



Religion and Society in Early Roman Corinth: A Forgotten Coin Hoard
and the Sanctuary of Asklepios

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RELIGION AND SOCIETY IN EARLY ROMAN CORINTH

A FORGOTTEN COIN HOARD AND THE SANCTUARY OF ASKLEPIOS

ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the evidence from a coin deposit (*IGCH353*) found in the Asklepieion of Corinth in order to gain fresh information on the survival and renovation of the cult place in the early colonial years. The aim is to contribute to questions such as when and where did normal civic and religious life resume in Corinth after the destruction of the city in 146 B.C., and to what extent did Roman decisions and local attitudes influence traditional cult places in newly founded Roman colonies.

The city of Corinth was conquered and razed to the ground by Mummius's troops in 146 B.C., a critical event that strongly influenced all future developments of Roman policy in Greece. It was the first time that the Romans intervened directly to punish a major Greek city and imposed arrangements aimed at the annexation of Greek territory.¹ Corinth was punished because it had opposed the Romans and contributed substantially to the development of the crisis that led to the Achaian war: Corinth was the only place in Greece where Roman envoys had been mobbed and insulted.² "As a harsh but just retribution for hostility to Rome," Mummius's troops pillaged the city, set fire to the buildings, and pulled down the walls, at the same time providing the Roman general with splendid booty.³ All the literary sources agree that the city and its

1. In the current debate on Roman hegemony in Greece, most recent opinions follow Gruen 1984 and Kallet-Marx 1995, and highlight the disinterest of Rome in the annexation of Greek territory and in Greek politics generally in the years following the third Macedonian war. This state of affairs seems to change in 146 B.C., when the conflict reached its breaking point (for the most recent survey of the bibliography on the subject, see Camia 2009, p. 169).

I wish to express my thanks to Konstantinos Kissas, Head of the 37th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities for the Corinthia, and to Guy Sanders, Director of the Corinth Excavations of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, for granting me permission to study the coin deposit in the winter of 2010. I am also extremely grateful to the many people who generously helped me through this work at Corinth: Nancy Bookidis,

Michael Ierardi, Guy Sanders, Ioulia Tzonou-Herbst, and Orestes Zervos. In Oxford, John Kroll, Julian Baker, and Jean-Sébastien Balzat provided invaluable comments and saved me from many errors.

2. Kallet-Marx 1995, p. 85. On the role of Corinth in the events that led to war and the sustained hostility of the Achaians, see also Gruen 1984, pp. 517–523.

3. Kallet-Marx 1995, p. 88.

territory was abandoned and left desolate until its refoundation as a Roman colony in 44 B.C.⁴

The circumstances of this refoundation are well known. The material record is nevertheless relatively silent on the early years of the colonial settlement: “there is an acute absence of information for the very early period, and the dates generally accepted for some of the main structures in the forum are later than one might expect.”⁵ Some interventions, especially in the forum area, have been attributed to the colonists of 44 B.C., but it is only in the Augustan period that major developments took place in both the public and religious areas of town.⁶ The question of when and where normal civic and religious life resumed after the undeniable gap that began in 146 B.C. demands consideration. In response to the general lack of material remains, this article will focus on the evidence from a coin deposit found in one of the traditional Corinthian sanctuaries—the Asklepieion—in order to gain new information on the survival and renovation of this cult place in the early colonial years. This study will contribute to clarifying the role of both Roman decisions and local attitudes in the processes of change and in the preservation of traditional cult places in newly founded Roman colonies, and ultimately shed light on the life of Corinth in the early colonial years.

THE COIN DEPOSIT: *IGCH 353*

On 13 May 1931, 11 bronze coins were found in the lower part of a *thesauros*, or offertory box, in the Sanctuary of Asklepios at Corinth.⁷ This *thesauros* was located in front of the temple and close to the altar of the god (Fig. 1). It consisted of a large poros block with a hemispherical cavity in the center and a raised edge around the margin to accommodate a stone lid (Fig. 2). The lid—now lost—must have had a hole on the top, into which coin offerings could have been dropped.⁸ The controversial dating of the coins and the fact that they were found in situ in the offertory box led de Waele to think that “for some curious reason, the date of this hoard falls either in the period of the centennial desolation of the city or shortly after the rebuilding of the city by Julius Caesar,” and to ask himself “was the sanctuary still in use?”⁹ Similarly, according to Roebuck, “the nature of the deposit would seem to indicate that the sanctuary was being cleaned and the debris swept into convenient holes of which the receptacle provided one.” He therefore placed its date in the years of the refoundation, soon after 44 B.C.¹⁰

A catalogue and fresh analysis of the content of deposit *IGCH 353* is offered here, with the aim of clarifying the context and date of its concealment.

4. For a survey of the literary sources, see Gebhard and Dickie 2003, pp. 262–265. This picture of destruction and abandonment is now changing, especially thanks to Sarah James’s recent study of the post-146 B.C. pottery deposits from the Panayia Field. According to James, activities continued in the urban center in the late

2nd to early 1st centuries B.C. and can be explained by the survival of a small and prosperous Greek community, consisting mostly of Sykionians and returning Corinthians (pers. comm).

5. Hoskins Walbank 1997, p. 117.

6. For the planning and organization of the city and the forum, see Hoskins Walbank 1997, pp. 117–130;

for the religious areas, see Bookidis 2005.

7. De Waele n.d., p. 428; Edwards 1937, p. 247; *IGCH 353*.

8. *Corinth XIV*, p. 247. On this type of device and its functioning, see Melfi 1998–2000, pp. 291–297.

9. De Waele 1933, p. 95.

10. *Corinth XIV*, p. 39.

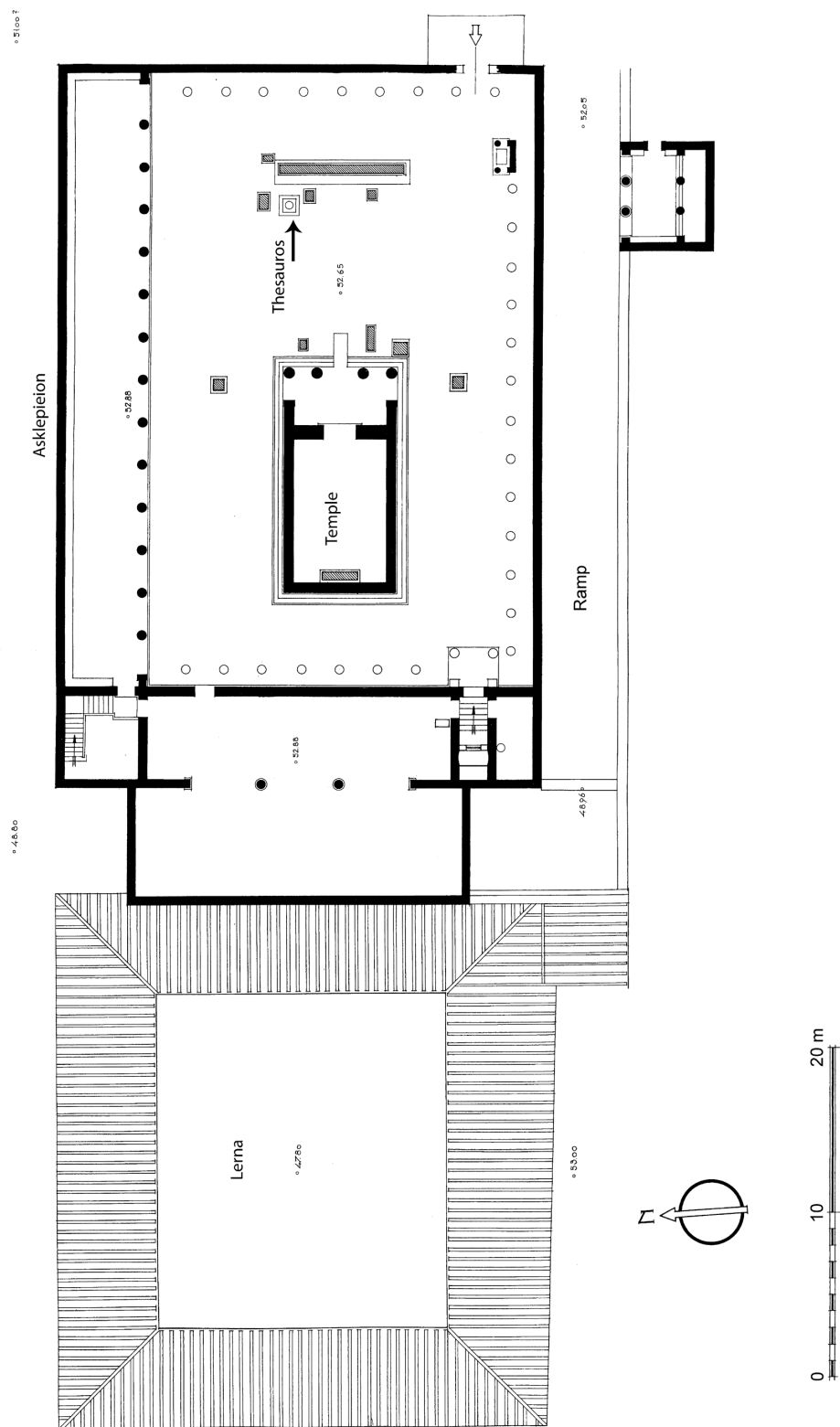
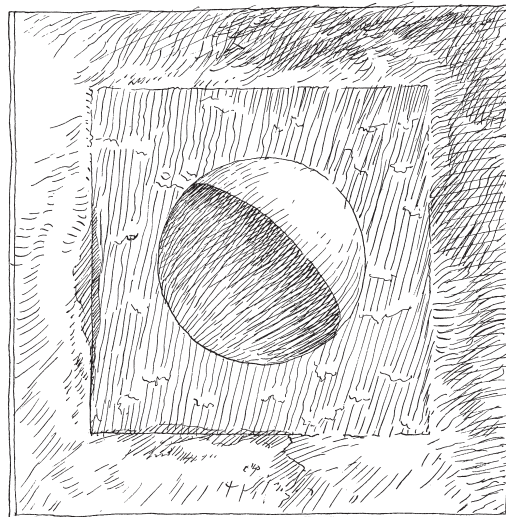
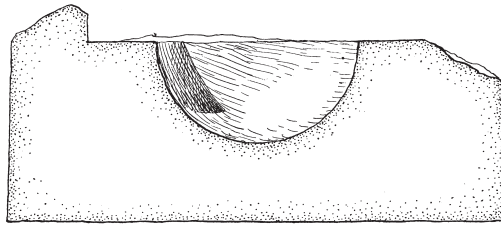


Figure 1. Restored plan of the Asklepieion and the Lerna. After *Corinth XIV*, plan B. Courtesy American School of Classical Studies at Athens



◊VIEW FROM ABOVE◊

0 10 20 30 40 50 cm.



