this fashion.[208] Their sarcophagi were accordingly large, and indeed 173 was the largest in the cemetery (2.27 × 0.90 m; Palmer 1964, 191). All three, and the largest of the child sarcophagi (157), were decorated with the finest quality stucco.[209] The number and quality of grave gifts appears to have

[206] As suggested by Palmer (1964: 175). If the ground level here was -1.25 m, Grave 145 (at -0.55) would have been entirely above ground, and 146 (at -0.70) only 15 cm in the ground.

[207] An adult north-south burial (249) was added to the 198–199 cluster c. 525 BCE, another east-west adult burial (296; male, aged c. 60) c. 475 BCE, and a child burial in a bronze bowl (236) perhaps around the same time. A north-south adult burial (223, contracted, stuccoed) was made next to 145–146, presumably before c. 550 BCE.

[208] The presence of an EC *aryballos* as well as an MC cup in this grave suggests a date very soon after 590 BCE; the pins worn at the shoulders in 155 and 156 indicate female burials; the absence of pins and large size of 173 suggest a male.

[209] Grave 157 was re-used in Roman times, but its interior length of 1.17 m implies that it originally held a child, given the practice of extended burial of adults in this group.

escalated: nine pots inside the early 156; 9 pots inside and four pots outside the early child burial 159, which also included a bone fibula and a unique silver pin with glass bead;[210] a bronze bowl as well as five pots inside and four pots outside 155; another bronze bowl along with fourteen small pots on and around the cover of child burial 172; and an array of 24 finest-quality pots remaining outside 157 even after whatever was inside the grave had been replaced by a Roman burial. The adult male burial included a restrained four pots.

This group surely represents just a single generation of a single household – the sequence is compatible with one man, his first wife, second wife and three of their children – but its display of wealth must have made a striking impact. The rare outside offerings in particular suggest an exceptionally lavish funerary ritual.[211] We may imagine that other Gamma buriers felt under pressure to compete while also maintaining their claims to noble lineage, and solved the problem by dividing their burials between the tumulus and the new arena at the eastern border of the cemetery, where they started burying many of their adults in fine sarcophagi immediately next to their ostentatious fellow-east-west buriers. If we add the latter cluster to the Gamma burials counted so far, the total of 20–21 adults and 18–20 children and infants produces a burial rate of 0.42–0.46 p.a., with 46–50% children, much the same as the numbers for Gamma in 750–650 BCE but lower than in 650–590 BCE. Unexcavated burials in the north-east sector may have made up the difference, but we have no reason to assume that the Gamma group became any larger than it had been.

New contenders and new monuments

If there was any broadening of the elite after 590 BCE, it took the form of three new clusters of north-south buriers, two far away from old Alpha and Beta territory, the third close by but so different in nature that it was surely a different kind of group.

The most remote cluster, about 50 m south of the central area discussed so far, emerged in the area where an isolated infant burial had been made in the early eighth century (s-2/S-7) and where in the classical period many were buried, next to an entrance to the cemetery from the road to Lechaion (fig. 18). The excavations covered only a narrow strip here, and we may be missing an important part of the picture, but between 750 and 550 BCE the only graves attested here were two pot burials mentioned earlier (196–197). Few details of these were reported, but 196 was not only irregularly shaped but exceptionally large, with a diameter of 1.685 m,[212] which means that it was a storage *pithos*, rather than the usual much

[210] For the scattered items reconstructed as a pin with a silver pin head, see Dickey, 1992: A-72. The outside offerings were published separately as Deposit D-43.

[211] Palmer, 1964: 85 n. 115, 178. Only 172 and 128 had offerings on the lid of the sarcophagus.

[212] NB 389, p. 32; noted by Dickey, 1992: A-84, correcting Palmer, 1964: 198 (0.685 m).

smaller krater, amphora or *chytra*. This was a common form of burial in neighbouring Argos, but unique in the North Cemetery and Corinth at large.[213] The next burials in the area were a woman of c. 35 and a child, in 550–525 BCE (238–239), and in 525–500 BCE a man of c. 36 (251) and an infant (258) in the smallest sarcophagus in the cemetery – only 0.36 × 0.18 m, and 0.16 m deep, yet with 5 small pots crammed in alongside the baby. All other burials anywhere in the vicinity are dated after 500 BCE, so these burials and perhaps others to the unexcavated west of the trench were pioneers in this area.

