Corinthian pyxis: A relative dating and contextual analysis of origin
by Mackenzie R. Lofgren

Pyxide jars are not uncommon to excavate, as they were standard possessions of women throughout a significant portion of ancient Greece. However, the pyxis jar on display at the W.G. Hardy Classics Museum in Edmonton, Alberta, is suggested to be from a time period that is limited in terms of comparable pyxies. The W.G. Hardy Classics Museum gives no explanation as to where the pyxis jar was contextually found beyond originating from Corinth, and an estimation of being produced sometime within the seventh–sixth century BC. This article narrows the suggested time of production from the two-hundred-year period, as claimed by the museum, to specifically the Early Corinthian period, through a process of relative dating, as Corinth was becoming the production centre for pottery during the time within ancient Greece. Through an analysis of the physical condition, artistic motifs, and comparable pyxies, we are able to ascertain the particular context in which it would have been found, in addition to the timeframe of production, and the likely tools used through the manufacturing process.

The University of Alberta has a pyxis jar within its W.G. Hardy Classics Museum (Hardy Museum), and gives a very vague description regarding the context of the small jar, proposing the place of origin is Corinth, during a broad time period of the seventh–sixth century BC. The museum’s lack of contextual information, unfortunately, is a common issue when attempting to accurately date an artifact. Through a process of visual, structural, and comparative analysis, we will be able to ascertain contextual information such as the location and date of origin, concluding that the museum dating is too broad and recent. I agree with the Hardy Museum that the pyxis jar is from the Proto-Archaic period (the Orientalizing period), 710–600 BC, but I argue that it is specifically from the Early Corinthian period which dates to approximately 620/615–595/590 BC (Hasaki 2022; Tegerdal Hune 2022). The pyxis jar displayed within the Hardy Museum is Corinthian and originates from the Early Corinthian period, in that it possesses much of the characteristically geometric artistic motifs of the Late Geometric period, spanning from 750–720 BC (Dickey 1992), and due to the absence of the black-figure and floral motifs popular in the later Proto-Archaic period during seventh century BC (Charalambidou and Morgan 2017).

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Figure 1. Corinthian pyxis displayed at the W.G. Hardy Classics Museum. Photo by M. Lofgren.
Recontextualization

The context derived from excavation is fundamental in the study of an artifact and, oftentimes, there is limited available information provided by a singular museum exhibit such as in the case of the pyxis (fig. 1) at the Hardy Museum (Whitley and Osborne 2016). As a result, it becomes increasingly important to utilize artifacts from other museums’ collections that are comparable to enable a more conclusive understanding of an object when the provided contextual information is lacking. While a more fulsome description of an object may exist, a museums’ physical display of an artifact does not always make this information readily available for public consumption, nor might a museum have complete access to more expansive information regarding an artifact. One of the issues discussed by Robin Osborne (2015) is the transition of priority within museums (particularly university museums) from informative and educational to visual appeal (243). Museums prioritizing visual appeal is not the only reason why there may be a lack of documented or publicized contextual information of an artifact, as there are numerous reasons why a museum may not have access. Early in the field of archaeology, there was no standardization for the practice of excavation. One example of this is undocumented excavation which has been equated to a form of looting (Hollowell 2006). Undocumented excavation was formerly practiced, particularly during the beginning of the last century, to serve the specific purpose of stocking museums (Hollowell 2006). The means of obtaining an artifact, whether it be by a museum or an individual, can also result in the loss or destruction of its context through not only the object’s dislocation, but also through the process of transaction. By only providing the seventh-sixth century BC from Corinth as the artifact’s point of origin, the Hardy Museum’s physical display of the pyxis (see fig. 1) leaves too broad and generalized a level of understanding in the mind of the spectator. Whether or not it is justifiable, a museum exhibit possesses an impression of infallible authority. Despite this, Osborne (2015) argues that among researchers, museums around the world are often subject to neglect, and preference is given to the perceived superior value of excavational context. Excavational sites undoubtedly provide a level of comparative analysis—for instance, a burial site wherein multiple artifacts are located—but that analysis is limited. To derive contextual meaning of any artifact within a singular excavational site, it must be compared to others. For the purpose of comparative analysis, museums are invaluable because they not only possess objects for comparison, but they make artifacts accessible. Exclusive reliance upon either excavational or museum context can lead to an incomplete understanding of a vessel’s origin and significance, particularly when dating artifacts. It is the responsibility of the researcher to ensure all available measures of study in their repertoire are utilized when attempting to determine an accurate date of origin. Thus, it is essential to not only consider what Donald C. Haggis (2018: 101) describes as the “abandonment-phase or post-de facto” context of an object or, in other words, the time and place of excavation, but also the practice of cross-referencing comparanda so that more reliable conclusions can be made. The act of cross-referencing comparable artifacts allows for conclusions to be drawn as they pertain to the artifacts’ consistencies. Museums have the ability to provide value by way of comparison, and neglecting available comparanda can lead to erroneous conclusions of partial data.
Defining Characteristics