◊SECTION◊

Figure 2. *Thesaurus of the Asklepieion*. After *Corinth XIV*, p. 29, fig. 6. Courtesy American School of Classical Studies at Athens

LAKEDAIMON

1 $\frac{1}{3}$ obol

Fig. 3

Inv. 1931-275; 6.09 g.

Bronze; well preserved.

Obverse: male head with diadem facing right.

Reverse: Λ - Φ ., eagle standing right with closed wings between letters Λ and Φ in field.

Grunauer-von Hoerschelmann 1978, p. 140 (group XVI/series 1/emission 6).

Ca. 42-39 B.C.

2 Hemiobol

Fig. 3

Inv. 1931-277; 6.66 g.

Bronze; well preserved.

Obverse: Λ YKOYPTOC, bearded head of Lykourgos facing right.Reverse: Λ -H., caduceus and club between letters Λ and H in field, in olive wreath.

Grunauer-von Hoerschelmann 1978, p. 149 (group XVII/series 1/emission 7).

Ca. 42-39 B.C.

3 $\frac{1}{3}$ obol

Fig. 3

Inv. 1931-274; 4.59 g.

Bronze; well preserved.

Obverse: diademed and draped bust of beardless man facing right.



Figure 3. Coin deposit from the *thesauros*. Scale 1:1. Photos J. Baker

Reverse: [. . .]-I, eagle standing right with closed wings between letters Λ and A in field.

Grunauer-von Hoerschelmann 1978, pp. 141–143 (group XVI/series 3, 4, 5, or 8/emission 8, 9, 10, or 13).

Ca. 42–39 B.C.

4 $\frac{1}{3}$ obol Fig. 3

Inv. 1931-271; 4.12 g.

Bronze; broken.

Obverse: ΑΤΡΑΤΙΝΟC, male portrait head facing right.

Reverse: ΦΙ-ΔΙ, eagle standing right with closed wings between letters Λ and A in field.

Grunauer-von Hoerschelmann 1978, p. 145 (group XVI/series 9/emission 14).

Ca. 39 to 36 B.C.

5 Hemiobol Fig. 3

Inv. 1931-278; 8.56 g.

Bronze; well preserved.

Obverse: ΛΥΚΟΥΡΓΟC, bearded head of Lykourgos facing right.

Reverse: ΦΙ-ΔΙ, caduceus club between letters Λ and A in field, in olive wreath.

Grunauer-von Hoerschelmann 1978, p. 152 (group XVII/series 7/emission 14).

Ca. 39 to 36 B.C.

6 Assarion Fig. 3

Inv. 1931-276; 5.08 g.

Bronze; chipped.

Obverse: ΛΥΚΟΥΡΓΟC, bearded head of Lykourgos facing right.

Reverse: ΔΙ-ΟΨΚ, caduceus club between letters Λ and A in field, in olive wreath.

Grunauer-von Hoerschelmann 1978, p. 155 (group XVII/series 15, but with readable legend on obverse/emission 26).

35–31 B.C.

ELIS

7 $\frac{1}{6}$ obol Fig. 3

Inv. 1931-280; 3.43 g.

Bronze; heavily damaged surface.

Obverse: laureate head of Apollo facing right.

Reverse: ΗΨ-Σ, Zeus striding right, hurling a thunderbolt with his right hand and holding an eagle on his outstretched left, between letters F and A.

SNGCop 438.

2nd century B.C.

8 $\frac{1}{6}$ obol Fig. 3

Inv. 1931-281; 2.62 g.

Bronze; heavily damaged surface.

Obverse: laureate head of Apollo right.

Reverse: ΗΨ-Σ, Zeus striding right, hurling a thunderbolt with his right hand and holding an eagle on his outstretched left, between letters F and A.

SNGCop 438.

2nd century B.C.

CORCYRA

- 9 Coin, uncertain denomination Fig. 3
 Inv. 1931-272; 10.79 g.
 Bronze; well preserved.
 Obverse: iugate heads of laureate Herakles and Corcyra facing right in wreath.
 Reverse: KOPKYPAIQN-ΦIAQTAS, prow of ship.
SNGMun 685.
 229–48 B.C.
- 10 Coin, uncertain denomination Fig. 3
 Inv. 1931-273; 7.18 g.
 Bronze; well preserved.
 Obverse: head of Herakles with lion skin facing right.
 Reverse: ΦIAQN-KP, prow of ship.
SNGMun 679.
 229–48 B.C.

UNCERTAIN ISSUER

- 11 Coin, uncertain denomination Fig. 3
 Inv. 1931-279; 4.59 g.
 Bronze; heavily damaged surface.
 Obverse: head facing right.
 Reverse: possible countermark, otherwise illegible.
 Originally suggested as Grunauer-von Hoerschelmann 1978, pp. 140–148 (group XVI).¹¹ This attribution would seem to be problematic on account of the size of the obverse head and the reverse countermark.
 1st century B.C.(?)

The majority of the coins in the deposit consist of Lakedaimonian bronzes, which can be dated with certainty within the period from 42 to 31 B.C. Grunauer-von Hoerschelmann's study of the Spartan mint identified 29 bronze emissions for the time period from 48 to 31 B.C.¹² The first six, following the dissolution of the Achaian League, follow purely Greek standards, while emissions seven to 16 closely resemble in style and weight contemporary denominations minted by Antony and his generals—such as the “fleet” coinage (38–37 B.C.). With emissions 17 and 18, which date to around 35 B.C., Roman denominations appear and the Greek system is abandoned.¹³ Sparta was probably the only producer of Romanized coinage in southern Greece before the battle of Actium.¹⁴ Coins 1–5 of our deposit are very close in date and all belong to the period when traditional denominations were still in use, though the slightly heavier standards and some technical characteristics reveal their kinship with Antonian coinages struck in Greece between the end of the 40s and the early years of the 30s.¹⁵ Among them, 3 is the most revealing issue, bearing the portrait of Antony's general L. Sempronius Atratinus, who was in Greece in the autumn of 39 B.C., where he acted as Antony's *legatus propraetor* until 36 B.C. Finally, coin 6 is the most recent of the group and is to be dated after 35 B.C., which is to say, after Sparta had shifted to the Roman system.

The remaining four readable coins consist of Hellenistic bronze issues of Elis and Corcyra, which are difficult to date. Elean bronzes of this type

11. The original identification of the coin as Lakedaimonian (in the coin cards in the Corinth Museum and in Edwards 1937) cannot currently be confirmed. It is possible that more of the coin type was visible in 1931, but both obverse and reverse are illegible at present.

12. Grunauer-von Hoerschelmann 1978, pp. 37–62 (updated in Kroll 1997, p. 128).

13. Kroll 1997, p. 128.

14. Kroll 1997, pp. 128–129; Cartledge and Spawforth 2002, p. 96.

15. On the similarities between the coinage of Sparta and the fleet coinage signed by L. Sempronius Atratinus in particular, see Kroll 1997, p. 129.

(7 and 8) are found in large quantities at the excavation sites of Olympia and Elis, and in a few other hoards.¹⁶ Their date is generally placed from the 3rd century to 191 B.C.: the *terminus ante quem* being the year in which Elis joined the Achaian League and started minting federal coinage exclusively.¹⁷ Unlike other, supposedly contemporary, Elean bronze emissions bearing the heads of Hera or Zeus on the obverse and traditional Elean types (e.g., eagle, horse, thunderbolt) on the reverse, 7 and 8 present the same combination, with the head of Apollo on the obverse and fulminating Zeus on the reverse.¹⁸ The head of Apollo is unattested in the earlier coinage of Elis, while the fulminating Zeus is only found in a rare early-5th-century emission of staters.¹⁹

It is interesting to note that Elis also used the fulminating Zeus to countermark bronze coins, evidently in a period when there was a dearth of bronze and coinage was needed.²⁰ This countermarking operation was not inconsiderable and involved both worn and unreadable bronze flans and Achaian federal bronzes of Elis.²¹ Although the countermarking of smooth, worn coins intended for circulation is not surprising, the countermarking of recently minted federal bronze coins, which is what occurred with these coins, can be interpreted as a political act. It may have marked the withdrawal of Elis from the *koinon* before or after the confrontation with Rome in 146 B.C.²² According to Warren, “after 146 such of the Achaian federal bronzes of Elis as were in circulation at Olympia (and/or Elis) were countermarked to relate them to the mainstream coinage of Olympia, whose bronze coinage would continue to be needed for the festival fair.”²³ The fulminating Zeus type therefore indicates that bronzes such as our 7 and 8—bearing the combination of head of Apollo/fulminating Zeus—can only be related to those countermarked coins. For this reason, I believe we should entertain the hypothesis that coins 7 and 8 might be later than 146 B.C., which is to say, they date to after the dissolution of the Achaian League.

Such a possibility has not been excluded by Oikonomidou and Nicolet-Pierre, and was supported by Gardner, who originally dated these coins to the period 146–43 B.C.²⁴ The worn state of many of the specimens found in hoards and excavation levels, and the fact that, according to Gardner (quoting Weil), they were often found in Olympia in association with Early Imperial coins, suggest that they were in circulation—whatever their date of production—in a period much later than 146 B.C.²⁵ Also, in Corinth, the fact that the Elean coins are significantly more worn than any of the other coins in our assemblage suggests that they were in circulation longer.

The bronze coins of Corcyra (9 and 10) are generally dated between 229 and 48 B.C., which is during the period in which the island was under Roman protection.²⁶ Any closer dating seems to be unachievable because of the lack of both archaeological information on the few published finds and datable hoards. It is nevertheless worth noting that coins of this type or of similar types, traditionally dated to the same period (229–48 B.C.), are found at Corinth in levels dating to around or post-146 B.C. One specimen of the series Herakles/prow (cf. 10) was found in an assemblage “closely linked to the catastrophe of 146 B.C.,” which had been either hidden in a well or tossed in at a time of general cleaning up.²⁷ Another example comes from Well 60-1 in the Roman Cellar building, which contained material from the first decade B.C. and was used to date the construction of the first

16. Oikonomidou 1963; Oikonomidou and Nicolet-Pierre 1993, pp. 198–203; Moustaka 1999, pp. 157–158.

17. Franke 1984, p. 21.

18. See Oikonomidou and Nicolet-Pierre 1993, p. 198, for the possible combinations of obverse/reverse.

19. Oikonomidou and Nicolet-Pierre 1993, p. 201.

20. Nicolet-Pierre 1992.

21. Nicolet-Pierre 1992; Warren 2007, pp. 132–133.

22. Franke 1984, p. 22.

23. Warren 2007, p. 132.

24. Gardner 1879, pp. 246–247; *BMC* (Elis), p. xxxviii; Oikonomidou and Nicolet-Pierre 1993, p. 203.

25. Gardner 1879, p. 247.

26. *BMC* (Corcyra), p. xlvi.1.