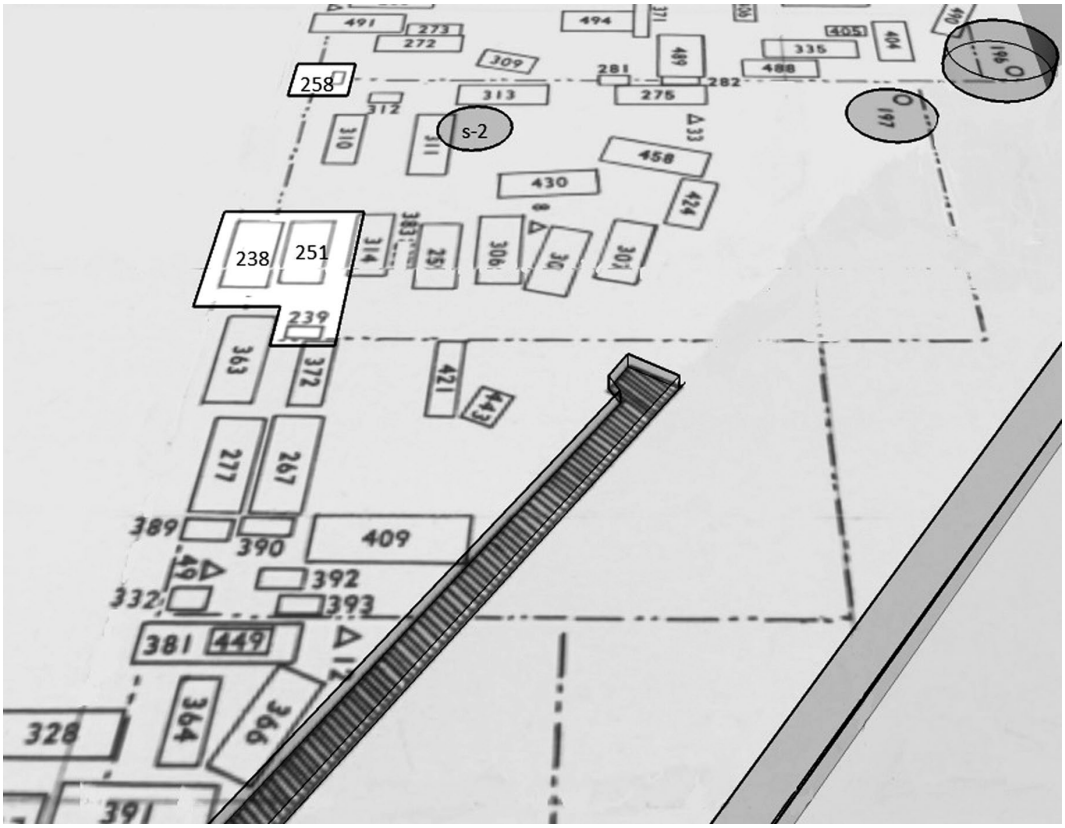

Fig. 18: New burials at entrance from Lechaion road, 590–500 BC. Graves highlighted on base map from *Corinth XIII.* Later graves and road walls included; extension of south-eastern wall hypothetical.

[213] See Dickey, 1992: 39–40, noting a possible example from Aghioi Theodoroi in the wider Corinthia, but surprisingly not mentioning Grave 196. Cf. Palmer, 1964: 73, for "urn" burials.

The sarcophagi and their grave gifts were modest by the standards of their time, but they may have been marked by mounds. As ever, we can only infer this by comparing the depth at which objects were found with the estimated ancient ground level, which in this part of the cemetery is indicated by the road to Lechaion that formed its boundary in the south-east. In the small excavated section, most of this road was flanked by walls, of which the one bordering the cemetery rested at -1.40 m and reached up to -0.90 m, while 4 m to the east the wall on the other side of the road rested at -1.66 m and reached only -1.20 m below the modern surface.[214] Since the top of the east wall lay much lower and did not serve to fence off anything – nothing was found on the other side, except a "sunken area" – this was surely a retaining wall for the road to prevent its surface from sloping and sliding down into that dip in the landscape. The road surface would thus have been at or slightly below the top of the east wall, at c. -1.25 m, and the west wall would have formed a low border, about 35 cm high, around part of the cemetery.[215] The unique early *pithos* burial (196) was found only 90 cm below the modern surface, as far above the level of the ancient road as the top of the later wall, and thus must have been covered by at least a low mound.