For the purpose of discussion and to better understand the pyxis from the Hardy Museum, the analysis of the pyxis must first be prefaced with a brief introduction to how artistic design has changed and the characterizing features of different time periods. During the Protogeometric period (commonly understood to have taken place from the eleventh–tenth century BC), pottery design was dominated with the use of concentric circles and semicircles. While still in practice in following design periods, characterization of pottery gave way to more prominently featuring designs such as triangles, checkers, painted lid and handles, and a shift back to the black-on-white style (Wardle, Higham, and Kromer 2014). While similar to the period prior, in Middle to Late Geometric pottery (approximately 825–750 BC and 750–720 BC) a greater variety of decorative patterning emerged to also feature meander, figurative, and floral patterns in its design. There were most certainly changes in preference regarding artistic motifs throughout the tenth to the sixth centuries BC, though it was not uncommon for there to be evidence of an observable nostalgia, or regression, among pottery design (Doplouy 2021). This poses a challenge to visual analysis; however, it is still possible to come to an accurate conclusion regarding an artifact’s origin through comparative analysis.

Decorative motifs did undergo another phase of transformation over the following one hundred years during the Protocorinthian period, though this period did not completely abandon stylistic trends of geometric pottery (Weinberg 1943). Pottery decoration in this period has been referred to as “Subgeometric” in that it derives much inspiration from Late Geometric pottery, and designs were still primarily limited to the shoulder and handle areas of vessels (Weinberg 1943: 33). The later half of the Protocorinthian period also saw the emergence of multiple dotted bands (Risser 2001). As opposed to pottery that possessed large areas of dark glaze, Protocorinthian pottery established a style referred to as Linear Geometric which had a trend of lightening pottery design through the use of “wide striped or banded zones rather than [the] large areas of dark glaze” which were common in prior design periods (Weinberg 1943: 33). In addition to an adaptation of decorative motif, there was also the innovation of a greater variety in the shapes of pottery, the most notable being the kotylai vessel shape (Weinberg 1943). While pyxide jars with rims shaped to fit a lid were produced during this period, the shape was not common through the “end of the eighth century and the first half of the seventh century” (Weinberg 1943: 52).

The Proto-Archaic period maintained the prominence of both black-style pottery and the rise in floral motifs, although with the entrance into the Early Corinthian period, pottery began to possess greater colour variation as well as more variation in the particular shapes of pyxide jars (Risser 2001). While the Early Corinthian period was still defined by the use of black-on-white painting style, the transition to the Middle and Late Corinthian periods, approximately the first half of the sixth century BC, once again saw a shift in trends returning to the white-on-black, which was “particularly common on convex shapes, such as…some pyxides” (Dickey 1992: 6; Risser 2001: 5). Pyxide jars were subject to the same shift in decorative stylistic preference as other vessels from the Early through to the Late Corinthian period, in addition to changes in structural preference. Early Corinthian pyxides still commonly had a flat base, but moving into the Middle Corinthian period, stemmed pyxides
“curvilinear patterns such as spirals became more common” (Risser 2001: 5). Understanding the transformation of stylistic trends of pottery gives a foundation by which to conclude a vessel’s context.

Visual Analysis

The pyxis jar at the Hardy Museum (see fig. 1) does possess many of the characteristic angular motifs of the Middle to Late Geometric period such as triangles, a checkered design on the lid (see fig. 2), painted lid and handles, the return of the black-on-white painting style, and what can be described as a plastic attachment on the top of the lid. A plastic attachment refers to a molded figure or ornamentation created either on the spinning wheel or through the use of an actual mold (Biers 1994). However, its shape is more consistent with those of the Early Corinthian period. I would argue against this particular pyxis jar being from the Middle Corinthian period, in part due to its lack of the white-on-black painting style, which would have required a double-firing technique to achieve a black slip. For the time period, it is more likely that the black colour of

