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NB – UNEDITED CONFERENCE ABSTRACT

Events not processes: Reassessing and Redating the lower fills of the South Stoa Wells at Corinth.

by *Guy D. R. Sanders, Corinth Excavations*

In his volume on Corinthian Hellenistic pottery, *Corinth VII.3*, Roger Edwards divided the 61 Cyma Kantharoi from the lower fills of the South Stoa wells into groups based on their height. Within each group, he discerned differences which he interpreted as morphological changes reflecting the development of the shape during the history of its production. He believed that they became narrower in relation to their height, that the body diameter reduced in relation to the rim diameter, and that the feet became longer and narrower. He dated production and use of Cyma Kantharoi to between 330 and 225 BCE.

In sum, Edwards presents his reader with the falsifiable hypotheses:

HØ 1 The lower South Stoa wells represent use fills spanning the entire history of the stoa from its construction ca. 330 (300) until the Mummian sack of 146 BCE.

HØ 2 The latest coins in these deposits percolated down from the later deposits above.

HØ 3 The form of the Cyma kantharos attenuated and constricted with time.

Since we cannot re-excavate the contexts, we must return to the excavation records.

Reconsideration of the depositional processes at work in the wells of Units 14, 19, 3, 30 and 27 indicate that they were fills dumped when structural changes were made to the stoa rather than extended processes of deposition. Instead of representing the development over the course of over 150 years, the pottery in each represents the production of a restricted period of time. Coins found in the deposits date the material, with the exception of residual pieces (survivors), no earlier than the last quarter of the 3rd century BCE and, more likely, ca. 190 +/- 20. While the attenuation and constriction of kantharoi through time appears to be illusory, this hypothesis cannot be rejected altogether. If true, however, it represents a much more rapid and much later development than hitherto believed.

Corinthian Hellenistic pottery chronology must now be completely re-assessed. This will not be simply the application of a constant *plus K* decades to Edwards's scheme but a thorough analysis of contexts and their contents. Re-evaluation will change how we interpret the physical development and history of Corinth from the construction of the South Stoa to 146 BCE and probably later. It will require adjustments to the chronology of ceramic assemblages found outside Corinth dated on the authority of *Corinth VII.3*.

In the interim, I propose three new falsifiable hypotheses:

HØ 1 Attic type skyphoi continued to be drinking vessel of choice throughout the 3rd century.

HØ 2 Kantharoi were produced and used from ca. 210/200 to ca. 180/170 BCE.

HØ 3 Kantharoi were replaced by Moldmade bowls ca. 180/170.