The level of the other early pot burials was not recorded, but directly above a nearby child sarcophagus (281) of c. 475 BCE, buried well below ground (-1.46 m), a *lekanis* and a salt-cellar of the same date were found at -0.30 m.[216] It seems reasonable to infer that these were offerings placed on top of a mound almost a metre high, heaped over the tiny grave. If this modest burial was so conspicuously marked the same may have been true of its neighbours, which would then have been highly visible from the road.

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[214] NB 390, p. 237; Palmer, 1964: 66 n. 4, wrongly gave both walls the same measurements.

[215] Most finds in and around the road are compatible with this conclusion. Inside the west wall, Deposit 12 (a set of objects from c. 450 BCE) at -1.35 m (NB 390, p. 197) would have been buried just below ground; a krater of which only the base remained with its top 24 cm below the top of the wall (NB 389, p. 152) would have stood on the ground. In the road itself, an inscribed archaic sherd [X-141] and a floral decoration [X-119] were found at -1.32 (NB 390, pp. 198, 215), trodden a few centimetres into the surface (an archaic horse figurine [X-109] lay deeper, at -1.65, while no depth was recorded for a miniature *skyphos* [X-158]). Only a number of coins, and a tiny terracotta head (X-106) at only 11 cm below the top of the west wall (NB 389, p. 152; i.e. at -1.01 m, not -1.10 as *Corinth XIII* has it), would have been above the ancient surface. A fifth-century coin (X-1) found 0.65 m above the top of the east wall shows that not all objects were in their original location.

[216] Palmer, 1964: 223, 324 (X-218), 325 (X-251), said that they were found "just west" of 281, but NB 389, p. 89 (cf. pp. 2–3, 8–9), indicates a position directly above 281.

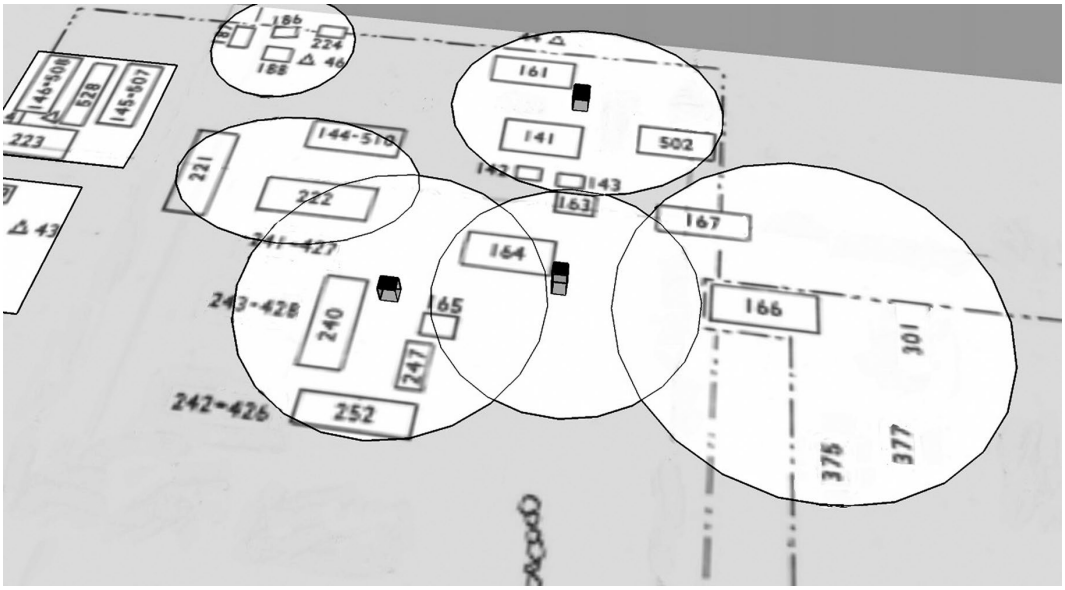

Fig. 19: New cluster at eastern boundary, 590–500 BC. Territory marked on base map from *Corinth XIII.* Surface markers added; some relevant later burials indicated by numbers without outlines, but other later graves deleted. The shape and size of the overlapping burial mounds is hypothetical. (Where graves have double numbers, such as 144-510, the higher number is that of a later burial that reused the archaic sarcophagus.)