Figure 2. Corinthian pyxis displayed at the W.G. Hardy Classics Museum. Photo features the painted design on the lid. Photo by M. Lofgren.

rose in popularity (Risser 2001). The second half of the sixth century saw trends leaning toward the “heavy patterning of vases,” and is often characterized by the addition of loops and whorls. It was not until the fifth century when

Figure 3. n. 367 Kotyle vessel. Height, 0.109 m. Greatest diameter, 0.166 m (copied from Weinberg 1943, 149). Reproduction is courtesy of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Corinth Excavations.
the pyxis was achieved through a single firing technique that would have used stages of oxidation, reduction, and reoxidation (Schreiber 1999). These three different stages would have controlled the resulting colour of the gloss through manipulating the amount of oxygen exposed to the vase, the clay mixture of the pyxis, the fuel type, and the temperature during the firing process. If these variables were controlled correctly and the kiln was “allowed to cool down slowly, the gloss would be shiny black, and the clay would be matte and grayish in color,” which explains why some of the black slip has remained on the pyxis jar, and the matte and dull texture of the unpainted parts of the jar (Schreiber 1999, 56). While the jar may have been predominantly black in colour, it does not have the etched-in markings to suggest that it would have been the white-on-black painting style. In addition, much of the darker colours have worn off, indicating that those colours were not fired before painting. A kotyle vessel (see fig. 3) that was dated to the Late Corinthian period exhibits this white-on-black painting style (Weinberg 1943). The pyxis jar at the Hardy Museum cannot have been from any earlier than Late Geometric, not only because it does not exhibit the white-on-black painting style, but also due to the lack of meander patterns. While the jar would have had a significant amount of black paint, the painting technique used is more likely to have been the inverse: black-on-white. Despite there having been a shift back to the black-on-white painting style, the pyxis jar is not likely to have been from the Late Geometric period as it does not possess any figurative or floral motifs that were becoming evermore popular in pottery due to eastern influence. There also seems to be remnants of white paint (see fig. 4) which serves to further indicate an Early Corinthian time period, in that there was an increase in colour variations being used.

The pyxis jar at the Hardy Museum most certainly does not originate as far back as the tenth century BC (Vanschoonwinkel 2006), during the Protogeometric period, although it does employ the use of Protogeometric tools to achieve some of its painted lines. The multiple-brush device is a tool very characteristic of Protogeometric pottery, used to more efficiently paint multiple lines simultaneously. It is apparent that the pyxis jar’s geometric and angular motif could have been achieved using a multiple-brush device to create the evenly spaced bands that encircle multiple areas of the pyxis. The multiple-brush device, while in existence long before the Early Corinthian period, was a standard-use tool that ensured both efficiency and accuracy during the production time of Corinthian pottery. Harrison Eiteljorg II (1980) explains that a “simple, flat surface presents no special problems for a painter with a

Figure 4. Corinthian pyxis displayed at the W.G. Hardy Classics Museum. Arrows indicate remnants of white paint. Photo by M. Lofgren.
multiple-brush device” (449). While the device is thought to have been primarily used when attached to a compass to create multiple concentric circles and semicircles such as shown on a Protogeometric oinochoe from Athens (see fig. 5), as evidenced by the uniform lines depicted on another Corinthian vessel (see fig. 6), it is not unreasonable to assert that some of the more evenly spaced encircling lines painted on the pyxis at the Hardy Museum (see fig. 1) could have been achieved through the use of a similar, if not identical, multiple-brush tool. The possibility of this tool having been used in the production of the pyxis jar is not unlikely because it would have existed during the time of the pyxis’ fabrication.

The origin and context of the pyxis at the Hardy Museum can be identified not only through study of artistic motifs, but also through the physical structure. The slightly concave structure of the pyxis jar is another reason to suggest an Early Corinthian origin of the pyxis. While the concave-sided feature of Corinthian vessels began in the Protocorinthian period, it became characteristic of the Early Corinthian period (Amyx and Lawrence 1975). The pyxis jar displayed at the Hardy Museum is a Type A pyxis with no foot to rest on. Schreiber (1999) explains the Type A pyxis style was in production from the sixth–fourth century BC, and the “canonical Type A pyxis with its concave sides, flat floor, and flanged rim was given several different foot shapes,” while others have no foot (226). Despite this, the Hardy Museum has dated the pyxis to the seventh century BC. While it is true that many Type A pyxide jars would have had a type of foot base, Schreiber notes that Type A pyxide jars could have no foot base as well. One could argue that the pyxis is not from the Early Corinthian period because the shape of the vessel’s body could be classified as resembling a more pewter-box style, as well as the absence of feet that is characteristic of the fifth century BC in Athens. However, the Athenians borrowed this body style in the sixth century BC from Corinth (Schreiber 1999). Additionally, pewter-box style pyxides did not have plastic attachments on the lid as seen on the Hardy Museum’s pyxis, and this pyxis has no figurative motifs on it like a pewter-box of the fifth century BC likely would.
have had. Another reason to suggest the Hardy Museum is correct in its stated location of origin being Corinth are the similar pyxide jars that were also placed at Corinth during the early years of the Proto-Archaic period.