27. Thompson 1951, p. 357.

phase of the building.²⁸ Finally, a coin bearing on its obverse the iugate heads of Herakles and Corcyra (cf. 9) was found during the excavations of the west side of East Theater street, in the construction fill of the buttresses that supported the cavea of the theater.²⁹ The fill is dated to the late 1st into the 2nd century A.D., but all coins found therein seem to be earlier and can be dated between 37 B.C. and the Early Imperial period.³⁰

The iconography of these coins, bearing one or two heads on the obverse and a prow on the reverse—with a full and detailed epigraphical text—reminds one of the Roman bronzes minted under Antony in the East, such as the fleet coinage.³¹ Similarly, their heavy weight might be an adaptation to Roman standards, and in particular to the 8–11 g *as* of Roman coinages in the Aegean area.³² This would not be surprising considering that Corcyra had been under Roman influence since the last quarter of the 3rd century B.C. I would therefore suggest that these Corcyraean bronzes were produced in the later part of the period to which they are normally attributed (229–48 B.C.), and that they were certainly available at the end of the 1st century B.C. in Corinth.

THE DATE OF THE DEPOSITION

The composition of the deposit can clarify the circumstances of the deposition of the coins. The fact that six (possibly seven) of the 11 coins were minted in the same period by the same authority suggests that the deposition was intentional rather than the result of cleaning. These coins are all non-Corinthian, chronologically consistent, and relatively exceptional in a Corinthian context; this in itself is proof that they were part of a single deposit, rather than random sweepings from the floor, as initially suggested by Roebuck.³³ The six Spartan coins, in fact, date so tightly that they must have been deposited within a limited time frame, shortly after being minted, as a result of one single action or several successive actions. Although the dates of production—if not circulation—of the remaining coins might have been earlier than those of the Spartan coins, it is impossible to postulate that they were deposited significantly earlier, survived the Roman sack, and were left untouched inside the *thesauros* until the 30s B.C., when they were finally joined by the Spartan coins. Either their deposition, if a single event, would have occurred ca. 35–31 B.C., when the latest coin is dated, or the last deposition could have occurred in 35–31 B.C., with previous depositions taking place in a precise period of time between 42 and 31 B.C. Once we accept these dates, it is worth investigating the nature of the deposit and the possible provenience of the coins to see whether they reflect contemporary trends in coin circulation, both in Corinth and in the wider region of southern Greece.

Data on 1st-century B.C. coins found in Corinth are quite difficult to assemble because of the nature of the published record. Post-1929

28. Fisher 1980, p. 12; Warner-Slane 1986, pp. 274–283.

29. Williams and Zervos 1985, pp. 71–73.

30. Williams and Zervos 1985, p. 83.

31. Amandry 1986, 1987.

32. Kroll 1997, p. 124.

33. Roebuck suggested that the coins were swept into an empty and abandoned receptacle as part of a general cleaning, and were left there

following the destruction of 146 B.C. This idea is retained by Wickkiser in her recent contribution on the Corinthian Asklepieion (Wickkiser 2010, p. 57).

coin finds were most frequently published as lists ordered by their issuers, often without the inclusion of material or types, and of all coins found in Corinth after World War II, only those dug in Williams and Bookidis's excavations have been published in yearly reports.³⁴ In addition to this, a precise dating and attribution of post-146 B.C. coinages circulating in southern Greece has been achieved only in the last 30 years.³⁵ Therefore, all coin finds recorded in Corinth before the 1980s are imperfectly dated and cannot be reattributed securely, except in those cases where details of types and legends are fully published.

Despite these limitations, it is still possible to compare the data from our assemblage with the published sample available from Corinth in order to gain a general impression of the coins in circulation between the founding of the Caesarian colony and the battle of Actium (see Table 1). The great majority of stray finds securely dated to the period under investigation consists of local duoviral issues (30), followed by the coins of Lakedaimon (12), and Patrai (10). Also represented, though in much smaller quantities, are coins of Aigion (4), Tegea (1), Zakynthos under C. Sosius (1), and Dyme as a Caesarian colony (2), together with Roman Antonian emissions (three bronzes and one denarius, the latter from Gaul).

The Greek bronzes found at Corinth reflect the coin circulation in the Peloponnese in the years of the second triumvirate, when the cities of the Corinthian Gulf and Sparta were striking the most important emissions of civic bronzes. This minting activity took place both in those areas of Achaia that were officially subject to the Romans and in "free" and allied cities, such as Sparta. Introducing bronze through a forced exchange with Roman silver was possibly a response to Roman demands for currency, and at the same time it was a way of raising money for the old Greek poleis.³⁶

The fact that the coinages of Patrai, Aigion, Tegea, and Sparta were all minted following Greek standards in several denominations, were struck from flans that had been punched with central depressions, and gave space for inscriptional details, suggests that they were somehow connected and motivated by the same circumstances.³⁷ One possible motivation for these coinages may be found in the political climate of the Peloponnese under the rule of Antony when, after the battle of Philippi (42 B.C.) and the treaty of Brundisium (40 B.C.), the *triumvir* was left in charge of Greece and imposed heavy taxation on the Peloponnese in order to finance his military campaigns in the East. The range of Greek coinages found at Corinth reveals, in fact, a direct connection with Antony. Spartan bronzes such as those found in the Asklepieion deposit all belong to the period after Philippi (42 B.C.) because of the technical similarities with the fleet coinages. The emissions of Patrai are similarly believed to date after

34. For 1896–1929, see *Corinth VI*; for 1930–1935, see Edwards 1937; for 1936–1939, see Harris 1941. Post-1970s excavation reports containing coin finds are all published in *Hesperia*.

35. A general reassessment of the chronology of Peloponnesian coinages took place after Boehringer's study of post-146 B.C. issues of the Achaian

League; see Boehringer 1997, 2008; Warren 1997, 1999, 2005. Warren (1997, pp. 99–109), Kroll (1997), and Grandjean (1999) have all written in favor of Boehringer's idea that coin production continued well after the dissolution of the League and should be linked to a number of Peloponnesian civic issues; Thompson (1968),

Jessop Price (1967), and most recently Touratsoglou (2010, pp. 239–242) maintain that federal coinage ceased after 146 B.C. and partial minting operations took place only in order to contribute to military operations.

36. Kroll 1997, p. 126; Cartledge and Spawforth 2002, p. 96.

37. Kroll 1997, p. 126.

Philippi, when the city lent unquestioned support to Antony and became the main base of operations for Antony and Cleopatra in 32/1 B.C. The iconographical choices on the coins of Aigion—especially the Dionysos/eagle emission, which is well represented in Corinth—reveal that they were minted in the years between 37 and 31 B.C., during the liaison between Antony and Cleopatra.³⁸

The Roman coins found at Corinth confirm this numismatic picture. All Corinthian duoviral issues of the pre-Augustan period are attested. They include Antony's portrait in their types and share some technical characteristics, such as the use of flans that had been punched with central depressions, with the Greek bronzes of the Antonian Peloponnese. The presence of one coin minted in Zakynthos by Antony's general Sosius, and three specimens of the fleet coinage signed by L. Sempronius Atratinus and M. Oppius Capito, similarly contribute to an image of Corinth as a main base for Antony's operations in the East from the end of the 40s B.C.³⁹ This coexistence of denominations in the Greek monetary system struck by neighboring cities at Rome's behest (27 specimens), and coins of Roman standard produced by Roman colonial and military officers (37 specimens), is not at all surprising and reflects a pattern well described by Kroll. Both the Greek and the Roman systems were in use between 42 and 31 B.C.: they had similar but not identical denominational modules and weight standards, and they were both somehow compatible with the Roman denarius.⁴⁰

The deposit from the Asklepieion, therefore, although coherent with the numismatic context described above, presents some exceptional characteristics that give way to particular interpretations:

1. The Lakedaimonian coins are overrepresented if compared to the contemporary sample of stray finds from the whole of Corinth.
2. The deposit contains Greek civic bronzes only and does not include any of the Roman emissions in Greece.
3. Four bronze coins from Corcyra and Elis were deposited at the same time or shortly before the Lakedaimonian group.
4. The coins appear to have been deposited in groups of two or multiples of two.

From these observations, it appears clear that the coins were deposited in the *thesauros* at a time when Corinth was under Antony's control. This period corresponds to the very early years of the colony, from ca. 42 to 31 B.C. The coins must have been deposited in the *thesauros* shortly after it had been emptied—or following a period of abandonment, during which the offertory box had remained empty. *Thesauroi* were temporary storage devices for money offerings; they were regularly emptied and the money contained therein was used for the everyday functioning of the sanctuaries to which they belonged.⁴¹ The absence of Augustan-period emissions of Spartan coins minted under Eurykles suggests that our *thesauros* definitely went out of use after 31 B.C. The deposition therefore represents a very short period of cultic activity, during which the votive offering practice in the Sanctuary of Asklepios had resumed.

The coins may have been offered in groups or multiples of two; they are all bronze and of similar (mostly negligible) value, recalling a votive

38. Kroll 1996, 1997.

39. As suggested by Amandry in his study of the Corinthian duoviral bronzes (1988, p. 36).

40. Kroll 1997, p. 132.

41. The *thesauroi* of Delos were opened once a year, mostly at the beginning of the year, and, according to the epigraphic accounts, produced very limited sums of money. These coins were later transferred into the treasury of Apollo and were used for the regular expenses of the sanctuary (Bruneau 1970, pp. 366–368). At the Amphiaration of Oropos, the epigraphic evidence suggests that the money from the annual opening of the *thesauros* was used to pay the silversmiths who made the new dedications (Petraikos 1997, p. 233, no. 324, lines 33–37; Pafford 2011, p. 1308).