Between 30 and 40 m further north along the edge of the cemetery, a second cluster of north-south burials emerged after 590 BCE (fig. 19). One surface marker here, beside Grave 144, once again implies an ancient ground level around -1.20/1.25 m,[217] but three others in the vicinity stood at a much higher level. Precise details were recorded for only one of the three, a stone cube (0.33 × 0.30 × 0.30 m) near Grave 240 which was found only 10 cm below the surface and implies an ancient ground level of -0.30 to -0.35 m, nearly a metre higher than it was only 4 m to the east at the marker for Grave 144.[218] The other two markers, a large hexagonal block above Grave 141 and a slim round column above Grave 164, also about 4 m distant from Grave 144, to the south and south-west respectively, feature in an excavation photo (fig. 20) which shows that the top of the little column was no more than 15–20 cm below the surface, and the ancient surface level here

[217] This marker (NB 395, p. 458–459) was said to lie at -1.15, but also to lie 0.25 above the grave which was at -1.35 (pp. 523–525); the marker was 17 cm high, so may have been only c. 10 cm above ground level, which was thus at -1.20 or -1.25 m.

[218] NB 395, p. 499: 0.10 m below surface and 0.30 high, but also said to have "stood 0.60 above" Grave 240, the depth of which was given as -0.95 m. See also photos BW 8981, 8987.

-0.45 to -0.50 m.[219] The hexagonal block evidently stood at a similar, perhaps higher, level. The much higher elevation of these markers than the marker of Grave 144 and the nearby road to Lechaion must mean that Graves 141, 164 and 240 were covered by quite high grave mounds.

Fig. 20: Excavation photo of markers with Graves 141 and 164. In the foreground, a hexagonal surface marker above Grave 141 (excavation number CCCCLVIII); at the top of the picture in the centre, a columnar surface marker above Grave 164 (still unopened; cover 1.66 m long); at top left, Grave 167, sarcophagus found already opened. (ASCSA, Corinth archive BW 8986)

Three child graves between 141 and 164 lay at depths of only -0.65 m (142-3) and -0.70 (163), and were evidently covered by one or both of the mounds over the adult graves. Moreover, 2 m south of the column marker above 164 lay an

[219] Elevation and height of the marker above 164 can be measured with reasonable precision by inference from recorded length of the cover slab of grave immediately below: the marker will have been c. 40 cm tall, with its top c. 90–95 cm above the grave (found at -1.10 m); a *lekanis* of c. 450 BCE (X-221) was found near the marker at -0.50 m (NB 395, p. 443). *Corinth XIII*, pl. 16, shows the hexagonal marker but the column is cropped from the picture. The marker beside 164 shown in the trench plan (NB 395, p. 458–459) was curiously drawn as if lying flat, like the marker beside 144, and is accordingly described as "a small slab" by Dickey (1992: 116, A-74). The photo leaves no doubt that it stood upright when first excavated. Yet another marker (lying flat) appears in the trench plan above Grave 243, but this was not otherwise recorded or illustrated, so far as I can see.

adult-sized sarcophagus (166) at a depth of 0.45 m, which implies a ground level at least slightly higher than it was at the marker; even its floor rested above ground, at approximately -1.08 m. Next to it was a sarcophagus (167) about which nothing was recorded except that the excavators found it already opened, but which can fortunately be seen in the same photo as the column marker (fig. 20), at an elevation similar to or higher than the foot of that marker. A couple of metres to the south and west of 166–167 lay three cist burials of later date which are relevant because they imply that by the early fifth century the surface level here, too, was already above -0.70 m although there were not yet any burials.[220] Much of the area was thus covered by sizable mounds that must have been contiguous or nearly so.

The earliest datable burials in this sector were Middle Corinthian (590–570 BCE): a woman wearing a *peplos* with four pins (141), the two infants nearby (142–143), and two more children slightly further away (165, 186). The latter two were again above ground level, and 186 in particular is likely to have been covered with a substantial mound, since over the next 20 years or so (570–550 BCE) another three child sarcophagi (187–188, 224) and a couple of separate offerings (D-46) were buried very close to it, at still higher levels (up to -0.63 m), and thus presumably within a mound already heaped up. During 570–550 BCE, three adults (161, 164, 502)[221] and a child (163) were also buried around the original female burial. All these burials were still in contracted position, in small sarcophagi that were with one exception (164) unstuccoed, but one of the children (142) had a unique rounded sarcophagus, and most had numerous pots as grave gifts, two including a seashell, perhaps the child's toy (165, 224). The first woman not only wore a luxurious *peplos* but was accompanied by 6 vases, while a second woman (161), although wearing an ordinary *peplos* with two pins and having only one cup and an *oinochoe* beside her, was endowed with an extraordinary range of outside offerings of the finest Corinthian pottery, a collection which uniquely included pots decades older than the burial, and even one Early Corinthian *arybal-los*.[222]

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[220] Graves 301 (-0.70 m), 375 (-0.75), 377 (-1.15); unlike sarcophagi, which could be placed (partly) above ground and then covered with a mound, these rubble-lined cists had to be dug into the ground, so that the surface was above -0.70 when 301 was dug 470–460 BCE.