One very well-preserved Corinthian pyxis jar in terms of both paint and structure is depicted in Figure 7. This pyxis (see fig. 7) has very few signs of wear in the paint apart from a few imperfections located at its base. It depicts the same concave sides and flat base as the pyxis from the Hardy Museum, and appears to have been much more well preserved. This pyxis jar is described as having red stripes, an almost identically-shaped plastic attachment knob on the top of the lid, and is “[e]arliest Corinthian, in transition from the straight-walled, flat lidded Protocorinthian type” (Smith 1936: 14). However, unlike the pyxis jar depicted in Figure 1, this pyxis jar does not possess nearly as many varieties of painting motifs characteristic of the Late Geometric period, apart from the lines that encircle the circumference of the body, lid, and plastic attachment of the jar. Otherwise, the structural elements such as the plastic attachment on the lid, the concave sides, and the out-turned edge of the rim of the jar to form handles are virtually indistinguishable from the pyxis in the Hardy Museum.

The pyxis depicted in Figure 8 bears a remarkable resemblance to the pyxis at the Hardy Museum in structural composition of what is described as the “usual concave-sided” conformity to pyxide jars of the Early Corinthian period, with its “[b]road flat bottom…[and] reflex handles at [the] lip” (Weinberg 1943: 70). The pyxis jar in Figure 8 is not as well preserved as the other two Corinthian jars, and stylistically, it more closely resembles the pyxis jar within the Hardy Museum (e.g., encircling dark lines, triangular design on the base, and checkered

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**Figure 7.** Illustration by M. Lofgren of Corinthian concave pyxis (after vessel published in Smith 1936, 184).

**Figure 8.** Pyxis with restored handle and body fragments (copied from Weinberg 1943, plate 37). Reproduction is courtesy of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Corinth Excavations.
band). Similarly, this pyxis jar has the same reflex handles as the other two, and the paint seems to have worn the same as the pyxis in Figure 1; the little that survives is the dark-coloured slip. While this pyxis jar has identifiable red slip remnants and the pyxis at the Hardy Museum has remnants of what some might consider to be red slip, it would be difficult to distinguish whether the original intended colour was meant to be red or if it is merely a result of discolouration. However, that is not to say that it is completely implausible for the pyxis jar in Figure 1 to have had red slip, as there was an increase in the colour’s use during the Proto-Archaic period. Acknowledging that this reference (see fig. 8) does not have the lid to go along with it for further analysis, from the painting style and structural composition we can argue with a reasonable amount of assurance that the pyxis jar in the Hardy Museum is from a very similar, if not the same, time period.

Mass Production

Corinth was the mass production centre for pottery of the Greek world during the seventh and sixth century BC. Again, pottery was a massive business in Corinth at the time, as Corinth became known for their mass production of fine wares. Therefore, the notion that the pyxis jar in question at the Hardy Museum is a product of this rapid production cannot be simply discounted. It is also not uncommon for pottery to have been signed by the person who constructed/painted the jar (Richter 1936). There exists a large discrepancy in the number of recorded signatures on vessels between Athenian and Corinthian potters, the painters with Athenian signatures far surpassing those from Corinth. Only seven known ceramic artists represent the whole of the Corinthian ceramic industry which spanned over several centuries (Hasaki 2022). However, as Corinth was a mass producer of pottery, the lack of personal identification is not surprising. In the case of the pyxis at the Hardy Museum, there is no evidence of the producer’s identity, thereby further supporting the notion that the pyxis jar is an example of the mass production of pottery in Corinth. Recalling the multiple-brush device, one way the context of the pyxis jar may be indicated is through analyzing how the lines on the pyxis would have been painted, as they resemble a tool that had multiple brush heads on it so as to make the production time shorter without having to sacrifice accuracy. The slip on the pyxis jar (see fig. 1) is in considerably worse condition than those that are comparable in both structure, artistic motifs, and time period, which indicates that the jar is not worn as a result of age, but rather due to a lesser quality of slip. Chaviara and Aloupi-Siotis (2016) examine glaze composition, explaining that there is evidence of pottery originating from Corinth in the seventh–sixth century BC having what is referred to as a black glaze. While there may be no evidence of black glaze on the pyxis jar at the Hardy Museum, the evidence provided by Chaviara and Aloupi-Siotis assures that the use of glaze was not uncommon in Corinth as the time of the pyxis’ origin, which leads to the question of why this pyxis has none. The answer likely resides in the purpose of the object, the history of Corinth as a mass producer of pottery during the time, and the potential sacrifices in quality that may have been made for the sake of efficiency.