TABLE 1. STRAY FINDS OF COINS AT CORINTH DATED 44 TO 31 B.C.
(EXCLUDING AUGUSTUS)*

<i>Issuer</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Reference</i>	<i>Inv. No.</i>	<i>Findspot</i>	<i>No. of Specimens</i>
Corinth, <i>duoviri</i>	Caesar/Bellerophon (Aeficius-Julius)	44 or 43 B.C.	Williams and Fisher 1976, p. 145, no. 39	76-365	Forum Southwest	1
Corinth, <i>duoviri</i>	Caesar/Bellerophon (Aeficius-Julius)	44 or 43 B.C.	Fisher 1980, p. 15, no. 59	76-362	Forum Southwest	1
Corinth, <i>duoviri</i>	Caesar/Bellerophon (Aeficius-Julius)	44 or 43 B.C.	Williams and Zervos 1982, p. 150, no. 9	81-185 81-222	East of Theater	1
Corinth, <i>duoviri</i>	Caesar/Bellerophon (Aeficius-Julius)	44 or 43 B.C.	Williams and Zervos 1984, p. 112, no. 9	83-157	East of Theater	1
Corinth, <i>duoviri</i>	Caesar/Bellerophon (Aeficius-Julius)	44 or 43 B.C.	Fisher 1984, p. 228, no. 72	77-297	Forum Southwest	1
Corinth, <i>duoviri</i>	Caesar/Bellerophon (Aeficius-Julius)	44 or 43 B.C.	Mac Isaac 1987, p. 104, no. 6	25-337 25-371 25-498 26-632 26-804 26-811	Theater area	6
Corinth, <i>duoviri</i>	Caesar/Bellerophon (Aeficius-Julius)	44 or 43 B.C.	Williams and Zervos 1988, p. 136, no. 7	T87-372	East of Theater	1
Corinth, <i>duoviri</i>	Bellerophon/Poseidon (Chilo-Nikephoros)	43 or 42 B.C.	Fisher 1984, p. 228, no. 73	77-1093	East of Theater	1
Corinth, <i>duoviri</i>	Bellerophon/Poseidon (Chilo-Nikephoros)	43 or 42 B.C.	Williams and Zervos 1982, p. 150, no. 10	81-221 81-225	East of Theater	2
Corinth, <i>duoviri</i>	Chimaera/Nike (Insteius-Castricius)	42 or 41 B.C.	Fisher 1980, p. 15, nos. 62-65	76-165 76-206 76-207 76-383	Forum Southwest	4
Corinth, <i>duoviri</i>	Zeus/Athena (Insteius-Castricius)	42 or 41 B.C.	Williams and Zervos 1985, p. 85, no. 11	84-91	East of Theater	1
Corinth, <i>duoviri</i>	Zeus/Athena (Insteius-Castricius)	42 or 41 B.C.	Mac Isaac 1987, p. 104, no. 7	26-649	Theater area	1
Corinth, <i>duoviri</i>	vase/CO RIN in wreath (Publilius-Orestes)	40 B.C.	Williams and Zervos 1991, p. 45, no. 7	90-280	Temenos E	1
Corinth, <i>duoviri</i>	Poseidon/Aebutius- Pinnius in wreath	39-36 B.C.	Williams and Zervos 1985, p. 85, no. 12	84-24	Forum Southwest	1
Corinth, <i>duoviri</i>	Poseidon/Aebutius- Pinnius in wreath	39-36 B.C.	Mac Isaac 1987, p. 105, no. 9	26-446	Forum Southwest	1

*The dates are based on Amandry 1988 (for the duoviral bronzes), Grunauer-von Hoerschelmann 1978 (for Sparta), and Kroll 1996, 1997 (for the other Peloponnesian cities).

TABLE 1—*Continued*

<i>Issuer</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Reference</i>	<i>Inv. No.</i>	<i>Findspot</i>	<i>No. of Specimens</i>
Corinth, <i>duoviri</i>	Antony/prow (Aebutius-Pinnius)	39–36 B.C.	Williams and Zervos 1986, p. 168, no. 7	85-232	Forum Southwest	1
Corinth, <i>duoviri</i>	Poseidon/chimaera (Aebutius-Pinnius)	39–36 B.C.	Williams and Fisher 1976, p. 145, no. 40	75-73	Forum Southwest	1
Corinth, <i>duoviri</i>	Poseidon/Aebutius-Pinnius in wreath	39–36 B.C.	Fisher 1984, p. 228, nos. 74, 75	77-119 77-1241	Forum Southwest	2
Corinth, <i>duoviri</i>	Aphrodite/Pegasus (Niger-Pamphilus)	34–31 B.C.	Williams and Zervos 1989, p. 41, no. 9	T88-173 88-175	East of Theater	2
Aigion	Zeus/fulminating boy Zeus	37–31 B.C.	<i>Corinth</i> VI, p. 53, no. 325	unknown	unknown	1
Aigion	Dionysos/eagle	37–31 B.C.	<i>Corinth</i> VI, p. 53, no. 326	unknown	unknown	1
Aigion	Zeus/fulminating boy Zeus	37–31 B.C.	Fisher 1980, p. 20, no. 112	76-78	Forum Southwest	1
Aigion	Artemis/Eileithya	37–31 B.C.	Fisher 1980, p. 20, no. 113	76-204	Forum Southwest	1
Dyme	Caesar/plow (Arrius and Tanginus)	40 B.C.	Bookidis and Fisher 1972, p. 328, no. 64	69-786	Sanctuary of Demeter and Kore	1
Dyme	Caesar /plow (Arrius and Tanginus)	40 B.C.	Williams, MacIntosh, and Fisher 1974, p. 59, no. 125	73-293	unknown	1
Lakedaimon	Herakles/club (Grunauer-von Hoerschelmann, emission 6?)	42–31 B.C.	<i>Corinth</i> VI, p. 58, no. 364	unknown	unknown	1
Lakedaimon	Lykourgos/caduceus-club (Grunauer-von Hoerschelmann, emission 12)	42–31 B.C.	<i>Corinth</i> VI, p. 58, no. 363	unknown	unknown	2
Lakedaimon	Lykourgos/ caduceus-club (Grunauer-von Hoerschelmann, emission 12)	42–31 B.C.	Williams and Zervos 1991, p. 46, no. 26	90-302	Temenos E, southeast corner	1
Lakedaimon	Lykourgos/ caduceus-club (Grunauer-von Hoerschelmann, emission 21)	42–31 B.C.	<i>Corinth</i> VI, p. 59, no. 367	unknown	unknown	1
Lakedaimon	Athena/Dioskouroi (Grunauer-von Hoerschelmann, emission 17)	42–31 B.C.	<i>Corinth</i> VI, p. 59, no. 365	unknown	unknown	1
Lakedaimon	Apollo/Artemis (Grunauer-von Hoerschelmann, emission 21)	42–31 B.C.	<i>Corinth</i> VI, p. 59, no. 366	unknown	unknown	1
Lakedaimon	not specified	146–31 B.C.	Harris 1941, p. 150	unknown	unknown	3

Continued on next page

TABLE 1—*Continued*

<i>Issuer</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Reference</i>	<i>Inv. No.</i>	<i>Findspot</i>	<i>No. of Specimens</i>
Lakedaimon	Herakles/club	42–31 B.C.	Bookidis and Fisher 1974, p. 303, no. 60	74-424	Sanctuary of Demeter and Kore	1
Lakedaimon	Dioskouroi/amphoras	42–31 B.C.	Fisher 1980, p. 22, no. 143	76-122	Frankish columned hall	1
Patrai	Athena/Poseidon	end of 40s	<i>Corinth</i> VI, p. 53, no. 327	unknown	unknown	1
Patrai	Athena/Poseidon	end of 40s	Williams and Zervos 1982, p. 151, no. 29	81-215	East of Theater	1
Patrai	Athena/Poseidon	end of 40s	Mac Isaac 1987, p. 111, no. 139	26-634	East of Theater	1
Patrai	Herakles/Athena	end of 40s	<i>Corinth</i> VI, p. 54, no. 328	unknown	unknown	1
Patrai	Herakles/Athena	early–mid 30s	<i>Corinth</i> VI, p. 54, no. 328	unknown	unknown	2
Patrai	Herakles/Athena	early–mid 30s	Fisher 1984, p. 233, no. 120	77-424	Forum Southwest	1
Patrai	Athena/Poseidon	40s to 30s	Jessop Price 1967, p. 382, no. 107	unknown	Wells V and VII (South Stoa)	2
Patrai	Athena/Poseidon	40s to 30s	Bookidis and Fisher 1974, p. 302, no. 52	71-223	Sanctuary of Demeter and Kore	1
Tegea	Athena/Telephos	50–25 B.C.	<i>Corinth</i> VI, p. 68, no. 436	unknown	Sanctuary of Demeter and Kore	1
Zakynthos	Poseidon/dolphin (C. Sosius)	32 B.C.	Williams and Zervos 1989, p. 42, no. 28	T88-196	East of Theater	1
Rome, fleet coinage	Antony and Octavia (facing)/galley (Capito)	36–35 B.C.	<i>Corinth</i> VI, p. 75, no. 6	unknown	unknown	1
Rome, fleet coinage	Antony and Octavia (iugate)/galley (Fisher: Capito; Amandry: Atratinus)	36–35 B.C.	Williams and Fisher 1975, p. 40, no. 56	74-13	unknown	1
Rome, fleet coinage	Antony and Octavia (iugate)/galley	36–35 B.C.	<i>Corinth</i> VI, p. 76, no. 7	unknown	unknown	1
Gaul, denarius	Antony/Caesar	ca. 42 B.C.	Williams and Zervos 1982, p. 152, no. 42	81-178	East of Theater	1

pattern known from other sites. In fact, Greek sacred laws often prescribed the preliminary payment of a precise sum of money to Asklepios (or to other healing gods), and its deposition in a *thesauros*, in order to be admitted to the healing rites.⁴² In the Amphiaraiion at Oropos, worshippers seeking a cure had to pay in advance a sum of nine obols; while in Athens,

42. On this subject, see Gorrini and Melfi 2002, pp. 255–260; Pafford 2011.

they were charged one drachma.⁴³ These quite substantial 4th-century B.C. coin offerings seem to diminish steadily in the Hellenistic period. A sacred regulation from the Asklepieion of Pergamon prescribed that visitors wishing to enter the *enkoimeterion* should pay into the *thesauros* of the god a fee of only three obols.⁴⁴ Similarly, an inscription engraved on the *thesauros* of Theagenes in the Agora of Thasos warned the worshippers that they would gain access to the rites only after paying “not less than one obol.”⁴⁵ Between the second quarter of the 3rd and the mid-2nd century B.C., the Delian accounts register a steady decrease in the annual income from all the *thesauroi* of the island.⁴⁶ The yearly revenue of the *thesauros* of Asklepios, in particular, decreased from a maximum of 28 drachmas in 250 B.C. to a minimum of one drachma and one obol in 174 B.C.⁴⁷ The sums paid in Lakedaimonian and Corcyraean monies to Asklepios in Corinth—in single or in successive depositions—are therefore of a magnitude comparable to those frequently offered in other Greek *thesauroi* of the 2nd and 1st centuries B.C.