[221] Grave 502 was a cist without grave goods and therefore difficult to date; Palmer 1964: 290–291, treated it as "Roman" on account of the adjacent Roman burials 515–516, but the contracted position of the body contradicts this (since Roman-era buriers made the effort to cut holes even in small sarcophagi to enable extended burial) and points to a date pre-550 BCE.

[222] D 44-f. These 11 pots (plus some fragments of bronze) were separately published as "Deposit 44", but were found immediately east of 161, and the objects rested at the same level as, or slightly higher than, the floor of that sarcophagus, which was at c. 1.68 m whereas most of the pots were found at -1.60 m and were 4–10 cm tall.

Apart from the one cist burial without grave gifts (502), these graves were thus quite rich, and in most or all cases prominently marked. The cluster continued to expand after 550 BCE, but the record is complicated by various disturbances. The two very shallowly buried and opened sarcophagi 166 and 167, probably sited at the top of an extensive mound, seem later than 550 BCE, because they would have been large enough to hold extended bodies rather than the contracted burials of the previous generation. Towards the north two groups of three burials were added between 550–500 BCE. There were also three sarcophagi with late fifth-century burials (426–428) which *Corinth XIII* hypothesised re-used sixth-century coffins (numbered 241–243). The evidence for re-use is, however, extremely tenuous, and far more probably these were simply new graves of the late fifth century, buried near or in the older mound(s) here.[223] The remaining six burials consisted of a pair each, lying side-by-side (adult 240 and child 247; adults 144 and 222), with a third adult burial later placed at right angles to the pair (252 and 221, respectively) to form a *pi*-shape. The graves in the mound under the cubic marker block above 240 used the finest stucco, and were mostly oriented east-west. The other set, probably under its own mound, used ordinary or no stucco and few grave gifts, but experimented with a gable-shaped sarcophagus lid (222);[224] they were mostly oriented north-south, like the rest of the group.

The total number of burials in this area was thus 11 adults and 9 children from 590–500 BCE (0.22 p.a., 45% children), but with most adults and only one child buried after 550 BCE. A few early fifth-century graves in the vicinity (268, 301), including a unique cremation burial of a warrior with armour (262), were also adults, and after that there was a hiatus until the further adult sarcophagi of the

[223] The arguments for re-use are (a) that sarcophagi burials were rare by the end of the fifth century, (b) that the cover of 243/426 was askew and had been moved, and (c) that the "gabled" cover of 242/428 was similar to the gabled cover of 222 and ought to be of the same date (Palmer, 1964: 76, 208–209). However, (a) there were half a dozen late fifth-century sarcophagus burials along the eastern border of the cemetery (403, 405, 407, 409, 415, 422), all with "rich" grave gifts, like 241/427 and 243/426, where no re-use is suspected; (b) the cover of 243/426 was only slightly askew (NB 395, p. 528) and no more so that the covers of e.g. nearby 159–161, 164, where no disturbance is suspected; (c) the "gable" of 242/428 was far more complex than that of 222 and looks more like a stone version of the lid of a wooden chest than a gable (and a third gabled slab is attested for Grave 478, c. 300 BCE, at the other end of the cemetery). Moreover, the walls of 242/428 were only 6 cm thick, the thinnest of any adult sarcophagi, matched only by others of 425–400 BCE (Palmer, 1964: 71). Finally, classical re-users of sarcophagi usually merely pushed aside the older bones and grave gifts, but we would have to assume that "241–243" were thoroughly cleaned out.

[224] Grave 144 was reused for a Roman burial (510), but had no stucco, and at 1.60 m long might have held either an extended or contracted burial (cf. the contracted burial in 240, which was 1.585 m long). It was below ground level, as indicated by the marker alongside it, but 221–222 were at -0.85 and -0.80 m respectively and needed covering.

late fifth century. It looks like our group flourished for a couple of generations but then stopped reproducing and petered out. While they did flourish, they created a conspicuous set of burial mounds along the road.