Corinth became known for its pottery, and was renown for its inventive artistic style, starting a precedent of specialization. However, vase painting in the Corinthian period does not generally have a reputation of being particularly well made. Corinthian artistic motifs were often used repeatedly due to the ever-growing mass production of pottery, and the increase in demand for Corinthian pottery had the unfortunate consequence of a decline in quality (Biers 1994).
spalls in the outer wall of the pyxis, which occur when the clay mixture is not homogenous. If the clay mixture is not homogenous, a spall or a “conically shaped chip of clay” breaks away from the wall of the vessel due to the increased pressure when being fired in a kiln (Schreiber 1999: 62). Spalls are a foreign substance that are more porous than the clay of the vessel such as limestone fragments which, after several days of having been fired, will expand and pop out of the vessel and leave a small pit. Not only was the pyxis jar originally from the Early Corinthian period, but it was not of particularly exceptional quality. The fact of the jar’s structural integrity being relatively sound is not an indisputable indication of whether the jar was produced with a lesser degree of care; rather, it is an indication of the context that the pyxis jar was found in (Risser 2001).

While the pyxis at the Hardy Museum is very well preserved structurally when compared to the pyxis depicted in Figure 8, there are visible signs of lower-quality production that could not be explained as a result of wear over time. One example that could be indicative of mass production is that the rim of the vessel’s body is not completely flush with the lid, as seen in Figure 9. This is due to a slight upturn in the configuration of the lid. The flawed joining of the lid to the vessel is not a result of the out-turned handles, as the pyxis jar of Figure 7 possesses the same style of out-turned handles but does not have this sort of flaw with the lid. There is some wear in paint apart from the more well-preserved black paint, indicating a technique where the black slip is painted on before being fired, and the other colours after. There are also visibly noticeable signs of damage (see fig. 10) that cannot all be explained by how a vessel wears, such as what Schreiber (1999) explains to be

Figure 9. Corinthian pyxis displayed at the W.G. Hardy Classics Museum. Arrow indicates the poor seal between the lid and jar. Photo by M. Lofgren.

Figure 10. Corinthian pyxis displayed at the W.G. Hardy Classics Museum. Arrow indicates a spall. Photo by M. Lofgren.

Funerary Context

The pyxis jar that is currently displayed in the Hardy Museum at the University of Alberta is stated to have been from Corinth, but there is no
context given as to how or where this pyxis jar was found. Although we are not completely sure as to the context in which the jar was found, based on the relative structural integrity of the jar’s preservation, we are able to infer that it likely would have been found in a gravesite as opposed to within a sanctuary as an offering. Slane (2017, 229) explains “earlier graves normally contained several vessels, placed inside the burial container and intended to accompany and nourish the deceased,” and were more than likely owned by the individual whose grave it resided in, as burying an individual along with possessions was still practiced as a sign of wealth during the Early Corinthian period. In particular, pyxide jars have often been found within gravesites as gifts that would have been buried along with the deceased individual (Alexandropoulou 2016). Pyxide jars are relatively common excavated artifacts, and if discovered within a gravesite are indicative that the burial site was for a female, as Corinthian-type pyxides are consistently associated with women (Pemberton 2000). The pyxis jar at the Hardy Museum remains in one piece with the accompanying lid and, apart from the paint wearing, is very well preserved structurally, serving to further reinforce the assumption that it would have been found in a female burial site. T. Leslie Shear (1939) discusses the discovery of a particularly ornamented pyxis, or “ivory toilet box,” excavated from a large chamber tomb in the Agora of Athens with decorative relief carvings and a protective tin-lined interior, indicating the box was used to house some sort of liquid (581). The difference in ornamentation and quality between the ivory pyxis described by Shear and the pyxis displayed in the Hardy Museum can be explained by the post-de facto context of excavation and by Shear’s assertion that the ivory pyxis’ presence and quality leads to the conclusion that the tomb was likely to have been a royal female burial site (1939). Saul S. Weinberg (1943) states that several pyxides were excavated “from late seventh-century graves at Phaleron” (70). One such vessel that was found in a burial context, seen in Figure 8, was dated to the Early Corinthian period. The estimated time period provided for the Hardy Museum’s artifact is inaccurate in that it is too broad to claim it is from the Proto-Archaic period which spans over more than one hundred years.