While the number and value of the coins is largely consistent with the pattern described above, their overall provenience appears exceptional. The absence of coins produced by Roman colonial and military officers makes it likely that the dedicant(s) were travelers. It is reasonable to assume that—whether colonists or simple visitors—the dedicant(s) might have found it easier to put their spare change from out of town into the sanctuary offering box rather than taking it to a moneychanger and paying the exchange fee.⁴⁸ The presence of Lakedaimonian coins might point to the direct or indirect provenience of the dedicant(s) from Sparta itself, or, more likely, to their involvement in military operations or business enterprises in or around Lakonia.⁴⁹ The two coins of Corcyra draw a similar picture. In fact, Corcyra, as much as Sparta, was one of Antony’s strategic bases in the East, particularly after his alliance with Domitius Ahenobarbus, who had established an actual thalassocracy on the Ionian Sea.⁵⁰ The same people involved in the logistics of Antony’s military presence in Lakonia could easily have been involved in Antony’s operations in Corcyra and, in general, on the Ionian Sea. Here, in 39 B.C., the *triumvir* had left his lieutenants Proculeius and Sosius in charge of the naval bases of Zakynthos and Kephallonia. The fact that the coins of Corcyra “came to Corinth by way of Sparta,” as suggested by de Waele, cannot be proved at this point, but it might well illustrate another aspect of the same phenomenon.⁵¹ In addition to this, the two Elean *dichalkoi* could either have been in Corinthian or general Peloponnesian circulation when the Spartan and Corcyraean coins were deposited in the *thesauros*, or, in fact, they may not have been in

43. Meritt 1936, p. 401, no. 10, lines 142–147; Petrakos 1997, p. 179, no. 277, lines 20–24.

44. The Pergamenian regulation dates to the 2nd century A.D., but it is believed to reproduce a 2nd-century B.C. text; see Habicht 1969, no. 161, lines 8, 22–23.

45. Sokolowski 1962, no. 72, lines 112–113. The inscription probably dates to the 1st century B.C. The

mention of a minimum fee may imply that people tried to get away with less money than was appropriate.

46. The revenues of the Delian *thesauroi* became so negligible that in the accounts of 140/39 B.C. they are all grouped under the same entry; see Bruneau 1970, pp. 366–368.

47. Bruneau 1970, pp. 366–367.

48. This may have been the case especially considering the very low

value of some of the coins (e.g., the Elean bronzes).

49. Lakonia, being located along the route between Italy and Egypt, was pivotal for the logistical organization of Antony’s forces (Kroll 1997, p. 128).

50. Deniaux 2001, p. 99; 2007, p. 83.

51. De Waele n.d., p. 96.

contemporary circulation at all. Nevertheless, these coins also underline the preference for Greek denominations in the deposit, and they may serve as a further pointer to the activity of the dedicants prior to their deposition in the sanctuary.

Elis, as much as Corcyra and Sparta—with its harbors of Gythion and Methone—is located along the coastal route of western Greece from which shipping lanes departed to the north toward Italy and to the south toward Egypt.⁵² The fact that coins of Elis of all periods are almost exclusively hoarded in the south Peloponnese (Kyparissia, Zacharo), with the telling exception of the hoard of Zakynthos, seems to confirm that they moved swiftly along this same route.⁵³ Their presence in the Asklepieion is particularly interesting because they are rare at Corinth, which suggests that they were brought by someone who had acquired them in their area of origin.⁵⁴ Anyone traveling along the Adriatic and Ionian coasts of Greece, possibly to coordinate transportation of goods and troops from Italy and Egypt, though not necessarily crossing the sea, could have easily owned the range of coins attested in the Asklepieion deposit. I would therefore propose that those who left the coins in the *thesauros* of the Asklepieion were not primarily inhabitants or colonists of Corinth itself, with access to the different coinage and denominations that are characteristic of the stray finds from Corinth, but rather officers or businessmen involved in the reorganization of the Antonian Peloponnese, who were entrusted in particular with the establishment of the new colony at Corinth. That these individuals might have been of Greek, rather than Roman, origin is suggested by their exclusive use of Greek civic coins and by their adherence to the traditional Greek votive pattern in the dedication of the coins; this is particularly striking in view of the religious and cultural discontinuity that followed the destruction of Corinth and its refoundation as a Roman colony.

THE DEPOSIT IN THE CONTEXT OF THE ASKLEPIEION SITE

The Asklepieion at Corinth was founded in the last quarter of the 5th century B.C. close to a spring of fresh water on the edge of a terrace that was to constitute the northern boundary of the city. It originally consisted of a small temple, a secondary building (*oikos*), and a third rectangular structure of unknown use. Abundant dedications of anatomical ex-votos in terracotta attest to the frequentation of the sanctuary and its healing vocation. Around 300 B.C., the Asklepieion was entirely transformed (Fig. 1). Its sacred area

52. The importance of this route in the years around the battle of Actium is suggested by Strabo (8.4.3) and well explained by Baladié (1980, pp. 246–247) in his commentary: a major move made by Agrippa in the preparations for the battle was the conquest of the port of Methone. Methone covered, in fact, the south flank of Antony's forces

on the west coast of Greece, stretching from Epiros to the southwest tip of the Peloponnese.

53. Kyparissia: *IGCH* 209; Zacharo: *IGCH* 302; Zakynthos: *IGCH* 245.

54. Four Elean coins are listed by Edwards (*Corinth* VI, p. 57, nos. 352–354), and three by Harris (1941, p. 150) from the 1936–1939 excavations.

Mac Isaac (1987) detected none in over 5,000 coins from Shear's excavations. According to Michael Ierardi, about a half dozen come from the modern excavations and the Apollo head/fulminating Zeus issue accounts for only about five of these outside the Asklepieion deposit (pers. comm.).

was reorganized and surrounded with colonnades and porticoed buildings. A new, larger temple and a monumental altar for Asklepios were built along the main axis of the complex. Most importantly, the cultic buildings were physically connected with the nearby spring thanks to the construction of the Lerna, a multistory monumental fountain directly accessible from the inner room (*abaton*) at the back of the temple. With its stoas, architectural symmetry, and use of terracing, the new Asklepieion perfectly conformed to the contemporary trends in sanctuary architecture, while providing all the structures necessary for the performance of healing rites: there were rooms for bathing and dining, as well as areas for waiting and dedicating. The Lerna, on the other hand, probably did not maintain an exclusively cultic function, because it was also accessible from the outside, via a ramp or sloping street that started parallel to the sacred precinct on its south side and reached the level of the Lerna courtyard, 4 m below. It is therefore possible that the Lerna water system, with its reservoirs and basins, was accessible to all Corinthians for drawing water.

After 146 B.C., the Asklepieion shows evidence of disrepair and neglect. A filling accumulated in the courtyard of the sanctuary, on the ramp, and in the entrance court to the Lerna. Wheel ruts across the colonnade and in the lower section of the ramp also suggest that a road for vehicles passed through the sanctuary before a Roman building was constructed on the site (Fig. 4).⁵⁵ According to Romano, this road testifies to the first Roman attempt at reorganizing Corinthian land, possibly as a consequence of the *lex agraria* of 111 B.C., which prescribed the measurement (for leasing or sale) of parts of the *ager publicus* of Corinth. It appears, in fact, that this road passed from the northwestern corner of the Lerna through a break in the Greek city walls and onto the plain, where it connected with one of the several newly created Roman roads in the framework of an early *limitatio* of the land north of the city.⁵⁶ It is surprising that the Romans wanted a road at this exact location, since there must have been other Greek roads passing nearby through proper gates in the city walls. The explanation might simply be that the Romans needed to connect with the new limitation, which did not necessarily respect the location of the existing Greek city gates, as Romano suggested. I would not rule out another possibility: that the Asklepieion played a role as a landmark or reference point for the Roman surveyors. Even in the later phases of land division, the sacred complex seems to have represented a sort of border between the different systems, probably because of its position along the Greek walls.

If the cart road was created following the *lex agraria* of 111 B.C., we must assume that by that time the Lerna, or at least part of its south colonnade and propylon, was in ruins, while the Asklepieion might still have been standing, since it was respected by the new roadway that bordered its south side along the ramp. It is, nevertheless, difficult to assess to what extent the cultic buildings suffered damage and whether they could still be in use. The presence of at least one Knidian stamped amphora handle in the fill of the abandoned buildings suggests that some activity took place in the sanctuary at the end of the 2nd or at the beginning of the 1st century B.C.⁵⁷ Whether the site was being cleaned up for a planned refurbishment, or worshippers occasionally visited the sanctuary and made prayers to the god, is difficult to say.⁵⁸

55. *Corinth* XIV, pp. 80–83; Melfi 2007b, p. 305. What Roebuck interpreted as a later monumentalization of the complex is today seen as an enlargement of the gymnasium dated to around A.D. 100; see Wiseman 1969, pp. 65–67.

56. Romano 2003, pp. 280–281.

57. Gebhard and Dickie 2003, p. 269. Roebuck records the presence of fragments of lamps and Knidian stamped amphoras belonging to the mid-2nd century B.C. and later (*Corinth* XIV, pp. 80–82).