The most conspicuous burials of all, however, were made by a final group of north-south buriers in the last remaining unoccupied corner between the two Bronze Age tumuli. Four of the burials were made between 570–550 BCE and subsequently marked by an unparalleled monument (fig. 21). Two contained bodies in contracted position, each with a single pin at the left shoulder and a cup and *oinochoe*: one was a short and slender-looking skeleton (192), casually called "the woman" by the excavator (NB 390, p. 270) but equally likely to be an adolescent, while the other looked sturdier but was virtually rolled up into a foetal ball (191), which left nearly half the sarcophagus unused, unless it was filled with perishable material. The other two were extended burials with several pots each, including Attic imports: one was identified as a male c. 28 years old (219); the other took up the full length and width of a similar-sized sarcophagus (220), and so was perhaps also a man.

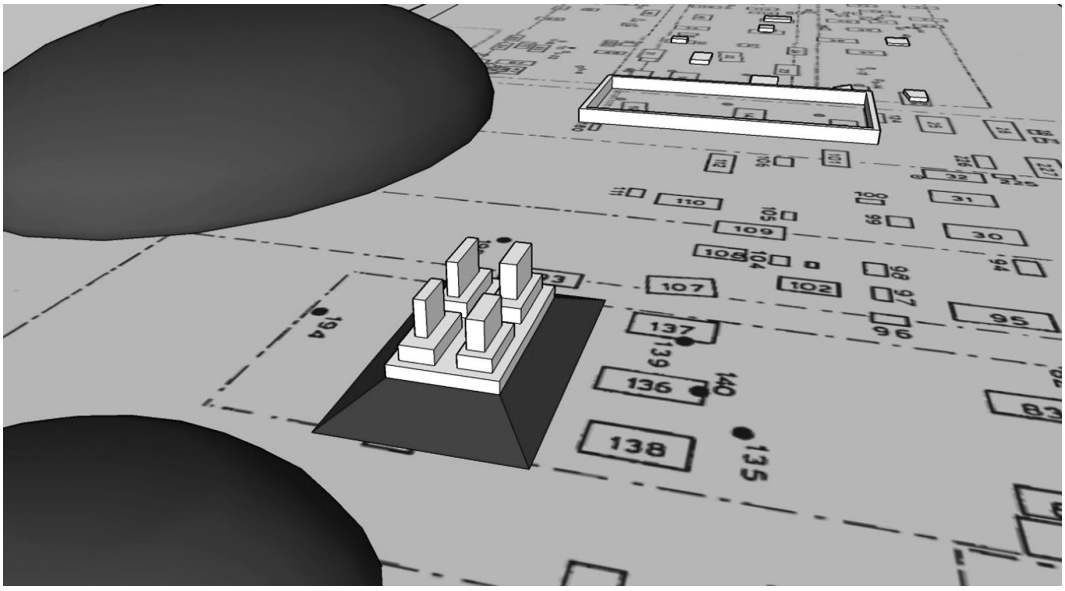

Fig. 21: Stelae platform. Features imposed on base map from Dickey 1992, fig. 5.

At some point after the final burial a stone platform of 3.65 × 2.00 m, 25 cm thick, was placed above the graves, so as to cover 220 and part of the other three.[225] This platform lay only 30 cm below the modern surface, i.e. 70–90 cm higher than the ancient ground levels attested at the enclosure to the north and the

[225] Palmer, 1964, 66–68, fig. 2; Dickey, 1992: 118–119.

small tumulus to the south, and must have rested on a large mound of earth, presumably raised for its sake. Moreover, the surface of the platform was prepared for the placement of four stelae, evidently one for each of the dead, and although these stelae do not survive, the space prepared for "slots" within the four bases shows that they would have been 90–115 cm wide and 20–30 cm thick.[226] Such large slabs might easily have been 1 m or more tall and would have towered above everything else in the cemetery, with the possible exception of the Bronze Age tumuli.