Since before the Greek Bronze Age, approximately 2800–1100 BC (Warren 1970), it has been typical for people to bury their dead with personal belongings as both a sign of respect and an expression of power. There was a drastic decrease in grave goods following the Middle Geometric into the Protocorinthian period, and it was not until the Early Corinthian period that grave goods once again saw a resurgence (Duplouy 2021). The Hardy Museum’s pyxis jar is likely to come from some sort of funerary context as it is very structurally sound. Male and female gravesites vary, primarily, in terms of what type of grave goods were buried, and while this does vary throughout time (eastern trading and loss of resources), females where often buried along with personal items such as pyxide jars (Alexandropoulou 2016). Pyxide jars would have been used, typically by a woman, to store toiletries due to their size, lining, and lid. Later pyxide jars would have eventually been lined with some sort of glaze on the inside to store liquids. Shear (1939) argues that a pyxis jar “was presumably used as a container for ointment or some oily substance” (581). Pyxides are some of the most commonly found vessels in graves, such as those within Boeotian tombs that had been imported from Corinth (Risser 2001). The export of Corinthian pottery to other regions indirectly assures that pottery, such as pyxides, were common in burial sites during the time period.
(sixth–fifth century BC), meaning that the custom was likely to have been in practice during the Early Corinthian period, as the sumptuary laws and forced isonomia had yet to be implemented. These laws placed restrictions upon funeral proceedings and the allowable level of ostentatiousness, limiting expressions of wealth in addition to the giving of vessels as grave gifts (Blok and Lardinois 2006). Until the Classical period, fifth–fourth century BC (Domínguez and Sánchez 2001), the Greeks used to invest in lavish graves and tombs as an expression of power and wealth, a convention that was still very much in practice during the Early Corinthian period. Therefore, when considering the possibilities of origin of the Hardy Museum’s pyxis, one must take into account the relative quality of its preservation which almost entirely dissuades any argument that it could have been found within the context of a sanctuary, where it most probably would have been looted or broken. While sanctuary offerings from the Late Geometric period to the Protocorinthian period usually consisted of more valuable items such as bronze pins and jewelry, other types of pottery vessels have been found at sanctuaries, though their function was more closely associated with libations and communal meals (Bookidis 2003). The ancient Greeks believed that, though they did not always hold a common religion, gods engaged in the concept of reciprocity, in that if they wanted something, they must first give something else in exchange. In addition, the offerings in sanctuaries were often very distinct and valuable because sanctuary offerings also became a way the ancient Greeks expressed power, and pyxide jars were a commonly used household object. Thus, pyxides would likely not have been perceived as a suitable offering.

Conclusion

While the artistic motif of the pyxis jar at the Hardy Museum subscribes to a characteristically geometric style, the vessel does not possess the black-figure nor the floral motifs that were becoming evermore widespread in the Middle to Late Proto-Archaic period. The pyxis jar is a Type A style that was common during the Early Corinthian period, but was likely not as carefully produced as others in Early Corinth due to the growing demand for mass production of Corinthian pottery. The vessel also is comparable in both painting and structural style to two other pyxide jars that were identified as originating from the very Early Corinthian period, and the likely context is similar to that of many other pyxide jars that were found in graves during this time period and their female connotation. Though neither method is infallible, both museums and excavational context have the significant ability to provide value when re-dating an artifact, and when the contextual information is lacking or unavailable, it is crucial to utilize comparanda within museums to gain further insight. One must utilize each method of study to provide a sound conclusion as it pertains to an artifact’s context of origin. While the Hardy Museum is correct in stating that the pyxis jar on display is from seventh–sixth century Corinth, the museum’s dating is far too broad. Based on stylistic, structural, and comparative analysis, it is more accurate to say that the pyxis jar is from the Early Corinthian period specifically.

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