58. Bookidis 2003, pp. 255–256; 2005, pp. 148–149.

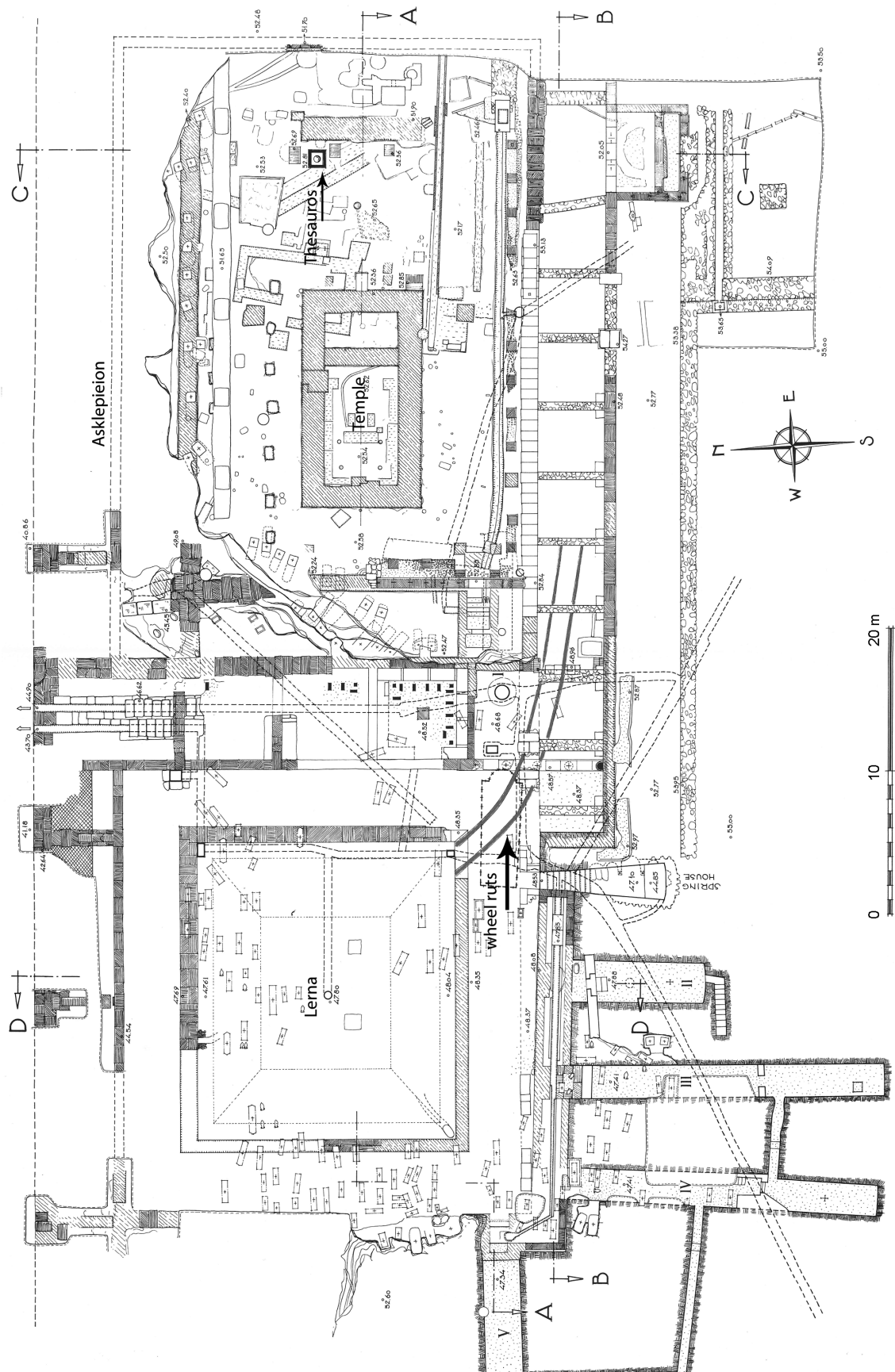


Figure 4. State plan of the Asklepieion and the Lerna after the excavations. After *Corinth XIV*, plan A. Courtesy American School of Classical Studies at Athens

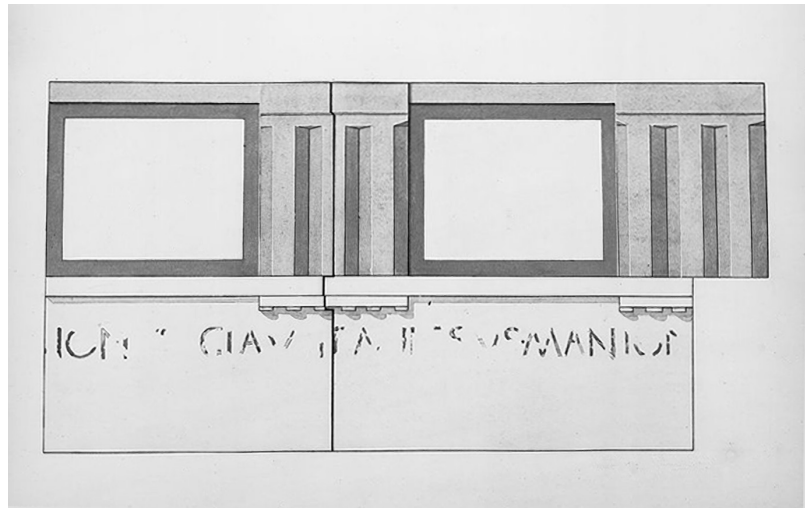


Figure 5. Inscription on the epistyle of the temple of Asklepios. Scale 1:20. After *Corinth* XIV, pl. 11, no. 6. Courtesy American School of Classical Studies at Athens

The first repairs made to the temple of Asklepios involved the superstructure of the building, probably the ceiling and roof of the pronaos. An epistyle block of the original Doric temple was reworked, possibly to accommodate the replacement of one of its ceiling beams. Some fragments of an Early Roman *sima* with lion's-head spouts, have been associated with this restoration of the roof.⁵⁹ The epistyle preserves an inscription in red letters (Fig. 5). It bore the names of at least two individuals who might have been responsible for the restoration of the temple: M. Antonius Milesius, son of Glaukos, and a second M. Antonius, whose *cognomen* is lost.⁶⁰

The name Marcus Antonius Milesius has been interpreted by Roebuck as that of a freedman of Antonius, and by Kent as that of a Corinthian who received Roman citizenship through Antonius. The geographical connotation of the name “Milesian” suggests either the place of origin of our Marcus Antonius or the fact that he belonged to a specific category of stateless persons, namely the “Milesians,” attested mainly in Attica in the Late Hellenistic and Early Roman periods.⁶¹ It is generally believed that some of these “Milesians” were genuine Milesian immigrants, while others were only loosely associated with them as freedmen, citizens marrying their own freed slaves, or illegitimate children.⁶² Scholars have proposed a number of reasons that might have prompted a steady influx of immigration of Milesians specifically directed toward Attica between 100 B.C. and A.D. 200.⁶³ Specifically for the 1st century B.C., Vestergaard suggests that some Milesians may have reached Athens as slaves from Delos, and that they used their original ethnic upon manumission.⁶⁴ The servile origin of some Milesian women has also recently been proposed on the basis of their association with Isis, in the name of whom they may have been formally manumitted.⁶⁵ What is significant for our investigation is that the term “Milesian” ended up indicating a large number of individuals of obscure origins whose status was comparable to that of “the classical metics.”⁶⁶ I would therefore suggest that Antonius Milesius, son of Glaukos—whether genuinely Milesian or not—was of Greek origin and probably came from a servile background. In particular, Milesius, as much as the other individual(s) whose name was written on the epistyle, was linked to Antonius, having

59. *Corinth* XIV, p. 39.

60. *Corinth* VIII.3, no. 311. According to Roebuck (*Corinth* XIV, p. 39), “since the inscription began at the end of the epistyle on the front of the temple, it presumably was carried across its whole length. Thus, in addition to the names preserved, three or possibly four more may be supplied.”

61. For the best definition of this category of individuals, see Lambert 2000, p. 500.

62. Baslez 1989, p. 27.

63. Vestergaard 2000.

64. Vestergaard 2000, p. 96.

65. Bricault 2008, p. 104; Martzavou 2011, pp. 78–79.

66. Lambert 2000, p. 500.

obtained through him either his freedom or Roman citizenship. As a *homo novus* of servile background or freedman of Greek origin connected with Antony and his logistical network in the East, Milesius seems to make the perfect colonial officer or businessman to be employed in the organization of the early colony at Corinth. As was the case for M. Antonius Orestes, M. Antonius Theophilus, and M. Antonius Hipparchus, Milesius too was likely counted among the number of Antony's freedmen-agents in Corinth.⁶⁷ He might even be the same person as the *duovir* whose name is later attested together with that of Graecinus on the Augustan coins of the colony at Butrint.⁶⁸ The fact that these coins bear the staff of Asklepios on their reverses would confirm Milesius's special connection with the god and suggest at the Asklepieion of Butrint a phenomenon of patronage comparable to that at Corinth.⁶⁹

The obvious question is when exactly the restoration of the Asklepieion by Milesius, the other Antonius, and possibly additional individuals should be placed. Kent dated the inscriptional evidence to 25 B.C., while admitting that the epistyle from the Asklepieion is the earliest written record of building activity in Roman Corinth.⁷⁰ Roebuck warned that "it would be unwise to assume that Milesius's activity took place in the period of Antony's supremacy" because the name of the *triumvir* was very common in the East, and he could well have been the son or descendant of one of Antony's freedmen.⁷¹ More recently, Wickkiser has suggested that Milesius's restoration of the Asklepieion took place in the wake of Actium, and was in line with Augustan religious and cultural policy.⁷² I would argue, nevertheless, that a number of elements suggest that the restoration of the superstructure of the temple of Asklepios took place in the period of Antony's influence over the city, which is to say at the time of the Caesarian refoundation.

The Roman inscription bearing the names of Milesius and the other Antonius was later covered and made invisible under a layer of coarse white stucco.⁷³ According to de Waele, the reason for the concealment of the names should be sought in the "moral *damnatio memoriae*" that affected Antony, along with his relatives and closest collaborators, after Actium.⁷⁴ Both Roebuck and Kent dismissed such an explanation, mostly based on the fact that several Antonii were allowed to pursue a political career even after 31 B.C.⁷⁵ For example, in Corinth, M. Antonius Theophilus and M. Antonius Hipparchus, father and son, were both known to have served as *duoviri*, the latter, in particular, being the "first of Antony's freedmen to go over to Octavian after Actium" (Plut. *Ant.* 67). However, we also know that in Corinth, documents bearing the name of Antony were actually erased after the Battle of Actium. A recently republished inscription commemorating the transfer of a fleet across the isthmus, under the command of Antony's grandfather, bears certain testimony for this phenomenon: the stone was erased in order to remove the name connected to the *triumvir*.⁷⁶ This was the time when Greek cities were prompted to destroy all monuments in honor of the *triumvir*, while in Rome his name was being removed from the *Fasti* and all his descendants were forbidden to use the *praenomen* Marcus (Plut. *Ant.* 86–87).⁷⁷ Is it possible that the same circumstances, or,

67. M. Antonius Orestes: *RPC* I, nos. 1122, 1123; M. Antonius Theophilus: *RPC* I, nos. 1129–1131 and Plut. *Ant.* 67; M. Antonius Hipparchus: Plut. *Ant.* 67.

68. *RPC* I, no. 1387. In this case, we should assume that Milesius, being a *duovir* in Butrint, was a Roman citizen.

69. Melfi 2007a, p. 27.

70. *Corinth* VIII.3, p. 21.

71. *Corinth* XIV, p. 39.

72. Wickkiser (2010, p. 57, n. 64) subscribes to the assumption that Milesius's restoration should be dated after the concealment of the coins.

73. De Waele 1933, p. 434; *Corinth* XIV, p. 39.

74. De Waele 1933, p. 454.

75. *Corinth* XIV, p. 39; *Corinth* VIII.3, p. 123, no. 311.