Corinth XIII describes the platform as "the only certain evidence for a family burial plot" after the walled enclosure (Palmer, 1964: 68), but this does not seem certain at all. It is not clear that the group included any women, and it certainly did not include the usual infants and small children, although admittedly an amphora burial of the same period (194) was found 3 metres further west. Moreover, we would expect to find the next generation(s) of a family that erected such a spectacular monument to be buried nearby, yet there were only two later graves here: one child sarcophagus with fine stucco (248) but only a single black-glazed cup of 530–500 BCE, and one adult buried at the end of the sixth century (257). The latter was evidently a person of some wealth, wearing a silver ring, a bronze pendant and an iron fibula, with an additional pin, presumably attached to a gift of cloth, two *lekythoi* of Attic oil, and a set of four Corinthian pots placed in a finely stuccoed sarcophagus, albeit one that otherwise seemed curiously old-fashioned.[227] The person buried in 258 could in principle have been the sole surviving member of the family, and very young, at the time of the burial of 220, but if so, he or she would surely not have been in a position to put up such an exceptional monument, which broke all the norms of marking graves with no more than small plain blocks and columns observed in the rest of the cemetery.

The dramatic break with precedent in the decision to glorify these four dead with huge stelae, presumably with relief sculpture and/or inscriptions, in a traditionally prestigious part of the cemetery, with hardly any subsequent burial around the monument suggests to me that this was no family plot but a civic monument, honouring people of outstanding merit in the community. If so, these burials after 570 BCE and especially the construction of the stela platform after 550 BCE, are the first signs of the North Cemetery becoming a civic centre.

This is not to say that the cemetery was now open to all. The total number of

[226] These are the dimensions of the rough areas left within the rectangles cut smooth to receive the stela bases, which surely represent the slots left to insert the stelae. Given their size, Palmer's suggestion (1964: 67) that an archaic volute only 28 cm wide found elsewhere in the cemetery (X-120) came from one of these stelae is unlikely.

[227] Palmer, 1964: 213, noted that the sarcophagus was slightly too small for an extended burial (cf. *Corinth XIII*, pl. 106) and that the lid had no strap holes, which was rare by this time; one might add that the lid was 4 cm too short for the sarcophagus. The fine ("thin") stucco of both 248 and 257 is reported in NB 390, pp. 241–242, 244.

burials made between 590–500 BCE was at most 115 (62 adults, 53 children), which represents 1.28 deaths p.a. with 46.1% child mortality. At first sight that suggests a drastic broadening of the elite, with a 78% increase compared to 650–590 BCE (0.72 p.a., with 44.2% child deaths). Almost half of the increase, however, was due to the return of Alpha and Beta: if we compare the numbers with the period 720–650 BCE before their exile (0.91, p.a., with 46.9 child deaths), the rate went up only 41%. Indeed, if we count up only the graves of 590–500 BCE that we have assigned to the Alpha, Beta and Gamma groups, the numbers are virtually the same as they were in 720–650 BCE: 44 adults and 38 children over 90 years, i.e. 0.91 deaths p.a., 46.3% children. The increase in 590–500 BCE was thus entirely due to the three new clusters we have identified, by the south-eastern entrance to the cemetery, further north along the road, and beside the monumental platform.[228]

In short, after the fall of the Cypselid monarchy, we see the return of the Bacchiads reviving their claims to hereditary status; the emergence of new groups, establishing territories and mounds for themselves near the road, away from the Bronze Age tumuli, and so advertising their wealth rather than birth; and Gamma having it both ways, burying its women and children mostly in the "ancestral" tumulus, and its other dead in lavish graves by the road.

Conclusions: class- and state-formation in early Corinth

For the first 300 years of existence, the North Cemetery was a burial ground for the elite, and changes in its use reflect three key moments in Corinthian social and political history. After the initial burials by a small group (Alpha), perhaps just a single large family, claiming superior status by birth, and then also by an even smaller group (Beta), probably a single household, doing the same on a smaller scale, the arrival of a third group (Gamma) marked the formation of an extended, stable elite that respected each other's burial territories and adopted very similar and relatively austere forms of burial, avoiding open rivalry. The three groups that buried in the North Cemetery gradually managed to acquire the *poros* sarcophagi that had already been in use by other elite groups in Corinth, and so came to share in a form of elite burial that became the norm at Corinth as the richer graves found in small numbers in previous centuries disappeared. This was the first and major turning point: the development between 750–700 BCE of what had been small communities dominated by a few "chiefs" or "Big Men" into a single large stratified, class-based political community, as the result of a process of integration by which rival groups from across the region joined forces to establish their collective dominance over the whole territory.

[228] Total burials 720–650 BCE: 64 (34 adults, 30 children), 650–590 BCE: 43 (24 adults, 19 children); 590–500 BCE: Alpha, Beta, Gamma: 44 adults, 38 children; others: 18 adults, 15 children.