76. *Corinth* VIII.2, pp. 1–4, no. 1; Gebhard and Dickie 2003, p. 272.

77. Chamoux 1986, pp. 380–384; Kantirea 2007, p. 37.

at least the shift of political power following Antony's disgrace, prompted the concealment of the name of Miliesius and his comrades from the Asklepieion epistyle?

It may be asked then, if this were so, why should Miliesius and the other donors have suffered such defamation, while other contemporary Antonii remained apparently unaffected by Antony's disgrace? Perhaps this episode reflects the tension between different political factions in Corinth in the aftermath of the Battle of Actium. While some of Antony's agents promptly switched to Octavian's party, others—such as, perhaps, M. Antonius Miliesius and M. Antonius Orestes, whose fate after Actium is similarly unknown—might not have done so. In addition to this, Miliesius, whose name alone suggests an obscure and servile origin, was probably an easier target for Antony's enemies than Theophilus and Hipparchus, who were more established members of the Corinthian political elite. Miliesius was probably not entrusted with any official or political role and he had no deep roots in the local community.⁷⁸ His name could therefore be cancelled, perhaps not as a result of an official *damnatio memoriae*, but rather as an effective act of propaganda on the part of the new ruling elite.

Thus, Miliesius may very well have been a victim of the *refus de mémoire* that seems to have hit many of Antony's partisans of the lowest ranks, as opposed to the proper legal condemnation, which required an official intervention of the Roman state and was reserved for Antony's family and the last Republican leaders.⁷⁹ If this scenario is correct, the inscription of Miliesius and the other Antonii may have been carved before the Battle of Actium, at a time when Mark Antony's name was not controversial, and later concealed under a thick layer of stucco when Octavian took charge of the colony of Corinth. It might not be a coincidence that the coins of the Augustan colony at Butrint mentioned above bear the name of "Miliesius" only: if the *duovir* at Butrint is the same as the dedicant at Corinth, we should assume that he thought it appropriate not to mention his Roman *praenomen* and *nomen* in public documents at a later stage of his career.⁸⁰

The coins in the *thesauros* of the Asklepieion serve to further clarify elements of this picture. They were certainly—in whatever sequence—deposited after 42 B.C., and possibly shortly before 31 B.C. After a period of abandonment and the construction of the cart road, the Asklepieion was, therefore, again in use and dedications of coins were deposited in the *thesauros*. Since the use of the sanctuary had resumed, it is likely that the repairs of the collapsed roof of the temple had just happened or were happening at the same time. The hypothesized pre-Actium date for Miliesius's inscription would support the idea that the epistyle of the temple was carved at the same time that the use of the *thesauros* was restored. A definition of this phase of the Asklepieion as "Antonian" would not be far-fetched, considering that the patrons who funded the temple restorations were all connected to Antony and that the coin circulation attested in the *thesauros*'s deposit reflects exactly the climate of the early years of the colony, when officers and businessmen—such as Miliesius and the other Antonii—were laying the foundation for the new relationship between Rome, the Adriatic, and the Antonian Peloponnese.

78. It is interesting to note that in our epistyle the ethnic Miliesius follows the *praenomen* and *nomen* of the patron Marcus Antonius. This is the position where in freedman's onomastic formulas the original name of the freedman is normally placed. Miliesius, therefore, addresses himself simply by the ethnic and does not use a traditional Greek name, such as M. Antonius Orestes or M. Antonius Theophilus. This further indicates his obscure origins.

79. Ferriès 2007, p. 58. An official *damnatio memoriae* would have required a *senatus consultus* and the application of a legal procedure. This affected only a few individuals; the majority of Antony's partisans were rehabilitated, either by paying a fine or through diplomatic negotiations.

80. This is an unusual onomastic formula, considering that nearly all magistrates of Augustan Butrint are recorded by *praenomen* and *nomen* (see the table in Hansen 2011, p. 89).

Whether the *thesauros* survived the Mummian sack or, after suffering damage, was appropriately restored at the same time as the temple, is a matter of speculation, but it is certain that at one point after 42 B.C. it had resumed its function. As mentioned above, since only 11 coins were found in its cavity, they must have been deposited shortly after the *thesauros* had been emptied or following a period of abandonment. The paucity of coins and negligible values are not surprising considering that they were deposited within a very limited time period and that the *thesauros* went out of use shortly afterward, by 31 B.C.⁸¹ They therefore reflect a very limited portion of its activity and revenues. What is surprising is that the *thesauros* was reused and abandoned within such a short time.

It is probable that major structural changes took place in the temple forecourt, whereby the floor level around the altar was raised and the *thesauros* was consequently interred. Only the concealment of the offertory box under a layer of earth or filling material can explain the in-situ preservation of the coin deposit. If the lid (now lost) had remained in place, it would have preserved the coins while building works were proceeding over and around it. The value of the coins left in the receptacle was probably not worth the effort of retrieving them. In Delos, for example, some bronze coins were similarly left inside the *thesauros* of the Hermaists, in the Stoa of Philip V, and retrieved only when the site was excavated.⁸² Alternatively, if the lid had been removed either with a simple lever system, or even by smashing it into pieces (thanks to the cavity underneath) the lifting of the lower block—which had been in place for more than 300 years—might have proved difficult and time consuming. The coins could therefore have been overlooked in the rubble associated with the building works.

The abandonment of the *thesauros* and the concealment of the inscription on the epistyle of the temple of Asklepios seem to mark the end of a phase for the cult at the Asklepieion. Both events took place after Actium, appear to seal a short “Antonian” phase in the life of the Asklepieion, and anticipate the beginning of a new era under Octavian. The interruption of the practice of depositing coin offerings in a purpose-made *thesauros* suggests, in particular, a significant change in votive giving and possibly a transformation of the ritual itself. In the cult of Asklepios, the payment of preliminary fees had important implications in the performance of both sacrificial and healing rites, and it was a fundamental part of the prescribed ritual. Was the preliminary fee no longer paid? Were the monetary offerings collected in different ways? Were there no further offerings of this kind? Whatever the reason, this Corinthian development reflects a more general phenomenon in Roman Greece. The use of *thesauroi* in sanctuaries—which was a common practice in the Hellenistic period—seems, in fact, to have disappeared by the end of the 1st century B.C. Of the 27 *thesauroi* known in the Greek world, only one, from the island of Melos, is dated as late as the 1st century A.D.⁸³

The well-dated case of the Corinthian Asklepieion can add a few elements to our understanding of this phenomenon. The early years of the colony were, according to Spawforth’s onomastic study, “dominated socially and politically by wealthy men of freedman stock and by Roman

81. See pp. 755–757, above, on the dating and composition of the deposit.

82. Vallois 1923, p. 119.

83. See the catalogue presented in Kaminski 1991, and especially the *thesauros* of Melos, pp. 168–169.

families with business interests in the East, some no doubt of freedman stock themselves, and many probably already resident in the East.”⁸⁴ That many of the Roman freedmen of the earliest generation were of Greek origin seems obvious based on the *cognomina* of the Julii and Antonii of the triumviral period: C. Julius Nikephorus, M. Antonius Theophilus, M. Antonius Orestes.⁸⁵ Similarly, onomastic evidence suggests that some of the families of *negotiatores* established in Corinth upon its foundation were settled in Greece as early as the 2nd and 1st centuries B.C.⁸⁶ The picture seems to change by the second generation of colonists, when it is recognized that there might have been a prejudice against Greek names: in the sample of 37 *cognomina* recorded in the Corinthian duoviral bronzes, Spawforth notes that all but eight are Latin.

Finally, by the early Principate, one of the colony’s most striking features was the fact that it was perceived of as a Roman, not a Greek, community; its “assertive *romanitas*” may have been its main attraction.⁸⁷ It is therefore possible that the use of the *thesauros*, following the traditional Greek practice, was confined to the very early life of the colony, when the Sanctuary of Asklepios was repaired and frequented by the freedmen-colonists of Greek origin and the eastern *negotiatores*, among others, who filled the ranks of the Caesarian (and Antonian) colony. The Augustan restoration and reappropriation of the sanctuary probably marked the end of this fundamentally Greek practice and of the rituals traditionally connected with it, perhaps at a time when they were no longer understood or deemed interesting. This phase, not surprisingly, corresponds to the strengthening of the Roman outlook of the colony and its population.

It therefore appears that the Asklepieion was not only one of the first—if not the first—cult place(s) to be restored after the refoundation of Corinth, but it also bears intriguing evidence of the earliest history of the Roman colony. Its site was somehow part of the earliest land division attested in Corinth, possibly that described in the *lex agraria* of 111 B.C., and its repairs and revival, conducted under the aegis of Antony and set against a fundamentally Greek cultural background, can be attributed to the first generation of colonists and colonial officers. The role of Antony’s administrators in this is easily explained since the *triumvir*, long based in the East and “delighted to be called a philhellene” (Plut. *Ant.* 23), was probably responsible for the implementation of Caesar’s plans and the actual foundation of the colony.⁸⁸ He must also be credited with having started in Greece the cultural policy of the restoration of traditional cults and the recovery of lost rituals, later resumed by Augustus, within which the restoration of the Asklepieion is easily understood.⁸⁹ Finally, the further development of the site, probably in the Augustan period—with the cancellation of the previous phase—bears testimony to the rivalries between the Antonian and the Octavian factions at Corinth, which were among the dramatic consequences of the civil wars in the East. It may also suggest a desire on the part of the second generation of colonists to mark a turning point in the cultic choices of the city, which involved the abandonment of certain specifically Greek practices in favor of a more “Roman” outlook.

84. Spawforth 1996, p. 174.

85. Julius Nikephorus: *RPC* I, no. 1117; M. Antonius Theophilus: *RPC* I, nos. 1129–1131; M. Antonius Orestes: *RPC* I, nos. 1122, 1123.

86. For example the Heii and the Castricii; see Spawforth 1996, p. 172.

87. Spawforth 1996, p. 175.

88. Hoskins Walbank 1997, p. 98: “It is highly improbable that Julius Caesar’s plans were actually implemented by Augustus. The young Octavian did not return to Rome until May 44 and did not become a senator until January 43 B.C. Meantime Antony was consul and had taken possession of Julius Caesar’s papers. . . . The most likely scenario is that the founding of Corinth was the decision of Julius Caesar, implemented by Antony in June 44 B.C., and that the *deductio* took place shortly afterwards.”

89. Spawforth 2012, pp. 145–146.

This raises a question: Why was the Asklepieion given such particular attention at the very beginning of the life of the new colony? Most of the local Corinthian cults were abandoned by the mid-2nd century B.C. and revived only much later, if at all. Why was renovating the Sanctuary of Asklepios viewed as important?