It was this complex and gradual process that gave rise to the oligarchy of the Bacchiads, and was reflected in tradition as the story of the 200 descendants of king Bacchis seizing and sharing power exclusively amongst themselves for 90 years. The second turning point was the overthrow of this closed oligarchy in the mid-seventh century, which is reflected in the temporary disappearance of the Alpha and Beta groups from the cemetery. The take-over of the cemetery by Gamma alone suggests that this section of the elite, probably until then excluded from the narrow oligarchy or at any rate marginal to it, was a driving force in the *coup* led by Cypselos and initially a strong supporter of the new regime. Around 600 BCE, however, the growing lavishness of Gamma's burials – in the face of reported sumptuary legislation by the current ruler – and its dramatic occupation of the Bronze Age tumulus with the claim to royal birth that this implied, suggests that this elite group was becoming a driving force in the opposition to the Cypselids.

This soon culminated in the third turning point, marked by continuing prominence of Gamma in the cemetery but also the return of Alpha and Beta, and the appearance of two new groups, as well as an area set aside for "state" burials, later monumentalised in a way unparalleled in the cemetery. This burial record suggests that Gamma allied itself with both old Bacchiad rivals and new wealthy families that had previously been excluded from the elite, and that all joined forces in establishing a new upper class. This was not as narrow and closed a body as the Bacchiads had been, and it did not adopt uniform burial customs, but engaged in openly competitive display – as has been the case before 750 BCE – in its funerals as no doubt in other areas of life. From 590 BCE, sarcophagi became larger, finer and more varied; grave gifts multiplied and included the finest Corinthian and imported Attic pottery rather than purely funerary or utilitarian vessels; graves were marked by conspicuous burial mounds; some still expressed pretensions to noble lineage but others did not. This was still an elite, not a comprehensive citizen community, but probably an elite more like the typical Greek type: a fluid body of leisure-class property owners engaged in constant competition to gain and maintain status in the cemetery and in the community.

As we have seen, Corinthian forms of burial often seem simple, but in their use of shaft graves, heavy cover slabs and still heavier sarcophagi, they tended to rely on having a great deal of manpower to perform the tough physical labour of digging up tonnes of soil and hoisting up tonnes of stone. One of the reasons for this preference may have been that, still according to literary tradition, "the city of the Corinthians prospered so much that it acquired 460,000 slaves" (Timaeus *FGrH* 566 F 5). A Delphic oracle called the Corinthians "*choinix*-measurers", in reference to their distribution of daily rations of one *choinix* of grain each to a large number of slaves (Athen. 272b). In the context of an early book of his history, Timaeus' reference is probably to the time of Bacchiad rule, and the oracle may have circulated as a warning to the Bacchiads, like the oracles cited by Herodotus (5.92β). If Periander "forbade the citizens to acquire slaves" (Nicolaos of

Damascus *FGrH* 90 F 58), it will have been in reaction to elite slave-ownership on an unusually large scale. Perhaps, therefore, we can see reflected in the laborious burials in North Cemetery not only elite claims to status, but also one of the pillars of wealth and power at Corinth: a slave labour force that dug graves, carried sarcophagi, and cultivated the plain just beyond the cemetery.

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Abbreviations

AGOnline	*Archaeology in Greece Online:* https://chronique.efa.gr/?Kroute = homepage
ArchDelt	*Archaiologikon Deltion*
AR	*Archaeological Reports*
ASCSA	American School of Classical Studies at Athens
Corinth XIII	C.W. Blegen / H. Palmer / R.S. Young (eds.): *Corinth XIII: The North Cemetery*. Princeton, NJ. 1964.
Dilts	*Heraclidis Lembii Excerpta Politiarum*. Edited and translated by Mervin R. Dilts. Durham, NC. 1971.
Diod.	Diodoros, *Bibliotheke Historike*
Diog. Laert.	Diogenes Laertios, *Bion kai gnomon ton en philosophia eudokimesanton*
FGrH	F. Jacoby, (ed.): *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*. Berlin / Leiden 1923–1958.
Hdt.	Herodotos, *Historiai*
NB	Notebook (see n. 3)
Paus.	Pausanias, *Hellados Periegesis*
Rose	*Aristotelis qui ferebantur librorum fragmenta*. Collegit Valentinus Rose. Lipsiae. 1886.

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