The newly founded colony of Corinth was inhabited mostly by freedmen, as appears clear from the testimony of two contemporary authors. Strabo says that the city was colonized with people that belonged, for the most part, to the freedmen class (8.6.23). The poet Crinagoras, although his description has often been dismissed, polemically describes the once glorious city as “wholly abandoned to a crowd of scoundrelly slaves” (*Anth. Pal.* 9.284). A confirmation of the servile origins of the early colonial elite has been offered by both Spawforth’s study of the duoviral coinage and Millis’s recent contribution to the epigraphy of early Roman Corinth.⁹⁰ Both scholars’ conclusions, based mostly on onomastics, confirm that the servile element was so marked in Corinth that the colony can be considered an especially “freedman-friendly” site and that these freedmen were “entirely Greek in origin.”⁹¹

Asklepios played a particular role as patron of freedmen in Greece during the Hellenistic period; rituals of manumission in the name of Asklepios became increasingly popular at this time.⁹² Manumissions are inscribed in large numbers on the seats of the stadium at the Asklepieion of Epidaurus and in the *parodoi* of the theater in the sanctuary at Butrint.⁹³ Other sanctuaries of continental Greece bear abundant inscribed testimony of freedmen formally manumitted in the name of Asklepios.⁹⁴ Additionally, in Rome, Asklepios became very popular among the freedmen and people from the lowest social classes.⁹⁵ Slaves, according to a law passed by Claudius, had the right to be cured in the Asklepieion of Rome and, if healed, gained the right to be set free (Suet. *Claud.* 25.2).

The cult of Asklepios, therefore, a fundamentally Greek cult with strong connections to the world of freedmen and slaves, would have been particularly appealing to the first generations of colonial settlers at Corinth and would have offered an ideal source of cohesion within Corinth’s social fabric. Moreover, elsewhere the Romans endorsed the choice of Asklepios as the patron of political communities characterized by a marked servile component. At least two of the sanctuaries in which inscribed manumissions are found in large numbers—Butrint and Gonnoi—became seats of regional leagues inspired by the Romans and set under the patronage of Asklepios during the 2nd century B.C.⁹⁶ In both cities, priests of Asklepios played political roles within the substantially philo-Roman settlement of northern Greece after the Macedonian wars, and freedmen represented a large percentage of the population, especially following the Romans’ massive deportations in the course of the same wars.⁹⁷

Besides appealing to the colonists of Greek servile origin, the cult of Asklepios in Corinth may have also offered a readily recognizable appearance to 1st-century B.C. Romans. The cult of Asklepios had been known in Rome since 293 B.C., when it was introduced directly from Epidaurus on the occasion of an epidemic.⁹⁸ After the importation of the Greek cult, the epidemic promptly ceased and a temple was established on Tiber Island.

90. Spawforth 1996; Millis 2010.

91. Spawforth 1996, p. 170; Millis 2010, pp. 30–32.

92. This point, highlighted for the first time by Melfi (2007a, p. 27; 2007b, p. 55), has been recently stressed by Wickkiser (2010).

93. Epidaurus: *IG IV²* 354–370; Peek 1969, pp. 79–94. Butrint: Cabanes and Drini 2007, nos. 110–151bis.

94. Naupaktos: *IG IX².1* 612–623. Orchomenos: De Ridder 1895, nos. 1–3. Thespieae: *IG VII* 1779–1780. Chaironeia: Roesch 1982, p. 157, nos. 1, 2. Gonnoi: Helly 1973, vol. 2, pp. 135–137, nos. 114, 115.

95. Musiał 1992, pp. 55–57.

96. Helly 1973, vol. 1, pp. 100–101; Cabanes and Drini 2007, pp. 241–242.

97. Especially in Epiros: Strabo 9.5.12; Hammond 1967, p. 705.

98. Guarducci 1971.

More generally in the Italian context, the cult of Asklepios merged with local healing cults, all characterized by the particular ritual practice of dedicating terracotta body parts. The thousands of anatomical ex-voto dedications found at the healing sites throughout the peninsula, even in the absence of temples or religious buildings, attest to the popularity of this practice.⁹⁹ Large deposits of such votives from the bed of the Tiber suggest that the site of the Roman Asklepieion was previously associated with some sort of healing cult.¹⁰⁰ The Asklepieion of Corinth is the only cult place in Greece where votive body parts made of terracotta have been found. The realistic and idiosyncratic character of these objects, as much as the technical similarities with their Italian counterparts, have been underscored.¹⁰¹ A new theory even proposes a direct derivation of the Italian anatomical votives from Corinthian models coming through Etruscan emporia such as Gravisca.¹⁰² While this is difficult to demonstrate, the similarities of the material evidence from both regions are undeniable.

It is generally agreed that the practice of dedicating anatomical votives in Corinth was discontinued by the last quarter of the 4th century B.C., when terracotta body parts were buried in large numbers in seven different deposits within the grounds of the sanctuary. In his publication of the sanctuary, Roebuck nevertheless mentions that “twenty one small fragments from later contexts were inventoried,” and he notes that Votive Deposit VII, where “a few scraps of votive limbs were found,” was only filled up after the construction of the “Roman building over the ramp” in the 1st century A.D.¹⁰³ It is therefore possible that at least some terracotta votives were still visible in the Sanctuary of Asklepios in the 1st century B.C. hanging from the walls of the porticoed buildings. Is it possible that the new colonists saw the Corinthian terracotta votives and recognized in them domestic cult practices? These objects would have marked the site as unequivocally sacred for the Romans, since in Italy (especially in Etruria, Latium, and some areas of Campania and Apulia), anatomical votives appear to be dedicated to nearly all the most important deities in a variety of cult places.¹⁰⁴ They would also have evoked the religious world of the Italian countryside, where the farmers and peasants who usually dedicated such votives lived.

Considering that the division and distribution of Corinthian land were at the forefront of the Roman administrators’ activities, and later evidence of centuriation points to a thorough agricultural exploitation of the coastal plain, it is likely that a fair portion of the imported colonial population consisted of dispossessed Roman citizens fleeing disadvantageous conditions at home with the hope of acquiring a fairer distribution of land abroad.¹⁰⁵ The very existence of a sanctuary site where familiar religious practices could be performed in the same manner as in the Italian countryside would, therefore, have fostered cohesion among the colonists.

99. See, among others, Fabbri 1994–1995, 2004–2005; Comella and Mele 2005.

100. Pensabene et al. 1980.

101. Hughes 2008; Fabbri 2010, pp. 29–30.

102. Lesk 2002.

103. *Corinth* XIV, pp. 113–114.

104. Fabbri 2010, p. 22.

105. For evidence of centuriation, see Romano 1993, pp. 23–26; 2003.

CONCLUSIONS

Religion played an important role in Roman society, and in the 2nd and 1st centuries B.C., cults and religious institutions were often used for political purposes.¹⁰⁶ In a well-known passage, Polybios states: “the respect in which the Roman constitution is most markedly superior is in their behavior toward the gods. It is, I think, the very thing that brings reproach among other peoples that binds the Roman state together: I mean their superstitiousness.”¹⁰⁷ That the organization of cults and festivals was also a priority in newly founded Roman settlements and that they had a firm place within the sociopolitical fabric of the colonies is confirmed by the foundation charter of the Spanish settlement of Urso (*lex coloniae generativae Juliae*), in which norms applying to sanctuaries, deities, and rituals occupy prominent positions. The fact that—except for the Capitoline triad of Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva—no suggestions are made regarding the selection of deities to be venerated, suggests implicitly that “the concrete content of this religion is left to the local elite and its financial power.”¹⁰⁸

Since the refoundation of Corinth as a Roman colony was carefully planned and played a particularly prominent role in public opinion,¹⁰⁹ I would argue that the disappearance or survival of Corinthian cults was not incidental, but the result of decisions made at the highest levels of the Roman administration. The attention paid to the refurbishment of the Sanctuary of Asklepios and its maintenance throughout the early years of the life of the Roman colony was, therefore, most likely done in response to a precise strategy. This strategy was undoubtedly a Corinth-specific one, which combined the general religious requirements of a new colonial settlement with the deep knowledge and understanding of both the colonists’ background and the local, preexisting cults. The cult of Asklepios was probably chosen over others because it reflected known cult practices and the social background of the new settlers, but at the same time, it had strong ideological roots in Roman society. It therefore offered Roman administrators the ideal basis upon which to build bonds with the newly imported population. At the same time, the cult was fundamentally a Greek one, with a long history in Corinth, and it could constitute a focus of worship for individuals of local and more generally Greek origin.

Initially, the agents of this process were probably Greek freedmen who held the highest offices in the colony, ideally placed in both the newly constructed and the preexisting cultural networks. They were responsible for the first refurbishment of the cult site and the resumption of the votive practices. Later, Augustan administrators, while confirming the pivotal role of Asklepios in the colonial pantheon, annulled all previous associations of the god and probably gave him a more “Roman” look by radically changing the votive practices. This phase was probably inspired by Augustus’s desire to promote his own affiliation with Asklepios, both as healer of the state after the Civil Wars, and as son of Apollo—as convincingly argued by Wickkiser on the basis of contemporary literary evidence. That Augustus established a direct analogy between Asklepios, son of Apollo, and himself, son of Julius Caesar, ultimately meant that by worshipping Asklepios in Corinth the colonists were “honoring not only Asklepios, but the founders of their city Julius Caesar and more immediately Augustus.”¹¹⁰

106. For a discussion of the relationship between politics and religion in 2nd-century B.C. Rome, see Beard, North, and Price 1998, pp. 108–113.

107. Polyb. 6.56.6, trans. M. Beard, J. North, and S. Price, Cambridge, 1998.

108. Rüpke 2012, pp. 142–143.

109. A number of ancient authors mention the refoundation of Corinth, and many of them link its destruction and rebirth with that of Carthage; see Hoskins Walbank 1997, p. 97.

110. Wickkiser 2010, pp. 59–60.

In summary, the archaeological data from the Asklepieion—including the *thesauros* coin deposit—suggest that religious choices were made very early in the process of founding the colony at Corinth, and they ultimately confirm the most recent historical analysis of the establishment of the Roman presence in the East.¹¹¹ Following Gruen's reassessment, many scholars have stressed the importance of the knowledge of local contexts in the process of the conquest: Rome, rather than entirely imposing a foreign language and rules, established herself within preexisting networks. That is probably why, in Corinth—even though it was a Roman foundation in Roman territory, reconstructed precisely in the manner seen fit by Roman authorities—a traditional Greek cult was chosen to carry a message of common identity and social cohesion.

111. See, in particular, Gruen 1984; Kallet-Marx 1995.

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